THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (IOC) OFFERS THE FOLLOWING VIDEO NEWS RELEASE TO ALL NEWS AGENCIES, BROADCASTERS AND ALL ONLINE PLATFORMS FREE OF CHARGE

STORY HEADLINE: Trinidad and Tobago relay team awarded Beijing 2008 gold medal at reallocation ceremony in Lausanne

LOCATION: The Olympic Museum, Lausanne, Switzerland
DATE: 5 July 2022
LANGUAGE: English

STORY SCRIPT: The Men’s 4x100 relay team from Trinidad and Tobago have finally received gold medals from the Olympic Games Beijing 2008. The medals were awarded in a ceremony today at The Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Aaron Armstrong, Keston Bledman, Marc Burns, Emmanuel Callender and Richard Thompson each received their medal from International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach.

The ceremony was held in line with the Olympic Medal Reallocation Ceremony principles established in 2018, and follows the IOC Executive Board decision to reallocate the gold medal after the disqualification of the Jamaica team.

Thompson described the team’s emotions on receiving the medals: “I am very excited and relieved at the same time. This has been a long time coming. We should have originally won these medals 14 years ago, but the circumstances were beyond our control. We are happy that the IOC acted with immediacy and all the relevant bodies continued to do everything they could for the integrity of the sport and the Olympics in general.”

He explained how special it was to have the ceremony at The Olympic Museum: “When you see some of the names that are on the wall here, like Jesse Owens, Michael Phelps, Michael Johnson, Roger Federer - they are greats, they go beyond just sport, they have the ability to reach people from all walks of life and different parts of the globe. So, it is a huge honour for us to be here to donate items of ours as well from the final, and to have a space alongside these people.”

Addressing the athletes, President Bach said: “This is a very special moment. I am very happy that you can share it with your family members present here and that you can share it, hopefully, with many of your fans back home in Trinidad and Tobago. I think we should salute all your countrymen and women here from Lausanne.

“Our feelings are mixed,” continued President Bach. “All of us, and in particular you, would have preferred to have this ceremony in the Olympic Stadium at Beijing 2008 and to share this feeling immediately after your victory, to enjoy it in the emotion of the moment, having crossed the finish line first. On the other hand, and in sport anyway, we should always look on the bright side of life. Finally, justice is being done.”
“Nobody in the Olympic Movement, and in particular the IOC, just accepted the result of Beijing at the time and forgot about everything. Instead we took the necessary precautions to make sure that cheats can never feel safe, by storing samples and by re-analysing the samples when new methods were available to do justice.

“There are two parts of justice: one is to catch and sanction the cheats, but this is not the ultimate goal of what we are doing and what we intend to do. Our goal is to protect you, the clean athletes. Sanctioning the cheats is just a means to an end. Therefore we should just enjoy this together. We should enjoy and be happy that this could finally happen. Now you can feel the pure joy and satisfaction. You have the final confirmation that you have won this Olympic final, that you won this Olympic race, that you won this Olympic gold medal by being clean and fair athletes and by being role models. Not only for the young generation in Trinidad and Tobago, but for the athletes around the world.

The Medal Reallocation Principles were established in 2018 following a recommendation from the IOC Athletes’ Commission. They provide athletes with a menu of options - including a ceremony at The Olympic Museum - to receive their medals in a way that recognises their achievements.

The awarding of the Men’s 4x100 relay gold to its rightful winners was made possible through the re-analysis of stored anti-doping testing samples from Beijing 2008. Since Athens 2004, samples have been stored after each Games so they can be re-analysed when new information or more sophisticated detection tests and methods become available. After Rio 2016, the sample storage period was increased from eight to 10 years.

Ahead of Tokyo 2020, the IOC Executive Board approved a budget of up to USD 5 million to cover the long-term storage for up to 10 years of Pre-Games testing samples, which are collected by International Federations and National Anti-Doping Organisations. The programme is managed by the International Testing Agency.

SHOT LOG:
00:00 Applause - Aaron Armstrong, Keston Bledman, Marc Burns, Emmanuel Callender and Richard Thompson names announced as they walk up onto the stage.
00:27 Gold medals brought on stage.
00:30 Thomas Bach, IOC President presenting Aaron Armstrong with his gold medal.
00:35 Wide shot of stage as Keston Bledman receives gold medal.
00:37 Close up as Keston Bledman.
00:42 Wide shot as Marc Burns receives his gold medal from President Thomas Bach.
00:45 Close up of Marc Burns.
00:50 Wide shot as Emmanuel Callender receives his gold medal.
00:53 Close up of Emmanuel Callender.
00:59 Wide shot as Richard Thompson receives his gold medal.
01:03 Close up of Richard Thompson.
01:07 Applause - Aaron Armstrong, Keston Bledman, Marc Burns, Emmanuel Callender and Richard Thompson on stage with their gold medals.
01:13 Diane Henderson, President, Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee, presenting athletes with flowers.
01:19 Applause - VO English - Ladies and Gentlemen your Olympic Champions. Aaron Armstrong, Keston Bledman, Marc Burns, Emmanuel Callender and Richard Thompson on stage with their gold medals and bouquets.
01:31 VO English - And now Ladies and Gentlemen the Anthem of Trinidad and Tobago
Pan from Diane Henderson, President, Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee and
Thomas Bach, IOC President, President to the athletes.
01:39 Athletes turn to their flag as the National Anthem of Trinidad and Tobago is played.
01:46 Athletes presented with the flag of Trinidad and Tobago.
01:50 Aaron Armstrong, Keston Bledman, Marc Burns, Emmanuel Callender and Richard
Thompson holding the Trinidad and Tobago flag for the cameras.
02:02 Wide shot of the stage as Athletes hold their flag on stage.

02:04 SOUNDBITE: Thomas Bach, IOC President (English Language)
“Our feelings are mixed, I guess. All of us, and in particular you, would have preferred
to have this ceremony in the Olympic Stadium at Beijing 2008 and to share this feeling
immediately after your victory, to enjoy it in the emotion of the moment, having crossed
the finish line first. On the other hand, and in sport anyway, we should always look on
the bright side of life. Finally, justice is being done, and nobody in the Olympic
Movement, and in particular in the IOC, just accepted the result of Beijing at the time
and forgot about everything. We took the necessary precautions to make sure that
cheats can never feel safe, by storing the samples and by re-analysing the samples
when new methods were available to do justice.”

04:01 SOUNDBITE: Thomas Bach, IOC President (English Language)
“It is a clear warning to all the cheats, never feel safe and it's a warning to them
that we are not giving up, but we are using the latest methods that are available in
science to catch them even if they thought at the time that they had found
something that could not be detected so the clear message is never feel safe and
the other clear message is we want to protect the clean athletes and for this we
undertake every possible effort.”

04:42 SOUNDBITE: Richard Thompson, Olympic Champion, Trinidad and Tobago
(English Language)
“What I’m truly proud of is the message we’ve sent by the way we’ve completed.
We at no point in time, not one of us have been implicated in or tried to shortcut or
undermine the system of what it means to participate in this sport.”

05:05 SOUNDBITE: Aaron Armstrong, Olympic Champion, Trinidad and Tobago
(English Language)
“It’s big, I think it’s the third medal for the country, as it’s a small country for us to
bring this kind of joy and recognition back to the country is always a great feeling
and we know the people of Trinidad and Tobago the key is you know our families
is really going to be celebrating us because this is a huge moment in history for
the country.”

05:28 SOUNDBITE: Emmanuel Callender, Olympic Champion, Trinidad and Tobago
(English Language)
I think it’s similar to being at the Olympic Games. Not fully, but you know you get
some sense of pride in the country and you know you kind of remember walking
through the Museum and seeing all the greats before you, what they have done
and the importance of the Olympics. I think it is really good.
05:49 SOUNDBITE: Keston Bledman, Olympic Champion, Trinidad and Tobago (English Language)
“I mean like, was I trying to hold back my tears. I heard some of my teammates sniffing and I was like don’t blink, don’t blink, don’t blink and if I blink it was going to run right down my face. But the feeling, it was an awesome feeling. I can’t even explain to you, because it was a long wait, but I can’t beat the feeling. Hearing the anthem played, I really can’t explain but it really was a tremendously amazing feeling.”

06:20 SOUNDBITE: Marc Burns, Olympic Champion, Trinidad and Tobago (English Language)
“Elated, knowing that we are part of an elite pantheon of athletes showing integrity for the sport and also sportsmanship at the highest level, you know, nothing but honour and a great jubilant feeling to represent our country and the sport as well. You know, the younger generation. It’s just heartfelt."

06:50 Aaron Armstrong, Keston Bledman, Marc Burns, Emmanuel Callender and Richard Thompson holding their medals for the cameras.

Olympic Games, Beijing 2008 - Men’s 4x100 Metre Relay Round 1 - Heat 1
06:58 Keston Bledman standing at the starting blocks waiting to start the heat
07:06 Aerial shot of the stadium before the heat is run
07:09 Keston Bledman settling into his blocks at the starting line
07:17 Start of the race
07:24 Marc Burns baton handover to Aaron Armstrong
07:32 Richard Thompson running the last 100 meters.
07:37 Close up of Richard Thompson at the end of the heat.

Olympic Games, Beijing 2008 - Men’s 4x100 Metre Relay Final
07:43 Keston Bledman waiting to start the Men’s 4x100 Metre Relay Final
07:52 Wide shot of the stadium before the final is run
07:57 Keston Bledman settling into his blocks at the starting line
08:03 Start of the Men’s 4x100 Metre Relay Final
08:08 Marc Burns baton hand over to Emmanuel Callender
08:14 Emmanuel Callender running the third leg of the race
08:17 Richard Thompson slow motion running to camera
08:24 Richard Thompson celebrating at the end of the race
08:28 Keston Bledman, Marc Burns, Emmanuel Callender, Richard Thompson celebrate after the final race.
08:33 Trinidad & Tobago 4x100 Metre Relay team have pictures taken with their national flag.

-- ENDS --

© Copyright International Olympic Committee 2022. This content is the exclusive property of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). IOC-VNRs are for bona fide news reporting purposes only and all rights required for their production have been cleared. Terms and Conditions of the IOC Newsroom and olympics.com apply.

####
The International Olympic Committee is a not-for-profit, civil, non-governmental, international organization made up of volunteers which is committed to building a better world through sport. It redistributes more than 90 per cent of its income to the wider sporting movement, which means that every day the equivalent of USD 4.2 million goes to help athletes and sports organizations at all levels around the world.

###

For more information, please contact the IOC Media Relations Team:
Tel: +41 21 621 6000, email: pressoffice@olympic.org, or visit our web site at www.olympics.com

Broadcast quality footage
The IOC Newsroom: http://iocnewsroom.com

Videos
YouTube: www.youtube.com/iocmedia

Photos
For an extensive selection of photos available shortly after each event, please follow us on Flickr.

To request archive photos and footage, please contact our Images team at: images@olympic.org.

Social media
For up-to-the-minute information on the IOC and regular updates, please follow us on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.