

## Media Release

### NGC and UTT collaborate on scholarship programme for YEP athletes

**17 March 2023**

The National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (NGC) has continuously demonstrated its commitment to the key role that corporate T&T can play in athlete success by building a strong support system for track and field. For this reason, NGC has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), to implement a scholarship programme for the Tier I student-athletes of NGC/NAAATT Youth Elite Programme (YEP) who are interested in pursuing a tertiary education at the university.

The scholarships, which will be funded by NGC, will cover all costs associated with YEP athletes' course of studies as well as other aspects of their athletic preparation and training. The MOA essentially establishes a formal relationship between NGC and UTT, where UTT will provide education, accommodation and training facilities for YEP athletes.

Beyond the opportunity to advance their education within any programme of study they choose, the athletes are also expected to benefit from UTT's own strategic partnerships, with and access to international networks and federations that are involved in the world of athletics. The MOA aims to leverage Trinidad and Tobago's local resources, talent, capabilities and facilities, while facilitating opportunity for exposure to regional and international sporting competitions.

The scholarship programme will ultimately support the development of a first-class environment for the student-athlete, which is meant to produce well-rounded individuals thriving in both academics and athletics and equipping them for life beyond sport. The structured programme seeks to build the capacity of the selected athletes enrolled in the YEP scholarship programme, by providing financial assistance as well as instruction in strength and conditioning, physiotherapy, psychology, nutrition and life skills.

NGC President, Mark Loquan remarked, "NGC has been actively forging pathways to embed sustainability in its CSR programmes through strategic partnerships. Building a sustainable future for any sector is dictated by a focus on ESGs – *environmental, social and governance* standards, and sport is no exception. Sport can improve learning outcomes by fostering academic performance and achievement, leadership abilities, and concentration and focus capabilities. Therefore NGC's partnership with UTT for a scholarship programme was conceived from clear and indisputable synergies around the goal of advancing sport and student athletes in Trinidad and Tobago.

NGC is excited about the immense potential of this collaboration with UTT. The company choose to partner with the national university based on noteworthy achievements in academics as well as its tremendous experience in the sector of sport. This experience is further validated by UTT's stellar record of producing national and elite athletes. We anticipate great and positive impact from the scholarship programme as it allows for a shared philosophy and approach to student-athlete education."

Professor Prakash Persad, President, UTT, stated that "As the national University, UTT's commitment to the development of local sport is of the utmost importance, and is displayed by our unyielding support of our student-athletes who continue to excel in various disciplines.

Our track and field athletes in particular, have gone on to achieve success both locally and regionally, and this partnership with NGC will ensure they are well poised to represent the country on a global scale."

*About NGC/NAATT Youth Elite Programme (YEP):*

*Launched in 2017, this programme has sought to provide specialist coaching to a select cohort of athletes who have excelled at regional and international events and proven their 'podium potential.' The programme aims to help these athletes attain excellence in track and field while emphasising the significance of having an all-round academic and life skills foundation. YEP adopts a holistic view of athlete development and involves a multidisciplined approach to achieving the programme's goals. It provides coaching, medical assistance, and other benefits to our elite athletes through effective administration, accountability, and the sound delivery of the programme. Upon approved enrolment, Tier 1 athletes will enjoy all benefits associated with the programme. As the programme progresses, it is hoped that registered Tier 1 athletes will gradually move in two directions – university or embedded into the senior team for the next Olympic cycle.*

**For more information:**

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Photo 1:

NGC President, Mr. Mark Loquan and UTT, President Professor Prakash Persad, sign the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to implement a scholarship programme for the Tier I student-athletes of NGC/NAAATT Youth Elite Programme (YEP).



Photo 2;

(L to R) – Mr. Myles Lewis, Head, Corporate Social Responsibility, NGC; Mr. Mark Loquan, President, NGC; Ms. Antonia Burton, Athletic Coach, UTT; Mr. Savion Joseph, Student-Athlete, UTT; Professor Praksah Persad, President, UTT; and Mr. Ian Pritchard, Senior Manager, Sport and Recreation, UTT.