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MEDIA RELEASE

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Dear Editor / Head of Department

Dr. Jerome Foster Awarded ICGEB Grant Award

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago – NIHERST proudly announces that Dr. Jerome Foster, a researcher at The University of the West Indies, has been awarded the prestigious 2024 International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) Research Grant. His project, "Metagenomic Surveillance for Potential Viral Pathogens in Illegally Imported Wildlife and Livestock Species in Trinidad, West Indies," has secured €10,000 to advance research in public and animal health.

Selected from a competitive pool of 464 applications across 47 ICGEB member states, Dr. Foster's work showcases cutting-edge innovation in utilising advanced metagenomic techniques to identify potential viral threats. The project aims to strengthen biosecurity and public health measures in Trinidad and Tobago, addressing critical challenges in safeguarding human and animal health and reinforcing the country's position as a leader in global research.

This groundbreaking research is a result of collaborative efforts with esteemed colleagues:

- Dr. Rod Suepaul (School of Veterinary Medicine, UWI St. Augustine)
- Prof. Christine Carrington (Preclinical Sciences, UWI St. Augustine)
- Dr. Nikita Sahadeo (Preclinical Sciences, UWI St. Augustine)
- Dr. Lana Gyan (Ministry of Agriculture, Land & Fisheries, GOTT)
- Mr. Dave Mahabir (Ministry of Agriculture, Land & Fisheries, GOTT)
- Dr. Sarah Hill (Royal Veterinary College, University of London)
- Dr. Georgia Schafer (ICGEB - Cape Town, South Africa)
- Dr. Stefano Cacciatore (ICGEB - Cape Town, South Africa)

As the official Liaison Office for ICGEB in Trinidad and Tobago, NIHERST is committed to supporting researchers like Dr. Foster, whose groundbreaking work elevates the nation's research landscape and inspires scientific collaboration.

NIHERST's President Ag., Ms. Julie David, remarked, "Dr. Foster's achievement is a testament to the immense talent within Trinidad and Tobago's scientific community. His research not only addresses critical biosecurity challenges but also highlights the global impact of local innovation. NIHERST remains steadfast in its support for initiatives that foster scientific excellence and innovation."

NIHERST congratulates Dr. Foster on this remarkable milestone and invites the public to celebrate his success as an inspiring example of the transformative power of science and innovation.

About NIHERST:

The National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science, and Technology (NIHERST) has been instrumental in advancing science, technology, and education in Trinidad and Tobago for over 40 years. NIHERST remains committed to building a knowledge-driven society by supporting educational initiatives that empower teachers, engage students, and inspire a culture of innovation.

About ICGEB

The International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) conducts innovative research in life sciences for the benefit of developing countries. It strengthens the research capability of its members through training, internship and funding programmes and advisory services to member states. The Centre employs a comprehensive approach to promoting biotechnology internationally and is dedicated to advanced research and training in molecular biology and biotechnology with applications in the fields of public health, energy production, industrial production of high added-value commodities, nutrition, and environmental protection/remediation. Its expertise is also solicited by international agencies and member countries on biosafety.

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