



*Amina Mohammed –
UN Special Advisor
addresses the
participants of the UNDP
Development Dialogue*

UNDP Development Dialogue on the Post - 2015 Agenda

Special Advisor to the Secretary General Ms. Amina Mohammed was the feature speaker at a UNDP National Development Dialogue held on May 8, 2015. The key messages focused on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its relevance and application to Trinidad and Tobago. Ms. Mohammed explained that it is necessary to prioritise at the national level which of the 17 SDGs, inclusive of the accompanying 169 targets, would be implemented in Trinidad and Tobago since they are not intended to be prescriptive. She emphasized that the localisation process should be done based on wide and inclusive consultations and a clear national vision. The Special Advisor also stressed the importance of a financing framework to execute the SDGs. This Development Dialogue was the first of a series of dialogues which UNDP will be hosting in Trinidad and Tobago; the next one is scheduled for July 2015 and will focus on Citizen Security.



*(L-R) Stacy Richards Kennedy – Assistant Resident Rep UNDP,
Richard Blewitt – Resident Rep UNDP, Prof. Clement Sankat –
Principal, UWI and his assistant*

Strengthening Relations: UNDP and UWI

UNDP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Tuesday 5 May 2015, at the opening ceremony of the Forum on the Future of the Caribbean at UWI, St. Augustine. The aim of the MOU is to foster and develop the cooperative relationship between the two institutions. The MOU opens doors to strengthened collaborations in research, student and staff development and special academic programmes. The MOU will remain in effect for a period of five years and will include training of government officials and other key stakeholders on subjects related to development planning, monitoring and execution. Another area of collaboration will be the use of international UN Volunteers to support the work of UWI. A research and policy centre will be established by UNDP and UWI dedicated to supporting responses to national and regional development issues and to strengthening development effectiveness and impact through targeted research, policy formulation and project execution.

Promoting Human Rights and Gender Equality



(L-R) Prof. Patricia Mohammed, Attorney-at-Law Gaietry Pargass, Commissioner Tracy Robinson and UN Special Rapporteur Prof. Rashida Manjoo

In April 2015, a study visit was conducted in Trinidad and Tobago to consult with stakeholders on priority issues concerning violence against women and girls, and the prevention and response to any human rights violation. The visitors included Rashida Manjoo, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences and Commissioner Tracy Robinson, Rapporteur on the Rights of Women of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

The study visit, coordinated by [redacted] comprised a number of meetings with parliamentarians, government representatives, law enforcement agencies, judicial officers, indigenous community members, rural communities,

university students and faculties, students and educators, service providers, civil society organisations and UN agencies. During the meetings, stakeholders were advised that violence against women is a human rights violation which prevents the realisation of all other human rights and is a barrier to the effective exercise of citizenship rights. Important highlights from the meetings included widespread concern for sexual violence against girls, normalising of violence against women and girls and the under-reporting of violence. Stakeholders agreed that there are many manifestations of violence against women and girls which occur within the home, community, workplace and in state institutions. Violence is also manifested in several forms such as psychological, physical, sexual, economic and institutional.

Mobilising Support for the Differently Abled in Trinidad and Tobago

On 29 April 2015, John Wodatch, a pioneering disability rights attorney specialising in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), visited Trinidad. The visit was hosted by the United States Embassy in partnership with UNDP. Wodatch met with leaders of the government, civil society organisations, and the private sector to help advance legislative reforms affecting persons with disabilities.

The Attorney, who played an important role in drafting the 1990 ADA and its implementing rules, explained that Trinidad and Tobago is currently in a privileged position for advancing the ratification of the UN Convention because of existing national policies and those in draft stages that promote the interests and well-being of persons with disabilities. Among the suggestions made by Wodatch to Trinidad and Tobago were:

- Ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as soon as possible.
- Educating and sensitising the population to dismantle the misconceptions about persons living with disabilities.
- Instituting legislation to provide benefits to businesses that invest in making their buildings accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Improving accessibility standards to make establishments more easily accessible, retrofitting existing buses and purchasing new buses that are accessible to persons with disabilities.

On June 3, 2015, the Trinidad and Tobago Cabinet approved the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. UNDP is proud to have played a part in this process.

Deliberating the Social Protection Landscape of T&T

A two day workshop was held on April 21 and 22 2015, to review targeting methodologies for social protection programmes and conditionalities on social transfers with government partners in Trinidad and Tobago. The purpose of the training workshop was to build national capacities for child sensitive and gender responsive social protection mechanisms for effective targeting and to provide an understanding of the impacts of and issues related to conditional cash transfers. The workshop, coordinated by UNICEF and UN Women in partnership with the Government, brought together key social sector ministries and provided a forum for dialogue on the topics and an opportunity to reflect and deliberate on the social protection landscape in Trinidad and Tobago. UNDP joined participants in reviewing existing literature and case studies from other countries. The workshop participants also assessed existing cases in Trinidad and Tobago and brainstormed to identify challenges and possible recommendations for moving forward.



A cross section of participants at the targeting and conditionalities workshop

Strengthening Government Capacity in Environmental Management

On May 27 and 28 2015, the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources (MEWR) held two Validation Workshops in both Trinidad and Tobago on Capacity Development for Improved Management of Multilateral Environmental Agreements for Global Environmental Benefits. The aim of the workshops was to engage with stakeholders on the proposed outcomes and activities of the proposal being submitted for funding. The proposal's main objective is to develop a project that will strengthen the Government's ability to create, leverage and maintain synergies for the national implementation of Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs). Additionally, the project should develop integrated approaches to environmental management, including MEAs guidance and national reporting requirements.

The workshops were attended by members of the private sector, community based organisations and academia along with representatives from UNDP. A brief perspective was provided by UNDP on the importance of this project to Trinidad and Tobago in aligning its national environmental programmes with the international obligations. The workshop outcomes included strengthening of the institutional framework, thereby making it more coordinated and able to address global environmental concerns and making the Green Fund more effective as a funding mechanism to support the implementation of MEAs in Trinidad and Tobago.



*Nicole Dagher,
UNV Programme
Analyst at UNDP*

Volunteering - a Way of Life

United Nations Volunteer (UNV) Programme Analyst, Nicole Dagher joined UNDP and the UNV team in Trinidad and Tobago on 21 May 2015. Canadian by birth, Nicole will spend the next two years sharing her experience and skills in developing and managing the UNV programme in T&T and Caribbean. As with any field Nicole recognises there are challenges to working in volunteerism.

Nicole intends to create and strengthen collaboration with other UNV regional offices. She will also promote online volunteering and volunteerism to the corporate sector. Nicole shares, "A lot of businesses are not aware of online volunteering and its benefits. A key benefit to corporate clients is having access to global expertise and experience without the overhead physical costs of housing them at their workplaces." Nicole brings fresh ideas and a lot of enthusiasm to the UNV team and a deep commitment to getting things done.