



# TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO GAZETTE (EXTRAORDINARY)

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Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

2013 Public Statement of

## **THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

in compliance with

**Sections 7, 8 and 9 of the Freedom of Information Act, Chapter 22:02, Laws of Trinidad and Tobago (FOIA)**

In accordance with Sections 7, 8 and 9 of the Freedom of Information Act, (FOIA) Chapter 22:02 of the Laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago the Office of the Prime Minister is required by law to publish the following Statements, which list the documents and information generally available to the Public.

The Act gives members of the public:

- (1) A legal right for each person to access information held by the Office of the Prime Minister.
- (2) A legal right for each person to have official information relating to him/her- self amended where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading.
- (3) A legal right to obtain reasons for adverse decisions made regarding an applicant's request for information under the FOIA.
- (4) A legal right to complain to the Ombudsman and to apply to the High Court for Judicial Review to challenge adverse decisions made under the FOIA.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

To provide the best professional support to the Prime Minister, utilizing contemporary systems and technology, to enable fulfillment of this mandate as Head of Government.

### **SECTION 7 STATEMENTS**

#### **Section 7 (1) (a) (i)**

##### **1) STATEMENT OF THE FUNCTION AND STRUCTURE**

The Office of the Prime Minister is located at Nos. 13-15 St. Clair Avenue, St Clair, Port of Spain.

1472—Continued

The Office of the Prime Minister provides professional and other support to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet and is responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of decisions taken by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet in order to ensure and promote the effective and efficient conduct of business of Government.

The Secretariats/Divisions/Units that comprise the Office of the Prime Minister are as follows:

### **Secretariats**

- Cabinet Secretariat
- National Security Council Secretariat
- National Awards Committee Secretariat
- Sport and Culture Fund Secretariat
- HIV Secretariat
- Financial Assistance(Studies) Programme Secretariat
- Commission of Enquiry

### **Corporate Services Division**

### **Public Information and Communication Unit**

### **International Relations and Protocol Unit**

### **Internal Audit**

### **Office of the Prime Minister Security Unit**

### **Unemployment Relief Programme**

### **Freedom of Information Unit**

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARIATS/DIVISIONS/UNITS IN THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

### **SECRETARIATS**

- **Cabinet Secretariat**

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago the Cabinet consists of the Prime Minister who is appointed by the President, and other Ministers (of whom one shall be the Attorney General) chosen from among the members of the House of Representatives and the Senators appointed by the President acting in accordance with advice of the Prime Minister. The Cabinet has the general direction and control of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and is collectively responsible to Parliament.

The Cabinet is serviced by a Cabinet Secretariat which provides specialized administrative support as well as support to certain Sub-committees of Cabinet. The Secretariat receives submissions from all Ministers of Government in the form of Cabinet Notes for consideration by Cabinet. The Cabinet Secretariat records the decisions of Cabinet and transmits those decisions to the relevant public authorities in the form of Cabinet Minutes for implementation.

▪ **National Security Council Secretariat**

The National Security Council consists of the Prime Minister as Chairperson, the Attorney General, the Minister of National Security, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Energy and Energy Affairs, the Minister of the People and Social Development and one other Minister appointed at the discretion of the Prime Minister. The National Security Council is charged with the responsibility of monitoring matters relating to defence and national security and is serviced by a Secretariat comprising staff employed to assist the Council in the execution of its duties.

▪ **National Awards Committee Secretariat**

The National Awards Committee was established by Letters Patent establishing the Order of the Trinity in 1969. The Order of the Trinity was amended in 2008 to the Distinguished Society of Trinidad and Tobago. The Committee selects persons nominated by members of the public, deemed suitable for National Awards based on selection criteria. The Secretariat is responsible for the annual advertisement of the awards and the collating of the nominations received for submission to the National Awards Committee.

▪ **Sport and Culture Fund Secretariat**

The Sport and Culture Fund Act, Chapter 40:54, Laws of Trinidad and Tobago, provides for the establishment and administration of the Sports and Culture Fund for the purpose of facilitating the provision of sporting and cultural activities and is available to all bona fide sport and cultural groups in communities in Trinidad and Tobago. Assistance is given in the form of grants. The Board established by the Act, determines the eligibility of individuals and groups. The Members of the Board are selected in accordance with Section 9 of the Sport and Culture Fund Act, Chapter 40:50

The Secretariat receives and collates all requests for the funding of sport and cultural activities which are to be submitted on prescribed application forms and addressed to the Secretary of the Sport and Culture Fund, Office of the Prime Minister, Nos. 13-15 St. Clair Avenue, St Clair, Port of Spain. Application forms are completed in accordance with the rules set out in a booklet entitled "A Guide to the Sports and Culture Fund" and are also available at the Office of the Prime Minister.

The applications are submitted to the Board for consideration at its monthly meetings.

### ▪ HIV Secretariat

The Secretariat falls under the purview of the Office of the Prime Minister. It is responsible for performing a coordinating, monitoring and advisory role in respect of the implementation of the national expanded response according to the key priority areas identified in the National Strategic Plan and the key deliverables reporting to the Interim HIV Agency. The main functions of the HIV Secretariat are to:

- 1) Ensure that the strategic direction of action plans of Ministries/Departments is maintained;
- 2) Monitor and evaluate the implementation and attainment of goals of all actions plans of Ministries/Departments, NGO's and Civil Societies to meet global level alignment;
- 3) Collate information and prepare reports and briefs for local and international agencies;
- 4) Prepare reports on NGO's and Civil Societies etc. seeking funding from international agencies;
- 5) Ensure that all Ministries/Departments, NGOs etc. commit to an inclusive National Response;
- 6) Champion the Legislative agenda to support HIV/AIDS programmes, plans, etc;
- 7) Utilize feedback and reports to give direction to areas of research on HIV/AIDS in Trinidad and Tobago;
- 8) Undertake research to include issues which can support and be party to HIV/AIDS programmes;
- 9) Identify training and capacity gaps to meet the continually changing HIV/AIDS epidemic;
- 10) Develop and implement a system to validate registration audited accounts and goal-achievements of all NGOs, Civil Societies etc;
- 11) Continually review the role of HIV/AIDS Coordinators in terms of changing demands;
- 12) Ensure that HIV/AIDS Coordinators generate and analyze sector data and prepare sector reports;
- 13) Minutes of meetings of the HIV Interim Agency
- 14) Policy documents such as National HIV Strategic Plans and Policies
  - a. Annual reports
  - b. National strategic plans
  - c. National and sectoral policies on HIV and AIDS
  - d. Procedure and training manuals for staff
- 15) Statistical reports on HIV and AIDS
- 16) Official publications such as newsletters and brochures
- 17) Legal documents with respect to HIV and AIDS

- **Financial Assistance (Studies) Programme Secretariat**

This unit is specifically established to provide supplementary financial support in circumstances of need and is not intended to be a student's main source of funding. It supports the disadvantaged students who are struggling to meet the cost associated with the pursuit of academic studies and/or encounter financial difficulties during their programme of study. These students are unable to meet the cost of studies even with assistance from statutory or other sources of funding.

- **Commission of Enquiry**

The Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Chapter 19:01 provides for the appointment of a Commission by the President to enquire into, the conduct of any officer in the public service in Trinidad and Tobago, the conduct or management of any department of the public service or any public or local institution, or into any matter in which an enquiry would, in the opinion of the President of Trinidad and Tobago, be for the public welfare.

The Office of the Prime Minister and the Attorney General have the administrative responsibility for the provision of staff, that may be required to support the work of the Commissions of Enquiry. All expenses associated with the Commissions of Enquiry are met by the Office of the Prime Minister.

In this regard, it should be noted that currently there are two Commissions of Enquiry appointed by the President. These are:

I. Events surrounding the attempted coup in Trinidad and Tobago on July 27, 1990, with a view to ascertaining why such events occurred and what action should be taken in that regard, if necessary and to make recommendation to ensure that such events do not recur.

II. Failure of CL Financial Limited, CLICO Investment Bank Limited, British American Insurance Company (Trinidad) Limited, Caribbean Money Market Brokers Limited and the Hindu Credit Union Co-operative Society Limited with a view to ascertaining why such events occurred and to make such findings, observations and recommendations arising out of its deliberations, to ensure that such events do not recur.

## **DIVISIONS**

A synopsis of the role and function of each Division/Unit is as follows:

- **Corporate Services Division**

The Corporate Services Division is responsible for the delivery and provision of critical support services to the Office of the Prime Minister. The Division treats with accommodation, registry and records management, procurement and office management, and internal security. The Division also has supervisory oversight of the Human Resource Management Unit, the Finance and Accounts Unit and the Management Information System Unit. A synopsis of the role and function of each Unit is as follows:

➤ **Procurement and Office Management Unit**

This Unit's primary functional responsibility is the management and provision of the required goods and services for the efficient running of the office. In so doing, this Unit is required to ensure compliance with proper procurement processes. This Unit is also responsible for the monitoring/inventory of office supplies, furniture and equipment.

➤ **Registry and Records Management Unit**

The Registry & Records Management Unit is responsible for the creation and maintenance of systems and procedures for the control and flow of records to and from the various Divisions/Units of the Office of the Prime Minister, as well as, for the retention and disposal of such records. This Unit is the repository of all documents, correspondence and files within the Office of the Prime Minister, with the exception of those managed by the Cabinet Records Section.

➤ **Human Resource Management Unit**

The main function of this Unit is to adopt, implement and maintain human resource management principles, policies and practices in the Office of the Prime Minister. The Unit is responsible for continuously improving and building capacity of personnel within the Human Resource Unit; developing and strengthening the capabilities of the human resources and implementing the performance management and appraisal system in the organization; and addressing grievances/representations made by members of staff.

➤ **Finance and Accounts Unit**

This Unit is responsible for advising and ensuring that all expenditure incurred by the Office of the Prime Minister is in keeping with allocations and project plans as provided for in the Appropriation Act. It also has the responsibility for maintaining the accounting records of the Office of the Prime Minister in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

➤ **Management Information System Unit**

This Unit is mainly responsible for the planning, operation, support and management of the information system services and network facilities as well as the local area networks and peripheral systems of the Office of the Prime Minister.

▪ **Public Information and Communication Unit**

This Unit develops and implements strategies for communicating the activities of the Prime Minister and the Office of the Prime Minister to the media, general public and other target audiences. It also handles all public relations matters.

### ▪ **International Relations and Protocol Unit**

This Unit is charged with the responsibility of providing protocol services for the Prime Minister. It also gives advice and provides required expertise on issues relating to the foreign relations of Trinidad and Tobago in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Communications.

### ▪ **Internal Audit Unit**

The Unit has auditing oversight for the Office of the Prime Minister and is responsible for the effective monitoring of Special Projects that are often undertaken. It provides management with information about the adequacy and effectiveness of the organization's system of internal control and also has responsibility for ensuring that the necessary audit systems and procedures continue to be maintained in strict accordance with the Financial Regulations.

### ▪ **Office of the Prime Minister Security Unit**

This Unit is responsible for security at the Prime Minister's Residence and Diplomatic Centre St. Ann's, and at the Office of the Prime Minister, St. Clair.

### ▪ **Unemployment Relief Programme**

This Unit is responsible for the Administrative (Human Resource and Financial) functions of the Unemployment Relief Programme.

### ▪ **Freedom of Information Unit**

This unit is responsible for co-ordinating and implementing the regulations as set out in the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Chap 22:02. The Unit provides:

1. assistance to public authorities relating to queries, preparation of responses to request, interpretation of the Act and in the drafting of public statements;
2. sensitization services to public authorities as it relates to its responsibilities under the FOIA; in particular, providing a training manual for designated FOI officers; training relevant personnel and Public Officers; and sensitizing key decision makers on the FOIA and various communication initiatives relating to the Act;
3. research, policy guidance and monitoring and evaluation relating to both Act; and
4. professional support which also involves satisfying reporting requirements associated with the Act.

**Section 7 (1) (a) (ii)****Categories of Documents in the possession of the Office of the Prime Minister**

1. Files dealing with administrative support and general administrative documents for the operations of the Office of the Prime Minister
2. Personnel files which detail all job applications, staff appointments, job specifications, promotions, transfers, deaths, retirements, vacation and other leave
3. Files dealing with the accounting and financial management function of the Office of the Prime Minister
4. Documents relating to Cabinet Meetings
5. Internal and external correspondence files
6. Documents relating to the strategic review of the Office of the Prime Minister
7. Legislation and Legal Instruments
8. Minutes and Agenda of meetings
9. Files dealing with circulars, memoranda, notice bulletins
10. Files dealing with official functions, conferences and events hosted and attended by the Office of the Prime Minister
11. Files dealing with complaints
12. Files with speeches, messages and addresses originating in the Office of the Prime Minister
13. Newspaper clippings and periodicals
14. Financial records – cheques, vouchers, receipts
15. Files dealing with matters relating to the procurement of supplies, services and equipment
16. Reports of Commissions of Enquiry
17. Policy and procedure documents
18. Customer files
19. Legal opinions and related matters
20. Training plans
21. Reports.

**Section 7 (1) (a) (iii)****Material prepared for publication or inspection**

1. A guide to the Sport and Culture Fund
2. National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan 2004 – 2008
3. NACC HIV/AIDS Bulletins
4. Directory of Government Services
5. Administrative Report 2007/2008
6. Administrative Report 2008/2009
7. Administrative Report 2009/2010

**Section 7 (1) (a) (IV)****Listing of the literature available by way of subscription**

This section is not applicable at this time

## **Section 7 (1) (a) (v)**

### **Procedures to be followed when requesting access to a document from the Office of the Prime Minister**

#### ▪ *General Procedure*

The policy of the Office of the Prime Minister is to respond to all requests for information made both orally and in writing. However, in order to exercise the rights conferred by the FOIA (for example, the right to challenge a decision if a request for information is refused), requests must be made in writing. In order to access information that is not readily available in the public domain, an application must be completed on the appropriate form “*Request for Access to Official Documents*” available from the designated officer at the Office of the Prime Minister or any public authority.

#### ▪ *Addressing requests*

To facilitate prompt handling of a request, such a request must be addressed to the Designated Officer in the Office of the Prime Minister (see Section 7(1)(a)(vi)). Request will be acknowledged as official when made on the prescribed form.

#### ▪ *Details in request*

Applicants should provide details that will allow for ready identification and location by the Designated Officer of the documents. If insufficient information is provided clarification will be sought from the applicant. If the applicant is uncertain as to the details to be included he/she should communicate with the Designated Officer as named in Section 7(1)(a)(vi).

### **Requests not handled under the FOIA**

A request under the FOIA will not be processed to the extent that it asks for information that is readily available to the public, either from this Office or from another public authority.

### **Responding to your request**

#### ▪ *Retrieving documents*

The Office of the Prime Minister is required to furnish only copies of documents in its possession or which can be retrieved from storage, either in the National Archives or another storage centre. Prior to the commencement of the Freedom of Information Act, Chap 22:02, old records may have been destroyed. The granting of a request for such documents may therefore be impossible. (*The laws and regulations give the time period for keeping records before they may be destroyed*).

▪ ***Furnishing Documents***

An applicant is entitled to copies of information within the possession, custody or power of the Office of the Prime Minister. The Office of the Prime Minister is required to furnish only one copy of a document. If a legible copy of a document is not possible the Office of the Prime Minister may not attempt to reconstruct it. Instead, the best copy possible will be furnished and an indication of its quality will be mentioned in the reply of the Office of the Prime Minister.

Please note that the Office of the Prime Minister is not obligated to do the following:

- a) Create new documents
- b) Perform research for the applicant.

**Time Limits**

▪ **General**

The Office of the Prime Minister will determine whether a request for access to information will be granted as soon as is practicable but no later than 30 days after the request has been made, as required by Section 15 of the FOIA.

In the event that the Office of the Prime Minister fails to meet this deadline, the FOIA gives the applicant the right to proceed as if the request has been denied.

If a decision is taken to grant access to the information requested, the applicant will be permitted to inspect documents or be provided with copies, if so requested. If it appears that processing the request may take longer than the statutory limit, the Designated Officer of the Office of the Prime Minister will acknowledge the request and advise the applicant of its status. Since there is a possibility that requests may be incorrectly addressed or misdirected, the applicant may wish to call the Designated Officer to confirm that the application has been received.

**Fees and Charges**

Section 17(1) stipulates that no fee shall be charged by a public authority for the making of a request for access to an official document. However, where access to an official document is to be given in the form of printed copies, or copies in some other form, such as on tape, disk, film or other material, the applicant will be required to pay the prescribed fee incurred for duplication of the said material as provided for by the Freedom of Information (Fees and Charges) Regulations. Similarly, where documents in the public domain are made available to a member of the public, the Office of the Prime Minister may charge duplication fees in accordance with its normal replication policy.

**Section 7 (1) (a) (VI)**

The Designated Officer in the Office of the Prime Minister is responsible for:

1. The initial receipt of an action upon notices under Section 10
2. Requests for access to documents under Section 13 and
3. Applications for correction of personal information under Section 36 of the FOIA.

**The Designated Officer is Mrs. Kamla Mohammed, Administrative Officer IV (Ag)**

**The Alternate Officer is Ms. Christine Coonai, Administrative Officer V (Ag)**

**Address:**                   **Office of the Prime Minister**  
Nos. 13 – 15 St. Clair Avenue  
St. Clair  
Port of Spain  
Telephone:   622 – 1625 ext. 2148 and 2133 Fax: 622-1132

E-mail address: [Mohammedk@gov.tt](mailto:Mohammedk@gov.tt) and  
[Coonaic@gov.tt](mailto:Coonaic@gov.tt)

### **Section 7 (1) (a) (vii)**

**Advisory Boards, Councils, Committees and other bodies (where meeting/minutes are open to the public)**

This Section is not applicable at this time.

### **Section 7 (1) (a) (viii)**

**The provision of a library or reading room by the public authority for use by members of the public.**

This section is not applicable at this time.

## **SECTION 8 STATEMENTS**

### **Section 8 (1) (a) (i)**

**Documents containing interpretations or particulars of written laws or schemes administered by the public authority, not being particulars contained in another written law.**

- Laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
- Gazette material
- Exchequer and Audit Act Chapter 69:01
- Financial Instructions
- Civil Service (Amendment) Regulations
- Public Service Commission (Amendment) Regulations
- Freedom of Information Act, Chapter 22:02
- Judicial Review Act

### **Section 8 (1) (a) (ii)**

**Manuals, rules of procedure, statements of policy, records of decisions, letters of advice to persons outside the public authority, or similar documents containing rules, policies, guidelines, practices or precedents.**

**Personnel Department**

1472—Continued

- Guidelines for the Administration of the Devolved functions
- Manual of Terms and Conditions of Service
- Shaping Performance – A manual for Performance Management in the Public Service.

#### **Service Commissions Department**

- Manual of Guidelines and Procedures for the Exercise of Delegated Powers
- Circulars

#### **Ministry of Public Administration**

- Training Policy for the Public Service of Trinidad and Tobago
- Training Policy Guidelines
- Circulars
- Circular Memoranda

#### **Section 8 (1) (b)**

**In enforcing written laws or schemes administered by the public authority where a member of the public might be directly affected by that enforcement, being documents containing information on the procedures to be employed or the objectives to be pursued in the enforcement of the written laws or schemes.**

- A Guide to the Sport and Culture Fund

#### **SECTION 9 STATEMENTS**

##### **Section 9 (1) (a) – (g) and (j) – (m)**

There are no statements to be published under these sub-sections at this time.

##### **Section 9 (1) (h)**

**A report on the performance or efficiency of the public authority, or of an office, division or branch of the public authority, whether the report is of a general nature or concerns a particular policy, programme or project administered by the public authority.**

- A review of White Hall prepared by the University of the West Indies, Institute of Business
- Organization Development and Management Division Report on the Restructuring of the Office of the Prime Minister.

##### **Section 9 (1) (i)**

**A report containing final plans or proposals for the re-organization of the functions of the public authority.**

- Public Management Consulting Unit (PMCD) Report on the Structure and Staffing of the Office of the Prime Minister, November 11, 2009.

**This statement represents an update to the last published statement.**