INTRODUCTION

The symbolism of ‘30’ holds good and true for the Caribbean Community - enfolding its progress and regress; explicating its growth and maturity; and displaying its fears and fortunes. Upon it is exhibited the resolve and steadfastness of the Community in changing and challenging times; its triumph over divisive issues and the periodic ascent of partisan national interests, which frequently towered ominously above Community concerns. Thirty is therefore a significant landmark with insightful reminders in the journey of the peoples of the Caribbean Community towards their evident destiny of greater integration.

In retracing the steps in that journey, we must pause to reflect on the watershed agreement of 1982. There the vigorous efforts of Heads of Government ensured maintenance of purpose and displayed determination to forestall major breakdown in relations and provide new momentum to the movement. Perhaps, we are required to journey back to Grand Anse in 1989 to receive an adequate appreciation of the elevations climbed or to ponder the steep descent possible into valleys of self-doubt, and there rediscover the spirit that has led to the overcoming of fearsome contentions. Or in more recent times, a return to Chaguaramas to experience the renewal of the spirit of 1973 expressed in the Consensus of Chaguaramas which chartered the way forward for the Caribbean Community in the twenty-first century. However we interpret these developments in the Caribbean Community, and whatever meanings we assign them, they abound with lessons for our future.

This volume captures the studied reflections and records the penetrating projections of seven of the region’s illustrious sons and one of its many celebrated daughters. These Distinguished Lecturers, who traversed from Brooklyn in the North to Suriname in the South bearing tidings of the Caribbean Community have made their mark in intellectual endeavours while additionally three have gone on to also record successful efforts at the highest political level in the region.
Inaugurating the Distinguished Lecture Series, Dr. the Honourable Ralph Gonsalves literally, symbolically and significantly transports us back to the 1973 origins of the Community. Within the virtual shadows of Chaguaramas he launches an engaging and worthy discourse about ‘Our Caribbean Civilisation and its Political Prospects’. That we of the Caribbean are distinctive as to constitute a civilisation *sui generis*, reaffirmed the pride of place and accomplishment belonging to the psyche of Caribbean people and forged over centuries through the furnace of slavery, the hardships of indentureship, and the deleterious effects of colonialism.

He describes Caribbean Civilisation as being of a ‘small island and seaboard civilisation’ within a particular Caribbean seascape and landscape, comprising the chain of islands from the Bahamas to Trinidad and Tobago and the countries on mainland South America, Guyana and Suriname, embracing Belize and Haiti and widening to include the island-states of Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Dutch and French Antilles, and all the other Central and South American countries which are washed by the Caribbean Sea.

When considering internal and external reservations to the acceptance of a Caribbean Civilisation, Dr. the Honourable Gonsalves argues that the unfounded reservations arise through the mistaken attempt to resort to established typologies of civilisations, many of which apply to dominant civilisations that have historically tended to be coterminous with empires. He explains that a civilization, as is doubtless the case of the Caribbean, need not possess, nor be in quest of, imperium to be acknowledged as such an entity.

While all may not as yet be convinced of the difference and distinctive nature of ‘Our Caribbean Civilisation,’ there is no ambivalence regarding the success and achievements of the peoples of the region. Many Caribbean citizens have excelled in the domains and traditions of their once oppressors and climbed to the zenith of disciplines such as Economics and Literature - as Sir Arthur Lewis, Deryck Walcott, and V.S. Naipaul - in the global arena which affords little compensation for historical disadvantages and gives no concessions for historical wrongs and setbacks.

It is true that we live within the large and looming shadow of an externally brokered and failed attempt at federation but evidently this has not diminished our ability to set and achieve goals, determine means of achieving such goals and differentiate times and seasons. So with a sense of identity, a record of accomplishments, and a place carved in the global community, the Honourable Dr. Gonsalves advocates urgent movement by the Community
to a sturdy, confederal political arrangement described as EUROPEAN UNION PLUS. In this bold suggestion he offers proof that as a region we are not the psychological prisoners of our past. He urges rapid movement to an integrated whole similar, though not identical, to that of the European Union, plus other home-grown variations, additions or evolutions.

If, as would have been expected, the subject of the inaugural lecture awakened the region’s sense of pride and place, the august assembly and the peoples of the region also received a severe warning that delay in advancement toward political union through continuation on the post-independence path is likely to lead to absorption by the metropolitan centres within fifty years.

Whether the Prime Minister has assumed the persona of prophet or philosopher; futurist or realist, his contentions cannot be easily dismissed. In fact, the thought of absorption did not appear implausible since our recent history records that British Prime Minister Churchill had extended to the United States of America possession of any of Her Majesty’s territories from Newfoundland to British Guiana. The US opted to establish military bases rather than assume full possession of the territories. Further, a well-known diplomat of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago reminds that our absorption was almost a done deal and serendipitously we were saved merely by the fact that the US President of the time did not fully consider the enormous benefits of diversity.

The wisdom that guided the formulation of lecture topics and selection of venues for these discourses became quickly evident. That Professor Nettleford was assigned to explicate our unity in diversity and to do so at the Turkeyen Campus in Guyana between multi-ethnic Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname is remarkable. For while our diversity is largely what defines us, he is forced to admit that the Caribbean itself has struggled for all of five centuries with mastering the management of the complexity of its diversity. However, today it is possible to say we have learned to live together rather than simply living side-by-side, which is the easy solution of peoples of different origins who find themselves in close encounters.

Some manifestations of the accuracy of his contention regarding the complexity of diversity are visible in the political sphere particularly in the grand contest of national elections. Our inability to expertly manage the challenges of diversity then functions to retard development and disturb the stability required for progress on many fronts. These issues, while signalled and implied in Professor Nettleford’s lecture, are explored more fully in Professor Grant’s discussion on democratic governance in the region. And while the claim is incontestable that the region at a subliminal level
understands and trades on the unity, which underlies the differences like a ‘submarine’ according to West Indian poet Kamau Brathwaite, Professor Grant, would want to quickly see the submarine surface at port with its abundant treasures from the deep.

And yet there is the persistence of what Professor Nettleford describes as the eloquence of the differences reflected in hyphenated fragmentation (Anglo-Caribbean, Dutch-Caribbean, etc.) and which emphasizes the legacy of a heritage of separation and shattered identities. Fortunately, the existence of this creative diversity has been recognized and efforts to ensure that it does not intervene dysfunctionally are reflected at national levels. He notes that Jamaica aspires for ‘Out of Many One People’; Guyana’s seeks ‘One People, One Nation, One Destiny;’ and Trinidad and Tobago’s national anthem proclaims a place where ‘every race finds an equal place.’ However the acknowledged verdict is that these declarations all remain challenging aspirations rather than solid achievements.

Without attempting to minimize the effects of slavery and indentureship, our historical experience is seen fitting us to adapt more readily in the new global environment, which UNESCO identifies as emphasising interdependence of the world’s peoples. The Caribbean experience and the region’s capacity to manage creative diversity hold global lessons for peoples faced with the need to learn to live together, and to deal with the dilemma of difference in ways that will serve the enhancement of the human life and ensure positive human development well into the third millennium, Professor Nettleford offers.

Further, that the recognition of culture as a point of power by Caribbean dependencies has catapulted them into the twenty-first century because they are in possession, of that which he labels the new sensibility forged over 500 years of encounters making them fully au fait with relationships, with texture, with contradictions, with unity in diversity.

The Honourable Maxine Henry-Wilson, following in both logical and thematic sequence, challenges us to revisit the place and power of culture in the development of the region. She brings us the memory that the founding fathers of the Caribbean Community more than thirty years ago at the Seventh Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government had identified cultural development as an important vehicle for the journey towards greater regional unity. Forbes Burnham had uttered his prophetic challenge to artists and CARIFESTA was born, and Michael Manley had spoken of the necessity of according primacy to the psychological elements.
As Minister responsible for education in the most populous English speaking CARICOM state, Jamaica, her purview of this sector is most interesting considering present challenges and shortfalls in the Caribbean education sector. She expresses that the Caribbean education system must be steeped in the culture of the region and provide the knowledge base and attitudinal constructs that will underpin integration and development if it is to serve to create the Caribbean persona and provide the ideological framework for integration. This may require radical shifts in education offerings and delivery modes to include culture in an integrative framework and in a methodology that is intensely Caribbean.

Her exhortations are not entirely new but they are timely. Perhaps next to cricket, which is much older and currently offers little cause for a display of native exuberance, she is correct in pointing to the tremendous success of CARIFESTA. The creative diversity unleashed through CARIFESTA and its attempts and success in transcending the boundaries of the Anglophone Caribbean to include Cuba and others who are washed by the Caribbean Sea must be recognized. It has certainly functioned as a vehicle transporting the peoples of the region to the common stage in order for them to realize their sameness and the power of their diversity.

One of the key challenges of the Honourable Maxine Henry-Wilson to us is for the Caribbean to find the formula to convert its warmth and vitality, which underscores cultural prowess, to the establishment of powerful cultural industries. This is similar to the exhortations of the leading economists in the region to move from agricultural commodity production to agricultural product production. In her view, it is the area where culture can impact directly on regional economic development especially at a time when we are all experiencing economic challenges and the need to expand our tourism products.

This transformation though highly desirable, is evidently not simplistic. Imbued with new enthusiasm and envisioning new possibilities, the Honourable Lloyd Best is apt to fondly remind us that after half a century of experimentation and application of various ideologies and methodologies we have not succeeded in transforming our plantation economies to modern manufacturing economies. Such a reminder is not intended to deter but to make us determined to confront the decisions and accept the choices necessary for building cultural industries. The establishment of support structures and mechanisms, and the catalytic role of culture departments backed by financing strategies both in-country and Community come into focus.
That democratic governance within the region is under threat from external sources may be readily accepted. Professor Grant locates internal and systemic threats which are to be equally addressed in a region that measures its democratic credentials primarily in terms of regular competitive elections which are not always a contest over visions. And more so, the requirements for the smooth functioning of the Westminster parliamentary system which we have adopted, may not be easily met considering the peculiarities of the region.

He tells us that the challenge that governance presents in small societies and multi-ethnic societies are not to be underestimated. Yet he sees the emergence of measures to improve democratic governance in the Community through the creation of the Justice and Governance portfolio, engagement with civil society, and the extension of the participatory approach to include opposition political parties. He cautions not to underestimate the challenges that governance presents in small multi-ethnic societies.

Professor Cedric Grant observes that it has become increasingly obvious that the inherited governance arrangements fixed in independence constitutions have had their limitations and have not always led us in the direction we have sought to go mindful of our history and consistent with our vision. The tensions experienced in Caribbean societies in recent years served to galvanize efforts at constitutional reforms, for neither implosion nor explosion would be to our profit and stability. The winds that drove our societies to embrace constitutional reform provide an opportunity to design governance arrangements that are inclusive in nature, consistent with international thinking and in harmony with citizens’ expectations.

Professor Grant is incisive as he examines the impact of the Caribbean Community on the governance conduct of Member States. Despite the entrenched doctrine of non-intervention and efforts to promote the principle of ideological pluralism, he finds that CARICOM has exerted influence in the realm of governance. He notes that, for example, claims of electoral irregularities in Guyana were not ignored by CARICOM. He tells us that these were treated through reliance upon informal discussions which CARICOM has employed as its preferred method of conferring with Guyana’s leaders on several occasions. This disclosure and the other recent examples cited are the highest commendation of the regional grouping and illustrative of its maturity and its preparedness to deal with the fears of citizens of CARICOM in order that their expectations of the CSME could rest on a solid foundation with realistic expectations.
Professor Compton Bourne reminds that our roots of community run deep and have been established over many years with similar desires articulated over various periods of our history. He undertakes to disabuse our minds and calm our insular spirits in the knowledge that the movement of Caribbean nationals is not the major cause of unemployment. He illustrates the increasing importance of intra-Community trade as he shows us the national and Community benefits of the free movement of skills and finance, reminding that the invisible hand of the market is not perfect and so deliberate mechanisms have been created to offset negative impact. Ultimately the goal is mutuality of benefit since that is the glue holding and solidifying a Community. He is convinced that we can build a Community for all of the Caribbean and one in which citizens of the Caribbean occupy a genuinely common economic space and perceive of themselves as having a common economic destiny.

He points to the ‘potential dynamic benefits of labour market integration’ and envisions that such relaxation of the labour constraint through the realisation of a Community labour market would confer benefits of lower prices, and larger output on both labour sending and receiving member countries. This would have a positive effect on the financial sector of each Caribbean community territory.

Financial capital in the Community predicts Professor Bourne, if used mutually could be a boost for the borrowing countries and through financial capital and direct investment, which could benefit the sender countries, create a stable economic environment with ‘vibrant economic community partners’. Despite the potential for investment and economic growth Professor Bourne writing in 2003 highlighted that the attitudes in the Caribbean countries as recipient countries seems less than welcoming towards Community-origin direct investment. Foreign exchange controls, work permit regulations and the clamour of protective nationalism he noted, constituted formidable obstacles to the potential trans-border investor in the Caribbean Community, prefacing that the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas should be implemented if barriers to movement of labour and capital are not to frustrate cross-border investments, specifically with respect to the rights of establishment, the right to provide services and the right to move capital.

Similarly, foreign exchange controls in the Community Professor Bourne notes, have served to rigidly segment financial markets into national enclaves which minimize the scope for productive employment of financial services in the Community artificially depress interest rates and result in the variation of the quality of financial services across the Community.
Professor Bourne acknowledges that since as early as 1965 McIntyre and 1967 Demas, Brewster and Thomas recognized the need for ‘explicit redistributive policies for promoting equal gains in Caribbean economic integration’, although this seemed to have been seldom acknowledged by policy makers.

Professor Bourne visits the issue of the policies of the Caribbean Development Bank on CARICOM’s Less Developed Countries. One of these policies adopted by the Bank favours the LDCs in terms of the proportion of its financial resources made available to them. He notes however that the CDB’s role has been one of intermediating international capital rather than regional capital.

In concluding Professor Bourne observed that geographical and cultural inclusivity along these lines may not be a very distant objective in light of regionalisation trends in the world. As a result, he sees a Community that extends beyond its present core of Anglophone Caribbean countries to include the other linguistic countries within the Caribbean basin.

This Distinguished Lecture Series would have been incomplete without the region considering the nature of contemporary globalisation and the strategies that are needed to ensure that the Community gains from this process. While many of the subjects of the Lectures considered our collective will and agreements, globalisation compelled our responses. If our creative diversity ensured our survival in the past, a new platform of knowledge and information was needed for the future. Additionally, and surprisingly, our cumulative experiences of the past are assessed as inadequate and therefore the region must build an entirely different platform to ensure current and future success.

Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie does not bring us totally comforting news but a vital message that the future does not always resemble the past and so new strategies are required in the age of globalisation. The Region is caught at a juncture at which post-independence visions have not been fulfilled nor have plantation economies been transformed. In order to succeed in changing a global knowledge based economy, there is need for an ideological shift in the development of a less inward world-view; and a shift in our mind-set.

He informs us that the Caribbean can no longer look to land, labour and capital to secure a sustainable future. It needs instead to focus on information, intellectual capital, knowledge and innovation. For this, it must link intellectual capital formation with ICT technologies in order to integrate into the global knowledge economy since ICT technologies present a new platform for the creation of a new economy.
While that is understandable, meeting its demands is costly. Caught in our struggle to maintain and improve old education systems that are faltering, he urges us to stop in order to revamp the education system at all levels with attention to realignment of curricula, teaching methodologies, learning strategies, and research. With a male underachievement in education, and general under-performance at the secondary school level, the region must now pursue the goal of becoming a Learning Society by making education its number one regional priority and making the education sector the driver of its development thrust.

This will undoubtedly be a huge challenge of overwhelming proportions for the region, but one that it cannot postpone except at the risk of being rendered less competitive globally.

Dr Tewarie argues that as a region we will not be able to benefit from the diffusion of new technologies unless a telecommunications infrastructure exists to facilitate low cost easy access for small societies including microstates. He locates the need for information technology to be infused in the functioning of business, government and institutions in other sectors throughout the society including labour unions and NGOs so that efficiency gains are made, effectiveness is achieved, and transformation of institutions, work processes and systems are realized.

That the Caribbean extends beyond its geographic confines and includes its growing and vibrant migrant communities has always been intuitively known and recognized. The Most Honourable P. J. Patterson, Prime Minister of Jamaica, in his presentation shares with his audience the tremendous benefits available to Caribbean nationals derived through building upon the existing levels and intensity of Diaspora engagement at the national homeland level to extend to Diaspora engagement with the Caribbean Community itself in a pattern that ensures mutuality of benefit. He sees this being achieved through the building of solidarity between the peoples of the Caribbean a process which would lead to the West Indian Diaspora seeing themselves as belonging to the Caribbean Community.

In sharing information about the tremendous resources and potential of the West Indian Diaspora, Prime Minister Patterson identifies the existence of organized linkages between the Diaspora and the region, actions that augment the financial capital at the disposal of the banking system - remittances and the barrel phenomenon - as positive contributions of the Caribbean Diaspora to the region’s development. He admits that migrant remittances in cash and kind comprise a significant part of the implicit social safety nets of Member States, supporting consumption at adequate levels.
and thereby providing stimulating injections into various sectors of the economy. He encourages Members of the Diaspora to embrace the wider CARICOM as an enlarged homeland, where synergies for cultural and productive action that generate profitable returns for all, may be located. He persuades us to participate in the construction of the Caribbean Community with its features of freely moving peoples committed to sound democratic principles, the rule of law, the consolidation of civil society in governance, and a Community anchored in a common economic space for investment, production, and trade.

Describing his views as not a definitive blueprint for consolidating the Diaspora as an integral part of the life of the Caribbean Community, he calls for further contributions to the ideas from which an action agenda may emerge. He commends research undertaken on the dynamics of West Indian migration and Diaspora behaviour and advocates more work and maintenance of a comprehensive programme of research and analysis on West Indian migrant flows and their communities abroad.

The convening of a CARICOM Diaspora business conference; exploration of ways of securing Diaspora participation, such as admitting representatives of the Diaspora to appropriate fora of CARICOM as the Assembly of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians; and collaboration to produce a range of multi media materials that would assist West Indian migrant homes in the socialization of offspring into West Indian consciousness, are also addressed by The Most Honourable Prime Minister.

Deliberately and strategically positioned in the choreography of the Distinguished Lecture Series, the way forward for the Caribbean Single Market and Economy was set to bring the curtains down. Emphasis on the way forward is testimony that the thirtieth anniversary was viewed as a critical juncture reached along the route to a destination. This sentiment reverberated even when not distinctly expressed. The CSME was woven and suffused into the entire Lecture Series in its myriad dimensions and manifestations. And just like its inauguration was its closure - full of challenges and replete with warnings.

The Right Honourable Owen Arthur shows that what appears as sloth in the movement towards the CSME is really attending to the complex changes - reaching up to the constitutional level - that must be undertaken in some States. For the CSME, which already exists essentially as a legal entity as embodied in the provision of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas to be transformed into a lived reality, we have now to make the Caribbean matter as a major source of our capital, skills, technology, entrepreneurship and
markets, and important in the decision making process of Governments, enterprises and individuals.

The Right Honourable Arthur is of the view that the CSME is an initiative that will profoundly and fundamentally change the structure of each of the economies involved, the trajectory of their development, their relationship with each other and with economic systems in the rest of the world. It will be the most complex, ambitious and difficult enterprise ever contemplated in the region. He points to the extreme difficulty of conceiving an economy, whether national or regional as a stand alone entity which embodies and represents a way of life. In addition, the socio-economic climate in which the CSME is being conceived and is to be implemented is not very favourable; and, added to these, is the conviction that any venture to forge deep political integration in the region is inappropriate and impractical at this time.

He stresses that appropriate instruments of communication have to be developed so as not to further deprive the endeavour to create the CSME of a sturdy foundation. There are also new socio-economic tendencies, perspectives and developments across the region that are not creating a climate that is conducive to progress.

While Community citizens may have anticipated, in some measure, the described difficulties and challenges and complexities, they could not have imagined the pervasive and impending impact of CSME on social, cultural, political and economic institutions within member countries. According to Prime Minister Arthur, the CSME represents a way of life and should therefore be seen as an entity that draws its purposes and its dynamics from the social and cultural norms and values of the region. It is more than its physical and financial resources and includes social assets such as a sense of community, a shared identity and other bonds that inspire individuals to cooperate in the design and workings of the instruments to promote their mutual well being.

The Right Honourable Arthur remains of the firm conviction that, regardless of any obstacles that may arise, the creation of a CSME is an urgent, inescapable and historic necessity which has the capability and holds the promise of unleashing a new and an unprecedented economic energy in the Caribbean.

And so thirty years after the Treaty of Chaguaramas, armed with the lessons of the ill-fated West Indian Federation, fortified by the jolting experiences of the international system, and convinced that men and women are masters of their fate and architects of their destinies, the Caribbean has defied the sceptics, assailed the doomsayers, and dared to dream of a Community.
The distinguished lectures leave no room for doubt, for as Professor Kari Levitt eloquently stated and as embraced by the Hon. Lloyd Best, a distinguished Caribbean intellectual, who collaborated with her in conceptualising a Caribbean economy on its own terms:

Development [of the Caribbean Community] cannot be imposed from without. It is a creative process. Its central nervous system, the matrix which nourishes it, is located in the cultural sphere.

Development is ultimately not a matter of money or physical capital, or foreign exchange but of the capacity of a society to tap the root of popular creativity, to free up and empower people to exercise their intelligence and collective wisdom.

Today, in spite of acknowledged setbacks, our strides have been and continue to be confident as we journey towards moulding what Dr. the Honourable Ralph Gonsalves so appropriately describes as a ‘Caribbean Civilisation’ that dares to be different.

The Most Hon. Prof. Kenneth Hall
Professor Emeritus (UWI, Mona)
Executive Director
UWI-CARICOM Project

Myrtle Chuck-a-Sang
Project Director
UWI-CARICOM Project