



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **PRIME MINISTER THOMAS CHALLENGES THE REGION'S YOUNG SCIENTISTS TO FIND SOLUTIONS**

ST. GEORGE'S, GRENADA, 7 DECEMBER 2011\_ Grenada's Prime Minister Tillman Thomas has challenged young scientists in the Caribbean to place greater effort into finding solutions to the regions food security, climate adaptation and mitigation and health concerns, including Non Communicable Diseases and HIV and AIDS.

Addressing the 10<sup>th</sup> Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office of the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (Twas- ROLAC) Young Scientist Conference this morning in Tobago, the Grenadian leader pointed out that the region's prosperity and its ability to withstand social impacts, resulting from external economic challenges "require a paradigm shift from the old and familiar, to the new and adventurous."

"It requires a new thinking that will add value to the resources found in our region for the benefit of our people. Therefore the marriage of youth and its accompanying adventurous spirit, with science and technology, provides a platform that has the potential to move this region forward," the Prime Minister said.

He also called on the scientific community to identify "robust solutions" to protect and secure the region's investments and infrastructure from natural disasters and to strengthen the recovery efforts when countries are affected.

"I urge all of you, our young scientists, to begin to critically look at these issues to help our countries to conceive, design and implement appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures that will ensure our survival. These are areas on which your knowledge, skills and talents can be focused," the Prime Minister suggested.

He said the region must strengthen its research capability to deal with HIV/AIDS and Chronic Non Communicable Diseases, such as Heart Disease, Hypertension and Diabetes, which are posing "a serious threat to our populations."

"This therefore requires focus and a determined effort to find a solution," he said, suggesting that greater emphasis must be placed on utilizing foods and goods produced within the region.

For more information contact: PRESS SECRETARY - Richard Simon



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“We must provide the analysis to show the impact on our plants that are indigenous to our countries now having to coexist with imported genetically modified seeds and plantlets. We are yet to fully understand how these newly introduced species will impact on indigenous crops, on our cultural practices and on the animal life that support our agricultural production,” he said.

He called for the enhancement of the region’s Research and Development capability to take advantage of the green economy, with emphasis on wind, solar and thermal energy, and the blue economy, referring to the resources in the region’s marine environment.

“We must be mindful of our need for balance as our rich heritage and our fragile eco-systems must harmoniously coexist, if we are to bequeath a sustainable region to the next generation. The people of this region are eagerly awaiting your solutions to enhance our independence, to improve our health care, our living conditions, our employment opportunities and our standard of living,” he declared

The Conference being held at the Grafton Beach Resort in Tobago is “another step in the process of bridging the traditional socio-economic divide between the Americas and the Caribbean,” he declared.