

# UWI Pro Chancellor to new students: Build resilient societies

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EVERY MEMBER of the University of the West Indies community can support the six of its 17 contributing countries that have been devastated or affected by the category five hurricanes, Irma and Maria, says Pro Vice-Chancellor for undergraduate studies Prof Alan Cobley.

Already, he said, UWI was sending experts ranging from structural engineers to water-resource personnel and even psychologists to

counsel the bereaved and traumatised.

Cobley welcomed new students to the UWI St Augustine campus on Thursday at the matriculation ceremony on behalf of Vice Chancellor Sir Hilary Beckles, whose father died earlier this week.

On Monday, Maria made landfall on Dominica and ravaged the island. Barbuda, Antigua's sister isle, was completely destroyed days earlier by Irma. In his welcome remarks and referring to the havoc wreaked by the hurricanes, Pro

Vice Chancellor and campus principal Prof Brian Copeland said St Augustine has accepted UWI's challenge of an "activist agenda that targets an effective alignment with industry and government, to drive a stronger, more robust culture of self-sustainability, wealth creation and social and ecological good."

Committed to the agenda, he reiterated his previous statements at the installation of UWI's sixth Chancellor, Robert Bermudez, in which he said the role of national

and regional education systems in building new societies must address current social, economic and ecological ills.

"Our governance and culture would make man-made disasters a thing of the past."

In the aftermath of natural disasters like Irma and Maria, Copeland said, "Our citizens would be able to survive and build and maintain resilient communities that can grow to re-establish sustainable societies. Citizens would understand, respect and protect the ecology."