

Trini **UWI** student Kara John wins IMF Caribbean Essay Competition

Little did Trinidadian university student Kara John know that she would be awarded an internship at the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) local office as her prize for winning the multilateral institution's Caribbean essay competition.

She was recently announced the winner by IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde during a students' forum at the University of the West Indies (**UWI**) Mona Campus, in St Andrew, Jamaica.

The runners-up were Immaculate Conception High School student Tajha Winkle; and **UWI** students Wendel Ivey, Shannique Rhoden and Keenan Falconer.

The competition, which was held under the theme Inclusive and Resilient Growth in the Caribbean, was launched in early October and open to young nationals aged 18 to 25 from the English-speaking Caribbean and Haiti. It was aimed at providing young people with the opportunity to articulate their views on how their welfare and that of the general region can be improved.

John, who studies law at the **UWI's** Cave Hill Campus in Barbados, said she entered the competition because she saw where it could serve to advance her career plans.

"I like development, so I hope to one day pursue a Master's Degree in Development Studies or

move on to international law. I am concerned about development in the Caribbean and the world as a whole, (and) there are ways in which (it) can help to develop the nations in the regions," she says.

John notes that she has plans to work for an organisation such as the IMF, and views the internship opportunity as a stepping stone towards accomplishing that. She is of the view that the IMF endeavours to assist small island developing states (SIDS) like those in the Caribbean with economic development, despite many of the Fund's critics.

"They aim to make our societies economically better, especially the policies that they help to put in place, as well as with the other (forms of assistance) that they (offer)," John said.

In her remarks at the forum, Lagarde said many of the competition's entrants demonstrated "immense economic understanding coupled with a deeply rooted understanding of the Caribbean society.

"They (students) took into account external shocks and also looked at entrenched factors... specific to the Caribbean that prevent growth from really flourishing and being of sustainable quality."

Lagarde said John's essay was "top-notch," as it addressed "a lack of social justice, lack of politi-

cal unity in the region and a linear approach to development as the critical bottlenecks to growth."

Additionally, IMF MD said the competition's judges "were most impressed by the essay's quality." She also addressed issues relating to the IMF's role in improving the standard of living in countries with which it partners; the role of the private sector in providing jobs and public-sector reform.

(Reporting by Chad Bryan)



Essay competition winner Kara John, right, and International Monetary Fund Managing Director Christine Lagarde.

PICTURE **UWI**

