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Consulate-General of Antigua and Barbuda

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Dear Nationals and Friends,

The Consulate-General wishes to forward the attached press release for your kind information.

Establishing of 4th Campus of UWI In Antigua and Barbuda is a defining moment in Antigua and Barbuda's History

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua and Barbuda – 1st September, 2019....."The establishment of the Fourth Landed Campus of the UWI, is a landmark event and a defining moment in our nation's history. It opens a further pathway for our country's growth, development and prosperity, through improved education, expanded knowledge, and increased capacity of its most significant resource – its people," were the words of Prime Minister the Hon. Gaston Browne while delivering remarks at the Ecumenical Service which launches the Five Islands Campus of the University of the West Indies in Antigua and Barbuda.

The country's leader said that the opening of the Campus in Antigua and Barbuda provides the opportunity for every Antiguan and Barbudan to earn a degree. "By opening the door of the University to all, we open the opportunity for this generation, and all the generations that follow: to know as much as the next person if not more; to hold their own anywhere in the world; to rise-up from the dark shadow of ignorance into the glowing light of knowledge of competitiveness and of respect. No Antiguan and Barbudan will be denied the opportunity of a University education; all will have access to it," he said.

In giving thanks to God for the blessings, Prime Minister Browne said that today is truly a great day in the nation's history. "Today is further progress in our people's long march to freedom.

Today the mist of the future is beginning to lift, and we see more clearly the heights to which we are ascending," Prime Minister Browne concluded.

We are pleased to present below the full text of the Prime Minister's remarks at the Ecumenical Service on Sunday. (Ends)





**The Honourable Gaston A. Browne
Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda
Remarks**

Launch and Blessing of the Five Islands Campus

The University of the West Indies

Ecumenical Service

Sunday, September 1, 2019

Cathedral of St. John the Devine

Antigua and Barbuda

His Excellency The Governor General and Lady Williams

The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House

Colleague Ministers of Government

Members of Parliament

The Vice Chancellor and Principal of the UWI Five Islands Campus

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Greetings !

We have gathered in this magnificent Cathedral in humble adoration, to give thanks for the establishment of the Fourth Landed Campus, of The University of the West Indies at Five Islands.

Today, we are not here to boast. In the words of the Jamaican reggae artist Koffee: “ gratitude is a must - We nah rise and boast....we give thanks and toast.”

The Five Islands Campus, is the most significant blessing that has been bestowed on the people of Antigua & Barbuda since independence.

Therefore, we are compelled to be thankful; we have to give thanks.

In essence, we are here to give thanks and praise to the most high - The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords and to toast those who contributed to the realization of this dream.

The awesome significance of the Five Islands Campus to the OECS citizens and residents, should not be lost on any of us.

No country can expect to achieve its full potential, or to compete with the rest of the world, unless it recognizes the value of giving the highest level of knowledge to its people.

Throughout history, in every part of the world, as people struggled to raise themselves from oppression, exploitation, discrimination and marginalization, their leaders asserted the central importance of education.

Here are several examples.

Nelson Mandela emerged from 27 years in prison, to tell his repressed people in South Africa: “No country can really develop unless its citizens are educated”.

Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States, who personally built the University of Virginia in 1825, said: “To penetrate and dissipate these clouds of darkness, the general mind must be strengthened by education.”

In the height of the US civil rights movement, Malcolm X, declared: “Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today”.

But, just as tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today, it is lost to those who make no preparations at all.

We, the people of Antigua and Barbuda, will make no such mistake. We intend to be an integral part of tomorrow. And we are resolved that the people of Antigua and Barbuda will command a place of respect in it.

That is why, despite all the odds, we have worked feverishly and with unrelenting determination to establish a campus of the University of the West Indies at Five Islands.

By opening the door of the University to all, we open the opportunity for this generation, and all the generations that follow:

to know as much as the next person if not more;

to hold their own anywhere in the world;

to rise-up from the dark shadow of ignorance into the glowing light of knowledge of competitiveness and of respect.

No Antiguan and Barbudan will be denied the opportunity of a University education; all will have access to it.

Education is as much a human right, as it is a social and economic good. Let us not forget that one hundred and eighty-five years ago, on August 1st, 1834, our people threw off the manacles and shackles of slavery.

For centuries before that, the very humanity of our forefathers was denied. They were chattel; no better than the beasts of the field. They were deliberately denied education, because, even then, their owners and tormentors, knew in their minds and in their bones, if not in their hearts, that learning would accelerate the overwhelming passion for liberation; for freedom not only to be equal but to declare: "They, too are human beings".

That struggle in the international community is not over.

We are still fighting economic oppression and are yet to claim our rightful place under the sun.

We have started that march.

And, the UWI campus, here in Antigua and Barbuda, is the font from which our people will drink the knowledge they need, to fortify them to continue marching – onward, upward, indomitable and unstoppable.

In every journey, there are naysayers; those who cast doubts and generate fears.

The church will recall, that even as Moses was leading his people to the promised land, Aaron preyed upon their fears and built a false God to lure them from their destiny.

Despite all that has been achieved; and notwithstanding the noble purpose that the UWI Five Islands campus will serve in the interests of our people, there are those that point to its humble beginnings as an obstacle to its capacity.

In their selfishness, they would refuse our people the opportunity to grow, to develop and to climb the ladder to success.

But, no University was built in a day, in a year or even a decade.

Every University has been built in time, in dedication, in service and in results.

We, in Antigua and Barbuda, have started with foundations much better than many others, including the beginnings of Mona, Cave Hill and St Augustine.

We are ahead of the game.

The establishment of the Fourth Landed Campus of the UWI, is a landmark event and a defining moment in our nation's history.

It opens a further pathway for our country's growth, development and prosperity, through improved education, expanded knowledge, and increased capacity of its most significant resource – its people.

This evening, we salute all of the contributors, who worked tirelessly to establish the Five Islands Campus.

The contributors include:

The People's Republic of China, whose generosity made possible the existing buildings that form the core

Sir Hillary Beckles, Vice Chancellor of UWI, who is convinced of my government's unyielding determination to ensure the success of the campus.

Other notable contributors are: Minister of Education, Michael Browne, Attorney General, Hon Steadroy Benjamin, Hiram Forde and the other members of the UWI steering committee, and many others who would be duly acknowledged at the ceremony next Tuesday.

To these contributors, my Government expresses its profound gratitude for their contribution and, more particularly, for sharing our vision.

Last, but by no means least, I thank the people of Antigua and Barbuda who have stood with my government, insisting that good sense and their own interests should prevail.

The people of Antigua and Barbuda have always placed immeasurable value in learning.

Over the years, parents have sacrificed much to enable their children to go abroad to study.

The graduation of a son or daughter brings not only joy and pride, it confirms ability and capacity.

Also, It especially affirms equality with the best in the world.

Now, this campus on Antigua, by reducing the burden of costs, puts that incredible joy and that enormous pride within the reach of every family without exception.

Today is a great day in our nation's history.

Today is further progress in our people's long march to freedom.

Today the mist of the future is beginning to lift, and we see more clearly the heights to which we are ascending.

In closing I ask the church to join me in saying - Hallelujah.

Give thanks.

Much love & Blessings !