

**OFFICE ADDRESS**

Grayson Courtyard, Lot #24 Estate Trace,  
Off 6th Avenue,  
Barataria

**POSTAL ADDRESS**

PO Box 113, St. Vincent Street, Port of Spain

<http://niherst.gov.tt>

**NIHERST**

NATIONAL INSTITUTE  
OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
RESEARCH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

INCORPORATED BY ACT OF PARLIAMENT ACT NO. 20 OF 1984

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 27<sup>th</sup> 2026

Dear Editor / Head of Department

**Trinidad and Tobago's Young Innovators Shine at FIRST Tech Challenge Tournament 2026**  
**Students Demonstrate Excellence in Robotics, Engineering and Innovation**

Point Lisas, Trinidad and Tobago, June 27, 2026: The brightest young minds in robotics and engineering were on full display as teams from across Trinidad and Tobago competed in the FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) Tournament 2026, hosted by the National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (NIHERST) and its title sponsor, Shell Trinidad and Tobago Ltd.

The tournament brought together secondary school students and youth teams who spent months designing, building, programming and testing robots to compete in a series of challenges that assessed their technical skills, teamwork, creativity, problem-solving abilities and engineering design processes.

The tournament featured ten teams representing schools and youth organisations from across Trinidad and Tobago, each demonstrating exceptional creativity, teamwork and technical skill throughout the competition.

Participating teams included:

1. Maple Leaf International School
2. Trinity College Moka
3. Tranquillity Government Secondary School
4. Holy Name Convent
5. Woodbrook Secondary School
6. Wepala
7. Waterloo Secondary School
8. Presentation College Chaguanas
9. Chaguanas North Secondary School

Speaking on the significance of the programme, **NIHERST Chairman, Dr. Indira Rampersad** commended the participants for their dedication and innovation.

*"Today is a massive milestone. By officially transitioning from the FIRST Lego League into the FIRST Tech Challenge, we are joining a worldwide community of young minds who are designing, building, and competing on an international stage, while developing essential life skills that extend well beyond the classroom. FTC is an arena where students learn to think on their feet, collaborate, communicate under pressure, and tackle real engineering problems. It teaches grit, creativity, leadership, and adaptability, the very qualities that modern industries and global economies increasingly demand in today's environment."*

**Also in attendance, the Honourable Minister of Education, Dr. Michael Dowlath stated** *"Today has been about far more than robots on a competition field. It has been about learning to identify a problem, develop an idea, test it, improve it and work with others towards a solution. These are habits that will serve our young people in engineering, medicine, agriculture, business, the creative industries, public service and every field in which Trinidad and Tobago needs capable minds. This tournament marks an important step for STEM education in Trinidad and Tobago."*

**Senator Professor Emeritus, the Honourable Prakash Persad, Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training (MTEST)** delivering the feature address, praised the students for embracing technology and innovation and shared that *"we must encourage young people to understand the value of physics, mathematics, engineering and how it is multidisciplinary"*. Minister Persad also emphasized to the students that *"if you think and analyze, you can be the first in the world anywhere,"* and was also able to provide a physical demonstration of its application to robotics design.

As Title Sponsor, Shell Trinidad and Tobago reaffirmed its commitment to youth development and STEM advancement. **Ms. Vernisha Ahyoung, Shell's Information and Digital Technology Manager,** stated: *"At Shell, this programme is one of the reasons why we continue to invest in education built around Science, Technology, Research, Education, Arts and Mathematics, or STREAM as we call it. We see what happens when young people are given opportunities, mentorship and access to experiences that allow them to test their abilities and expand their horizons"*.

The tournament recognised outstanding performance across several award categories:

### **Inspire Award**

Winner: Maple Leaf Robotics

### **Robot Alliance Winners and Robot Alliance Grant**

Winner Alliance: Presentation College, Chaguanas

Winner Alliance: Chaguanas North Secondary

### **Robot Alliance Finalists**

Finalist Alliance: Maple Leaf

Finalist Alliance: Trinity College Moka

**Design Award**

Winner: Presentation College, Chaguanas

**Connect Award**

Winner: Waterloo Secondary School

**Think Award**

Winner: Tranquillity Government Secondary School

The FIRST Tech Challenge forms part of NIHERST's ongoing efforts to strengthen STEM education and provide young people with opportunities to develop future-ready skills through hands-on learning experiences.

NIHERST extends sincere appreciation to all sponsors and partners whose support contributed to the success of the tournament. Shell Trinidad and Tobago as Title Sponsor, the Massy Foundation for providing valuable support as Platinum Sponsor and Party Tools Ltd. and the National Energy Skills Centre (NESC) for their generous in-kind contributions, which helped enhance the overall experience for participants, volunteers and guests.

**Photos:**



**Caption: Minister of Education**



**Caption: Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training**



**Caption: Chairman of NIHERST**



**Caption: Shell's Information and Digital Technology Manager**



**Caption: NIHERST Chairman with team 'Maple Leaf'**



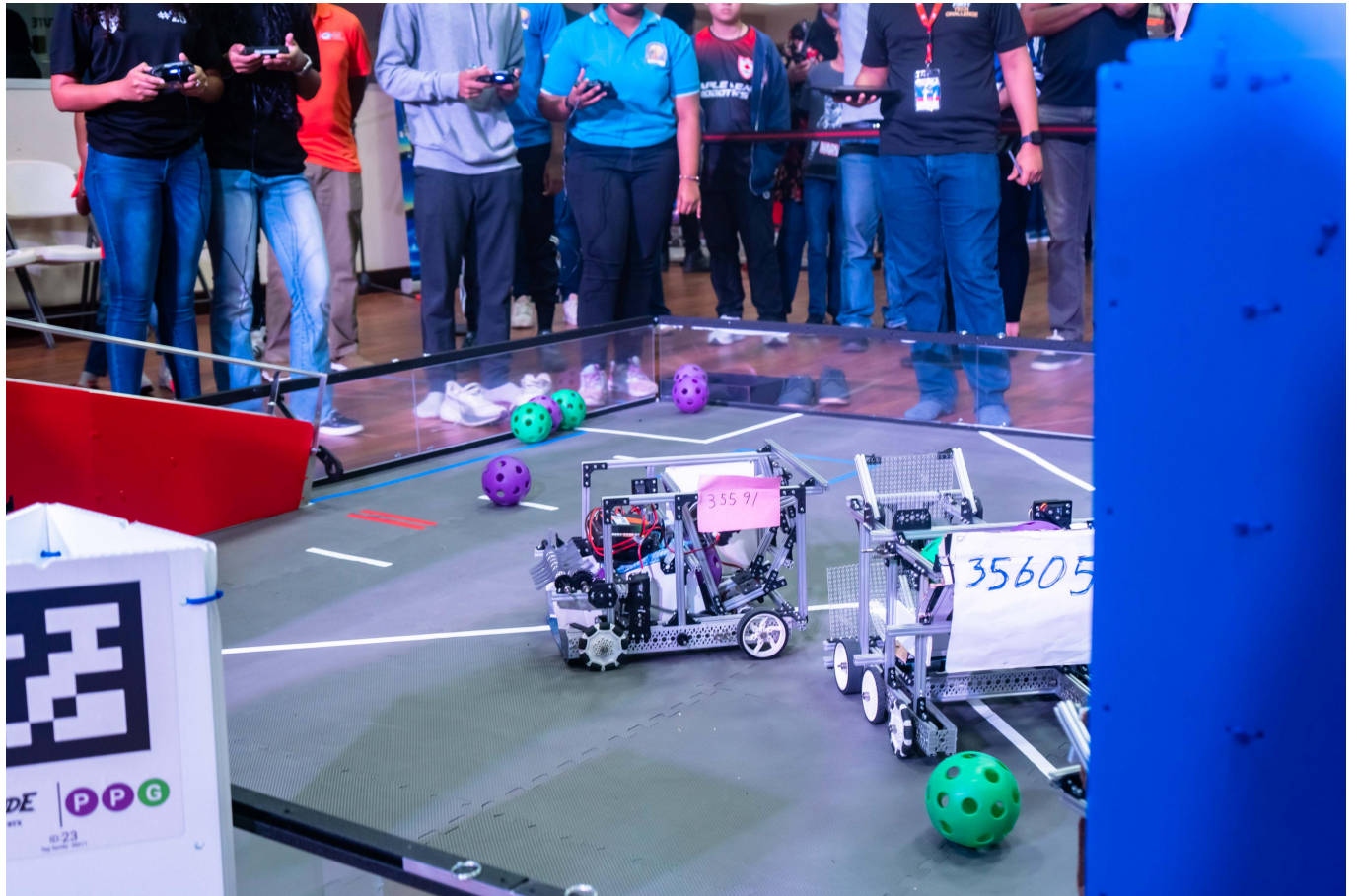
**Caption: Shell's Information and Digital Technology Manager with team 'Presentation College – Chaguanas'**



**Caption: Minister of Education with team 'Chaguanas North Secondary'**



**Caption: Minister of Tertiary Education and Skills Training with team 'Maple Leaf' - Inspire Award Winner**



**Caption: Cross-section of robots competing**



**Caption: Cross-section of judges**

**##END##**

**Contact Information:**

Marketing and Communications Department  
National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (NIHERST)  
Email: [marketing@niherst.gov.tt](mailto:marketing@niherst.gov.tt)  
Phone: 758-3381

**About NIHERST**

The National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (NIHERST) is a statutory body committed to promoting the development of science, technology and higher education in Trinidad and Tobago, while supporting innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship across the national community.

**About FIRST Tech Challenge**

FIRST Tech Challenge is an international robotics programme that challenges students to design, build, program and operate robots to compete in an alliance format against other teams. Through participation, students develop technical expertise, leadership, communication and collaboration skills while gaining exposure to real-world engineering principles.