



## **US\$60,000 RBC Blue Water Project grant for Biche, Icacos and Matelot**

**Port of Spain, July 22, 2010.** The Institute of Gender and Development Studies/Women Gender Water Network of the University of the West Indies, will receive US\$60,000 from the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), parent company of the RBTT Financial Group, to conduct water-education programmes in Biche, Icacos and Matelot during the July/August vacation period. The funds will be disbursed via the bank's Blue Water Project—a global effort to support the protection of fresh water.

Dr. Fredericka Deare, Coordinator of the Women Gender Water Network, said the project was a response to the recent drought experienced in the Caribbean and concerns for the quality of our water resources.

"We felt the children needed to learn about water conservation and usage. Globally there are discussions about water and predictions of water scarcity in the future. The recent drought in the Caribbean brought this issue home. We chose to target rural communities because in many of these communities residents struggle to procure potable water. Children get involved transporting water from community pipes and other sources to their homes...by exposing the kids to safe water collection and conservation strategies we are partnering with them to address their needs now and equipping them to deal with future water scarcity."

The children's vacation camp will run for two weeks in each community for children aged seven to 12 years. Participants will learn about sourcing water—where it comes from and how it gets to our homes and communities; the relationship between rainfall and household water, including climate change, rainfall patterns and water availability; protecting drinking water; and the relationship between water, health and sanitation. The camp will engage participants in fun, interactive activities that will encourage students to practise what they've learned and influence their families to adopt more responsible water practices. Participants will also discuss emerging topics which include the ways in which gender shapes the use of our water resources.

This project is undertaken in collaboration with the primary school principals and teachers in the three communities, the Institute for Public Health and Water Research out of Texas A&M University, the Water Resource Agency/WASA, the Environmental Management Authority, Global Water Partnership – Caribbean, and Kairi Institute of Knowledge.

This donation comes on the heels of the inaugural RBC Blue Water Day observed by RBC and RBTT employees worldwide on June 11. Blue Water Day is part of the bank's strategy to raise awareness of the significance of water and promote its sustainability via the RBC Blue Water Project, which has pledged to provide CAD\$50 million in grants to non-profit organisations that protect watersheds and provide or ensure access to clean drinking water. The grants will be disbursed over 10 years, from 2007 to 2017.

# **MEDIA RELEASE**



Anna-Maria Kurbanali, Regional Manager Corporate Responsibility, RBTT Financial Group said: "It is important that steps be taken now to preserve our water sources. This project will help stave off potential environmental and economic crises that can arise from restricted access to fresh water supplies."

According to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation, by 2025, 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity, and two-thirds of the world's population could be under stress conditions. Stress conditions refer to economic, social or environmental fallout that could arise as a result of unmet water needs.

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**PHOTO CAPTION:** Anna-Maria Kurbanali, Regional Manager Corporate Responsibility, RBTT Financial Group, listens to participants of a water-education vacation camp in Matelot. The camp is funded by the RBC Blue Water Project, a global initiative of RBC, parent company of RBTT, to support the protection of fresh water supplies.

## MEDIA RELEASE