

Foreword

Our Caribbean region today enjoys a certain measure of political stability but is nonetheless confronted with problems that need urgent attention, if we are to maintain this stability. The number of persons living below the poverty line varies from 25% to 80% in the region. Countries blessed with natural resources are not exempt from this high level of poverty and unemployment. Natural disasters mainly hurricanes, are a perennial problem particularly with some of the small islands with fragile economies. Some countries which have the capability to become self-sufficient in food production are faced with huge import bills. We, the scientists of the region cannot and must not remain oblivious to these problems. We have a societal obligation to mobilize and assist regional governments in finding solutions.

It is against this background that the historic first Caribbean Conference on "Furthering Cooperation in Science and Technology for Caribbean Development" took place at the Trinidad Hilton from September 23-25, 1998. Papers were presented and discussions held on the following topics with special reference to effective mechanisms and support for strengthening regional cooperation:

1. Use and Management of Natural Resources.
2. Poverty Alleviation.
3. Disaster Mitigation
4. Communication and Information Technologies.
5. Increasing Public Understanding of S & T.
6. Collaboration between Research Community and End Users.

Stakeholders, governments, research organizations, and industry from the wider Caribbean critically examined current S & T activities and identified priorities for research, strategies for enhanced collaboration and the means for invigorating cooperation with other countries and institutions. Their recommendations are enclosed.

The deep interest demonstrated by the participants from sixteen countries in the region and countries outside the region is most encouraging and augurs well for the future. Our task now is making the recommendations operational.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to all those who made our dream to host this historic Conference, a reality. This of course, includes the Members of the Steering Committee, The Caribbean Academy of Sciences, The American Association for the Advancement of Science, our sponsors, particularly UNESCO who provided a substantial grant, The invited speakers, participants and members of the Local

Organizing Committee. A special thanks to Mrs. Pamela Benson and her staff who did a wonderful job in making the publication of these proceedings possible.

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Prof. Harold Ramkissoon

Chairperson, Steering Committee