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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Media Researchers Evaluate AI: Demand Guardrails

Kingston, Jamaica:

Participants attending an AI-related research symposium called for Artificial Intelligence (AI) to be better regulated globally and in the Caribbean, to maximize its benefits and mitigate its harmful effects.

The call was made by AI policy specialist, Professor Hopeton Dunn, and Programme Director of UTECH's BSc in Applied AI, Mr Horrett Scarlett. They were delivering keynote addresses at the inaugural research symposium of the newly-formed Caribbean Consortium for Media and Communication Research (CCMCR), held at UWI's Regional Headquarters on Wednesday, June 24, 2026. The researchers insisted that human judgment must steer artificial intelligence (AI), and that people, not algorithms or machines, must determine the decisions we make and the information we consume.

Professor Dunn, who is also CCMCR's Chairman, surveyed the global and regional regulations shaping AI use, and noted that there was "no chances of turning back from AI". He said the global AI industry had the potential of generating up to USD 20-trillion in value within the next five years. This year, 2026 "is emerging as the year of 'agentic AI'—AI that can plan, act, and resolve tasks autonomously - rather than just as a chatbot-driven generative AI", he said. Prof Dunn cautioned, however, that although the emerging AI applications were already driving speed, revenue, and long-term structural transformation in corporate and government services, executives, policy-makers and developers should be vigilant in ensuring a "human-centric" AI.

Professor Dunn noted that data sits at the heart of AI, as both input and output. He said, currently AI is experiencing considerable pushback by some employees, creatives and students because of its 'hallucinations' as well as its environmental risks and resource demands: the heavy electricity and water consumption of AI data centres, anxiety by new graduates about their job prospects even as employers embrace AI's productivity gains; AI's reputation for poor recognition of Black and Asian faces, with women of colour most marginalised. Prof Dunn called for "guardrails" that put people first, borrowing medicine's founding ethical rule: "do no harm!"

Mr. Scarlett, who heads UTECH's BSc in Applied AI, framed the technology as the latest chapter in a long procession of human-assistive technologies. In that regard, he said, AI was not new. However, he said its best results can come when human-beings shape the output, rather than letting the system build on its own work: "We must be taking charge of the technology and strive to put our own spin and intentions on it."

While noting AI's many advantages, Mr Scarlett also flagged the pitfalls, including inconsistent responses, bias, ethical and data-security risks, and academic-integrity concerns. However, he emphasised that the technology is inescapable and that government agencies and companies must equip their staff to handle the emerging risks: "AI will not take your job, but someone who knows it will", he concluded.

Also addressing the Symposium were UWI researcher and former Deputy Principal, Professor Ian Boxill; UWI Communications Lecturer, Dr Alpha Obika of CARIMAC, and Data Scientist, Professor Gunjan Mansingh of the UWI's Faculty of Science and Technology, Mona. The Symposium was moderated by Dr. Patrick Prendergast, Director of CARIMAC.

The CCMCR is a multi-institution consortium, with membership drawn from communication and related researchers at UWI, Northern Caribbean University (NCU), UTECH, and the Mico University College. It seeks to build-up scholarly research and creative output throughout the Caribbean region in association with global partners. Reflecting the new organization's key goal, the theme of the Symposium was **'Advancing Caribbean Communication Research, Production and Publication'**.

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Media enquiries and high-resolution images: secretariat@ccmcr.org