



THE NATIONAL GAS COMPANY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO LIMITED (NGC)

Eldwin Noel Games

Date: 22-5-2016

Brighton Recreation Grounds, La Brea

Remarks by Mr. Fofi George, Community Relations Officer

Good Evening,

When you speak of energy in Trinidad and Tobago, your thoughts immediately turn to the southland, as this is where this nation's energy industry was born. This is where it grew up. From the discoveries of tar and pitch centuries ago, to the establishment of oil wells and offshore platforms, to the presence of large entities such as the LABIDCO Industrial Estate, this land has always featured prominently in our energy history.

La Brea saw the first pitch-paved roads in the country, the first pumping jacks, and the first foreign energy investors. Even when you set aside the enormous role La Brea has played in the growth of our energy industry, there is still much more to be said. La Brea was a giant in our agricultural industry, with its cocoa, coconut and sugar cane industries contributing to the wealth of the area since the 1800s. Some of the older residents can tell you of the glamour days of La Brea, of the fancy parties held in Brighton, which people of means would sail from Port of Spain, across the Gulf, to attend.

Its unique geology and significant archaeological finds have brought international recognition to Trinidad.

One of La Brea's most interesting contributions in recent times is the discovery of bacteria in the Pitch Lake, which may be the closest thing on Earth to

microbial life present in the hydrocarbon seas on Saturn's moon, Titan. It almost sounds like science fiction, but it's happening right here in La Brea. That makes me very proud.

We at NGC are also proud of our connection to the south, which is as deeply rooted as the pipelines that criss-cross the island, from Guayaguayare to Moruga to La Brea and beyond.

We believe that the benefits to be earned from our valuable natural resources must be enjoyed by all citizens. In addition to our contributions to the Treasury, we have a vibrant Corporate Social Responsibility programme, which allows us to invest in our communities through art, culture, skills development, environmental awareness and, naturally, sport.

Our sponsorship of the Eldwin Noel Games is part of this programme. These games first began 16 years ago, guided by Mrs. Maydeen Campbell-Williams, who was the first co-ordinator. The Games celebrate a different kind of energy — the thrill of competitive sport.

And if there is one resource that is as abundant in the South as energy, it is athletic talent. We all know that these games are named as a tribute to Mr. Eldwin Noel, a pioneer of sporting activity in this region. But there are so many more athletes to be proud of. The list of high performers who call the South their home is almost inexhaustible, but I will name just a few recent ones.

- Rondel Sorrillo, a La Brea-born sprinter who took his skills to several international stages, twice earning gold from the Central American and Caribbean Championships

- Shot-putter Cleopatra Borel, from Mayaro, who has brought home countless international medals
- Sprinter Keston Bledman, from San Fernando, who medalled at the 2012 Summer Olympics in the men's 4 x 100 relay
- Young Machel Cedenio, who finished fourth in the boys' 400 metres at the 2011 World Youth Championships; in July 2015 he acquired the Gold Men's 400m (44.97 seconds) IAAF Diamond League Grand Prix , Stockholm, Sweden; January 2016 voted Male Athlete of the Year by First Citizens Sports Foundation
- And please, let us not forget our own Hasely Crawford, whose achievements speak for themselves, and who was also the man who shaped much of NGC's Community Relations programmes during his tenure as Head of that department.

If you feel the same surge of patriotism that I do just by reading this small representation of the nation's athletic talent, I'm sure you will agree with us at NGC that an investment in sport is an investment in national pride.

Speaking of community investment, I want to point out that once again this year's Games are being organised by the La Brea Police Youth Club, one of four such clubs sponsored by NGC throughout the island. These clubs are run by volunteers within the Police service, who help to provide the youths of several communities across the nation with wholesome, productive activities, including homework support and cultural, sporting, and artistic activities.

To me, the fact that these young people have been able to stage such an important event is evidence that these clubs are, indeed, succeeding in

inculcating the ethics of hard work, co-operation, and national pride in this generation. And this is all the proof we need that our social investment is bearing returns.

So on behalf of all of us at NGC, I want to convey my best wishes to everyone who is involved in the Games, especially the organisers, the members of the La Brea Police Youth club, trainers, officials, spectators, media, and, of course, the athletes.

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of all this excitement. I look forward to a great Games.

Thank you.