



Association of Caribbean Mediaworkers

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REGIONAL JOURNALISTS MEET IN ST LUCIA

Journalists from the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) began a two-day workshop on education here Tuesday amid concerns that despite the many strides made over the last 40 years, there were still too many people who did not have access to an education.

Secretary General of the St Lucia National Commission for the United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Paule Turmel-John, said governments had an obligation to ensure that Education For All (EFA) goals were reached and sustained, even as she acknowledged that this was "a mammoth task which requires the coming together of many forces," including the media.

"You have the unique opportunity to be in the forefront of change, but only if you really understand and seriously assume your responsibility as information providers. Your role is paramount because the development of a society depends heavily on the knowledge of its people," Turmel-John said.

She said the journalist's task of reporting events could be enhanced if they better understood their role as providers of, and access to, knowledge.

The two-day workshop is organised by the Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM) in collaboration with UNESCO.

It is aimed at getting journalists more involved in education reporting with particular emphasis on promoting the goals of the UNESCO EFA initiative that is intended to enhance educational quality, achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015, increase adult literacy by 50 per cent and promote learning skills for young people and adults.

It is being facilitated by officials from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, (CARICOM), the Caribbean Institute of Mass Communication (CARIMAC) and the ACM.

In his address to the opening ceremony, ACM President Dale Enoch said the workshop should help develop a "better informed educated and skilled journalist allowing them to pursue other ways of practising their craft".

He said education was fundamental to the region's existence noting "that an informed journalist produces a better product".

Co-ordinator of the St. Lucia Media Workers Association (SLMWA) Mac Naughton McLean, urged regional governments to be more involved in promoting universal secondary education.



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"It must mean an effort to change our nation into a nation of people who are continually learning in an effort to improve their craft regardless of what it happens to be," McLean said.

McLean, while acknowledging the role of journalist in educating and informing the public, said "an honest critique" would leave media practitioners with "the undeniable notion that our professional training is inadequate".

The OECS groups the islands of Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis, Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands (BVI).