



BRIEF REMARKS

by

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MINISTER OF EDUCATION

on the occasion of a:

Meeting of the Technical Advisory Committees (TACs)
(Review of the Budgets of the University of the West Indies)

at

**Sheraton Nassau Beach Resort
West Bay Street
Nassau, The Bahamas
9:00 a.m.**

February 10th, 2010

Salutations:

1. **His Excellency, the Honourable Arthur D. Hanna** – *Governor
General of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas*
2. **Honourable Hubert Minnis** – *Minister of Health*
3. **Professor Nigel Harris** – *Vice Chancellor -University of the
West Indies*
4. **Mrs. Elma Garraway** – *Permanent Secretary –Ministry of
Education*
5. **Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald** – *Pro Vice Chancellor &
Principal, The Open Campus*
6. **Mrs. Luz Longworth** – *Director, The Open Campus Country
Sites*
7. **Dr. Robin Roberts** – *Director of the School of Clinical Medicine &
Research*
8. **Professor Howard Spencer** – *Resident Representative, The
Open Campus Bahamas*
9. **Permanent Secretaries** - from the various Ministries of
Participating Countries
10. **Other Senior Government Officials/ Special Guests/Principals**
11. **Ladies & Gentlemen**

Good Morning!

On behalf of the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, I am delighted to welcome all delegates as we host this **Meeting of the Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) for Review of the Budgets of the University of the West Indies (UWI)**. We realize that many of you have travelled great distances to engage in this dialogue, and we appreciate the effort you have made in getting here. We know that during the course of your two day visit you will find time to tour our sunny shores, and hopefully will also be able to sample some of our culinary delights. Our archipelagic nation of over 700 islands and 2,400 cays is populated by some 330,000 people of whom 70 and 15 percent reside on the islands of New Providence and Grand Bahama respectively. Our public school system has a student population of approximately 53,000 students whilst the private/independent schools have approximately 16,000 students. It is our goal not only to provide access to education, but to ensure that it is of a high quality and relevant to our country's evolving needs. You are welcomed therefore, to pay us a return visit at your convenience to enjoy the variety of experiences which our country has to offer.

Before I go any further, I would wish to publicly express my sympathies to the University family on the passing of Vice Chancellor Emeritus Rex Nettleford. Professor Nettleford who was well known and loved internationally was a Rhodes Scholar, author humanitarian, and a font of knowledge as far as culture and social issues were concerned. The professor has contributed much and he will certainly be missed but never forgotten.

The Bahamas has been affiliated with the University of the West Indies (UWI) since January 1964. Founded in 1947, UWI has become the region's flagship institution of higher learning with three campuses on the islands of Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados. A UWI Centre is also maintained in Nassau, through which students are able to seek admission and access programmes of the Open Campus.

Currently there are four distinct UWI programmes in The Bahamas, which include:

1. UWI Open Campus;
2. Centre for Hotel & Tourism Management (CHTM);
3. School of Clinical Medicine & Research, The Bahamas (SCMR); and a

4. Bachelor in Law degree (LLB) programme in association with the College of The Bahamas (COB).

In addition to this, the centre also coordinates distance education programmes in areas such as: agriculture, business and public administration, education, and counseling.

We are happy to say that Bahamian students continue to benefit from the arrangement between contributing countries and the University of the West Indies as they have been afforded an 80% subsidy for all programmes of study. They have only to pay the remaining 20%. The Government of The Bahamas made a commitment to UWI in 2004/2005 with a national budget allocation of Two million, ninety one thousand, five hundred and ninety two dollars (\$2,091,592). This has been increased to Three million, one hundred and twenty nine thousand, and twenty five dollars (\$3, 129,025) for the year 2009/2010. We are proud of our current students and of our graduates who can be found in senior positions in the public and private sectors in disciplines such as: accountants, teachers, doctors, lawyers, nurses, social workers amongst other professions.

We note that you have taken an interest in the College of The Bahamas thrust toward university status and are pleased to have you partner with us in this transformation. The collaboration between the College and UWI however began as far back as the 1970s with the LLB programme. UWI was the only institute of higher learning in 1978 that offered baccalaureate degrees in Tourism or Hospitality Management in The Bahamas. During this time also, The Bahamas Hotel Training College (BHTC) offered diplomas, certificates and Associate degrees. Since then, however, COB's Culinary & Hospitality Management Institute (CHMI) amalgamated in 2000 with The Bahamas Hotel Training Institute and now offers Bachelor's degrees in both Tourism Management and Hospitality Management. COB also offers through the University, The Joint Board of Teacher Education Certificate through which many of our outstanding teachers have received their professional qualifications. Both COB and UWI continue to collaborate on programmes and cost to better meet the needs of our students in the region. The Ministry of Education looks forward to the support of the UWI in reviewing its 10 Year Strategic Plan in addition to further examination of the provision of technical education in our secondary schools. To this end, I note that

initial discussions have been held with the officials of my ministry.

Ladies and gentlemen, The Bahamas has benefited greatly from the University of the West Indies' School of Clinical Medicine and Research. This relationship which began in 1964 has resulted in the training and development of our people in the field of medicine, and in the improvement of the level of care offered at the Princess Margaret Hospital.

Students studying at UWI School of Clinical Medicine & Research receive subvention from the Bahamas Government. There are at present twenty six (26) students for the 2009/2010 academic year who are receiving \$13,400 each totaling \$348,400 per annum. This contribution has enabled the Bahamas Government and UWI Bahamas make the following contribution to the medical profession in The Bahamas:

- *UWI has lifted the quality of care at the Princess Margaret Hospital and contributed to improved training/teaching and diagnosis of patients;*
- *Improved access to physicians, many of whom were trained at UWI and have returned home to practice;*

- *Training in specialty programmes in the areas of: psychiatry, emergency medicine, gynecology, and anesthesiology;*
- *Supports and encourages Research on matters of national importance such as: HIV, kidney disease, diabetes, and breast cancer.*

The Bahamas alumni chapter provides the largest contribution to the UWI alumni endowment fund. We encourage our students to consider studying in the region first before looking elsewhere as many opportunities are available in their areas of interest. The Government of The Bahamas has since the 60's been paying 80% of the tuition cost for all Bahamian students to study at UWI, which has made affordable education available to many.

I am advised that this is the second time that The Bahamas is hosting this meeting, our first being held in November of 1998, under then Minister of Education, Dame Ivy Dumont. Other countries which I am sure are all well represented here today that have hosted these meetings include: Grenada, Antigua & Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, St. Vincent & The Grenadines, St. Kitts & Nevis, Dominica, the

Cayman Islands, and St. Lucia. In addition to these delegates, we know that Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, Montserrat, and Trinidad & Tobago are here to share and gain crucial information.

These meetings are structured to initiate a dialogue on the budgetary submissions by the various campuses of the University of the West Indies (UWI), the Centre, and the University Hospital, which is necessary for our considerations regarding the way forward. As individual campuses seek funding, the information that will be gleaned will provide a road map that will assist us in making better decisions, as we continually evaluate and adjust to better serve our changing needs that are in part driven by global demands and the economic downturn. Despite the fact that our locations are different, we are alike in that our shared vision is to meet the educational needs of our students, and to enhance and expand the services that are currently provided. To this end, a review of our budgets is vital as we determine where best to allocate funds in facilitating lifelong learning and the diverse needs of our students be they young or mature.

Each of you is here because your Government is depending on you to share and provide feedback in these sessions, which will determine the extent to which their national budgets will be allocated to meet the new challenges facing the University. I have no doubt that you will listen carefully, exchange ideas, take notes, challenge, analyze, evaluate, and to think critically and creatively so that you may competently advise your policy makers on the best road to travel in taking the various campuses to the next level. During your deliberations keep in mind whom you are to serve, and align your thoughts so that you may all be on one accord for the benefit of all of our people.

Indeed this collaboration by such committed partners augers well for the improvement and enhancement of tertiary education. We are aware of the changing needs of our clients, and together we can meet those needs as long as we share the same vision. UWI has played a major role in the development of the human resources of our nation. I wish to thank UWI for its contribution and dedication in assisting us in our growth and development. Let us continue with our sustained efforts in providing retraining, research

initiatives, related to our various educational systems, and a world class education for the Caribbean region.

I wish to thank Professor E. Nigel Harris, Vice Chancellor of UWI who will provide excellent service in chairing the meetings. I also commend the organizers of this event for their diligent work in bringing this event to fruition. Delegates, once again, I welcome each of you and I extend best wishes for a productive meeting, and wish you much success in these budget discussions.

Thank you.