



**GREETINGS DELIVERED BY  
SENATOR HAZEL MANNING  
MINISTER OF EDUCATION**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

**MATHEMATICS OLYMPIAD**

**22<sup>ND</sup> PRIZE DISTRIBUTION FUNCTION**

**Learning Resource Centre**

**University of the West Indies, St. Augustine**

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2007 @ 4:00 P.M.**

Master of Ceremony, and Curriculum Officer

– **Mr. Steven Khan**

Principal at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus

- **Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie**

Chief Executive Officer - bpTT      - **Mr. Robert Riley**

Founder and Managing Director, KR Consulting

- **Mr. Kyle Rudden**

Deputy Principal at the University of the West Indies

- **Professor Gurmohan Kochhar**

Chairperson of the Trinidad and Tobago Mathematics Olympiad Committee

- **Dr. Indra Harracksingh**

Acting Dean, Faculty of Science and Agriculture

- **Dr. Indar Ramnarine**

Campus Registrar at the University of the West Indies

- **Mr. Jeremy Callaghan**

Head, Department of Mathematics and Computer Science

- **Dr. Shanaz Wahid**

Lecturers, Curriculum Officers, Supervisors, Principals, Teachers, Parents,  
distinguished students, other ladies and gentlemen.

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Ladies and Gentlemen:

We at the Ministry of Education are very happy to be part of today's proceedings and I applaud you for taking time out to recognize and celebrate the outstanding performances of our young Mathematicians of Trinidad and Tobago. Your collective interest, support and participation in the activities of the Trinidad and

Tobago Mathematics Olympiad (TTMO) are highly valued by the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry's branding of "Excellence in Education" is one of the pillars upon which we build. It is also a fundamental guiding principle for shaping our education system, and we try to ensure that this message is supported and enhanced in ALL initiatives that we undertake.

Some of the initiatives of the Ministry of Education to promote excellence include:

- a) A seamless education programme ranging from Early Childhood Care and Education to Secondary School Education and leading to Tertiary Education opportunities.
- b) The development of a blueprint for effectively managing schools and the functioning of school boards.
- c) Establishing a new relationship with denominational boards with the aim of providing adequate funding for the operation and functioning of schools; while at the same time providing financial and educational attainment accountability.
- d) The creation of **magnet schools** to nurture and develop specialization in subject areas using dedicated resources and educational facilities.

We recognize that as we move to provide "Education for All", some challenges have emerged and we must face them head on. In this regard, we recognize the need to employ new approaches.

At this time the Ministry of Education is engaged in the process of finalizing the New Lower Secondary School Curriculum. This is to ensure that there is proper alignment and congruence with the needs of our growing nation and to provide guidance for teachers in curriculum implementation.

This new curriculum has been field tested in schools, and now, having received feedback from our stakeholders, the officers at the Curriculum Development Division, together with teams of teachers are engaged in fine tuning the Curriculum Guides. The completed documents will guide the lower secondary curriculum for the next few years.

In this day and age when computer technology is fast becoming the norm as a mode for teaching and learning, the Ministry of Education has taken a leading role in providing Distance Learning opportunities for our population through the new National Open School of Trinidad and Tobago.

Of course, all of this cannot be done without building capacity among our Human Resource. The Ministry of Education has been partnering with the University of the West Indies and the University of Trinidad and Tobago to provide relevant training for our teachers. This year we have approved Training programmes for teachers of Social Studies, Chemistry and yes, Mathematics to be conducted during the July/August period. In addition, scholarships are being offered for the training of Teachers and Administrators to better serve our students.

Ladies and Gentlemen, The Trinidad and Tobago Mathematics Olympiad Committee have been instrumental in ensuring that excellence in Mathematics at the secondary level is recognized and promoted to the highest level. Indeed, the

identification, recognition, encouragement and inspiration of talented students of Mathematics are worthwhile aims of the TTMO.

Through the activities of the Olympiad, students are required to display in-depth understanding of mathematical concepts and apply their knowledge to demonstrate creativity, logical thinking, and problem solving skills.

The Ministry of Education congratulates all students, teachers, principals and parents for participating in the activities of the TTMO during the 2006 – 2007 academic year. At this time, when the popular cry by many students and adults alike, is that Mathematics is a **difficult** subject, it is heartening to know that we still have so many young enthusiastic mathematicians, who we hope will initiate a turnaround.

The Government through the Ministry of Education is engaged in comprehensive curriculum reform. We have been revisiting the way that we were doing things in our schools and through the Secondary Education Modernization Programme we are engaging ourselves in innovative strategies that will better prepare us for the challenges that lie ahead. We are confident that this initiative will bring about the desired change that will result in overall improvements in students' proficiency and competence in all subjects – including Mathematics.

One significant feature of the new curriculum is that it seeks to bring about a student-centered approach to education. In this way, students are to be given the opportunity to be more active in the teaching and learning process. Their experiences both within and outside of the classroom are to become more authentic. This means that classroom activities are now expected to draw on real life situations. Students engage in performance tasks that will help them to

demonstrate deeper understanding of mathematical concepts. This involves the issuing of projects for students to engage in, and consequently, the need for continuous assessment to be employed as a strategy for evaluation.

Closely linked to this new initiative and the TTMO is a new competition called the **Junior Mathematics Triathlon (JMT)** which was introduced during this academic year 2006 – 2007. The **Junior Mathematics Triathlon** was initiated by the Curriculum Development Division of the Ministry of Education and is run by a Committee comprising mainly secondary school teachers.

Consistent with the Ministry's theme of seamless education opportunities, the Junior Mathematics Triathlon fills the gap that connects the **Mental Mathematics Marathon (MMM)** to the competitions of the **Trinidad and Tobago Mathematics Olympiad (TTMO)**. Ladies and Gentlemen, whilst the Mental Mathematics Marathon (MMM) targets students at the primary school level, and the Trinidad and Tobago Mathematics Olympiad (TTMO) focuses primarily on the students at the upper secondary level, the Junior Mathematics Triathlon (JMT) seeks to provide rich opportunities for students at the intermediate stage or Lower Secondary level.

In this inaugural year of the JMT competition, the top three places went to **Prithvi Ramakrishnan** (The International School of Port of Spain), **Kerry Singh** (Presentation College, San Fernando), and Ryan **Gopeesingh** (Vishnu Boys' Hindu College), all students who have their sights on excelling in the Trinidad and Tobago Mathematics Olympiad, and representing Trinidad and Tobago at the International Mathematics Olympiad. We look forward to supporting their efforts and the efforts of all students in Trinidad and Tobago.

Ladies and gentlemen we, at the Ministry of Education, are very appreciative of the tremendous commitment displayed by the TTMO over the years. Through your hard work, and that of the participants we have been rewarded with **three bronze medals** at the **International Mathematics Olympiad (IMO)**.

The Ministry of Education congratulates these winners:

**William Blackwell** (the second) in 1998

and

**Rajini Harracksingh** and **Abuenameh Aiyejina** in 2001 on their excellent achievements.

We commend them once again and the teachers, university lecturers and other resource personnel who were involved in their training.

We also recognize and commend the Principal and Staff of the University of the West Indies, and in particular the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, for their continued dedication and commitment to the students of Trinidad and Tobago, and to the promotion of their development in the field of Mathematics.

The Ministry of Education would also like to thank all corporate bodies and private individuals for their interest and participation in the activities of the TTMO. We trust that our present accomplishments will serve as useful stimulation for your continued support.

Finally, I wish to congratulate those six students among you who have qualified to represent us this year at the 48<sup>th</sup> International Mathematics Olympiad in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Let me remind you that you are now ambassadors for Trinidad and Tobago. I urge you therefore, to continue working hard and to always give of your best. We are indeed very proud of you and we look forward to great things from you.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen.

June 26, 2007