



**THE NATIONAL GAS COMPANY  
OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO LIMITED**

**Speech Delivered by Mr. Indar Maharaj, NGC President  
at UWI Research Awards  
October 3, 2012**

**SALUTATIONS**

I am extremely pleased to be here at the St. Augustine campus of the University of the West Indies for the inaugural staging of the UWI Research Awards. On behalf of the National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago, I wish to congratulate the University for introducing these Awards which seek to promote a culture of research, scholarship and innovation. NGC is proud to partner with UWI in this important project which is a critical step in the pursuit of academic excellence.

The University's website emphasizes that "developing our research capacity and output in areas of critical importance to the Caribbean and international community is a major priority at the UWI St. Augustine

Campus". NGC also recognizes the need to build this research capacity and we see these Research Awards as not only necessary for honouring outstanding research work but also as a source of inspiration for our gifted academics. We expect that these Awards will also serve to bring together key stakeholders from the public and private sectors, civil society and the wider academic community. This is a major objective of this project because research and innovation are enhanced when diverse ideas and insights are analyzed and the best emerges to the fore. Our rich diversity is therefore one of our greatest assets not only in terms of social and economic development but also with regard to academic research.

Renowned management consultant Dr. Margaret Wheatley has made the following statement, *"innovation is fostered by information gathered from new connections; from insights gained by journeys into other disciplines or places; from active, collegial networks and fluid, open boundaries. Innovation arises from ongoing circles of exchange, where information is not just accumulated or stored, but created. Knowledge is generated anew from connections that weren't there before."*

The wonderful diversity that enriches every aspect of life in Trinidad and Tobago will ensure that the 'ongoing circles of exchange' will expand and that knowledge will be constantly generated anew.

As a result I expect that the exceptional research work that is currently being done here at St. Augustine will increase significantly with the establishment of the UWI Research Awards.

The sponsorship of these Awards is a continuation of long and fruitful partnership between the University of the West Indies and the National Gas Company. This collaboration began in 1994 when NGC gave financial support to the Institute of Engineering at the St. Augustine campus. Since then NGC has sponsored several major activities and projects at UWI. From 2001 to 2003 NGC provided an annual grant to the BSc Petroleum Geoscience programme and from 2005 to 2007 the Company gave \$300,000 each year to the Graduate and Research Fund. In 2010 NGC was the main sponsor for UWI's Conference on the Economy and has also been a regular contributor to the University's Development and Endowment Fund. Over the years this Fund has been a major source of scholarships for deserving students at both the undergraduate and post-graduate levels.

The sponsorship of the UWI Research Awards signals the beginning of a new era of increased collaboration between NGC and the University. Apart from these Awards NGC will also sponsor a Distinguished Lecture series at UWI which will focus on topics such as innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship. Each year a leading expert in an appropriate field will be invited to deliver a Feature Address. This lecture will be part of a Research Forum which would be initiated in 2013 and which would emphasize the sharing of new ideas and the strengthening of research networks.

Another important project arising from our strategic alliance is the sponsorship of a Chair at UWI in Innovation and Entrepreneurship. This sponsorship includes the appointment of a suitably qualified scholar as well as technical and administrative support staff. We expect that this initiative will facilitate the further development of appropriate academic and outreach programmes as well as new networks and partnerships.

Accordingly the main components of NGC's sponsorship which extends to 2016 are:

- The annual Research Awards

- An annual Research Forum which includes the Distinguished Lecture series
- The Chair in Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Together they establish another pillar in the pursuit of academic excellence at UWI. NGC will reveal the value of its sponsorship when the Chair is launched in early 2013; suffice it to say, at this point, that our sponsorship will be for a five year period.

Our support for these projects at the University is in keeping with NGC's unstinting commitment to national development. It is a commitment that spans several sectors of the society including sport, culture, small business development and of course education. This philosophy has established NGC as one of the foremost corporate citizens in Trinidad and Tobago today. We are extremely proud of this reputation since it means that our Corporate Social Responsibility programmes are timely and effective. I assure you that NGC will continue to build on this foundation in the months and years ahead.

I wish to congratulate all those at UWI, St. Augustine who have worked so tirelessly to make the 2012 Research Awards a success. NGC deeply

appreciates the spirit of collaboration and cooperation that has guided all the various meetings and discussions that were held to plan this event. I have no doubt that this relationship will grow even stronger as we work together in the pursuit of academic excellence in Trinidad and Tobago and throughout the Caribbean.

For Further information contact Christine Punnett

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