



The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited

NAAA Michael Johnson Press Conference

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Hasely Crawford Stadium

Remarks by

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It is impossible to deny the excitement we Trinidadians and Tobagonians feel when we see the colours of our national flag unfurled before the world on the field of international competition. The thrill of seeing that rippling fabric of red, white and black can only be matched by the pride of watching our athletes mount the platform to receive their medals.

In short, we love to watch our athletes win.

But winning takes more than natural talent, a love for the sport, and a desire to be at the head of the pack. There are practicalities to consider. Winning at the highest levels requires the early identification of talent, the selection and grooming of our best young athletes, and the strategic collaboration between coaches, trainers, therapists, managers, and many more, who work with the athletes to harness and fulfil their true potential.

In recognition of these requirements, NGC has partnered with the National Association of Athletics Administrations, or NAAAs, to support the development of Track and Field in this country at all levels, from the very youngest participants in our Kids' Athletics Programme and Right on Track, to more seasoned athletes who participate at CARIFTA and the Olympics.

NGC's partnership with the NAAAs is not restricted to financial sponsorship, but also includes interventions such as capacity building workshops, which train the executive in a variety of administrative skills, with a view to strengthening their ability to self-govern and manage their own finances and human resources.

Today we are commemorating the start of yet another collaboration: the engagement of Michael Johnson Performance (MJP) as the agency that will be supporting the NGC/NAAATT Youth Elite Programme in the achievement of their goals.

US athlete Michael Johnson is a veteran of three Olympic games, with several records to his name. He has attained 13 Olympic and World Championship gold medals, and achieved historic track times, including the 400-metre world record.

The company's philosophy is based on providing individually tailored programmes that suit the needs, abilities and goals of each individual athlete, thus optimizing their performance.

MJP will be working closely with athletes of the NGC/NAAAA Youth Elite Programme, which is, in turn, an essential part of NGC's agreement with the NAAAs. The Youth Elite Programme entails our sponsorship of the top ten athletes aged 15 to 20, and who, we believe, can take this country's dreams of international success all the way to the Olympics.

NGC's sponsorship provides funding for the needs of these athletes, including clothing and equipment, nutrition, supplements, transportation, training, and massage therapy. To ensure that these athletes are well-rounded, emphasis is also placed on their academics, life skills, and emotional and social well-being. Athletes

will also receive a stipend to diminish the unnecessary burden of day-to-day financial matters.

These elites have shown marked improvement, with most of them achieving personal bests over the course of their training. All but one represented the national team at regional and international competitions, including CARIFTA, at which several athletes brought home medals and one achieved a record. We look forward to their continued improvement, and eventual transition onto the senior national team.

Through this new alliance, MJP will assist in elevating these young athletes to a world class level by providing services such as athletic assessment, consulting and support services, psychometric testing, and health and wellness assessments. This will result in the athletes having a greater understanding of themselves, their strengths, and weaknesses. It will also help their coaches and trainers apply methods, specific, to each athlete's personal requirements.

The NGC/NAAA Youth Elite Programme is tied to the Athlete Development element of our sponsorship agreement with the NAAA, and is well aligned with the focus area of Youth Development in NGC's Corporate Social Responsibility Programme.

It is with great excitement and a sense of positivity that we at NGC look forward to this partnership with MJP, especially since we are building on many past successes. We have looked on as young local athletes shone in events such as the NGC / NAAA Juvenile and Junior Championships and the IAAF World Championships.

The outpouring of national pride at one of our most recent successes, in the Men's 4 x 400M at IAAF, is just one example of how important it is for our up-and-coming athletes to sharpen their skills,

gain competition experience, and raise their profile in the eye of the public. Their successes belong not only to them, but to an entire country that is rooting for them.

The NGC Right On Track Programme is also moving along to our great satisfaction, bringing opportunities for experience in Track and Field to over 15,000 participants in 105 communities. The programme impacts on more than 8 institutions; has trained over 88 coaches, and helped form or restore 7 sport clubs.

As successful as this programme has been in terms of the effect it has on the athletic development of so many young athletes, it is also a vital element of the country's strategy for discovering and developing young talent.

So it is with great optimism that we at NGC look forward to this newest element of our partnership with the NAAAs, and we have every reason to believe that our relationship with Michael Johnson Performance will yield tangible and positive results. I therefore want to thank MJM for agreeing to this alliance, and we at NGC pledge to support you in any way we can.

To our friends at the NAAAs, I want to say what a privilege it has been to work with you in this aspect of youth development, something that has been dear to our hearts for many years, ever since our own Olympic great, Mr. Hasely Crawford, first conceived many of NGC's early Community Relations programmes more than 20 years ago.

I feel that the passion with which we pursue our Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives is proof that NGC, as a wholly local, 100% national company, is devoted not only to fulfilling its mandate of

energy development, but also to seeing its fellow nationals achieve glory and success in all they do.

Because we are Trinidadians and Tobagonians, a bold, energetic, creative people, whose value exceeds that of any other natural resource that can be found under or above the ground. And NGC is pleased and proud to play a role in unleashing that energy.

Thank you.