



CENTRAL BANK OF TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

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OPENING REMARKS

at the

Eighteenth Dr. Eric Williams Memorial Lecture *“HIV/AIDS : Challenges for the Caribbean”*

by

Ewart S. Williams,
Governor, Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago

Friday June 11, 2004

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Management and staff of the Central Bank, I am absolutely delighted to welcome you to our Eighteenth Dr. Eric Williams Memorial Lecture.

We are honoured tonight by the presence of:

HEAD TABLE:

- Sir George A. Alleyne, Chancellor, UWI, Mona, Jamaica and UN Ambassador for AIDS in the Caribbean;

- Dr. Rolph Balgobin, CEO, UWI, Institute of Business;
- Ms. Amoy Chang Fong, Deputy Governor;
- His Excellency Professor George Maxwell Richards, President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and First Lady Dr. Jean Ramjohn-Richards;
- The Honourable Patrick Manning, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and Senator, the Honourable Hazel Manning;
- The Honourable Dr. Linda Baboolal, President of the Senate;
- The Honourable Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr. Barendra Sinanan and Mrs. Sinanan;
- Lady Alleyne;
- Honourable Ministers of Government;
- Ministers of CARICOM;
- The Honourable Arthur N.R. Robinson, former President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago;
- The Honourable Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly, Mr. Orville London;
- Members of Parliament;

- Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
- Former Governors of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago (Dr. Euric Bobb, Mr. T. Ainsworth Harewood and Mr. Winston Dookeran);
- I would also like to recognize the daughters of Dr. Williams; Mrs. Erica Williams-Connell and Ms. Pamela Williams (and other relatives who are with us tonight).

When the Central Bank initiated this lecture series in 1983, two years after the passing of Dr. Eric Williams, no one could have anticipated the level of interest it has generated or the significant impact it has had on the public. Undoubtedly, the unqualified success of the lecture series is testimony to the respect and esteem for the life and work of the man to whom these lectures are dedicated, as well as the quality of the speakers who have offered to share their thoughts and ideas with us.

This Eighteenth Dr. Eric Williams Memorial Lecture involves a few departures from our usual practice. To begin with, it is the first time in close to twenty years that the lecture is being held away from the sacred confines of the Central Bank. For this, we need to blame the long-overdue refurbishment works that have been timed to commemorate the Bank's 40th Anniversary, which is to be celebrated in December this year.

Secondly, I think it is the first time that the Dr. Eric Williams Memorial Lecture is not a "*stand alone*" event. This year, also in the context of our 40th Anniversary Celebrations, the lecture is linked to an International Seminar focusing on the theme, *Developmental Challenges*

Facing the Caribbean. This morning the Honourable Prime Minister, Patrick Manning did us the honour of delivering a most enlightening feature address to open the seminar.

We are delighted to have as our special guest tonight, a large number of the participants of the Seminar. In economics, it is called a **captive market**.

Accordingly, I would like to recognize the Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund; the Executive Directors of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank; other representatives of the multi-lateral organizations; CARICOM Central Bank Governors; the President of the Caribbean Development Bank; the Secretary General of the CARICOM Secretariat; and senior officials of regional governments and regional institutions.

The presence of so many Caribbean representatives is indeed fitting on this occasion, for, while Dr. Williams' political life was in service to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, his invaluable research on the economic and political history of the Caribbean brought about a decisive advance in our knowledge of the region and our understanding of its special features.

Dr. Williams was the quintessential Caribbean man. Convinced as he was that the West Indies were, in his words, **“one world”**, he more than anyone else, set the example for regional co-operation.

Our third “first” is that our feature speaker tonight is **our first encore performance**. Sir George delivered the Seventh Lecture in the series on the theme of *Health and Development*. It was in this lecture that Sir George, quoting Dr. Williams, reminded us that development has

a face and that that face is **the face of man**. He reminded us that development consisted of a matrix of inter-dependent relationships and that health was deeply imbedded into this matrix.

In tonight's lecture Sir George will also deal with health and development. This time, however, the connection is more direct, perhaps **even more relevant and certainly more urgent**. I say this because HIV/AIDS is increasingly being recognized as the major development problem in the Caribbean.

Tonight, I have the pleasure to introduce Sir George Alleyne as our feature speaker.

His credentials, as you would expect, are impressive indeed. He completed two terms as Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, a regional office of the World Health Organisation. He is currently Director Emeritus of the Bureau and holds an Adjunct Professorship at the Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University. In February 2003, Mr. Kofi Annan, The Secretary General of the United Nations appointed him as his Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean. In October 2003, he was named Chancellor of the University of the West Indies.

A Barbadian by birth, Sir George graduated in medicine from the University of the West Indies in 1957. He completed his postgraduate training in the United Kingdom and did further postgraduate work both there and in the United States. He joined the academic staff of the University in 1962, and just ten years later became Chairman of the Department of Medicine in 1972. He then moved to the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) in 1981, as he said, to follow his view that health could be an instrument of development.

Sir George has been the recipient of many honours and awards. In 1990, he was knighted for “his services to medicine” and in 2001, he received the Order of the Caribbean Community, CARICOM’s highest award.

I now take pleasure in inviting Sir George Alleyne to deliver the Eighteenth Dr. Eric Williams Memorial Lecture on “*HIV/AIDS: Challenges for the Caribbean*”.