

**THE NATIONAL GAS COMPANY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO LIMITED**

**Launch of the NGC/TTCB National Academy**

**Remarks by Narinejit Pariag**

**Vice President, Finance and Information Management, NGC**

**November 4, 2016**

**National Cricket Centre, Couva**

Mr Azim Basarath, President of the TTCB and other members of the executive

Coaches

Inductees and their parents

Members of the media

My colleagues from NGC

Friends in cricket

Good afternoon.

NGC is once again pleased to stand as corporate partners with the TTCB as we launch the 2016 NGC/TTCB National Academy. It is a source of great pride to us that our partnership with the TTCB not only helps support the most avidly followed and passionately spectated sport in our country, but also enables initiatives like this one, which target our nation's cricketing youth.

We at NGC are especially enthusiastic about this programme because it checks several boxes for us. It represents first and foremost an investment in **Sport**. We all know that at the regional level our cricket team has not been performing at its best, having just received a serious thrashing from Pakistan. This launch is therefore quite timely, as we need to look to the young stars as our hope for redemption. Trinidad and Tobago has built a reputation for producing some of the region's – and the world's – most formidable cricketers. We must therefore ensure we keep generating high-calibre players, not just for the sake of local cricket, but to feed the regional team. I am truly confident that we can see the West Indies reclaim its ascendancy in the sport in the near future. Insofar as these youngsters are critical to that vision, we at NGC believe that investment in their development is critical to securing the future of the sport.

Secondly, this is an investment in **youth**. Trinidad and Tobago is losing too many young people to crime and delinquency. As a country, we need to make opportunities available to our youth for productive engagement in their free time. Mindful of *our* responsibility in that regard, NGC has youth development as one of the focus areas of its extensive Corporate Social Responsibility portfolio.

The NGC/TTCB National Academy is one of several supported initiatives advancing that cause. Research shows that participation in sport is a proven delinquency deterrent strategy which also helps to shape character, because it requires discipline, it builds fraternity, and it encourages

ambition and aspiration. We are confident that the young cricketers inducted into this Academy will not only benefit from improvement of their game, but will also emerge from the programme as more rounded individuals.

Thirdly, this is an investment in **empowerment**. For most of us, cricket is a beloved pastime. Considering the thriving commercial industry that has grown around the sport, and especially around the T20 format, cricket can be a viable career option for many youth. This, however, requires dedicated play and professional coaching. Unfortunately, there are many avid, talented cricketers who do not have the wherewithal to access the requisite exposure and training. This Academy seeks to ensure that that talent does not wane for want of support. I am certain that this experience will go a long way in empowering these youngsters to advance their careers in and generate sustainable livelihoods from cricket.

To the young men who are being inducted this evening, I encourage you to use this programme to learn, explore and grow as sportsmen and as individuals.

You will be guided by coaches with a wealth of experience and expertise and I urge you to grab the opportunity to learn from them and show off your skill. Trinidad and Tobago is depending on you to ensure that in years to come, we will be well represented in international cricket.

To the TTCB and participating coaches and trainers, I commend you on behalf of NGC for your tireless work in running programmes like the National Academy to bring to life the TTCB's vision of developing and sustaining cricket as the most successfully organised sport in Trinidad and Tobago. You will all agree with me that Trinidad and Tobago is a wellspring of talent, but it is through targeted interventions such as this that talent is brought discovered and honed. Let's all continue to bat for our youth and the future of our sport.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you.

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