

## MEDIA RELEASE

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Dear Editor / Head of Department

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### **NIHERST in partnership with Shell Trinidad and Tobago Ltd launches FIRST LEGO League Robotics Tournament: MasterPiece**

Students from **twenty-five (25)** schools from across Trinidad and Tobago will have an exciting robotics opportunity this year, hosted by the National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (NIHERST) and Shell Trinidad and Tobago (Shell T&T Ltd.).

The launch ceremony for the innovative 21st-century robotics challenge, the FIRST LEGO League, kicked off the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the initiative, with the tournament scheduled for April, 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

The FIRST LEGO League is a global programme with a presence in eighty (80) countries and utilises theme-based challenges to engage students in research, problem-solving, and engineering. It emphasizes its core values of contribution of others, learning, and community involvement to its competitors, while training young minds to help find solutions to secure a sustainable world.

The programme's formula prepares its participants to excel in diverse social environments, including the evolving landscape of the future workforce, equipping them with valuable insights to succeed in global economic communities.

This year, the theme of Masterpiece will encourage participants to re-imagine how we communicate across the globe.

Dr. Andrew Hunte, NIHERST, Chairman was present at the tournament launch ceremony and, in his opening remarks, commented on the significance of the initiative in Trinidad and Tobago,

stating **'STEM education goes beyond equations; it fosters creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Through hands-on projects such as the First Lego League Tournament, students not only learn science, technology, engineering, and mathematics principles but also grasp their relevance in society. This education cultivates essential soft skills like teamwork, communication, and leadership—qualities indispensable in any field.'**

NIHERST, continues to be the national operational partner of the programme.

Shell T&T Ltd., platinum sponsor of the First Lego League Tournament, was represented by Mr. Daniel Devaux, General Manager, Contracting & Procurement Trinidad and Tobago and Bolivia, Shell Trinidad & Tobago Limited, who highlighted, **'At Shell we know that young people have the capability to lead positive sustainable change. Through the First Lego League, the youth of Trinidad and Tobago are not just building robots, they are building the foundation for a future where innovation and imagination go hand in hand.'**

Also in attendance was the Minister in the Ministry of Education, The Honourable Mrs. Lisa Morris-Julian, who gave the feature address, on behalf of the Ministry of Education. Minister Morris-Julian, expressed, **'The significance of integrating Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) into education cannot be emphasized enough. The timing of the FIRST LEGO League National Tournament couldn't be more opportune as we aim to enhance our engagement with the youth of our nation. It's imperative for us to adopt innovative, purposeful, and sustained approaches to keep them intrigued, motivated, and duly recognized. This initiative aligns perfectly with these goals, offering hands-on experiences and nurturing innovation among primary and secondary school students.'**

The FIRST LEGO League Robotics Tournament is scheduled to take place on April 27<sup>th</sup> at the National Cycling Velodrome, Couva.



**From Left:** - Mrs. Marleen Lord-Lewis - President, NIHERST, The Honourable Mrs. Lisa Morris Julian - Minister in the Ministry of Education, Mr. Daniel Devaux - General Manager, Contracting & Procurement Trinidad and Tobago and Bolivia, Shell Trinidad & Tobago Limited



**Back Row (L-R):** Ryane Rollock- Senior Specialist, NIHERST, Ms. Saufiya Douglas Mc Cree- Sponsorship & Event Execution Officer, Group Marketing & Communications, Republic Bank Ltd, Vydanand Singh- Senior Branch Sales Manager, Republic Bank Ltd, Mrs. Marleen Lord-Lewis- President, NIHERST, The Honourable Mrs. Lisa Morris Julian- Minister in the Ministry of Education, Mr. Daniel Devaux- General Manager, Contracting & Procurement Trinidad and Tobago and Bolivia, Shell Trinidad & Tobago Limited, Ms. Lovaan Superville- Vice President, Science and Technology (Ag.), NIHERST, Rondell Liverpool- Project Officer, NIHERST, Mr. Collin Samaru- Teacher, Presentation College

**Front Row (L-R):** Joshua Barton- Marabella South Secondary School, Jessica Hosein- Debe Secondary School, Zayden Redhead- Perseverance Preparatory School





**In the photo:** Marvin Holloway- Senior Innovation Technician, NIHERST offers a FIRST LEGO LEAGUE demonstration on the MasterPiece themed play chart with the assistance of one of this year's participants.

### **About NIHERST**

NIHERST is a statutory body established in 1984 to promote science, technology and higher education in Trinidad and Tobago consistent with national development goals. The Institute is an agency under the Ministry of Education. Its current work focuses on the development of a more diversified, knowledge-driven economy, based on the ingenuity of our people and their ability to create, adapt and use science and technology for wealth generation and national development. Many of its programmes aim to strengthen the innovative, creative and entrepreneurial capabilities of the general population. NIHERST is also engaged in research, such as in foresight and innovation, to support economic diversification; promoting innovation and the commercialisation of technology in priority sectors; and building global partnerships.

### **About Shell STREAM Programme**

Shell Trinidad and Tobago Ltd. (STTL) has been implementing Science, Technology, Research, Engineering, Arts and Math (S.T.R.E.A.M.) Programme since 2013. This national programme aims to strengthen the energy sector's talent pipeline and the country's progress at economic diversification by enhancing critical thinking, creativity and problem solving through strengthening awareness, competence and the delivery of Science, Technology, Research, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics within the educational system. Since 2019, NIHERST has been one of Shell's facilitators in STREAM education.

The programme represents a key opportunity for informal education and hands on learning around innovative science and technology resources. It communicates not only the fundamentals of STREAM but also enables the foresight to demonstrate how STREAM connects to the everyday and real world. This makes the STREAM concept more relatable and solidifies the correlation between science and society.



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