



Message from Professor Emeritus Tara P. Dasgupta
President, Caribbean Academy of Sciences, Jamaica

Caribbean Countries, especially Jamaica, have been suffering from a prolonged period of low income growth. As a response to this and in order to generate higher levels of economic growth within five years, Jamaica launched the Growth Inducement Strategy (GIS) in 2012. Unfortunately, the concepts behind the GIS were ineffective since the economic growth recorded in 2017 showed only a 1% increase. Many believed that the main reason for not having the expected growth of economy was the absence of a science and technology component. GIS comprised seven key components. It is now internationally accepted that a sustainable rapid growth of economy is only possible by creating a successful knowledge economy, characterized by the development of applications of science and technology and greater importance placed on innovation for economic growth. Currently Jamaica ranks 66 among 140 countries with a Knowledge Index (KI, developed by the World Bank) of only 5.40 compared to Denmark 9.55 and Singapore 7.75, ranked 1 and 24 respectively. Obviously, Caribbean countries need to adopt strategic policies to bring a science and technology culture to the society and to encourage scientific communities to do research on applications of science in solving their countries economic problems.

Against this background, the Caribbean Academy of Sciences, Jamaica in collaboration with The University of the West Indies will be holding 4-days of Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation to celebrate 30 years of the Caribbean Academy of Sciences and 70 years of The University of the West Indies. The theme of the conference is "Science, Technology and Innovation - Vehicles for a Knowledge based Economy" and it will be held at the Visitors' Lodge, Mona during the period 27th-30th November 2018. This Conference is quite remarkable in the sense that over 120 papers from both educational and professional organizations will be presented and ten distinguished scientists from across the world will be attending to give plenary lectures. The conference will attract academics and professionals from tertiary institutions, the public and private sectors of Jamaica as well as the wider Caribbean region. The goals of the conference are to deepen the dialogue among scientists about important problems in the region and illustrate how science, technology, and innovation can be used to help build a knowledge-based economy. I am very pleased to mention specifically that Professor Richard Catlow, FRS, Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society, England and Professor John Hildebrand, FNAS, Foreign Secretary of National Academy of Sciences, USA will be participating as Plenary Lecturers. Professor Catlow kindly offered to give a special talk to High School students during his brief visit to Jamaica.

The Scientific program has been carefully prepared so that attendees have the opportunity to attend a wide variety of plenary lectures, oral and poster presentations and Forums. In particular, a Forum on "***Cracking the Code to Gender Disparities in Creating a Knowledge Based Economy: Increasing Female Participation in STEM***" has been designed by CASJ who seeks to collaborate with other partners in examining the reality of gender parity within the scientific and technological space with special reference to the Caribbean. Key presenters in this session (supported by UNESCO) will provide their perspectives and highlight the situation with STEM in their countries.

We are looking forward to the opportunity this event will bring to meet and exchange ideas with our peers to promote science and technology which will bring us together to build a knowledge based society. This is the only way we can reach sustainable economic growth in our country.

I, on behalf of the Caribbean Academy of Sciences Jamaica (CASJ) wish to express my appreciation to the local organizing committee of the conference, especially Dr. Novelette McKnight who has tirelessly worked with the Team to organize this event.

I wish that every participant, either from Jamaica or abroad, will enjoy our scientific and social activities.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tara P. Dasgupta". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

(President, Caribbean Academy of Sciences Jamaica)