

# New series shows T&T's deep sea life

ANNA-LISA PAUL

**The National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (Niherst) has signed sponsorship agreements with four organisations to produce a video series and photo book about the region's deep sea environment.**

Collaborating with Niherst on this unique regional and educational project are Shell T&T Ltd, the Massy

Foundation, Sagicor Life Inc. and the German Embassy of Port-of-Spain. The sponsorship agreement was signed on Friday.

Niherst president Sylvia Lalla said the project aims to raise awareness about the variety of sea life existing 1,200 metres below the sea off Trinidad's east-coast. She said little was known about the deep-sea environment until 2013 and 2014 when marine biologist Dr Judith Gobin, a senior lecturer in the Department of Life Sciences at [UWI](#), St Augus-

tine, was invited to accompany an international team of scientists on an exploration mission.

During the trip aboard the exploration vessel Nautilus, four new deep sea cold seeps were discovered at a depth of 130 kilometres off the east coast of Trinidad, along with a multitude and variety of sea-life. Researchers explored several blocks off Trinidad's east coast, while a more extensive sweep was made off Grenada's north coast in the vicinity of the underwater volcano, Kick

'em Jenny.

It was the first time in T&T that high quality videography and photography of depths greater than 2,500 feet was acquired.

Gobin said the findings led university officials to review their classroom material as some of the items discovered at such depths debunked traditional teachings.

The trip was led by renowned deep sea biologist Dr Robert Ballard and filmed by National Geographic.

Gobin has been given permission

to use the expedition's footage and findings in a five-series documentary and photo book. The photo book will be titled Deep Sea Wonders of the Caribbean, while the documentary series will feature segments from exploration trips in Grenada and T&T, as well as the deep-sea environment and careers of a deep-sea expedition.

Along with Niherst and [UWI](#), St Augustine, the project is being executed by the Caribbean Council for Science and Technology (CCST).