



## THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST. AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, WEST INDIES

SEISMIC RESEARCH CENTRE

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### **2016 Seismology in Schools Awards Ceremony NIHERST National Science Centre Teckno Theatre Tuesday 13th December 2016, 9:30am**

Ladies and gentlemen I bring you warm greetings on behalf of myself and the entire staff of The UWI Seismic Research Centre to this 2016 Seismology in Schools (SIS) awards ceremony. We at the SRC are very pleased to have forged this partnership with NIHERST in promoting the Seismology in Schools programme, which we believe can nurture and stimulate student interests in geosciences. We are glad to be able to work with NIHERST in exposing the next generation of Trinidad and Tobago's scientists to real and useful scientific work through their involvement in a practical seismology programme that also has linkages to their regular school curricula. This most recent component, the first Seismology in Schools Competition is a fitting compliment that will help to promote the SIS programme.

The reality of life in the Caribbean today is one that is characterized by exposure to multiple hazards. One is hard-pressed to live anywhere, in this region that is not susceptible to the impact of at least one type of hazard, whether natural or man-made. We live in one of the most hazard prone regions of the world yet we continue to take heed of the need for building long-term resilience. Development in the region can be severely set back at any time by an earthquake, an erupting volcano or by a tsunami. The fact that we continue to pay insufficient attention of these hazards is something for which either we or our future generations will pay. It is therefore necessary and sensible to ensure that we build a future generation that is knowledgeable of and better able to cope sustainably with living in a multi-hazard environment.

Earthquakes are a hazard that we must all learn to deal with if we live in Trinidad and Tobago. The 6.2 magnitude earthquake that occurred west of Tobago exactly one week ago is a telling reminder of the fact that we live in a seismically active part of the world; a region that has had damaging earthquakes in the past and will continue to experience

similar events in the foreseeable future. We therefore need local geoscientists who understand this hazard and can help protect the country against their effects.

Ladies and gentlemen we need to start now to build resilience to the earthquake hazard in Trinidad and Tobago. We believe that the SIS programme will go a long way towards stimulating young and upcoming geoscientists who may be responsible for the future development of our nation. We need local geoscientists who may lead future efforts at reducing the impacts of earthquakes.

I therefore wish to encourage teachers engaged in this programme to be excited about the potential it provides for teaching their young charges about science. The practical application of concepts of Physics, Math and Geography would benefit students in the grasp of these concepts and I urge teachers to use the opportunity provided by this programme as much as they can. To the students I implore you to become fully engaged in the programme and to take great care of the equipment to which you have been entrusted. Seismology and even

more so Earthquake Engineering are worthwhile career paths for which this programme provides a very practical introduction.

In closing, I would like to congratulate all the participants in this competition. We are looking forward to welcoming the winning team for their Easter Internship at the SRC in 2017. I wish to also take this opportunity to encourage everyone present to take part in our recently launched ***Citizen Seismologist*** project. If you are fascinated by earthquakes and would like to help us to better understand earthquake effects in the region, we encourage you to consider participating. If you are interested in earthquakes and their effects and can volunteer for this project we urge you to send an email to [info@uwiseismic.com](mailto:info@uwiseismic.com).

Thanks you all for your attention.