

CLOSING REMARKS BY MARIA SUPERVILLE-NEILSON, PROGRAMME DIRECTOR OF THE ANTHONY N SABGA CARIBBEAN AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE AT THE AWARDS CEREMONY HELD AT HILTON TRINIDAD & CONFERENCE CENTRE ON SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2015.

I am Happy! I am very Happy!

Dr Anthony N Sabga, Chairman of the ANSA McAL Foundation and Patron of the Awards and Mrs Minerva Sabga

Sir Shridath Ramphal, Chairman of the Regional Eminent Persons Selection Panel, Lady Ramphal and other members of the Panel and their spouses.

2015 Laureates: Dr Paloma Mohamed Martin, Mr Herbert Samuel, Professor Patrick Hosein and Professor Suresh Narine

Mr A Norman Sabga, Chairman and Chief Executive of the ANSA McAL Group and Mrs Alma Sabga.

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Laureate the Very Reverend Monsignor Gregory Ramkissoon

Country Nominating Committee Chairs and Members

ANSA McAL Parent Board and Executive Directors

ANSA McAL Foundation Directors

Standing Laureates of prior years

Members of the Media

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Evening and what a happy occasion this is!

Ten years ago the ANSA McAL Foundation gave the Regional Eminent Persons Panel a very broad mandate – Award Caribbean Excellence. With that mandate the Panel had autonomy; the members would establish a meticulous and fair process and they would appoint persons of judgement and integrity who were themselves noteworthy in their respective fields, to oversee the process.

But the inauguration of the Anthony N Sabga Caribbean Awards for Excellence did not materialise overnight. Fourteen years prior, the seed had been planted by Mr Wilfred Naimool and the idea of such awards would float amongst the pages of the Foundations meetings stymied in part by Dr Sabga's humility and the notion that an award in his name should be established after his life here on earth. Thankfully, when the idea was shared with Sir Ellis Clarke, Mr Michael Mansoor, and many others, he was persuaded otherwise.

The length of time was also useful from the point of view that this was a programme being established for future generations; those yet unborn who would both be recipients and administrators of the awards and therefore working out the process was not to be hurried.

The Panel set about appointing other distinguished persons to Country Nominating

Committees in Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, the OECS and Trinidad & Tobago. A total of 88 persons have served on our Committees, half of whom continue to give of their time and expertise from inception to the present time.

There had to be a base, here in Trinidad & Tobago, a Programme Office that would provide the administrative support to all the Committees and to the Selection Panel. Mr Francis Lewis was appointed Programme Director with responsibility for the architecture and structure of the Programme its project management and implementation. We still use the Programme Manual developed by Mr Lewis and his team, and as expected when you work with any process enhancements were made and areas expanded.

Critical to the process as well was the appointment of Researchers coordinated by a Research Supervisor who verified candidates' CVs

and presented detailed research reports to enable the Committees to make informed decisions.

One year following the inauguration of the Awards Programme, the first Awards Ceremony was held and the rest is history.

In the short space of 10 years we have unearthed 27 Laureates whose work cover areas of film, the literary and performing arts, medicine, ecology, archaeology, adult literacy, plant genetics, music, women's and children's rights, volcanology, solar energy, computer science, tropical epidemiology, behavioural science and entrepreneurship. These 27 Caribbean men and women have received a total of TT\$12 million, which we sincerely hope has helped to advance their work.

Because we believe that to advance the work of gifted individuals is to brighten and strengthen the future of the region and its people. Each one of our laureates has contributed to this end, and our 2015

Laureates take the reins at the lead of our enterprise with aplomb.

Our laureates this year stand at the tip of the critical sciences of information technology, alternative energy, and the integration of science into our everyday lives to being rapid and economically viable change. Indeed it is this concern, which has been a preoccupation of our patron, that led to the introduction of a new category, entrepreneurship.

We are more certain now than when we started as to the viability of this exercise, and are acutely aware of its challenges. The major challenge we have faced is “buy-in”, getting the rest of the region to accept that this is real, and it is what it says it is. We have focused on our core function, that is finding and celebrating exceptional people. But we have become aware that this core function requires ancillary activities – mainly disseminating the knowledge of

our laureates, about their work and lives, to the wider region.

It is for this reason that, as of this year, we return to a biennial cycle. Our next awards ceremony will be in 2017. We intend to use the gap year to focus on dissemination, and deploying our laureates in broad-based educational and public awareness programmes. We hope to move into the different territories to do this.

The laureates may rest assured that we will not be demanding: there are 27 as of tonight, so 54 hands will make light work.

Ladies and Gentlemen, With all that said, I cannot bring the evening to a close without expressing the gratitude of Dr Anthony Sabga and the Directors of the ANSA McAL Foundation to the many persons who have contributed to our Ceremony. Our Regional Eminent Persons Panel headed by Sir Shridath Ramphal, our Country

Nominating Committees, our Research Supervisor, Skye Hernandez and our five Researchers. Thank you for the work you have done of which we can be proud. We have made the region a better place by pointing its attention in an immediate and tangible way to excellence in our midst. Thank You.

To Monsignor Gregory Ramkisson Thank You for agreeing so willing to be our guest speaker and for showing us how you have been able multiply your Award a hundredfold!

To His Excellency The Most Honourable Sir Patrick Allen, Governor General of Jamaica, Thank You for providing the Foreword for our Programme Booklet.

To Mr A Norman Sabga and the rest of ANSA McAL Ltd Thanks for the support given to the Programme Office.

To CNC3, MacFarlane Designs, Paria Publishing, Pepper Advertising, Hilton Trinidad &

Conference Centre, and our charming MC, Naette Lee. Thank You.

We trust that Dr Anthony N Sabga's vision and generosity will continue to bear substantial fruit to the benefit of our Caribbean people.

I must also, as we mark our decennium, pay tribute to Mr Michael K Mansoor, the last chairman of our regional Eminent Persons Panel who departed this life last year. Mr Mansoor was the person who pulled the disparate parts of this award together in 2005. It was his knowledge of the different territories of the region that allowed us to identify and recruit suitable persons to fill our country committee needs. It was his vision of a unified Caribbean which pulled together the Eminent Persons Panel. And it was his humility which caused him to decline the initial term as chair of that Panel, from 2005 - 2008. He insisted that someone of Sir Ellis Clarke's stature was appropriate and necessary to give the committee the

gravitas it needed.

These Awards owe much to Mike Mansoor, and we acknowledge and celebrate his contribution tonight.

Finally, we have chronicled the last 10 years into a coffee table book which will be distributed as you leave us this evening as our gift to you.

We now begin another chapter. Will it be as exciting as the last? I have absolutely no doubt it will be more than so, by the grace of God.

To all of you, Thank you, Thank You for celebrating this milestone with us. Do enjoy the rest of this happy occasion.

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