



**REMARKS BY PRESIDENT OF
THE CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
DR. W^m. WARREN SMITH
AT THE
OPENING OF THE REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS BUILDING
UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
MONA CAMPUS
JAMAICA
JUNE 27, 2012**

I. SALUTATIONS

Chairman, University Registrar, Mr. C. William Iton

Prime Minister of Jamaica, The Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller

Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, Sir George Alleyne

Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, Professor E. Nigel Harris,

Secretary General, CARICOM, His Excellency, Ambassador Irwin LaRocque

Principal of the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Professor, Sir Hilary Beckles

Ministers of Government of Jamaica

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen.

II. INTRODUCTION

Let me start by thanking the Vice Chancellor and his staff for inviting the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) to participate in the official opening ceremony of the University of the West Indies' Regional Headquarters.

This beautiful complex stands as yet another symbol of the progress made by our Caribbean region in expanding and democratising access to tertiary education for our people.

The building's designation as the UWI's Regional Headquarters and its declared focus on preserving the regional character of this institution represent a symbolic planting of the flag and a declaration that the atomisation of the university, even if it is by creep, will not stand.

I know that my good friend, Professor Nigel Harris, feels passionately that this university's future must be built around its essentially regional personality.

Many of you here this evening share the view that the UWI's competitive advantage in a liberalised market for tertiary education lies in the strengthening and deepening of its regional character. I am happy to associate myself with that vision.

III. CDB AND UWI

We, at the CDB, are proud that we were at the table when this project was being developed. Staff benefited greatly from the interaction with our UWI colleagues in identifying the development results which would flow from it.

Like you, we were not interested merely in financing construction of a beautiful edifice. What we wanted was to be able to contribute meaningfully to expanding human capital across our Region.

We came away from this project with a greater appreciation of your vision for a better regional university.

It is our hope that you also benefited from the experience and insights of our own staff. We are satisfied that our investment of USD8.75 million in this venture will demonstrate the desired results.

We are proud of this project because of its symbolism, the efficient manner of its execution and the magnificent quality of the outturn. But we are especially proud because it represents yet another example in a long continuum of collaboration between our two regional institutions.

For the benefit of those here this evening who might not be so familiar with the history, CDB has provided over USD40 million in loans and grants to the University of the West Indies since the 1970s.

Our support has spanned a range of interventions, which were consistent with our core mandate of reducing regional poverty through social and economic development. In every instance, we have tried to respond to your specific requirements, in keeping with **your** vision for the region.

Both our institutions share the view that a prosperous Caribbean will be built on the foundation of an appropriately skilled work force, with the capacity to think creatively; to deploy the most modern technological aids; and to underpin the same with the indispensable soft skills of persuasive communication and harmonious inter-personal relationships.

For this audience, I hardly need to elaborate the critical role of tertiary institutions in building this type of workforce. In this endeavour, CDB wants to be at your side.

Like you, we are mandated by Charter to promote economic cooperation and integration among our member countries. It will not surprise you, therefore, to discover that the largest projects supported by CDB in the area of regional cooperation and integration have been those in the fields of tertiary education and distance learning. And UWI has been the main recipient.

IV. HOW WILL THE PROJECT HELP UWI?

Before I close my remarks this evening, Mr. Chairman, I would like to turn briefly to some of the benefits of this project. I have said elsewhere, ladies and gentlemen, that the best way to sell to our young people the value of the regional integration process is to first demonstrate, in practical ways, that working together can produce a superior result to working alone.

It is, in some respects, tied up with the economies of scale argument that readily finds resonance with the business-minded among us. My fervent hope is that this project will demonstrate the superiority of opting for regional approaches to solve national problems.

I am advised that, because of this project, the university will realise at least four huge benefits.

First, UWI will now be able to record significant improvements in productivity and efficiencies by consolidating its various dispersed functions in a modern building with state-of-the-art technology and systems.

Second, the university will be able to harmonise and integrate management systems; and coordinate service delivery and research to address regional challenges and development imperatives.

Third, the university will bring together, under one roof, entities like the Institute for Crime, Security and Justice, the Institute for Sustainable Development, and the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies.

And fourth, the university will house the nerve-centre of the Single Virtual University Space Project here. This technology driven-project will be a key instrument for enhancing reach and service delivery; increasing cost-effectiveness; improving the quality of learning through cross-campus sharing of courses; and optimising the intellectual capacity of the University.

V. CONCLUSION

In closing, let me take this opportunity to congratulate the staff of

the University of the West Indies' Projects Office. Project implementation was well executed and exemplified the capacity of the University, in general, and the Vice Chancellery, in particular. We anticipate an equally commendable execution of the remaining activities.

Mr. Chairman, I Thank You.