



OPENING REMARKS BY

**Mrs. Giselle Dinzey
Registrar (Ag)**

**at Seismology in Schools – Trinidad and Tobago,
2016 Awards Ceremony**

December 13, 2016

**NIHERST NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTRE
TECHKNOTHEATRE**

Ms. Sylvia Lalla - Ag. President, NIHERST.

Dr. Richard Robertson – Director of the University of the West Indies Seismic Research Centre.

Ms. Karen Cooper – Systems Analyst II, Information Communication Technology Division (ICTD), Ministry of Education.

Mr. Laurence Jaggassar, District Curriculum Coordinator for the St George East District, Ministry of Education.

Ms. Tricia Gilkes and other Curriculum Officers – Curriculum Planning and Development Division, Ministry of Education.

Ms. Joycelyn Lee Young, former Ag. President, Registrar and Head of the International Projects Unit, NIHERST

Colleagues from the Ministry of Education and the University of the West Indies Seismic Research Centre.

Other specially invited guests.

NIHERST staff.

Members of the media.

Ladies and gentlemen.

Good Morning and welcome to all.

NIHERST is delighted to have you all here today to celebrate and recognize the achievements of the Trinidad and Tobago Seismology in Schools Programme, in particular, to commemorate the first Seismology in Schools Competition ‘Shake Squad: Mission 1’ and to acknowledge the participating schools’ hard work and achievement.

NIHERST is committed to the promotion of science, technology and higher education in Trinidad and Tobago consistent with its national development goals. Our institution aims to achieve this in a number of ways including building capacity for scientific research and technological advancement in priority areas; supporting education and training in science and technology; fostering a national ethos of science, creativity and innovation; and establishing collaborative relationships with institutions of excellence worldwide.

The Seismology in Schools Programme seeks to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation for geosciences through the introduction of practical seismology activities in secondary schools, which complement the theory present on the curriculum. It is anticipated that the students’ participation in the monitoring of real world seismic activity, would inspire careers in the field of geosciences, thereby potentially boosting the nation’s sustainable economic growth and development via the energy, national security and natural resources planning sectors.

The Trinidad and Tobago project was initiated in 2014 by leading international and Trinidadian-born geophysicist, Professor Emeritus Aftab Khan, from the University of Leicester in the UK, in collaboration with other co-founders of the UK programme - the British Geological Survey, Imperial College London and Durham University.

Since its launch in the UK, the programme has been expanded to a number of other countries globally including Germany, Portugal, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Uganda, Kenya, Namibia, Jakarta, and now Trinidad and Tobago. NIHERST is collaborating with the Ministry of Education and the University of the West Indies (UWI) Seismic Research Centre in this undertaking which is absolutely essential to ensure project results that positively impact our nation's growth and development.

The Trinidad & Tobago pilot programme has facilitated to date:- the installation of seismographs in 8 secondary schools and at the NIHERST National Science Centre; the training of staff representatives of the UWI Seismic Research Centre and NIHERST; the training of teachers and students in the pilot schools; the registering of the schools' network and uploading of its data with the British Geological Survey's international database so that their data can be shared with the global school network, and the execution of a competition to encourage the students to engage and understand the material. The competition challenged students to analyze and submit findings for real earthquake data and to document their process by producing a short video. We very much look forward to viewing the students' outputs and sharing in their success. Congratulations to all you students and teachers!!!.

The compilation of teachers' work books which link the practical seismology activities to the Physics and Geography curricula is currently in progress. We look forward to the distribution of these to the schools by early next year. The students' workshops and competition received great interest and participation from the schools and as a result, NIHERST aims to hold these workshops and the competition annually.

NIHERST is honored, through this project, to have the opportunity to work with some of the United Kingdom's premier institutions in the field. Collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the UWI Seismic Research Centre has been synergistic and enriching. Most of all NIHERST is pleased to facilitate the building of capacity in science and technology towards sustainable growth and development in our nation.

Congratulations to all. Enjoy the rest of the ceremony!!!!.