



NIHERST & Shell sign Three-Year contract to promote STEM Education in Trinidad and Tobago

The STEM programme in Trinidad and Tobago has received an added boost with the recent signing of a three-year contract between the National Institute for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (NIHERST) and Shell Trinidad and Tobago Limited (STTL).

Under the terms of the contract, NIHERST will manage Shell's STEM centres and its STEM Bus programme. Shell will also continue its sponsorship of the FIRST® LEGO® League competition and part sponsorship of NIHERST's Sci-TechKnoFest, a popular science exhibition and festival.

At the signing ceremony, Shell's External Relations Advisor, Leslie Bowrin said: "For the past seven years, Shell has been helping to create effective learning environments where our young people can develop those important critical thinking and problem-solving skills to prepare them to take up the leadership roles of the future. We want our students to not feel they are somehow limited in their ability to grasp the theories and concepts of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics." The Shell STEM centres are located in Port of Spain and San Fernando. They stimulate interest in and support the STEM curriculum being taught in schools while giving young people the tools and skills needed find STEM-based solutions to problems. The programme is comprised of a series of workshops, exercises, and help with coursework. Target ages range from early childhood education to primary and secondary schools.

The Shell STEM Bus takes the programme to remote areas for those who otherwise would find it difficult to participate. The success of these initiatives will be realised through a measurable increase in the interest and adoption of STEM subjects by participating students. Shell supports STEM in over 20 countries, including India, Australia, Kazakhstan and China.

NIHERST has agreed to manage and administrate these programmes, relying on its expertise in the area of STEM education. The organisation sees its selection as evidence of the great confidence its long-standing partner has placed in its abilities. Additionally, Shell's sponsorship of the 2019–2020 season of the FIRST® LEGO® League (FLL) secondary school competition and the upcoming NIHERST Sci-TechKnoFest mega science festival, the first exhibition of its kind in the Caribbean, will allow NIHERST to bring these much-anticipated events to the people of Trinidad and Tobago again.

The theme of the 2019–2020 FLL is CITY SHAPER. It will challenge participants to build a better world by exploring science and art to provide sustainable solutions to city development. The Trinidad and Tobago leg of the competition was launched and teams are currently registering. NIHERST, Shell, the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders are in the early planning stages of Sci-TechKnoFest.

The partnership between NIHERST and Shell will allow both organisations to achieve certain educational and developmental goals. NIHERST will continue to pursue its mandate to promote the development of science, technology and higher education in Trinidad and Tobago, and enhance the innovative, creative and entrepreneurial capabilities of the general population. Professor Emeritus Winston Mellowes, Chairman, during his speech noted that: "A scientifically literate population is curious, eager to learn, and open to fresh perspectives, ideas and that acts as a precursor to economic diversification and transformation of society."

The partnership with Shell aligns well with NIHERST's renewed strategic focus. The organisation recently made two appointments to its executive team: Vice President of Science and Technology, Mr. Roopchand Raghunanan and President of the Institute, Mrs. Marleen Lord-Lewis. The executive leadership team, working with management and staff, have directed their attention to the development of insightful action plans, analysis and research to deliver the greatest impact and reach for its programmes and events.

NIHERST is grateful to the Honourable Minister and other members of the Ministry for their vision, support and encouragement.



The Honourable Minister of Education, Mr. Anthony Garcia delivers his address



The official event commemorating the contract signing was held on Wednesday October 16th at Ministry of Education Towers in Port of Spain. (l-r) Ms. Michelle-Anne Thomas, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education; Professor Clement Imbert, Chairman of MIC; Professor Emeritus Mr. Winston Mellowes, Chairman of NIHERST; the Honourable Minister of Education, Mr. Anthony Garcia; Mr. Leslie Bowrin, External Relations Advisor of Shell and Mrs. Marlene Lord-Lewis, President of NIHERST



Ceremonial Signing between Professor Emeritus Winston Mellowes, Chairman of NIHERST (left) and Mr. Leslie Bowrin, External Relations Advisor, Shell (Right)