



The Office of the Minister of Planning and Development

PL&D: 6/12/9 Vol. I Temp.

June 21, 2022

The Honourable Bridgid Annisette-George, MP
Speaker of the House
Speaker's Chamber
Office of the Parliament
Parliamentary Complex
The Red House
St Vincent Street
Port of Spain

Dear Madam Speaker,

Second Report of the JSC on Social Services and Public Administration on an examination of unemployment during the COVID-19 pandemic and the State's capacity to provide support to persons who became unemployed as a result of the pandemic

Reference is made to your letter Parl: 14/3/56 Vol. IV dated May 27, 2022 on the captioned subject.

In this regard, please find attached the Ministerial Responses to the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee (JSC) contained in the Second Report of the JSC on Social Services and Public Administration on an examination of unemployment during the COVID-19 pandemic and the State's capacity to provide support to persons who became unemployed as a result of the pandemic. An electronic copy of the responses will be e-mailed to the Parliament via coth@tpparliament.org.

Sincerely,

Camille Robinson-Regis, MP
Minister

Enc.

cc: Ms. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel,
Clerk of the House

Ministerial Response to Questions of the Joint Select Committee on Social Services and Public Administration - An examination of unemployment during the COVID-19 pandemic and the State's capacity to provide support to persons who became unemployed as a result of the pandemic

KEY ISSUES, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OBJECTIVE 1: To examine the trends in unemployment and job losses in the private and public sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic

Recommendation B (Page 34):

The Ministry of Labour, The Ministry of Trade and Industry and The Ministry of Planning and Development (CSO) should collaborate to conduct an analysis of job gains made during the COVID-19 pandemic to complement previous research done on economic diversification in Trinidad and Tobago.

Response:

The Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD) concurs with this recommendation of the Committee. It should be noted that work has begun in this regard. The MPD developed a project entitled "Development of a National Manpower Plan", intended to create a more effective national manpower planning system to support human capital development including enhancing education and training and creating employment opportunities. Collaboration with key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Labour (MOL) and the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) is crucial in its execution. It also focuses on the key economic sectors earmarked to contribute to national development as identified in the National Development Strategy 2016-2030 (Vision 2030) and the Roadmap to Recovery Report, Phase 2 (R2R).

It was duly noted that in order for the country to meet these development objectives, the skills requirements within priority sectors such as the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Energy Engineering Services Sectors must be adequately met, if private sector investment activities are to be successfully realized. Skills Assessments were therefore completed

for these sectors and the Reports were published in May 2022.¹ The Reports aimed to fulfil the following four (4) main objectives:

- i. ***Anticipate the occupations in which most jobs will be generated over the next three to five years*** towards ensuring that skills supply shortages/mismatches are addressed;
- ii. ***Determine blockages to existing supply of skills*** and why the current labour market system is unable to respond to changes in occupational demand in priority sectors;
- iii. ***Provide a basis from which to guide the formulation of inclusive education and employment policies*** to enable resilience among the vulnerable and to contribute meaningfully to the development of country; and
- iv. ***Determine the skills needed by the workforce that are essential for boosting the productivity of people*** who are already employed and for young persons who are looking to enter the labour market.

The Skills Assessment component of the Project therefore compliments the recommendation for an analysis of job gains by identifying skills requirements in two (2) key areas of diversification. A roll out plan for the recommendations of the Skills Reports is being undertaken.

In addition, apart from the Skills Assessment component, another project component is the conduct of feasibility studies for targeted growth sectors in order to better determine their growth potential for investment. Once competitive and niche areas are identified, skills assessments will be conducted to encourage support and investments in these areas and create jobs. The opportunity for future collaboration with stakeholder ministries has been recognized. A feasibility study is targeted for the area of waste management and recycling in fiscal 2023. Skills Assessments are expected to be undertaken for other sectors/areas that have been deemed feasible for economic growth.

Further, with respect to statistics, the Central Statistical Office (CSO) of the MPD conducts a quarterly survey of households entitled: The Continuous Sample Survey of the Population (CSSP). The survey is primarily a labour force survey and collects data on employment. The CSO has published labour force data for the period up to and including the 2nd quarter of 2021 with the labour force data for the 3rd quarter, 2021 to be published and disseminated by the end of June 2022. Thus, the labour force data available for analysis at the end of June 2022 will cover the critical periods of the COVID-19 impact on job gains and employment trends. The CSO will continue to collaborate with the MOL and the MTI in the provision of labour force data to analyse

¹ The Reports are available at the Ministry of Planning's website at [Publications | Ministry of Planning and Development](#)

job gains and employment trends during all periods inclusive of the COVID-19 pandemic period. Furthermore, the MPD/CSO stand ready with the MOL and the MTI, among other stakeholders, to discuss any further collaborations deemed necessary for analyzing job gains made during the COVID-19 pandemic.

OBJECTIVE 3: To examine the proposed strategies of the Sate to stimulate job creation and employment opportunities to counteract the adverse economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic

Recommendation A (Page 42):

The Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Planning and Development should collaborate on conducting an assessment on the rate of job creation during the COVID-19 pandemic, this study should be commenced in the current fiscal (2021/2022).

Response:

The MPD supports an analysis of the rate of job creation during the COVID-19 pandemic. An assessment of the rate of job creation will necessitate the undertaking of an establishment survey designed for this purpose. Such a survey is currently not undertaken by the CSO or any stakeholder in the National Statistical System. The MPD is willing to collaborate with the MOL and the MTI in the design and implementation of a job creation survey. However, the nature of the collaboration between the interested parties and the scheduling of the implementation of the survey will need to take into account the project activity commitments of the parties in the current fiscal year and the next, while taking into account the need to plan and budget for the survey and assessment.