In recognition of

World Rural Women's Day

OCTOBER 15 1999

Deep within her resides the power to persevere, to press through pain and heal, she is a survivor whose strength is far greater than we know. She has always faced the storm, turned solace from its wrath, left her shadows behind.

For generations, she endured abuse and degradation at the hands of those who considered themselves better than she. But she refused to allow anyone to make her inferior because she knew she was good.

Her day starts when most of us are asleep and through the night she provides the essential comforts for her home and family before venturing out in the darkness unable to defend herself against the dangers and uncertainties of nature and man.

For generations she has nurtured our plantations, harvested our crops, worked our communities by raising children who have become our profession, our teachers, leaders and role models. And she has maintained her dignity in spite of society's disdain for her and her contribution to our development.

She was born into slavery, lived through indentureship and has taken us beyond survival to a life of comfort and influence. Yet she still walks alone in the darkness to our plantations. She has seen numerous downpours with sweat on her brows, tears in her eyes, pain in her stomach from hunger. But she is always sustained by the rays of the morning sun that throw light on the harshness under which she labours to produce our wealth.

Pride of her respect, she has developed arms that are strong, hands that are capable, feet that have left a mark in the history of Trinidad and Tobago. She is a woman who has planted our land, who has laboured without complaint.

She is the Caroni Woman.

As we salute our Caroni Woman, we join the rest of the world community in celebrating the contribution of rural women to global development.

Caroni salutes its Women