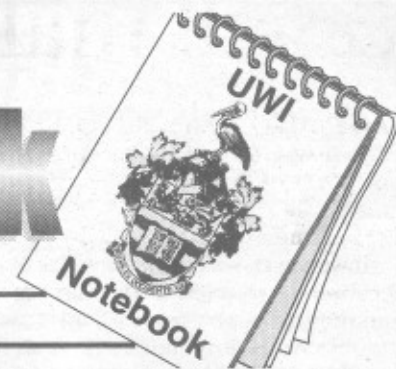




UWI Notebook



The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus

New Masters Programme to assist OECS

THE start of a fresh academic year often brings several new features to life at the University of the West Indies and this year is no exception.

Among the innovations can be found curriculum changes designed to meet the challenges of altered social and economic times and the new Masters Programme in International Trade Policy is testimony to this.

The programme launched officially on August 13th, following a signing ceremony on June 8th, is designed to create a cadre of professionals specifically trained to engage in trade negotiations at the regional, hemispheric and multilateral levels. It was implemented with technical and financial backing from several international agencies and seeks primarily to address the ongoing human capacity needs of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, in particular, in the area of international trade.

Manager of the MITP programme Pamela Coke-Hamilton in addressing the ceremony explained how it evolved from the Organisation of American States (OAS) Trade Unit's provision of funds through the Canadian International Development Agency to assist the six OECS countries in preparing their national trade capacity building strategies under the hemispheric co-operation programme.

She said: "The response of the donor community has been phenomenal with USAID (United States Agency for International Development) having enthusiastically received and supported the programme from the outset. It was based on their initial commitment (of US \$400 000) that the decision was taken to move ahead with the programme.

She also expressed deep gratitude to OAS Director of Fellowships, Dr. Santos Mahung, noting that in spite of significant cash flow constraints, he managed to provide 18 scholarships for the programme that has an initial enrollment of 33 students from across the region.

Mrs Coke-Hamilton praised the involvement and support of the World Trade Organisation, the European Union



Pamela Coke-Hamilton, manager Masters Programme International Trade Policy.

and CIDA adding that she looked forward to their continued collaboration in enhancing and expanding the programme to address not only the needs of regional governments but the private sector as well.

She told the students they were chosen from a field of over 80 well-qualified applicants to be at the start of something new and exciting and urged them to make the most of the opportunity afforded them over the next 15 months.

UWI Pro Vice Chancellor and Principal of Cave Hill campus, Professor Hilary Beckles told those present at the ceremony that there is no doubt Caribbean societies have a human resource challenge and pointed to the region's enrollment in higher education as being one of the lowest in the world.

"We have been in the international trade in these islands for as long as any other part of the modern world and yet at this critical moment we are still lacking in the capacity to represent and protect our strategic interest," said the historian adding that he hoped a historic perspective was imbedded in the syllabus.

He said the MITP programme was one example of how the UWI intends to demonstrate relevant education and human resource development; how to mobilise the intellectual power of this region to protect itself.

Featured speaker Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Dame Billie Miller noted the MITP programme has come at a critical juncture in the region's international

relations and when the world's economic landscape was undergoing fundamental change.

She warned that the region's failure to be adequately prepared for international trade negotiations would result in it being marginalised and regional economies being condemned to a certain fate. The MITP programme is expected to be placed on line from early next year in order that larger numbers may have access to its teachings.