

## Britain to track Slave Trade Money

THE BRITISH government has earmarked over £600,000 for the University College, London (UCL), to carry out an in-depth study to measure how monies accrued from the slave trade were spent.

The study will look into those British companies and institutions established from the profits of slavery. The government has said that the study should highlight how the owners were involved and how they contributed to the provision of social services.

Encouraging development

University of the West Indies (UWI) professor of history, Verene Shepherd, has hailed the development as encouraging.

"This major project has the potential to add strong support to the reparation movement," Shepherd said.

She added: "It will place the matter of culpability for African enslavement - that great crime against humanity - squarely on the table and will allow an unambiguous naming of those who benefited from the labour and productive skills of enslaved Africans in the Caribbean."

Meanwhile, another UWI professor, Barry Chevannes, who is chairman of the National Commission on Reparations, said that he was looking forward to the research.

"It is an exciting piece of research. It is the kind of study which will certainly enrich the work of the commission and something that we will be very interested in," Chevannes said.

But Government minister Mike Henry, a champion in the fight for reparation, is not salivating at the grant by the British government to research the beneficiaries of the slave trade.

"It is a sleight-of-hand approach," Henry said.

"They already know who are the beneficiaries of the slave trade. They have enough material to show who benefited. This money should go towards paying the descendants of the slaves, rather than studying to escape the responsibility, or to reduce what they must be asked to pay," Henry added.

Henry said that up to last week, he discussed the matter with an international lawyer and he intended to pursue the issue of slavery and reparation at the International Court of Justice.