

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Response to Recommendations on the Third Report of the Joint Select Committee on Social Services and Public Administration on “An Inquiry into the Impact of Work-from-Home and Alternative Work Arrangements, Policies and Initiatives on Public Sector Productivity and Service Delivery”

Objective 1: To examine the types of Work-form-Home and Hybrid policies and arrangements utilised in the public service in Trinidad and Tobago during the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

Recommendation:

The Ministry of Planning and Development, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Public Administration and Ministry of Digital Transformation should develop a Business Continuity Plan for the Public Service that includes formal policies for Work from Home and Alternative Work arrangements to be used during emergencies, natural disasters, pandemics and other extraordinary circumstances which may restrict employees being physically present in office.

Response:

The Ministry of Labour (MOL) recognises the need for business continuity, especially in times of crisis, and acknowledges the leadership role of the Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) in the development of a Business Continuity Plan for the Public Service which includes Work-from-Home (WFH) and other Alternative Work arrangements. In this regard, the MOL is committed to supporting the work to be led by the MPA, and collaborating with the Ministries of Planning and Development, and Digital Transformation, and other key stakeholders, for the development of a Business Continuity Plan for the Public Service.

Objective 2: To assess the methods used to design, deploy, monitor and evaluate/measure work output/employee deliverables of public sector employees.

Recommendation:

As part of its Ministerial Response, the Ministry of Labour should provide an update on the National Productivity Council’s assessment of Public Sector Productivity.

Response:

The National Productivity Council (NPC), in its last term which ended on May 9, 2020, developed a workplan to treat with productivity issues both in the public and private sectors in Trinidad and Tobago. The workplan included the conduct of baseline surveys on productivity levels across sectors, which includes an assessment of Public Sector productivity. Discussions were initiated

with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) for technical and other assistance. However, the term of the NPC ended on May 9, 2020, before much progress was realized in the conduct of the surveys. Currently, the MOL is in the process of reconstituting the Council and it is anticipated that the Council in its new term would continue with its intended workplan to make significant strides in the productivity agenda, which includes the assessment of productivity in the Public Sector.

Objective 3: To examine the feasibility of implementing Work from Home arrangements in the Public Sector as a (hybrid) working option.

Recommendation:

The Ministry of Planning and Development in conjunction with the Ministry of Public Administration and the Ministry of Labour should develop standardised benchmarks to measure Service Delivery in the Public Sector.

Response:

The MOL, through the work of the National Productivity Council (NPC), can contribute to the development of standardised benchmarks to measure Service Delivery in the Public Sector, an initiative to be led by the Ministry of Public Administration in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning and Development. It is anticipated that the NPC, when reconstituted, will continue work on the conduct of baseline surveys on productivity levels across various sectors which can inform the development of standardized benchmarks to measure service delivery in the Public Sector.