



HIGH COMMISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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FEBRUARY 23rd, 2011

-MEDIA RELEASE-

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR GARVIN NICHOLAS AT THE LAUNCH OF CVQO AND EDUCATION CARIBBEAN YOUTH 'AT RISK'

Chairman, Captain Williams, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for allowing me to host this evening's book launch.

The Trinidad and Tobago High Commission is delighted to be associated with this event, the latest testament of a dedicated, successful son of the soil.

Captain Williams has distinguished himself with many achievements in academia and the Cadet Force both in Trinidad and Tobago and in the UK. Permit me to humbly recognise my much shorter involvement in the Cadet Force during my years at Trinity College which I found to be very rewarding.

The study done by Dr. Williams identifies that the entire Caribbean region is affected by 'at risk' youth who become involved in a criminal culture driven by drugs and guns.

This is of course an international problem that is driven by many forces.

We all agree that youth crime is a plague on society. For me, it is deeply saddening every time I read about the often senseless and permanent consequences that flow from it.

Dr. Williams' research suggests that 'risky behaviour' has now become a major issue which affects economies in different ways and must be dealt with expeditiously.

It is postulated that the growth in youth anti-social behaviour can be correlated with a number of factors which include the breakdown in family



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support, inadequate teaching techniques at schools, and the lack of opportunities to engage in sports and other recreational activities.

The Trinidad and Tobago Government recognises these shortfalls as well, and has embarked on a number of initiatives to help in the curtailment of this behaviour.

The government through the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, has embarked on a programme to provide community sporting facilities throughout the length and breadth of Trinidad and Tobago to ensure access to sporting and recreational facilities.

The most 'at risk' young people often find themselves utilising social services through work programmes in Trinidad and Tobago.

As a result, this government has set as its goal the introduction of a training element to these programmes to ensure that these young people improve their life skills which can lead ultimately to an increase in self confidence and healthier lifestyles whilst engaging in these work programmes.

Many times these 'troubled youth' target other young people within the school system.

The government, in an effort to stamp out this element of anti-social behaviour launched a 24 Hour hotline recently by the Minister of Education.

The National Student Hotline is an initiative of the Ministry of Education working in partnership with the Ministry of the People and Social Development.

Pupils are advised to contact the hotline whenever they feel threatened.

The Ministry of the People and Social Development, in its continued efforts to protect the most vulnerable groups in society, initiated a series of public



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lectures to educate the public on Domestic Violence and Child Abuse, aimed at reducing the incidences of domestic violence and child abuse in the home.

As you know, violence in the home finds its way into the wider society and must therefore be addressed along with the other initiatives.

I hope that I have been able to give a glimpse into some of the work being done by the government of Trinidad and Tobago in treating with this very important issue of 'at risk youth' which is the key subject area of this very important piece of research by Captain Wallace.

There is much more to be done!

The work undertaken by Captain Wallace is a valuable tool that offers valuable insight and additional solutions which will undoubtedly influence the further shaping of policies affecting 'troubled youth' both locally and internationally.

Sir, I thank you for your commitment and effort.

Thank you

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