

28 July 2020

All Media Outlets:

SUBJECT: Response to Media Reports on sanctions Imposed by NACAC

We, the below named members of the board of directors of the Cayman CARIFTA 2019, the entity formed to act as the Local Organising Committee (“LOC”) of the 2019 CARIFTA Games (“Games”) wish to address the recent media reports in relation to sanctions imposed by the North American Central American and Caribbean Athletic Association (“NACAC”) on our Cayman Islands’ athletes and the allegation that the LOC is to blame for those sanctions.

In a letter which has been circulating in local media, CIAA President and LOC Co-Chair, Lance Barnes purportedly announced to the CIAA membership that NACAC has banned local athletes from participating “*in any NACAC and World Athletics athletic event including the Olympic Games*” as a result of the LOC’s failure to refund “*added charges made to member federations that contravened NACAC standing policy.*”

We unequivocally reject that any such reimbursement is owed by the LOC and we stand firmly behind our decision to consider the claim as invalid, prioritising our fiduciary obligation to safeguard the funding that was entrusted to us by the Cayman Islands Government and other sponsors of the 2019 CARIFTA Games.

Our factual account of the events leading up to this most unfortunate result is as follows.

The LOC ‘s obligations were set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between NACAC, CIAA and the LOC dated 12 October 2018 (“MOU”). In accordance with the MOU, the LOC was required to provide accommodation for the five-night period commencing 18th-22nd April 2019. We confirm that the LOC booked and paid for all such accommodations in line with the MOU. The MOU further allowed for the LOC to propose a rate for (i) extra team officials above the fixed limit and (ii) occupancy outside the period of the Games. The relevant section on Accommodation Rates has been pasted below

ACCOMMODATION RATES

For the 5-day period of the 2019 CARIFTA Championships /Games, the CARIFTA 2019 LOC is requested at minimum to bear the full board accommodation expenses of all athletes and team officials.

The CARIFTA 2019 LOC may propose a rate for extra team officials above any fixed limit that may be set by the NACAC AA Council, for single room occupancy and for occupancy outside the period of the 2019 CARIFTA Championships.

Additional specifics relating to the conduct of the Games and obligations of the LOC and attending Federations were separately set out in a Technical Manual which was drafted by the LOC (which included members of the CIAA). The Technical Manual was reviewed by members of NACAC and, in accordance with their explicit direction, reviewed and approved for distribution to the Member Federations by Mr Barnes in his capacity as president of CIAA. The relevant section on Accommodation Levies has been pasted below

7.2. Accommodation Levy

An accommodation levy of US\$150.00 per team member according to the official team size quota must be paid to the LOC Finance Office before teams can be accredited and checked into the Championships Village. Additionally, the Hotel’s rate and meals package rate will apply for excess personnel on each team exceeding the set quota.

The Local Organizing Committee MUST be notified in writing by January 31st, 2019 to ensure that any additional officials over the quota can be accommodated at the Championships hotels.

Payments can be made in US\$ or by debit/credit card.

This Technical Manual was circulated to participating Member Federations, including members who are on NACAC Council more than two months prior to the Games, none of whom raised questions or concerns about accommodation costs for persons exceeding the quota or staying outside the 5-night period. In fact, as the Games approached, all but one country who has still not paid any part of the levy, made the payments based on the requirements set out in the Technical Manual.

We became aware of concerns surrounding the fees and allegations that we had breached policy in relation to accommodation costs for extra officials following the meeting of the NACAC congress held on 22nd April 2019. Other than Mr. Barnes, the LOC was not represented at that meeting. It is our understanding that in response to concerns raised and in the absence of an adequate explanation from Mr Barnes, the Minister indicated her commitment to meeting the NACAC Agreement and reimbursing the Member Federations where necessary.

Per the Minister's request the LOC reviewed the MOU, the Technical Manual and all correspondence relating to same to ensure we had not missed a notification of the policy in question. An inquiry was sent to the, then NACAC president, Mr. Victor Lopez, as well as other members of the NACAC Council, though no clarification was received. In late 2019 Cydonie Mothersill (CIAA General Secretary and then incoming NACAC Council Member) finally sought to clarify what we had suspected all along. There was no documented policy. Per Ms. Mothersill's clarification it was 'tradition' that part of the accommodation costs for excess officials be absorbed by the LOC. This position was reaffirmed by President Lopez and Treasurer Alain Jean Pierre.

The LOC went about ensuring all financial obligations for the Games were met and on 22nd January 2020 convened a meeting to decide on two final payment requests which were in dispute, one of which was the levy reimbursement for excess officials which amounted to just under US\$5,000 ("Levy Reimbursement").

The meeting was quorate and by unanimous decision of those in attendance it was resolved that the Levy Reimbursement request be denied as:

- the fees charged were sanctioned by the terms of the MOU and fully outlined in the Technical Manual
- the Technical Manual was agreed and approved by all relevant parties and served as proper notification to Member Federations
- It was unreasonable that at this late stage NACAC would seek to enforce a policy which they could not evidence exists, particularly in light of the various financial commitments within the MOU that had not been realized on their part.

The Honorable Minister was notified of the LOC's decision and rationale behind it. To be clear the LOC did not receive a direction from the Minister to pay the Reimbursement Levy, rather the Minister entrusted us to ensure that if the request was in keeping with the agreement (MOU), it should be honored. We maintain that it was not.

The LOC was created with the primary objective of executing a quality Games. All members of the LOC vowed to do just that, utilizing the highest standards of professionalism, governance and financial integrity. Our challenge to the Reimbursement Levy was in keeping with those principles. Despite the many challenges faced, we believe we delivered on all we were tasked to do.

It should be noted that although the LOC has been accused of causing the sanctions against our local athletes, we have not received any direct communication outlining our alleged wrongdoing from the NACAC or the CIAA. We have become aware of the current situation through the same medium as the general public - the media. On that basis we are not in a position to comment on the accuracy of the details in the public domain including the grounds for the sanction.

It is unfortunate that what was an otherwise extraordinary event has been marred by the current state of affairs. It's even more disheartening that its greatest impact has been directed at our athletes. We are at pains to understand the grounds behind the sanctions or how they could be deemed proportionate to the accusations being levied and why they are not being challenged by the local body responsible for protecting local athletes. We too have many unanswered questions.

Yours sincerely,

**Jacqueline Haynes
Osbert Francis
Evelyn Rockett**

**Darrel Rankine
Scimone Campbell
Collin Anglin**