

## **FIRST EVER**

- **CARIBBEAN CARNIVAL CONFERENCE**
- **CARIBBEAN CARNIVAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

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Carnival is and has been the World's only event which is totally free of discrimination of any kind, example; it is so free that it can include anything one wants to project from a practical, philosophical, social and creative aspect of the human being.

Carnival is the World's presentation of total inclusion as a true global village. It includes people of all ages, races, gender, class and wealth coming together at one event, which for the only time in the life of the human being; one feels equal and a part of its fellow beings without any hindrance or inhibitions. At the same time Carnival can give you the feeling of a person who can portray to be the richest and most high of all humans and can also portray the richest man in the world as the most humble and poor of all humans and vice versa. Such is the elasticity of Carnival, Caribbean style, how dynamic an event that no matter who or what you are in life, you can be part of this great experience of whatever you wish to be and to be played out in a public stage whether it is of

joy, sorrow, rich, poor, tall, short, foolish, smart etc. This style of Carnival has grown from strength to strength and can be found in all parts of the world via our Caribbean people. The World's largest event is known as football or soccer which FIFA administrates as a world competition and which takes place in different regions of the globe, to qualify for the finals once in every four years. In like manner the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) must establish the Caribbean Carnival Championships in order to have a greater stamp of this event before aiming at the establishment of the World carnival championships based on the similar method of FIFA's operation only in this case we will have a variety of categories known in the Carnival world.

Carnival, Caribbean Style is the most Cohesive medium used to create a wider collaborative and understandable association (ACS), this practicing and vibrant culture is celebrated in various styles and with slightly different names. However there is one common interest and benefit which is the celebration of a cultural pluralism among the members of the Association of Caribbean States and the countries which have observer status in the ACS.

We have mainly within the English speaking Caribbean, the sport called cricket which is also a

unifying event which has held the Caribbean together in more ways than one. However, carnival attracts all races, class, age, gender, young and old all celebrating various parts of one event all at the same time, in total merriment and togetherness and at the same time bringing out the most creative aspect of all concern. My idea to create or establish The First Ever Caribbean Conference and as a by-product of the Conference, establish The Caribbean Carnival Championships in conjunction with the ACS has been on the drawing board for many years. I attempted to get the said project started with CARICOM and while planning, up comes the Association of Caribbean States and because the ACS is a larger body with more members and associate members all of which celebrate carnival or related festivals in one form or another, I thought it better and more practical to have this important Conference with the ACS, The projections for the Conference includes establishing a database for artistes, cultural practitioners, professionals and semi-skilled personals in areas of costume making, musical instrumentation, singers, musicians, drama, art, dance, culanary arts, engineering, and many other areas such as production engineers, lighting, stage management, choreography etc. Other areas of concern will be the establishment of common adjudication practices and training via the School of Continuing Studies University of the West

Indies (UWI) and the Carnival Cultural Judges Association (CJATT) which is the only organisation in the world that established a judges course at the St. Augustine Campus of UWI and has been very successful as an adjudication body serving culture with professional excellence throughout the world since 1991.

The Conference will also look at ways in which the respective carnivals can help each other in all levels including economic development networking and start up businesses among the ACS countries.

Each country has its own National events/Carnivals/Festivals etc and the winners of each category is normally only the champion in his / her country. The project is formulated in such a way that all the respective winners from the member states and associate states can now come together for the “Caribbean Carnival Championships” which is another level above the respective national levels. In a similar upscaling level I have also developed and proposed “The World Carnival Championships”.

The idea to bring the winners of the respective countries together in one event by itself is a major achievement for the ACS and its people. My involvement with all the major world bodies in carnival assisted me with the many ideas and projects

to date. I am also the representative for the Foundation of European Carnival Cities (FECC) in Trinidad and Tobago and the Head of the national section for Trinidad and Tobago of CIOFF, a UNESCO status B organization.

As a people, we in the Caribbean have placed our individual country in the World agenda from time to time and in particular one of our Carnival bandleaders (Mr. Peter Minshall) was asked to open and close the world's biggest event known as the Olympics is testimony of the power of Carnival.

In staging the Caribbean Carnival Championships from country to country within the ACS/Region we will be further uniting our people in more ways than we can imagine, and at the same time creating a new kind of Caribbean patriotism which only exists to some level at present through West Indies Cricket. Could you imagine the positiveness the Caribbean Championships will create over a period of time? It must be stated, what makes the Caribbean style Carnival different to the European, Asian, Latin American, African, North American and others. In the Caribbean and especially Trinidad and Tobago Carnival creativity is limitless hence any person or group of persons can portray whatever he / she or they thinks about, and that is entered for competition plus you have the many other authentic areas of

portrayals which people portray each year. The patrons enjoy the creativity and beauty of bands as large as four to five thousand persons in one band then you have as low as one person portrayals as an individual and it scales upwards as mentioned earlier.

Another important area is when a person is playing in any carnival band who could be the wealthiest person on the planet and next to you will be the poorest person on the planet, however each other enjoys themselves not knowing and thinking of nothing else but having a good time during that period of carnival. The same applies for blacks and whites, young and old, male and female and of various religious backgrounds and no one feels inhibited or inferior to each other.

Carnival has its level of criticism by various religious personals and organizations, however, I always say that Carnival also allows one to develop a greater level of self control and discipline, in other words, it can be used as a test in life to restrain oneself from the many temptations which one does not agree with such as the consumption of alcohol, eating of meat, seeing and not touching, assisting in behavioral patterns through dance and freedom of control and control of attitudes. It can also bring one closer to his or her religious belief due to the realities and

practices seen during the festival. However, some churches, example, the Catholic Church indulge in active participation through its Priest, Nuns and congregations in the production of Carnival Bands for both Senior and junior levels. Plus people from other religions agree with the celebration, however with their own reservations in various aspects. It is worth noting that the Foundation of European Carnival Cities (FECC) always starts every carnival meeting with a prayer, the same for the Latin American and Caribbean Carnival Associations.

Besides the lovely sand, sea and climate of the Caribbean, we can also use our cultural diversity and especially carnival to market the region in a way more likely to attract the population of countries in and out of the Caribbean. It is the one event, which accepts all people and rejects none, in carnival you can find any way of life you wish to live as a matter of fact, some people use the event to go to the beaches, etc.

The economy of carnival is yet another area, which were never really addressed in a scientific method among the ACS countries. This area is so wide and intangible that no one ever took time to study it. However some main areas benefiting in carnival are as follows: -

(a) The Food Industry

- (b) Transportation (Land, Sea and Air)
- (c) Hotels and Travel
- (d) The Craft Industry and Souvenirs
- (e) Foreign Currency Exchange
- (f) Bed and Breakfast Hostels
- (g) Textile Industry
- (h) Media and Telecommunications
- (i) Electronics Industry
- (j) Cosmetology
- (k) Alcohol and Soft Drink Industry
- (l) Printing and Packaging
- (m) The Music Industry
- (n) Recording Industry
- (o) The Video Production industry
- (p) The Human Resource Industry etc. etc.

In fact every sphere of the economy has some direct or indirect involvement in Carnival.

The success of The First Ever Caribbean Carnival Championships and Conference will depend on the level of support by both private and public interest which must be processed and propelled via the ACS and or the CTO .This event will benefit the entire region of the ACS and not specifically just one country.