



# *International Kerner*

## Center for International Social Work Studies

*Written by Abigail Amorim*

### **Student Profile**

Reia Bumble is a citizen of Trinidad & Tobago, a twin island Republic in the Caribbean. She graduated from the Caribbean Union College in 2001, which is an affiliate of Andrews University in Michigan. Her degree was in Psychology; however she has always wanted to be in more of a practice field setting, hence she opted to do an MSW. Reia chose to attend UConn School of Social Work because it was close enough to NY where she has close friends. Later she found out that UConn is connected with the University of West Indies, which has a campus in Trinidad (students and faculty from the UConn Graduate School of Social Work and the University of West Indies & Tobago participated in a on line distance education initiative during the spring 2002 semester). Therefore, that makes her feel more at home. She says she is enjoying her experience so far, with her greatest difficulties being adapting to the weather, transportation services, and the "coldness or indifference" of the people in the U.S. Apart from that, she thinks she is doing pretty well.

### ***Do you know that...***

The country Trinidad & Tobago is one of the most prosperous in the Caribbean thanks largely to petroleum and natural gas production and processing. Tourism, mostly in Tobago, is targeted for expansion and is growing. Trinidad & Tobago has earned a reputation as an excellent investment site for international businesses. Successful economic reforms were implemented in 1995, and foreign investment and trade are flourishing. The petrochemical sector has encouraged growth in other related sectors, reinforcing the government's commitment to economic diversification. Trinidad & Tobago has an interesting population with different Ethnic groups and religious practices. 39.5% are black, 40.3% East Indian (a local term - primarily immigrants from northern India), 18.4% mixed, white 0.6%, Chinese and other 1.2%. Roman Catholic 29.4%, Hindu 23.8%, Anglican 10.9%, Muslim 5.8%, Presbyterian 3.4%, other 26.7%. The official language is English, although Hindi, French, Spanish, and Chinese are also spoken in different areas of the countries. (World Fact 2001).





# *International News*

*Extra...Extra...Extra...Read all About it...*

Brazil's new president elected Luiz Inacio da Silva, also known as LULA, won by 61 percent of the votes in the runoff election on October 2<sup>th</sup>. LULA, who dropped out of school after 5<sup>th</sup> grade, defeated Jose Serra, an U.S. educated economist. LULA was a Union leader and also responsible for the formation of the Workers party PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores). Lula became the country's first elected left-wing leader. He promised to make the fight against hunger his top priority, and he urged lenders to stand by Brazil. The IMF, which gave Brazil a record \$30 billion last month to help ease the government changeover is looking forward to working with Lula to create "the conditions that would lead to sustained growth." LULA cautioned Brazilians not to expect overnight miracles. LULA said that things "cannot be resolved with magic," he said.

Although current president Fernando Enrique Cardoso reduced hyperinflation and attracted tens of billions of dollars in foreign investment during his eight years in office, unemployment is at its highest level since early 2000 and the minimum wages also fell. LULA received 52.5 million votes, more than the winner of any presidential election anywhere except Ronald Reagan. But his leftist Workers' Party won fewer than 20 percent of the seats in both houses of the Brazilian Congress. Even with the support of other, mostly left wing parties, LULA does not have the votes he needs to begin working on his promise of a country with more socio-economic justice for all. With the actual world shaky economy, international economists say that Lula's mandate will be an interesting one to follow.

Even though millions of people in Brazil are illiterate and living in rural areas, its voting system was all computerized. In less than 10 hours after the polls closed on October 27<sup>th</sup>, more than 85 percent of the votes had already been tabulated. There was no mess and the fears that the system would be falsified were unsubstantiated. The voting system consisted of a keyboard not different from an ATM machine. The candidates' pictures and the their names were displayed right after the candidates' numbers were punched in the screen (New York Times International).