

A Publication of the Trinidad and Tobago Country Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



UNDP Resident Representative Richard Blewitt presents a copy of the Caribbean Human Development Report to the Honourable Minister of Planning Camille Robinson-Regis.

## Launch of the Caribbean Human Development Report in T&T

On Wednesday 30, November 2016, UNDP Launched the 2016 Caribbean Human Development Report (CHDR) in Trinidad and Tobago at the Hilton Trinidad and Conference Centre. Over the years, Caribbean Countries continue to experience widespread vulnerabilities, inclusive of its geographic location in a hurricane belt and earthquake zone with climate change exacerbating weather-related threats, and limited scope for economic diversification. The Report is thereby significant, as it focusses on human resilience and seeks to expand the way we think about progress and well-being. It further demonstrates the human development approach towards the new Sustainable Development Agenda and highlights ways in which it can be adapted to the needs and aspirations of Middle Income Countries and Small Island Developing Countries. The Hon. Minister of Planning Camille Robinson-Regis, in giving the feature address, expressed that the Report provides a focused and prioritised view for Caribbean governments to adopt innovative approaches to development that would enable them to navigate the current unpredictable global economy. [Continue reading](#)



Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, the Honourable Ayanna Webster-Ray delivering the feature address.

## Democratic Dialogue on Gender Equity

UNDP in partnership with the Office of the Prime Minister, Gender Affairs Division and the Network of NGOs for the advancement of Women hosted a Democratic Dialogue on Nationally Institutionalising Gender Equity on Thursday 08, December 2016, at the Leon Agostini Conference Hall at the Chamber of Commerce, Westmoorings. The Dialogue sought to identify the following key processes and strategies including: a) the implementation of the CEDAW Recommendations; b) the adoption of the National Gender Policy; c) gender based budgeting and d) mainstreaming gender in research and data collection in Trinidad and Tobago.

Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, the Honourable Ayanna Webster-Roy, in delivering the feature address, expressed that as citizens are embracing equality more than before with their increased awareness of oppression and increased empathies to others, the climate is ripe to build on and shape the conversation required to infuse and maintain measures that will facilitate the achievement of rights for women in all aspects of life in this country. [Continue reading](#)

## International Volunteer Day 2017

International Volunteer Day (IVD), which is celebrated on December 5th every year, was celebrated across the Caribbean, from Barbados to Suriname. International and National UN volunteers worked to make this day a great success in its own way in each of their countries of placements. We did outreach and advocacy work on volunteerism, the UNV Programme, Volunteerism and IVD, we supported children at hospitals and built sanitation services in schools, we promoted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and even appeared on radio and a television show.

Out of all the great initiatives that took place, one specific activity deserves to be highlighted. In Trinidad & Tobago a great collaboration occurred through the support of international UN volunteer, Dr Stephanie Awa Mendy, from Gambia, who has been posted at the Point Fortin Health Centre in the south of Trinidad since July 2015. Dr Mendy developed partnerships with her colleagues, members of her community and the Therapeutic and Life Skills Centre, laid the ground work and submitted a concept note to support the Therapeutic and Life Skills Centre, located in Point Fortin based on a needs assessment. This centre offers targeted education and training for those living with autism and spectrum disorder (ASD).



**Members of the UNV and PAHO Team present the principle and general manager of the centre with the laminating machine and other gifts..**

The centre was established in November 2013 and received its first student in January 2014. They currently educate more than 15 students between the ages of 3-20 every year. Dr Mendy met with the general manager of the centre - Nichol Alves, to ascertain what their needs were and observed that a laminating machine was desirable to ensure a longer lasting shelf life for the learning aids and activities. She also observed that they were in need of benches and chairs. Dr Mendy knew that these items would greatly enhance the learning environment for all the students and was motivated to provide them. [Continue reading](#)

conservation.

In the VEEP project, a total of 25,000 vetiver plants have been jointly installed on the properties of 15 community members with the input of all project participants for planning the placement of vetiver hedgerows on their lands, planting, and maintenance. Vetiver nurseries have also been established on some community members, plots, which would provide a constant supply of vetiver plants to the community. These nursery plants can also be sold, thereby providing the community with a source of income. A total of five (5) educational workshops were carried out to teach the many different uses and aspects of vetiver grass according to the 'Vetiver System (VS)'. Some of which are: how to prepare, install and maintain vetiver projects.

VEEP has played an integral role in the local company Vetiver TT, as it was selected for the Swiss ReSource Award - which supports entrepreneurial solutions for resilience in water management. This valuable training and growth opportunity for the company is helping to promote VEEP locally, regionally and internationally as a project which can be replicated or inspire similar projects. [Continue reading](#)



### Vetiver Education and Empowerment Project (VEEP)

In September 2016, the Paramin Development Committee (PDC) received funding from the GEF Small Grants Programme UNDP to implement the Vetiver Education and Empowerment Project (VEEP) in Paramin. The PDC is working closely with Vetiver TT; a local company, to re-introduce vetiver grass to Paramin as a plant with a wide range of uses from - infrastructure and property protection, to climate smart-agriculture and handicraft making. The deep and fibrous root system of vetiver grass makes it a unique tool when applied correctly for slope stabilisation and erosion control, as well as soil and