THE SAMOA PATHWAY: ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN TRANSLATING VISION TO ACTION IN THE CARIBBEAN*

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OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

- Sustainable Development Challenges in the Caribbean Small Island Developing States (CSIDS)
- Implementing the SAMOA Pathway in CSIDS
- Role of Higher Education as an Enabler
CSIDS regarded as largely “high human developed” countries, with Barbados being “very highly developed” and Belize, Guyana and Suriname classified as “medium human developed” and Haiti as “low human developed”.

Countries in the “efficiency to innovation” stage of development according to the WEF’s Global Competitiveness Index.

Significant progress with the achievement of the MDGs.
But major development challenges in CSIDS:

- Slow pace of economic growth esp since the end of the Great Recession. Declining rates over the past six (6) decades possible “middle income trap”. Reliance on a few developed country markets to drive economic growth
- High debt to GDP ratios and limited fiscal space
- Limited production diversification and declining productivity and competitiveness—nationally and regionally
- High rates of poverty, inequality and youth unemployment
- High cost of energy and regional transportation
- Human insecurity with increases in crime and violence
- Rise of chronic non-communicable diseases (CNCDs)
- Vulnerability to natural disasters, climate change and invasion of sargassum weed and lion fish in recent years
IMPLEMENTING THE SAMOA PATHWAY IN CSIDS

- **SIDS Accelerated Modalities Of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (2014)** places emphasis on the following implementation:
  - **Education and training** ("people are their greatest resource" and "education for sustainable development")
  - **Research and Innovation** (esp with respect to the Green and Blue Economy initiatives in SIDS)
  - **Partnerships among Governments, private sector, NGOs/civil society, labour etc**
  - **Capacity building and institutional training re education and training**
IMPLEMENTING THE SAMOA PATHWAY IN CSIDS

- SAMOA Pathway consists of 16 Action Areas and several supporting activities and Implementation, Monitoring and Accountability Requirements
- Can be daunting for CSIDS with limited resources!!!
ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS AN ENABLER

- Higher education institutions (esp in colleges and universities) can play a critical role in the process of implementation.
- Higher Education provides the “higher order skills” required for technological innovation, absorption and diffusion required for sustainable growth and development.
- UN Declaration: Decade of Education for Sustainable Decade 2005-14 ---integrating principles and practices of SD in education and learning.
- Post- Decade Global Action Plan (GAP) to continue the work in 5 action areas.
ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS AN ENABLER

- Several higher educational institutions exist in the region—University of the West Indies (UWI); University of Guyana (UG); University of Technology (UTech-Jamaica); University of Trinidad & Tobago (UTT); University of Belize (UB) etc.
- These entities are engaged in:
  - **Knowledge creation**: research and innovation
  - **Knowledge transfer**: teaching, learning, training, capacity building
  - **Knowledge application**: advisory services, consulting, advocacy and community engagement
  - **Direct Campus Greening activities**
ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS AN ENABLER

- **Case of UWI (the largest of the universities):**
  - **Knowledge Creation:**
    - Establishment of specialised *institutes, centres, units and networks* – CERMES, ISD, SALISES, SRC, IGDS, CDRC etc (across its four (4) Campuses)
    - *Institute of Sustainable Development (ISD)* established in 2006 to lead process in graduate teaching, research, consulting and project activities
    - Research work in such areas as: *renewable energy, marine resources, climate change, natural products, green economy, bio-fuels, trade agreements, chronic diseases, agricultural diseases, cultural services, gender etc* — all related to the sustainable development of CSIDS and SP(2014)
ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS AN ENABLER

- **Knowledge Transfer:**
  - Certificate, diploma and degree programmes in several areas and professional training—with a rigid quality assurance system
  - Enrolment of almost 50,000 students and 5000 graduates each year in recent times to meet the high order skill needs for the SD of the region. **NB:** regional enrolment is still relatively low to meet the needs of countries pushing the SD agenda.
  - *Distance programmes* to widen access and capacity building—Open Campus
ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS AN ENABLER

- **Knowledge Application:**
  - Individual and institutional arrangements with advisory services
  - UWI Consulting Company; SALISES, Business Schools, Business Development Offices; Caribbean Centre for Competitiveness
  - Establishment of University-Private Sector Partnerships (UPPs)
  - Networking via MOUs with several universities and institutions across the world
  - Working with CARICOM Secretariat on its Strategic Plan with theme of *Building Resilience in the Caribbean*
ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS AN ENABLER

- **UWI plans to**
  - Build further capacity in such areas as: *agri-technology and food security; energy systems; tourism and hospitality; creative industries; ICT applications; governance and regulatory systems and human security.*
  - Engage in *greater public discourse* on issues of sustainable development in keeping with the Post Decade GAP
  - Build out its global reach esp with other universities in small developing states (e.g. *University Consortium for Small Island States—UCSIS*, hosted by the ISD at UWI) to *share knowledge and develop joint programs*
  - Host the *Caribbean regional network for Sustainable Development Solutions (SDSN)* – launched May 2014 at UWI (part of UN initiative) - focus on *energy, climate change adaptation and blue economy*
  - Place greater emphasis in the area of research and innovation to assist Caribbean countries with the “*innovation stage of development*”
  - Develop creative ways of *funding* such research and innovation

- **These initiatives would assist with the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway (2014) in the CSIDS**
Thank you for your attention