



Public Hearing Summary

Wednesday March 23, 2016

Inquiry Subject:

The Examination of the Report of the Auditor General on the Public Accounts of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for the financial year ended 2014 with regard to the Ministry of Tourism.

Committee Members:

The following Committee Members were present for the meeting:

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| • Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie | - | Chairman |
| • Mr. Rodger Samuel | - | Vice- Chairman |
| • Mr. Randall Mitchell | - | Member |
| • Mrs. Paula Gopee-Scoon | - | Member |
| • Dr. Dhanayshar Mahabir | - | Member |
| • Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy | - | Member |
| • Dr. Lester Henry | - | Member |

Witnesses who appeared:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| • Mrs. Cecelia Greaves-Smith | - | Permanent Secretary Ag. |
| • Ms. Samdai Rampersad | - | Deputy Permanent Secretary Ag. |
| • Mr. Anand Maraj | - | Coordinator, Monitoring and Evaluation |
| • Ms. Simone Medina | - | Dir. Research and Planning Ag. |
| • Ms. Debra Sookdeo | - | Accountant II |
| • Ms. Hemragie Ramdhani | - | Administrative Officer IV Ag. |

Key Issues Discussed:

The following key issues were discussed:

1. The status of 74 missing cheques as well as 12 cheques totaling \$844,492.15 by the Ministry is still under investigation and action has been taken to fix the issue;
2. The mechanisms implemented by the Ministry to improve the systems in place for the storage and issuing of cheques;

3. The penalties for Public Officers who do not adhere to the Financial Regulations;
4. The pervasive issues affecting the Public Service and specifically, the Ministry of Tourism including Lease Agreements, Register of Contracts, Contract Agreements, Contract Employment, Storage of Payment Vouchers, Void Cheques and Internal Audit;
5. The need to strengthen the Internal Audit function in the Ministry in order to identify risks and make recommendations to improve the systems;
6. The systems implemented to ensure value for money;
7. The tendering process for the award of contracts;
8. Strategies to attract Foreign Direct Investment;
9. The effectiveness of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit and its impact on the tourism sector's service throughout Trinidad and Tobago;
10. Goals and projects of the Ministry for the current and upcoming fiscal;
11. The reason for shortfalls in tourist arrivals in Trinidad and Tobago;
12. The misallocation of the funds originally intended for promotions, publicity and printing, which was used to finance the Cruise Tourism Initiative;
13. The issue of Pension and Leave experienced throughout the public service and the Ministry's approach to fixing the issue;
14. The tourism sector's contribution to Trinidad and Tobago's GDP and plans to increase the contribution to 7%.

View the Hearing:

The hearing can be viewed on our YouTube page via the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKVV6QdamTE>

Next Meeting:

The next Public Hearing of the Committee will be held on Wednesday April 13, 2016 at 10:30 a.m. At that meeting the Committee intends to examine the issues raised in the Reports of the Auditor General on the Tobago House of Assembly.

PAC Secretariat

March 23, 2016