



THE NATIONAL GAS COMPANY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO LIMITED

**MEDIA RELEASE
NGC Bocas Lit Fest South Launched**

November 7th 2016

Tradewinds Hotel was the site for the launch of 2016's NGC Bocas Lit Fest (South) on Saturday 5th November 2016. NGC's President, Mr. Mark Loquan, was the main speaker at the event. To an audience which included, Marina Salandy-Brown, Bocas Lit Fest founder & director; Michael Anthony, eminent author of *Green days by the River* fame; Sherid Mason, Chairman, San Fernando Arts Council (SFAC) and NGC Bocas Lit Fest South partners; Shella Murray, Vice-Chairman, San Fernando Arts Council (SFAC) and Ras Commander, Chairman, TUCO, Mr. Loquan expressed that NGC was "gratified by the success of this investment, especially given the challenges facing our business sector and the concomitant need for prudent expenditure. It is much easier to justify support for an organisation when it demonstrates consistent growth, when it addresses an underserved need and when it delivers tangible results."

The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (NGC) has been partnering with the NGC Bocas Lit Fest since 2011. NGC's support has grown from being that of a major sponsor in 2011 to title sponsor since 2012. For the past four years, the NGC Bocas Lit Fest has been one of NGC's flagship investments within its Corporate Social Responsibility portfolio. Attendance at the NGC Bocas Lit Fest has grown from its inaugural 2011 figure of just over 3,000 to over 6,500 persons in 2015.

The Festival allows the country and the region to showcase the talent and creativity via literature, films, music and speech. Authors, editors and publishers gather in Trinidad for this annual event which is increasingly attracting persons from Latin America, the Caribbean and its diaspora in North America and Europe. World-renowned writers such as Earl Lovelace, Derek Walcott, Monique Roffey, Olive Senior and Irvine Welsh have all attended and participated in previous Bocas Lit Fests.

The NGC President also noted that NGC was exceedingly pleased as a locally-grown company, to see this investment in indigenous craft yield such profits for our people. "Beyond building literacy, however, this festival serves another imperative of paramount importance. I have often lamented our indifference to and undervaluation of our local cultural creations, especially when they are regarded with such fascination by non-nationals. For that reason, I am thrilled and heartened by the work of NGC Bocas Lit Fest, by its efforts in *developing, commending and promoting* Caribbean authorship, in announcing our talent to the world *with pride*."

The launch of a 'A Bocas November', was also a celebration of the Festival's success in that

regard, as the past year has seen Caribbean writers who have been supported by NGC Bocas Lit Fest, sweep some of the biggest prizes in literature. These include Tiphonie Yanique, winner of the Felix Dennis Prize for Best First Collection; Marlon James, winner of the Man Booker Prize (2015); Trinis Andre Alexis, winner of the Scotia Gillar award and Vahni Capildeo, who was awarded the coveted Forward Prize for Best Poetry Collection 2016. Capildeo is also currently shortlisted for the eminent TS Eliot Prize. It was also said that an NGC Bocas-curated poet, Danielle Boodoo-Fortuné, was announced as the winner of the 2016 UK-based Wasafiri New Writing Prize for Poetry.

The NGC Bocas Lit Fest has been aggressively promoting our works, placing Caribbean literature in the grasp of international readers and clearly, in the hands of the right people. The Festival continues this weekend at San Fernando Hill from 12th November -13th November.

For more information:

**Lisa Burkett, Manager
Corporate Communications
The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited
lisa.burkett@ngc.co.tt**