

Media Release CERT Drill

A 5-week Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) exercise conducted by The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (NGC) came to an end on Saturday 14th November with an emergency response drill at the Company's Head Office in Point Lisas. The training was part of NGC's Community Awareness and Emergency Response (CAER) Programme, which targets its fenceline communities, schools and Regional Corporations. The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) drill was offered in response to one of the most frequently expressed concerns of community members: knowing what to do in the event of an emergency.

Representatives from each of NGC's targeted communities (Poole Valley, Rio Claro; St. John's, Brother's Road; Clarke Road, Penal; Cachipe, Moruga and Avocat, Fyzabad) attended all-day sessions each Saturday. The trainees were taught to respond to any emergency or natural disaster which might affect their community, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, chemical leaks or natural gas pipeline ruptures. Modules included Disaster Preparedness, Fire Safety, Disaster Medical Operations, Light Search and Rescue Operations, CERT Organisation and Disaster Psychology.

The sessions were conducted by Trinidad & Tobago Voluntary Emergency Response Trainers (TTVERT). The primary instructor was Mr. John Sylvester, Chairman of TTVERT and Head, Department of Security Administration and Emergency Management at Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies.

During the emergency exercise, the 24 graduates demonstrated their newly-acquired skills by responding to a simulated emergency in which a strong odour caused panic and nausea in a small community. As designated observers and TTVERT trainers looked on, participants set up an incident command post, assessed the situation, conducted evacuation and triage operations and applied First Aid.

The drill also called for them to manage frantic relatives, relay information to the media, and work with NGC personnel to assess the source of the odour, which was determined to be chemicals dumped in a drain by an irresponsible manufacturer.

Upon stand-down of the drill, the exercise was evaluated by TTVERT members. Graduates then received Certificates of Completion. They expressed their thanks to NGC for equipping them with the knowledge to serve their communities in times of crisis.

The graduates will be offered follow-up training in First Aid and Fire-fighting early in 2010. NGC will also host another CERT session for representatives of other selected communities in September-October next year.

The CERT training is just one aspect of NGC's newly-launched CAER Programme, in which the Company establishes relationships with the communities closest to its major pipeline infrastructure with a view to allaying their safety concerns while also building trust and fostering mutual support.