



The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited

**Mr. and Miss NGC Sanfest Teen Talent Competition
Finals 2016**

November 19, 2016

Good afternoon. It is such a pleasure to be here for the finals of the Mr and Miss NGC Sanfest Teen Talent Competition 2016. This year's theme "A Divine Alterative to..." beckons us to recognize the value in Sanfest. In its simplest form, it's an arts festival. But as current sitting First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama reminds us "*The arts are not just a nice thing to have or to do if there is free time or if one can afford it. Rather, paintings and poetry, music and fashion, design and dialogue, they all define who we are as a people and provide an account of our history for the next generation.*"

At today's finals you the participants are not just treating the audience to your performances but you are retelling the rich, cultural history of Trinidad and Tobago but also charting a course of history. You teen talent contestants have come to typify the kind of dynamic and confident young people that this competition seeks to promote through the arts.

The kind of growth witnessed here is one of the reasons NGC invests so heavily in the Arts. As competitors, these students have benefitted from extensive training and guidance which, ultimately, has helped them develop the confidence and skills to become positives role models and leaders in their society.

The discipline, self-expression and self-confidence developed through the Mr. and Miss NGC Sanfest Teen Talent Competition have helped numerous former contestants in their education or careers, both within and outside the Arts. Many competitors go on to tertiary education in a variety of fields. Some have also gone on to make a career for themselves in the Arts. Some examples include a past Miss NGC Teen Sanfest who has founded her own

production company and former Mr. NGC Teen Sanfest winners who have become professional musicians.

Similarly, countless contestants have gone on to achieve further success in Arts competitions. Former participants have held the title of *La Reine Rive*, reached the finals of the Dimanche Gras competition, won the first 'I AM PAN' national steelpan competition and been a first runner-up in the national Patriotic Song Competition.

Finally, the influence of the Mr. and Miss NGC Sanfest Teen Talent Competition is evident in past participants' willingness to give back to the San Fernando Arts Council. This year, past competitors have given of their time to serve as adjudicators or to help train the contestants. Further, countless participants have gone on to become teachers and continue to give back to Sanfest by getting their schools and students involved in the competition.

It's encouraging to see how one event can influence so many lives and we hope hear of similarly great accomplishments from this year's competitors.

We wish all the finalists of the year's Mr. and Miss NGC Sanfest Teen Talent Competition all the best!