



The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited

Media Release

**Launch of NGC SanFest 2014
Remarks by Mrs Cassandra Patrovani Sylvester
Vice President, Human and Corporate Relations**

**September 14th 2014
Creative Arts Centre, San Fernando
5:00 p.m.**

SALUTATIONS

Dr the Honourable Lincoln Douglas, Minister of the Arts and Multiculturalism

The Honourable Carolyn Seepersad Bachan, Minister of Public Administration and MP for San Fernando West

Councillor Rondell Donowa, San Fernando City Corporation
Ms. Sharida Mohammed Rahaman, School Supervisor III, Ministry of Education

Mr Torrance Mohammed, Chairman, and other executive members of the San Fernando Arts Council

Mr Winston Bramble, Festival Director

Mr Jessel Murray, Senior Lecturer and Head, Department of Creative and Festival Arts, UWI

NGC Sanfest committee members

Specially invited guests

Members of the media, performers, principals, teachers, ladies and gentlemen

Good afternoon/good evening

It is always a pleasure to represent NGC.

The period from September to November can be a busy one for parents, teachers, and students alike - it's the start of the new school year, children are settling into new classes and even new schools, and everyone is determined to do their best.



The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited

Media Release

Launch of NGC SanFest 2014 Remarks by Mrs Cassandra Patrovani Sylvester Vice President, Human and Corporate Relations

But this period is also one of excitement and anticipation for the lovers of the performing and visual arts in Trinidad and Tobago, because this is the time that the prestigious San Fernando Junior Arts Festival kicks off. This is the 44th year of SanFest, and the 12th that NGC has been a major sponsor. As a matter of fact, our association with the Festival has been so mutually rewarding that last year we agreed to take our relationship one step further by becoming its title sponsor.

Over the course of our partnership with the San Fernando Arts Council NGC has encouraged its members to be innovative and more forward thinking in its presentation of the Festival to keep it fresh and interesting to its target audience. And this year, in order to feed the momentum of innovation we are pleased to announce yet another important feature of this year's SanFest. That is, the involvement of students from UWI's Department of Festival and Creative Arts. The contributions and suggestions they have already made along with their hands-on involvement will enhance the operation and status of the festival as well as give them the practical experience the need – a truly mutually rewarding experience! And I take this opportunity to publicly welcome Mr Murray and his team to the NGC SanFest family.

NGC is very excited about this partnership which is just one aspect of our comprehensive Corporate Social Investment Programme which has three themes – sport, empowerment and civic life.

Through SPORT we support the TTCB and the National Association of Athletics Administrations, or NAAAs, primary school track and field games of the Caroni and St Patrick Districts and the Moruga Zone and of course, we also maintain our very own Track and Field developmental programme, NGC Right on Track coaching caravan.

Under our empowerment theme, we sponsor programmes in skills development and employment creation, as well as youth development projects such as the five Police Youth Clubs we sponsor in Beetham Gardens, Couva, La Brea, Laventille Road and Penal, the NIHERST/NGC National Science Centre, and the Capacity Building and Music Literacy modules for the management teams of the steelbands and police youth clubs we sponsor.

Finally, there is the Civic Life theme, which perhaps most applies to this situation, in which NGC supports education, the arts and culture and the restoration of public spaces to enrich community life. Among our major sponsorships in this area are the NGC Bocas Lit Fest, our Steelband and tassa sponsorship, the Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival which starts on Tuesday, the NGC SanFest, a professorial chair in innovation and entrepreneurship at UWI as



The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited

Media Release

Launch of NGC SanFest 2014 Remarks by Mrs Cassandra Patrovani Sylvester Vice President, Human and Corporate Relations

well as the many recreation grounds, community centres, and homes for the aged that NGC has built or restored throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

And all these projects represent just a snapshot of NGC's CSI programme.

Focusing solely on San Fest now, as a mother, a lover of music and the arts, and as a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago, I have to confess that my response to NGC SanFest goes beyond the professional. It is pure joy to see children and young adults performing on stage before an appreciative audience – whether in song, dance or drama. The art and essays produced give hope for the survival of the fine arts in Trinidad and Tobago.

I know that much effort and rehearsal go into polishing performances in tandem with keeping up with school work in a society which still places emphasis on traditional education and puts pressure on students to study, study, study, as opposed to spending more time on extracurricular activities. But the children who participate in the arts don't suffer academically. Far from it! They are better-rounded, less stressed, and more self-confident. Just check the interviews with the top placing SEA students and scholarship winners at CAPE. They all enjoyed a balanced load of school work and extra-curricular activities. So kudos to the parents and teachers who have encouraged the participation of their children and students in NGC SanFest!!

I congratulate the performers, in advance, even before the first panel of judges have made their decisions. Just by being here, they will have demonstrated their desire to win at life. And remember that competition is only part of the experience. Making friends, cheering each other on, and enjoying yourselves all form part of the total experience of performing and competing.

To the teachers, coaches, and administrators: well done. Teaching is hard, I know, and the work never seems to end. But we appreciate your sacrifices in time and effort, to help the next generation find their full potential. Because of your efforts, we can all look forward to two months of heart-stirring performances, which is more than any lover of the arts can dream of.

And to the San Fernando Arts Council, the hosts of NGC SanFest, I thank you most sincerely for your willingness to partner with us over the past 12 years which our relationship has improved and as we continue to collaborate to provide an enhanced space for our young people to perform.

I thank you.