

PRESS RELEASE



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United Nations Development Programme

Giving Voice to Youth Perspectives

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) hosted a Youth Development Dialogue on Friday 21 August 2015, at the Malick Youth Facility, Barataria. The objective of the dialogue was to bring together young persons to voice their views, discuss the challenges and provide recommendations for the future they want. Their recommendations would help shape UNDPs work in T&T. Attendees represented young persons across Trinidad and Tobago who work in or support the development of youth, and those who advocate for and on behalf of youth. The event was held in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development.

The dialogue was well represented by various youth led groups such as the Trinidad Youth Council, Caribbean Environment Youth Network, and Youth Business TT, to name a few. Other participants came from the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development's Youth Division. Additionally UN OJT Global Trainees and Interns attached to UN Agencies in Trinidad and Tobago also participated in the dialogue. Participants actively engaged in discussions around promoting youth empowerment through a Human Rights based approach by looking at multiple aspects such as Governance, Poverty and Social Policy, Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, Citizen Security and Youth Development.

In the opening remarks, Stacy Richards-Kennedy, UNDP Assistant Resident Representative shared, "We appreciate that successful youth engagement strategies require that youth have genuine and meaningful opportunities to work with each other and with policymakers to impact issues of importance". Richards-Kennedy pledged UNDPs commitment to providing adults and youth and youth led organisations with information, tools and support to work effectively together as partners, and facilitate opportunities for youth to take ownership of parts of the process, mobilise others and become powerful role models.

UNDP Programme Analyst Sharon Ramsaran, responsible for youth development presented the organisation's first ever corporate youth strategy 2014-2017 themed, *Empowered Youth Sustainable Future*. The strategy uses a four-pronged approach to supporting youth through capacity development, engaging youth through advocacy and mainstreaming, influencing youth through thought leadership and to sustain youth development through the support of national youth policies. The strategy is geared towards three outcomes which are to increase economic empowerment of youth, enhance youth civic engagement and participation in decision making in the political processes, and to strengthen youth engagement in resilience building.

Remarks were also given by Jacqueline Johnson, Ag Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development. Ms. Johnson reminded the youth that their, "...engagement and participation is indeed considered essential in the achievement of sustainable human development". She reiterated that her Ministry has been working assiduously over the past four years to not only promote, but include youth on the agenda in recognition that our youth is the present and the future.

The day concluded with a lunch and learn personal leadership session delivered by Dr. Ty Richardson, CEO YoPro Global who gave a riveting presentation entitled "*A Journey to Become a Successful Young Professional*". Dr. Richardson highlighted three core lessons which he hoped would assist the youth in becoming successful: 1) become self-aware by identifying understanding your strengths and weaknesses, 2) empower your team to be the best that they can be, 3) always add value to your organisation.

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Editors Notes:

In 1961, UNDP established a Country Office (CO) in Trinidad and Tobago, which has been supporting the country's national development agenda for over fifty years. UNDP T&T currently has a multi-country mandate with responsibility for programme development and execution also in Aruba, Curacao, Sint Maarten and Suriname. The overarching goal is to create an enabling environment for inclusive and sustainable human development by focusing on the following thematic areas:

Poverty and Social Policy: Assisting in the eradication of poverty and reducing inequalities and exclusion by informing policy and programme development through a mixture of policy advice, advocacy and downstream initiatives through various poverty-related projects and initiatives.

Energy, Environment and Disaster Risk Management: Supporting implementation and management of various programmes which help to minimize negative environmental impacts and facilitating funding to civil society organisations, through the GEF Small Grants Programme, to help communities build resilience by responding and adapting to climate change.

Democratic Governance: Working through and with initiatives that seek to facilitate an environment for trust-building and consensual decision-making and collaborating with Parliaments to strengthen executing functions so as to better serve the people.

Citizen Security and Youth Development: Building institutional capacity to tackle crime and violence; providing technical expertise to the Government and other partners in crime prevention and response; supporting criminal justice reform and advancing programmes aimed at empowering and developing young people.