

VICE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

(Protocols)

It is indeed a great pleasure to welcome you all to the 45th instalment of the National Junior Arts Festival (SANFEST) - **Empowering our Youth through the Arts.**

Our young people are continuously challenged by a rapidly changing and demanding world. They must be equipped with all the needed things that will permit them to meet and manage such challenges and ensure their survival and success. We see the contribution of the National Junior Arts Festival as fundamental and necessary in preparing our young persons for overcoming these life tests. Our programme supports the national educational objectives which promotes enhanced teaching and learning in schools and we continue to see the profound impact of our festival. Empowerment takes place when we ignite the creativity in the minds of our youth and help them hone their abilities through competition thus helping to mould our future conceptualizers, teachers, artists, politicians, visionaries.

The contribution and impact of education and empowerment through the arts can be somewhat summarised in the words of Plato- "that training in excellence from youth upward which makes a man passionately desire to be a perfect citizen and teaches him to rule and to obey with justice."

I dare say that if we examine the history of any person of significant interest, past or present, you will discover elements of their involvement in the arts.

Ms Joyce Kirton, dancer extraordinaire, has been a stalwart and a common denominator of the National Junior Arts Festival since inception, being its very first Festival Director. This visionary in the arts has had many accolades attributed to her - founder of the Les Efants Dance Company and support founder of the Arawaks Dance Group, teacher at every level of Education, Board member of Queens Hall and Naparima Bowl and 1993 recipient of Humming Bird Medal Gold to name a few. Commemorating this year's festival to Ms Kirton is our way of showing gratitude for her many years of assiduous dedication to promoting the arts and culture in our country. Ms Joyce Kirton, we thank and salute you!

And on the topic of dedication I refer now to our flagship sponsor, The National Gas Company of Trinidad & Tobago (NGC). Over a decade ago NGC saw the intrinsic value of supporting the San Fernando Arts Council via the National Junior Arts Festival in our quest of shaping and moulding our future society by infusing the arts into our education. We thank NGC for supporting us over the years in our initiatives that focus on the youth of our country and look forward to many more years of this mutually beneficial partnership. We could not have made it to this milestone without you.

Friends in the arts it is indeed a wonderful occasion at the launch of SANFEST 2015. I look forward to your participation and support during the festival over the coming months but for now I invite you all to sit back relax and enjoy the rest of this evening proceedings.

Thank you.