

SEVENTH

REPORT
FROM

THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE

EXAMINATION
OF

the implementation of the Public Sector Investment
Programme (PSIP) for fiscal year 2021.

Public Administration and Appropriations Committee

The Public Administration and Appropriations Committee (PAAC) is established by Standing Orders 102 and 92 of the House of Representatives and the Senate respectively. The Committee is mandated to consider and report to Parliament on:

- (a) *the budgetary expenditure of Government agencies to ensure that expenditure is embarked upon in accordance with parliamentary approval;*
- (b) *the budgetary expenditure of Government agencies as it occurs and keeps Parliament informed of how the budget allocation is being implemented; and*
- (c) *the administration of Government agencies to determine hindrances to their efficiency and to make recommendations to the Government for improvement of public administration.*

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Mrs. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George	Chairman
Dr. Lackram Bodoë	Vice-Chairman
Mrs. Amrita Deonarine	Member
Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy	Member
Mr. Randall Mitchell	Member
Mr. Symon De Nobriga	Member
Mr. Wade Mark	Member
Mr. Laurence Hislop	Member
Ms. Lisa Morris-Julian	Member
Mr. Hassel Bacchus	Member

Committee Staff

The current staff members serving the Committee are:

Ms. Keiba Jacob	Secretary to the Committee
Ms. Hema Bhagaloo	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Khisha Peterkin	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Rachel Nunes	Graduate Research Assistant
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Publication

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Members of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee



Mrs. Bridgid Mary Annisette-
George
Chairman



Dr. Lackram Bodoie
Vice-Chairman



Mr. Wade Mark
Member



Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy
Member



Mr. Hassel Bacchus
Member



Ms. Amrita Deonarine
Member



Mrs. Lisa Morris-Julian
Member



Mr. Randall Mitchell
Member



Mr. Symon de Nobriga
Member



Mr. Laurence Hislop
Member

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report of the PAAC for the Twelfth Parliament contains the details of the examination into the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme for fiscal year 2021.

The Committee, in undertaking this examination employed two (2) mechanisms:

- Written Submissions; and
- A Public Hearing.

Subsequently, the Committee conducted a Public Hearing with the following Ministries and Departments based on the written submissions:

- Ministry of Planning and Development;
- Ministry of Works and Transport;
- Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government; and
- Ministry of Public Utilities.

Requests for written submissions were also sent and responses received from the following Ministries:

- Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries;
- Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries;
- Ministry of Housing and Urban Development;
- Ministry of National Security;
- Ministry of Education;
- Ministry of Health;
- Ministry of Labour;
- Ministry of Social Development and Family Services;
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts; and
- Ministry of Youth Development and National Service.

The Committee made observations and recommendations related to the issues identified. These are presented in Chapter 3 of this Report.

INTRODUCTION

THE COMMITTEE

The PAAC of the Twelfth Republican Parliament was established by the revised Standing Orders to:

- examine the current public expenditure, thereby capturing the full budget cycle by providing Parliamentary oversight of the implementation of the budget; and
- conduct a real-time examination of the expenditure of Ministries and Departments.

Change in Membership

1. In the Twelfth Parliament the Members of the Committee were appointed by resolutions of the House of Representatives and the Senate at sittings held on Friday November 9, 2020 and Tuesday November 17, 2020 respectively.
2. Senator Clarence Rambharat's seat in the Senate was declared vacant on March 16, 2022 as such ceased being a Member of the Committee.
3. Senator Yokymma Bethelmy's seat in the Senate was declared vacant on March 16, 2022 as such ceased being a Member of the Committee.
4. By resolution of the House of Representatives at a sitting held on June 13, 2022, Mr. Symon De Nobriga, MP was appointed a Member of the Committee in lieu of Mr. Stephen Mc Clashie, MP.
5. By resolution of the Senate at a sitting held on June 14, 2022, Senator Laurence Hislop was appointed a Member of the Committee in lieu of Senator Yokymma Bethelmy and Senator Randall Mitchell in lieu of Senator Clarence Rambharat.

Chairman & Vice-Chairman

By virtue of S.O. 109(6) and 99(6) of the House of Representatives and the Senate respectively, the Chairman of the Committee is the Speaker and at its First Meeting held on November 25, 2020, Dr. Lackram Bodoie was elected as the Vice-Chairman.

Quorum

Additionally, in order to exercise the powers granted to it by the House, the Committee was required by the Standing Orders to have a quorum. A quorum of three (3) Members, inclusive of the Chairman or Vice-Chairman, with representatives from both Houses, was agreed to by the Committee at its First Meeting.

METHODOLOGY

Determination of the Committee's Work Programme

At an in-camera meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday, February 9 2022, the Committee agreed to conduct an inquiry into the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) for fiscal year 2021.

Review of Documents

The Committee deliberated on the following documents, namely:

- i. Written Submissions;
- ii. Public Hearing;
- iii. Public Sector Investment Programme 2021; and
- iv. Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure (2021).

The Inquiry Process

The Inquiry Process outlines steps to be taken by the Committee when conducting an inquiry into an entity or issue. The following steps outline the inquiry process followed by the PAAC for its examination into the implementation of the PSIP for the fiscal year 2021:

- i. Preparation of an Inquiry Proposal based on issues identified in the PSIP for fiscal year 2021. The Inquiry Proposal outlines:
 - Description;
 - Background;
 - Overview of Expenditure;
 - Rationale/Objective of Inquiry; and
 - Proposed Questions.
- ii. Consideration and approval of Inquiry Proposal by the Committee and upon approval, questions were forwarded to the relevant entities for written responses;
- iii. Requests for written response were sent to stakeholders on **August 23, 2021**;
- iv. Responses were received from the following stakeholders:
 - Ministry of Housing and Development (MHUD) – received **September 3, 2021**;
 - Ministry of Youth Development and National Service (MYDNS) – received **September 3, 2021**;

- Ministry of Labour (MOL) – received **September 7, 2021**;
 - Ministry of Public Utilities (MPU) – received **September 7, 2021**;
 - Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries (MEEI) – received **September 8, 2021**;
 - Ministry of Education (MOE) – received **September 9, 2021**;
 - Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) – received **September 14, 2021**;
 - Ministry of Work and Transport (MOWT) – received **September 17, 2021**;
 - Ministry of National Security (MNS) – received **September 23, 2021**;
 - Ministry of Health (MOH) – received **November 10, 2021**;
 - Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government (MRDLG) – received **November 22, 2021**;
 - Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts (MTCA) – received **December 6, 2021**;
 - Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (MSDFS) – received **December 14, 2021**; and
 - Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD) – received **March 8, 2022**.
- v. Preparation of an Issues Paper by the Secretariat for the Committee’s consideration, based on written responses received from the entities.
- vi. Review of responses received and of the Issues Paper by the Committee;
- vii. Determination of the need for a Public Hearing based on the analysis of written submission and feedback from the public. There is usually no need to examine the entity if:
- The Committee believes the issues have little public interest; or
 - The Committee believes that the written responses provided are sufficient and no further explanation is necessary.
- viii. Based on the recommendations and the issues identified, the Committee agreed to conduct the Public Hearing. The relevant witnesses were invited to attend and provided evidence on Wednesday March 9, 2022.

- ix. Request for additional questions were sent to the above mentioned stakeholders on **March 24, 2022** and **March 28, 2022**, respectively;
- x. Responses for further information were received from the following stakeholders:
- The Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government – received on **April 8, 2022**;
 - The Ministry of Public Utilities – received on **April 20, 2022**;
 - The Ministry of Works and Transport – received on **May 6, 2022**;
 - The Ministry of Education – received on **May 6, 2022**;
 - The Ministry of Labour – received on **May 9, 2022**; and
 - The Ministry of Planning and Development – received on **May 20, 2022**.
- xi. Report Committee's findings and recommendations to Parliament upon conclusion of the inquiry;
- xii. Request for Ministerial Responses. Review responses.

ISSUES, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (MPD)

1. Non-adherence to the Project Screening Brief (PSB) document.

The challenges experienced in the execution of the PSIP projects led to multiple delays. According to the MPD's website¹, the PSB is meant to provide a guide for reviewing and screening all projects proposed for funding. The overall aim is "to update and simplify the framework for planning, financing and implementing capital projects and in particular, the procedures for screening project proposals".

Significant benefits anticipated from the initiative to streamline and formalise PSIP procedures include:

- Improvement in resource allocation;
- Acceleration of the achievement of sectoral or national development objectives;
- Greater efficiency in project design and implementation;
- Facilitation of improved access to external funding; and
- Better control over public expenditure including recurring costs (i.e. legacy projects) emanating from the PSIP.

During the hearing, the MPD explained that the PSB has been operating for two years and that it intends to ensure that projects are adequately conceptualized and are at a state of readiness before funding can be released.

The MPD acknowledged that numerous Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) had challenges in adhering to the detailed and rigorous PSB process. Some MDAs developed incomplete PSBs lacking important elements, particularly in the area of Monitoring and Evaluation, Project Scope, Risk Management Plan and Quality Plan. In other cases, no PSB was submitted at all.

¹ Ministry of Planning and Development website, Project Screening Brief. Accessed October 26, 2022: <https://www.planning.gov.tt/sites/default/files/PSB%20REVISED%20for%20MOF.pdf>

The MPD expressed that the deficiencies were being addressed through the provision of training in the development of PSBs for the MDAs involved in the implementation of PSIP projects. As at January 2022, seven (7) successful PSB training workshops were completed. It was stressed by the MPD that the training did implement critical projects that were recommended by the Roadmap to Recovery Report (RRR) and the Community Recovery Report (CRR). To evaluate the effectiveness of the PSB, it should be determined if there is a relationship between compliant/non-compliant MDAs and their subsequent submission of properly planned projects to the MPD.

Recommendations:

➤ ***The MPD should submit a report to Parliament on the following by December 31, 2022:***

- i. The Project Screening Brief training conducted across all MDAs during FY 2022;***
- ii. The scheduled Project Screening Brief training initiatives for FY 2023; and***
- iii. The relationship between compliant/non-compliant MDAs and satisfactorily planned projects.***

2. High staff turnover within the Project Management Units (PMUs) of various MDAs.

The implementation phase of the PSIP projects is falling short due to the high turnover of project management staff. The MPD described the importance of continuous training and development of staff within the MDAs, with much focus on the implementation of project and programmes within the design context. The successful execution of PSIP projects depended on the strength of the MDAs project management. While there were no precise figures on hand, the MPD explained at the public hearing that some MDAs were affected by high turnover of project management staff recruited on contract basis. This was a clear obstacle to project implementation. The MPD sought information from relevant MDAs on the challenges related to high turnover. However, no responses had been received by the time of writing.

At the public hearing, the MPD acknowledged from the information provided that the difference in remuneration packages across the MDAs played a major role in the high turnover levels. Through the Project Planning and Reconstruction Division (PPRD), the MPD will continue to

engage with the other MDAs to gather information on the filled, vacant and no longer open positions. Plans to request this information from the MDAs to facilitate qualitative analysis of project management staffing, were underway. The MPD also plans to standardise the varying remuneration packages as a means to incentivise recruited officers to remain.

Recommendation:

- ***The MPD should submit a brief report to Parliament on the following, by December 31, 2022:***
 - i. The number of vacant, filled and no longer open positions within PMUs of the MDAs' with high project management staff turnover;***
 - ii. The project implementation challenges and other challenges experienced by MDAs due to the frequent departure of project management staff; and***
 - iii. Details on specific plans and the constraints to implementation, aimed at standardising remuneration for project management staff across MDAs.***

3. The Social and Economic Effects of COVID-19.

Restrictions due to the pandemic greatly affected the availability of staff. The Ministry gave the example of the Planning Unit of the MPD, charged with the coordination, monitoring and management of the PSIP, being reduced to a staff of two (2) Project Officers, thereby affecting the monitoring and execution of special projects. Further training exercises could not be conducted as they required in-person interaction. The Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) and the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI) experienced supply chain issues in the form of shortages, shipping delays and increased costs, in addition to difficulty accessing foreign exchange, further affecting project implementation.

As the public health restrictions in place at the height of the pandemic were lifted, the PPRD and the Planning Unit, are conducting a review to identify challenges that hindered progress.

Observation:

- ***The Committee acknowledges the unexpected nature of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and that this constituted the greatest challenge to business continuity in recent memory.***

Recommendation:

- ***The MPD should report to Parliament on the challenges identified by the PPRD and the Planning Unit, how these challenges were overcome as well as the lessons learnt and the strategies to be adopted based on these lessons, by December 31, 2022.***

MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT (MOWT)

1. Fleet Management of Public Transportation Service Corporation (PTSC) Buses

Maintaining the PTSC's vehicles is crucial for the continued delivery of its services. The MOWT described the features of a newly implemented bus maintenance programme as follows:

- planned maintenance schedules that are held by the engineering department;
- identifying issues before they become more significant; and
- working with the suppliers and the manufacturers to promptly address any additional repairs.

The programme also includes refurbishment and / or replacement of various components of the buses in addition to repainting. The programme also includes staff training, updated maintenance schedules and improvements to the cleaning of the vehicles.

Recommendation:

- ***The MOWT should report to Parliament on the measurable improvements made through the bus maintenance programme by December 31, 2022.***

2. Challenges in the Rehabilitation of Roads.

The pace of road rehabilitation works was slower than anticipated. The Ministry gave the example of only 9% of roads being repaving in fiscal year 2021. This was due in part to a the declaration of the State of Emergency in May 2021 due to which many projects were halted for approximately two (2) months until July 2021. Also, there was inconsistent availability of raw materials due to supply chain difficulties caused by the pandemic.

Recommendations:

- ***The MOWT should indicate to Parliament the extent to which it was able to prioritise specific road repavement and rehabilitation works given the constraints during fiscal year 2021, by December 31, 2022; and***

- *The MOWT should provide details of its plans to mitigate challenges related to road repavement and rehabilitation that may arise in FY 2023 by December 31, 2022.*

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES (MPU)

1. Water Leakages and Metering

With the consistent changes in the climate, water preservation is vital. The Committee noted complaints about leakages throughout the country. The MPU explained that the Water and Sewerage Authority's (WASA) current system of measuring the flow of water throughout the supply network is inadequate. In fiscal year 2022, a more robust system was put in place, involving the installation of bulk meters and data loggers to quantify the flow of water from the production facilities through the transmission and distribution network. In addition, WASA will continue with its plans to establish District Metered Areas (DMA), which will support the management and distribution of water and allow for effective reduction of non-revenue water.

The MPU explained that the DMAs are focused on gauging the extent to which water is reaching customers. When areas are metered it will provide information on how much water has been lost and guide efforts to address the problem in a targeted way.

The following table summarises all of the DMAs and their locations as at September 2021:

Region	Functional	Non-Functional	Proposed	Total
North West	10	7	4	21
North East	11	28	0	39
South West	5	7	10	22
South East	5	6	5	16
South Central	9	25	15	49
Tobago	1	25		26
	41	98	34	173

Recommendation:

- *The MPU should provide a brief report on the following to Parliament by December 31, 2022:*

- i. A status report on the full installation of the DMAs and the bulk meters; and*
- ii. The assessment of the success to date of the metering system in helping to detect and address leakages.*

MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MRDLG)

1. Challenges in Flood Prone Areas

There was room for improvement in addressing issues in areas habitually affected by flooding. The Committee asked the MRDLG about its contingency plans for flood prone areas. The Ministry's initial written submission indicated the purchase of radios, public address systems and amphibious vehicles, as an aspect of flooding response efforts. The radios were purchased and the public address systems were awaiting approval.

The amphibious vehicles, however, were not procured. Due to the considerable expense involved, of approximately three million (\$3Mn) per vehicle, in addition to the cost of training staff to operate the vehicles, the MRDLG did not allocate funding for this purchase. The MRDLG opted to use dingies instead. They are due to be placed throughout flood prone corporations. Flood response efforts will also be strengthened by the addition of volunteers who have received the Ministry's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training.

Recommendation:

- ***The MRDLG should provide a status report on the following to Parliament by December 31, 2022:***
- i. The number of dingies distributed, broken down for each flood prone corporation;*
 - ii. The total cost of the dingies;*
 - iii. A breakdown of the of volunteers who received CERT training in FY 2021;*
 - iv. The allocation of radios to each flood prone corporation;*
 - v. Plans for acquisition of amphibious vehicles; and*
 - vi. Possible arrangements with the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission for use of the Commission's amphibious vehicle in the interim.*

MINISTRY OF LABOUR (MOL)

1. Lack of Activity for Many Projects.

There was little to no spending on a number of the MOL's PSIP projects in fiscal year 2021.

There was no spending on the following projects:

- i. Labour Migration Policy, given that the MOL was able to obtain technical support to draft the Policy free of charge from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM);
- ii. Child Labour Policy, which was still at the tendering stage in FY 2021;
- iii. National Productivity Enhancement, given that the term of the National Productivity Council (NPC) ended in May 2020 and is still in the process of being reestablished. The National Productivity Enhancement project which aims to increase the levels of productivity for Trinidad and Tobago falls under the purview of the NPC
- iv. National Workplace Policy on Sexual Harassment the Ministry conducted public awareness initiatives but did not accrue any expenditure in developing the policy.

Additionally, only 2.2% of the fiscal year 2021 allocation for the project Determination and Impact of the Minimum Wage Level on the Economy was spent during the year. The spending undertaken was for the process of procuring the services of a consultant.

Observations:

- ***The Committee notes that the MOL was able to receive technical support from the ILO and IOM in preparing the Labour Migration Policy at no costs; and***
- ***The Committee acknowledges efforts by the MOL to undertake Public Sector and Private Sector vacancy surveys to understand the manpower needs from the demand side to facilitate a better matching with skills of the labour force.***

Recommendation:

- ***The MOL should report to Parliament on the following by December 31, 2022;***
 - i. ***The status of efforts to engage consultants for the preparation of the Child Labour Policy and of the Determination and Impact of the Minimum Wage Level on the Economy;***

- ii. *The expected timeline for the reestablishment of the NPC and the implementation of the National Productivity Enhancement project;*
- iii. *The expected timeline for the completion of the Child Labour Policy;*
- iv. *The status of the completion of the Labour Migration Policy;*
- v. *The status of the analytical report on the Public Sector Vacancy Survey and the progress made on the Private Sector Vacancy Survey; and*
- vi. *An assessment of the measurable effects of the Ministry's efforts to raise public awareness of the National Workplace Policy on Sexual Harassment.*

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (MOE)

1. Reassignment of Responsibility for Work on Early Childhood Care and Education Centres (ECCE)

Work was at a standstill because of non-functioning of the Education Facilities Company Ltd (EFCL). The EFCL's mandate includes responsibility for the repair and upgrade of all schools and District Education Offices under the purview of the MOE². The Ministry explained that, as a result of certain ongoing legal issues at the EFCL, the Company was not called upon to conduct works at ECCEs in FY 2021. Instead, the work was entrusted to the National Maintenance Training and Security Company Limited (MTS).

Recommendation:

- *The MOE should indicate the following to Parliament by December 31, 2022:*
 - i. *The status of ECCE works assigned to the MTS in FY 2021, including the specific ECCEs and the amounts spent on each; and*
 - ii. *An explanation of whether all former EFCL projects have been transferred to the MTS on a temporary or permanent basis, or whether any other arrangement has been put in place.*

MINISTRY OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL SERVICE (MYDNS)

1. Youth Employment Policy.

² Note 1 to the EFCL Audited Financial Statement for FY 2015.

A specific policy to address youth employment was not fully completed. Under the development theme Building Globally Competitive Business, the PSIP for fiscal year 2021 highlighted a National Youth Employment Policy for the period 2018-2023 aiming to make young people job-ready via training, job placements and micro enterprise development support.

In its written submission dated September 3, 2021 to the Committee, the MYDNS indicated that there was no specific policy for youth employment, as these issues would be covered by the overarching National Youth Policy. This is also reflected in the fiscal year 2022 PSIP³, in which youth employment is featured under the heading of the National Youth Policy 2020-2025.

2. ICT Training for Young People.

New training opportunities were offered for young people to gain in-demand skills. The MYDNS has partnered with MIC Institute of Technology (MIC-IT) to deliver three (3) online courses in Coding, Mobile App Development and Web Page Design beginning near the end of FY 2021, in August 2021. One hundred and fifty (150) young people participated in an initial five-week programme.

Observation:

- ***The Committee notes that while several initiatives were underway by the MYDNS to encourage youth economic participation and empowerment, the direct impact of these initiatives on the PSIP 2021 target to reduce the youth unemployment rate to 5% was uncertain.***

Recommendations:

- ***The MYDNS should briefly explain the following regarding the National Youth Policy 2020- 2025, by December 31, 2022;***
 - i. whether there was a shift that led to the proposed National Youth Employment Policy 2018-2023 being incorporated into the overarching National Youth Policy; and***

³ Ministry of Planning and Development, Public Sector Investment Programme 2022. Accessed October 26, 2022: <https://www.planning.gov.tt/sites/default/files/Public-Sector-Investment-Programme-2022.pdf>

- ii. A status update on the implementation of the National Youth Policy.*
- *The MYDNS should report to Parliament on the results of the Coding, Mobile App Development and Web Page Design training programmes and whether similar training will be offered on an ongoing basis, by December 31, 2022;*
- *The MYDNS should provide a status update and estimated timeline for the completion of the Project Screening Brief for the National Youth Employment Policy by December 31, 2022; and*
- *The MYDNS should report to Parliament by December 31, 2022 on how it intends to quantify the impact of its initiatives focused on encouraging youth economic participation on the youth unemployment rate.*

MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND ENERGY INDUSTRIES (MEEI)

1. Projects on Hold

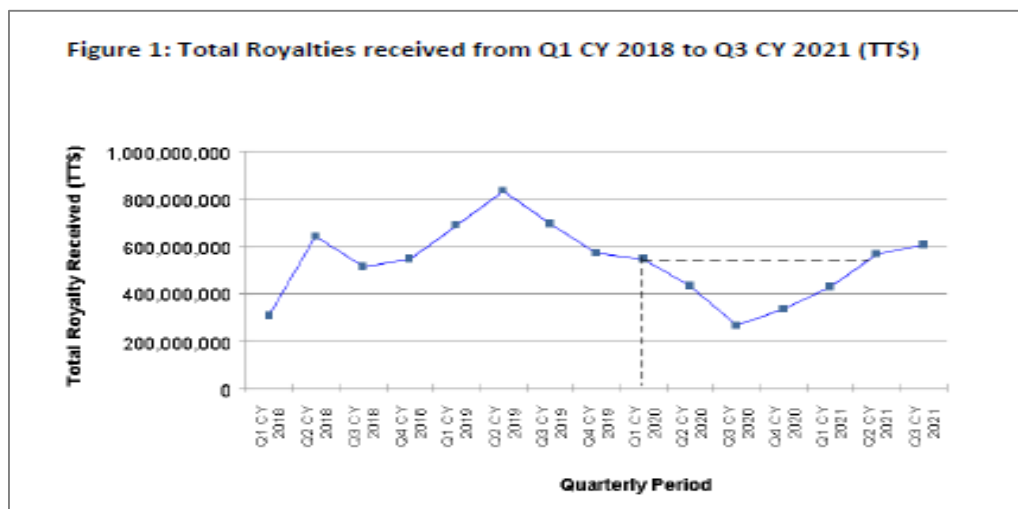
Some of the Ministry's projects were on hold. One of the MEEI's PSIP projects was the installation of the Floating Jetty and Four Subsea Pipelines at the NP Fuel Receiving Terminals at Crown Point, Tobago. As at the end of the 2021 financial year, no funds were expended from the \$2 million allocation. Similarly, the New Industry Gas Station (NIGS) at Sangre Grande project was at a standstill given the Government announcement of the sale of all National Petroleum (NP) Gas Stations. The Committee notes that neither of these projects were featured in the PSIP for the following financial year, 2022.

Recommendations:

- *The MEEI should provide Parliament with an update on the installation of the Floating Jetty and Four Subsea Pipelines at the NP Fuel Receiving Terminals at Crown Point, Tobago and the New Industry Gas Station at Sangre Grande, which were on hold in FY 2021, December 31, 2022. The update should indicate the following as applicable:*
 - i. The date on which the project was completed; or*
 - ii. Whether the project is still on hold or has been de-prioritised, including the reason for its non-implementation.*

2. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the energy sector

The pandemic led to fluctuations in revenue from oil and gas royalties. There was a sharp decline in the second and third quarters of FY 2020, right before the start of FY 2021. Royalties were impacted by the overall economic slowdown, as seen in the following chart.



Observation:

- *In the Fifth Session of the Eleventh Parliament, one of Parliament’s other financial scrutiny committees, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) published its Thirtieth Report⁴ focusing on various issues at the MEEI including challenges with revenue collection. In addition to revenue collection, the COVID-19 pandemic added a new aspect of difficulty in the area of revenue – that of the very generation and availability of the revenue given the economic downturn. The PAAC is aware that the PAC intends to conduct further inquiry into these and other issues at the MEEI in the Third Session of the Twelfth Parliament.*

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY (MNS)

1. Emergency Response Patrol (ERP) Response Times.

ERP response times needed to be improved. For FY 2021, a target was set of reducing the average time taken to respond to calls by the ERP unit of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service’s (TTPS) to eight (8) minutes. The written submission dated from the MNS, however, indicated that the ERP response time as at June 2021 was 11 minutes and 30 seconds, which was

⁴ Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Thirtieth Report of the Public Accounts Committee. Accessed October 26, 2022: <https://www.ttparliament.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/p11-s5-J-20200623-PAC-R30.pdf>

slower than the previously recorded average of 10 minutes and 46 seconds as at June 2020. The corresponding figures for FY 2021 were, however not provided.

Recommendation:

- ***The MNS should provide to Parliament the weekly and monthly average response times for each week and month of FY 2021 as well as the average for the 12-month period, by December 31, 2022; and***
- ***The MNS should conduct analysis of the deterioration of the ERP response times and report to Parliament on the corrective steps to be taken based on this analysis by December 31, 2022.***

2. Lack of Activity on Numerous Projects.

There was little to no spending on a number of the MNS's PSIP projects in fiscal year 2021. This was similar to what was observed at the MOL.

There was no spending on the following MNS projects:

- i. Supplemental works to air condition systems at the New Phase I Police Stations, as the TTPS was engaging the National Insurance Property Development Company LTD (NIPDEC) about the project;
- ii. Refurbishment of Residential Quarters – San Fernando, as the TTPS was awaiting the release of funds for the project;
- iii. Establishment of a Marine Division at the Carenage, as the project was in the design phase;
- iv. Establishment of a Marine Division in South Trinidad, as the project was still in the planning phases; and
- v. Construction of the Arouca fire station, as construction had not yet begun.

Recommendation:

- ***The MNS should report to Parliament on the following by December 31, 2022;***
 - i. The results of the discussions with NIPDEC on the Supplemental works to air condition systems at the New Phase I Police Stations;***
 - ii. Confirmation of whether the necessary funds were eventually released by the Ministry of Finance including, if they were indeed released;***

- *the sum requested and the date of the request; and*
- *the sum released and the date of the release.*
- iii. *A status update on the planning process for the Establishment of the respective Marine Divisions in Carenage and South Trinidad; and*
- iv. *Whether constructions were launched for the Arouca fire station, and confirmation of the expected completion timeline if it has indeed begun.*

MINISTRY OF HEALTH (MOH)

1. Implementation of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the health sector.

Work continued on the development of the Health Information System (HIS) for the Arima and Point Fortin hospitals. The HIS aims to assist in improving data management through the process of “one patient one record” system. This would facilitate greater management in the use of health care resources. The HIS is meant to foster the use of evidence-based decision-making and to ensure greater accountability within the Regional Health Authorities (RHAs).

In FY 2021, out of an initial estimate of \$20 million; \$745,875 was expended on the development of the HIS as reflected by the revised estimate for that fiscal year. A consultant was hired to conduct a gap analysis and develop a Request for Proposal (RFP), which was then due to be issued by December 2021, according to the National Information and Communication Technology Company Limited (iGovTT).

Observation:

- *The PAAC notes that in the Fifth Session of the Eleventh Parliament, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) published its Thirty-Third Report⁵ on the status of the implementation of the recommendations on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) governance and general controls as stated in the Reports of the Auditor General on the 2017, 2018 and 2019 Public Accounts. In this Report, the Committee learned of the challenges faced by the MOH in improving its health*

⁵ Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Thirty-Third Report of the Public Accounts Committee. Accessed October 26, 2022: <https://www.ttparliament.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/p11-s5-J-20200701-PAC-R33.pdf>

information management systems. The HIS featured in the FY 2021 PSIP is therefore a step in the right direction although there is still plenty of work to be done.

Recommendation:

- *The MoH should submit a status report on progress made in the development of Health Information Systems at the Arima and Point Fortin Hospitals as at September 30, 2022 and indicate the next steps required to achieve full implementation and integrate other hospitals in the system by December 31, 2022.*

CONCLUSION

During the Second Session of the Twelfth Parliament, the PAAC conducted an inquiry into the Implementation of the Public Service Investment Programme 2021.

The Committee discovered that the Ministry of Planning and Development was experiencing difficulty in monitoring the planning and implementation of the PSIP. There were issues related to the Project Screening Briefs and ensuring MDAs were thorough in following those documents. Across MDAs, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were felt during FY 2021, which caused many projects to be delayed. The Committee also noted that a number of projects across MDAs were on hold for reasons unrelated to the pandemic.

The Committee believes the adoption of its proposed recommendations will contribute to an improved implementation of the nation's Public Service Investment Programme. The Committee intends to monitor the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations proposed in this Report.

This Committee respectfully submits this Report for the consideration of the Parliament.

Sgd.
Mrs. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George
Chairman

Sgd.
Dr. Lackram Bodoë
Vice-Chairman

Sgd.
Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy
Member

Sgd.
Ms. Amrita Deonarine
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Hassel Bacchus
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Wade Mark
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Symon De Nobriga
Member

Sgd.
Mrs. Lisa Morris-Julian
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Randall Mitchell
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Laurence Hislop
Member

APPENDIX I

Minutes of Meetings

**THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
SECOND SESSION, TWELFTH PARLIAMENT
MINUTES OF THE NINTH MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY ON
WEDNESDAY MARCH 09, 2022 AT 1:33 P.M.**

Present were:

Mrs. Bridged Mary Annisette-George	-	Chairman
Dr. Lackram Bodoë	-	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Clarence Rambharat	-	Member
Mr. Wade Mark	-	Member
Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy	-	Member
Ms. Amrita Deonarine	-	Member
Mrs. Lisa Morris-Julian	-	Member
Ms. Keiba Jacob	-	Secretary
Ms. Khisha Peterkin	-	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Rachel Nunes	-	Graduate Research Assistant
Ms. Kelly Cipriani	-	Parliamentary Intern
Ms. Khadija Gonzales	-	Parliamentary Intern

Excused were:

Mr. Hassel Bacchus	-	Member
Mr. Stephen Mc Clashie	-	Member
Ms. Yokymma Bethelmy	-	Member

COMMENCEMENT

1.1 At 1:33 p.m. the Chairman called the meeting to order and welcomed those present.

EXAMINATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE EIGHTH MEETING

2.1 The Committee examined the Minutes of the Eighth (8th) Meeting held on February 23, 2022.

2.2 The following corrections were made on page 3:

- Item 5.5, 3rd line, insert the word “public” before the word “inquiry”;
- Item 5.6, in the 2nd and 4th lines: insert the word “public” before the word “inquiry”;
and
- Item 5.8, 2nd line, insert the word “public” before the word “inquiry”.

2.3 The Minutes were then confirmed by Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy and seconded by Dr. Lackram Bodoë.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EIGHTH MEETING

- 3.1 As per item 5.8, page 3: The Chairman reminded Members that at the previous meeting, it was agreed that Members will:
- i. determine whether the inquiry into the *Blackout in Trinidad on Wednesday February 16, 2022* will be postponed to a date after the Cabinet Appointed Committee reports or at the next meeting of the Committee.
 - ii. the scope of the inquiry was finalized. As such, the Committee agreed that questions should be sent to all of the stakeholders for written submissions to be made prior to the public hearing.
 - After some discussion, the later proposal was agreed to and the public inquiry was scheduled for April 06, 2022 at 1:30 pm.
- 3.2 The Chairman informed Members that their questions should be forwarded to the Secretariat by 1:00 p.m. on Friday March 11, 2022 as the letters to stakeholders will be sent out later that day.
- 3.3 The Chairman informed Members that the response to the request for additional information from the Tobago Regional Health Authority was received by the Secretariat and uploaded to the Rotunda (e-repository).

OTHER BUSINESS

The 2022 Work Programme

- 4.1 The Chairman informed Members that the inquiry into the progress of the Digitalisation of the Education System during the COVID-19 Pandemic will be cancelled, as another Committee has embarked on a similar inquiry.
- 4.2 The Chairman invited discussion on the changes to the Committee's Work Programme.
- 4.3 The Committee agreed to the following public inquires in this order:
- An Examination into the Implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) for fiscal year 2021 in Relation to the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Planning and Development to be held on March 23, 2022;

- An Examination into the Island Wide Blackout that occurred on February 16, 2022 to be held on April 06, 2022; and
- An Examination into the findings of the Committee Appointed to Investigate the Factors Contributing to Clinical Outcomes of COVID-19 Patients to be held on April 13, 2022.

4.4 With regard to inquires that require follow-up work to be done the Chairman requested that the Secretariat prepare a list.

PRE-HEARING DISCUSSION: AN EXAMINATION INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (PSIP) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

5.1 The Chairman reminded Members that this meeting would be an examination into the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) for fiscal year 2021.

5.2 The Chairman invited Members to review the Issues Paper prepared by the Secretariat based on the written responses received from the Ministry of Public Utilities, the Ministry of Works and Transport and the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government.

5.3 The Chairman invited Members to raise any issues or concerns on the examination into the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) for fiscal year 2021. Members discussed the issues of concern and the general approach for the public hearing.

SUSPENSION

6.1 There being no further business for discussion *in camera*, the Chairman suspended the meeting at 2:32 p.m., to reconvene in public.

AN EXAMINATION INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (PSIP) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021

7.1 The Chairman called the public meeting to order at 2:50 p.m.

7.2 The following officials joined the meeting.

MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (MPD)

Mr. Ric Javid Ali	-	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Ms. Lisa Barrow	-	Assistant Director (Ag.), Project Planning and Reconstruction Division
Ms. Corrine Lewis	-	Project Analyst II, Project Planning and Reconstruction Division

Mr. Kevin Brooks	-	Project Monitoring Officer, Project Planning and Reconstruction Division
Ms. Camille Spencer	-	Programme Director, Monitoring and Evaluation National Transformation Unit
Mr. Kishore Toolseram	-	Project Analyst II, Project Planning and Reconstruction Division

MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT (MOWT)

Mrs. Sonia Francis Yearwood	-	Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mr. Navin Ramsingh	-	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mr. Hayden Phillip	-	Programme Director, Programme for Upgrading Roads Efficient Unit (PURE)
Mrs. Katherine Badloo Doerga-	-	Director of Drainage (Ag.)
Mr. Mahadeo Jagdeo	-	Programme Manager, Bridges Landslip Traffic Management, Project Implementation Unit
Mr. Anil Mohansingh	-	Director of Highways (Ag.)
Mr. Kerry Sheppard	-	Chief Engineer Drainage, Costal Protection Unit
Mr. Lenin Olivere	-	Chief Executive Officer, Port of Spain Infrastructure Company (POSINCO)
Mr. Leon Richardson	-	General Manager (Ag.) Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC)
Mr. Emmanuel Baah	-	Deputy General Manager, Estates Planning and Business Development, Airports Authority of T&T
Mr. Steve Garibsingh	-	Vice-President, Engineering and Programme Management, National Infrastructure Development Company Limited (NIDCO)

MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MRDLG)

Ms. Desdra Bascombe	-	Permanent Secretary
Mr. Raymond Seepaul	-	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Ms. Gaynell Andrews-Vegas	-	Senior Planning Officer
Mr. Madho Balroop	-	Technical Officer (Ag.)
Mr. Aldwin Hylegar	-	IT Manager
Ms. Susan Ali	-	Accounting Executive II
Mr. Jerry David	-	Senior Disaster Management Coordinator

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES (MPU)

Ms. Nicolette Duke	-	Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Ms. Arlene Collis	-	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mr. Eric Jones	-	Project Manager
Mr. Micah Connor	-	Project Manager
Mr. Julian Sieuraj	-	Project Support Officer
Ms. Tricia Frederick	-	Project Support Officer

7.3 The Chairman welcomed the officials.

7.4 The Chairman outlined the mandate of the Committee and the purpose of the hearing. Introductions were exchanged.

7.5 **Key Issues Discussed:**

▪ **MPD:**

1. The anticipated outcomes of the set goals to achieve Vision 2030;
2. The details on the high turnover of staff in the Project Management Unit;
3. The monitoring and evaluation status of the Project Screening Brief;
4. The effectiveness of the Project Screening Brief as a tool to comprehensively analyse the conceptual stage of PSIP projects and programmes;
5. The reduction in the sum allocated to the Development Programme;
6. Details on the implications of underutilising allocated funds;
7. Details as to why projects are stagnant at the conceptualization phase;
8. The social and economic effects of COVID-19 on PSIP Programmes;
9. The impact of COVID-19 on the consistency of the labour force;
10. Reasons for projects being in an insufficient state of readiness for effective implementation;
11. The reduction in the utilisation of allocated funds to PSIP projects due to the constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; and
12. The circumstances that lead to a delay in the completion of PSIP projects.

▪ **MOWT:**

1. The present status of all on-going projects within the Ministry's PSIP;
2. The need to ensure projects are being implemented in alignment with the National Policy and the Roadmap Committee Framework;
3. The ongoing process of planned maintenance checks of Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC) buses;
4. Details on the expenditure of the \$14.2 million allocated to PTSC;
5. The delays experienced in the approval process to reduce the age of PTSC buses;
6. Details on the process to acquire new PTSC buses;
7. Details on the plans associated with upgrading bus terminals;
8. Details surrounding the allocated \$666.3 million to the Road Network programme;

9. The reasons for the delay in the road network projects;
 10. The challenges associated with the rehabilitation of roads for fiscal 2021 to the March 2022;
 11. The details of the expenditure of \$30 million on the construction of the Valencia to Toco Road;
 12. Clarification that the Ministry is responsible for flood management as it relates to major rivers, riverine and tributary watercourses;
 13. The plans for a feasibility study to be conducted on the Toco Ferry Port Project;
 14. The rationale for the re-allocation of funds from the Spectrum Yard Project and the timeline for completion;
 15. The details on the Ministry's decision not to expend funds on the Traffic Management Programme;
 16. The status of the works on the Piarco and the Arthur Napoleon Raymond Robinson International Airports;
 17. The procurement process and cost for the foam fenders at the Port of Scarborough;
 18. Details on the advancements in the Coastal Protection Programme; and
 19. The setbacks experienced regarding the procurement of machinery when undertaking some of the PSIP projects and programmes.
- **MPU:**
 1. The data collection method on the maintenance of flood management activities;
 2. The need for the planning and tracking of flood prone areas;
 3. Miscommunication over whether the Ministry of Public Utilities or the Ministry of Works and Transport is supposed to be in control over flood management projects;
 4. Details on a strategy plan to treat with the flood waters;
 5. The status of the Dual-Purpose Reservoirs Scheme;
 6. The list of assigned natural disaster facilities throughout the country;
 7. The measures in place to increase 24/7 water supply by 10%;
 8. The details on the repairing of water treatment plants and pipelines across Trinidad;
 9. Details on the implementation of the District Metered Areas;
 10. Details surrounding WASA's attempts in location leakages within communities;
 11. Status update on the San Fernando Waste Water Treatment Plant;
 12. The need for MPU to collaborate with WASA to make the water systems more technologically advanced;
 13. Details on the Recovery and Recycling Plant at Forres Park;
 14. The need to undertake planned PSIP wastewater projects and programmes; and
 15. The delays experienced in the procurement of equipment for projects.
 - **MRDLG:**
 1. The criteria used when choosing roads for rehabilitation;
 2. Details on shelters available to persons affected by natural disasters;
 3. The total expenditure of monies needed to repair the roads across Trinidad;

4. The process in which projects are deferred from submission into the PSIP;
5. Details on the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Programme;
6. The need to create training programmes that will encourage male citizens to participate;
7. Details on the procurement of amphibious vehicles; and
8. The challenges associated with the treatment of flood-prone areas.

Please see the verbatim notes for the detailed oral submission by the witnesses.

7.6 The Chairman thanked officials for attending and they were excused.

SUSPENSION

8.1 At 6:21 p.m., the Chairman suspended the public meeting to resume for a post-hearing discussion with Members only.

RESUMPTION

10.1 At 6:23 p.m. the Chairman resumed the meeting.

POST-HEARING DISCUSSION

11.1 The Chairman sought Members' views on the public hearing. A discussion ensued.

11.2 The Committee agreed that additional questions would be sent to the Ministry of Public Utilities, the Ministry of Works and Transport, the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, and the Ministry of Planning and Development.

11.3 The Committee agreed that the next inquiry would be on an examination into the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) for fiscal year 2021 in respect to the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Planning and Development to be held on March 23, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT

12.1 The Chairman thanked Members for their attendance and the meeting was adjourned to **Wednesday March 23, 2022 at 1:30 p.m.**

12.2 The adjournment was taken at 6:38 p.m.

We certify that these Minutes are true and correct.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY

March 09, 2022

Appendix II

Verbatim Notes

VERBATIM NOTES OF THE SEVENTH VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE HELD, (IN PUBLIC), ON WEDNESDAY, march 09, 2022, AT 2.50 P.M.

PRESENT

Mrs. Bridgid Annisette-George	Chairman
Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy	Member
Mr. Clarence Rambharat	Member
Mrs. Lisa Morris-Julian	Member
Mr. Wade Mark	Member
Ms. Amrita Deonarine	Member
Ms. Keiba Jacob-Mottley	Secretary
Ms. Khisha Peterkin	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Hema Bhagaloo	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Rachel Nunes	Graduate Research Assistant

ABSENT

Dr. Lackram Bodoie	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Hassel Bacchus	Member
Mr. Stephen Mc Clashie	Member
Ms. Yokymma Bethelmy	Member

MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Ric Ali	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Ms. Lisa Barrow	Assistant Director (Ag.), Project Planning and Reconstruction Division
Mr. Kevin Brooks	Project Monitoring Officer, Project Planning and Reconstruction Division

MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT

Mrs. Sonia Francis Yearwood	Permanent Secretary
Mr. Navin Ramsingh	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mr. Hayden Phillip	Programme Director, Programme for Upgrading Roads Efficiency Unit (PURE)
Mrs. Katherine Badloo Doerga	Director of Drainage (Ag.)
Mr. Mahadeo Jagdeo	Programme Manager, Bridges Landslip Traffic Management, Project Implementation Unit
Mr. Anil Mohansingh	Director of Highways (Ag.)
Mr. Kerry Sheppard	Chief Engineer Drainage, Coastal Protection Unit
Mr. Lenin Oliviere	Chief Executive Officer, Port of Spain Infrastructure Company (POSINCO)
Mr. Leon Richardson	General Manager (Ag.) Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC)
Mr. Steve Garibsingh	Vice-President Engineering and Programme Management, National Infrastructure Development Company Limited (NIDCO)

MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Ms. Destra Bascombe	Permanent Secretary
Mr. Raymond Seepaul	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mr. Jerry David	Senior Disaster Management Coordinator

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

Ms. Nicolette Duke	Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Ms. Arlene Collis	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mr. Eric Jones	Project Manager
Mr. Micah Connor	Project Manager
Mr. Julian Sieuraj	Project Support Officer

Madam Chairman: Good afternoon, everyone and welcome to the officials of the Ministry of Planning and Development, the Ministry of Public Utilities, the Ministry of Works and Transport, and the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government. My name is Bridgid Annisette-George, and I am the Chairman of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee. The Committee on Public Administration and Appropriations has the mandate to consider and report to the House on:

- a. The budgetary expenditure of government agencies to ensure that expenditures is embarked upon in accordance with parliamentary approval;
- b. The budgetary expenditure of government agencies as it occurs and keeps Parliament informed of how the budget allocation is been implemented; and
- c. The administration of government agencies to determine hindrances to their efficiency, and to make recommendations to the Government for improvement of public administration.

The purpose of this meeting is to examine the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme fiscal year 2021.

The role of the Committee is to:

1. Assist the stakeholders in achieving the efficient delivery of services, while ensuring that expenditure is embarked upon in accordance with parliamentary approval;
2. Determine the challenges being faced and possible solutions to these challenges; and
3. Make recommendations for improvement of public administration.

This meeting is being broadcast live on the Parliament's Channel 11, on Radio 105.5 FM, and the Parliament's YouTube Channel *ParlView*. Viewers and listeners can send their comments

related to today's enquiry via email: Parl101@tpparliament.org, facebook.com/parliament, Twitter, @parliament.

Participants are advised that their microphones should remain muted until recognized by the Chair. I will therefore now invite the members of the Committee to introduce themselves, and thereafter, I will invite the members of the various Ministries to introduce themselves, starting with the Ministry of Planning and Development, followed by the Ministry of Public Utilities, then Works and Transport and then Rural Development and Local Government. So that I now invite members of the Committee to introduce themselves.

[*Introductions made*]

Madam Chairman: Thank you. So we can now start with the Ministries. Ministry of Planning and Development. [*Technical difficulties*] We are having a bit of a difficulty in hearing from the Ministry of Planning and Development. Okay, so can I ask in the interest of time that we move on to the Ministry of Public Utilities, then Works and Transport, then Rural Development and we will come back and see if Ministry of Planning and Development have sorted out their technical issues by that time. Thank you.

[*Introductions made*]

Madam Chairman: We now go on to the Ministry of Works and Transport.

[*Introductions made*]

Madam Chairman: Okay, so can we therefore move on to the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government?

[*Introductions made*] [*Technical difficulties*]

Madam Chairman: We had everybody from the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government and if that is the case, can we go back to the Ministry of Planning and Development let us see if they are in a position to join.

[*Introductions made*] [*Technical difficulties*]

Madam Chairman: Is there no one else from Ministry of Planning and Development? Okay, and if there is no one else then I therefore will proceed. If members join us after we will recognize them and have them introduce themselves. Okay so, at this stage what I would like to do is, I would like to invite each of the PSs to make a brief opening statement. And I think to properly

set the context, I will invite you, Mr. Ric Ali, as the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Planning and Development to open the session. Mr. Ali, your mike.

Mr. Ali: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman, and good afternoon to all of the members of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee, and to my colleagues from the Ministry of Planning and Development, Ministry of Public Utilities, Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government and Ministry of Works and Transport respectively. It gives me great pleasure to be here today virtually to represent the Ministry of Planning and Development and to engage in discussions with your committee about the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme, the PSIP, for fiscal year 2021.

Madam Chairman, I am positive that your committee is well aware that the Public Sector Investment Programme represents the strategic investment plan of the Government in the formulation of the annual national budget. And it attempts to match capital investment with national priority areas. Accordingly, the PSIP is often viewed as an investment programming tool that seeks to advance national policy objectives to positively impact on overall national development. The PSIP comprises programmes and projects of respective Ministries, departments and agencies that are designed to achieve national strategic objectives and it is funded through the Consolidated Fund as well as the Infrastructure Development Fund.

The Ministry of Planning and Development being a centre of Government Ministry is among other things charged with the responsibility for medium and long term economic policy planning. Through its Project Planning and Reconstruction Division, the PPRD, the Ministry provides support to other Ministries, Departments and agencies in the formulation of their policies, plans and strategies that are necessary for the sustainable development of our beloved country. This support comes in facilitating the development of projects and monitoring the associated implementation of these projects that collectively comprise the PSIP.

The 2021 PSIP was framed in accordance with the National Development Strategy, our 2016—2030, commonly referred to as *Vision 2030*, together with the broad policy recommendations for development as contained in the Roadmap to Recovery Report, particularly in light of the impacts experienced arising from the COVID-19 global pandemic. Additionally, the 2021 PSIP sought to sensitize Ministries, Departments and agencies as to the proposed reintroduction of the medium term public investment planning through the three year PSIP, commencing with the preparation of the capital expenditure programme for fiscal 2023. This was documented in a segment entitled Medium Term Policy and Planning Agenda, which serves as a precursor to the second planning horizon 2021—2025 of the *Vision 2030* process. The segment entitled “Monitoring and Measuring Performance” attempted to showcase the brief—attempted to

showcase the key performance indicators that the PSIP would be measured against to ensure maximum returns on the strategic areas of investment.

The various aspects of strengthening policy development, project management, and monitoring and evaluation are functions of various arms within the Ministry of Planning and Development, namely the PPRD, the Project Planning and Reconstruction Division, the Socio-Economic Policy Planning Division, SEPPD, and the National Transformation Unit. And I am pleased to be accompanied here today by a few members of two of these divisions.

It is accepted that the PPRD focuses on the selection and prioritization of programmes and projects for inclusion in the PSIP, and monitors the overall implementation of the entire PSIP portfolio. However, it must be emphasized that Ministries, Departments and agencies ultimately remain responsible and accountable for the successful execution and completion of the specific programmes and projects under their respective heads of expenditure. It is also acknowledged that to achieve maximum efficacy of the PSIP, there is a need for the continuous training and development of staff within respective MDAs to focus the implementation of these projects and programmes within the design context. It has been reported that individual MDAs continue to be challenged by a high turnover of contract project management professionals in their project implementation units, and this has negatively impacted some of these projects and programmes.

Accordingly, the Ministry of Planning and Development as part of its medium term public investment strategy, intends to meet recommendations to expand the human resource capacity of the establishments within respective Ministries, and to standardize the project management positions so that the disruption caused by regular turnover may be addressed.

Madam Chair, the Ministry of Planning and Development's team looks forward to participating in today's discourse, as we recognize the impact that the Public Sector Investment Programme is intended to realize on our national development. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Ali, and I will now call upon the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Public Utilities to make her brief opening statement.

Ms. Collis: Good afternoon again, Chairman, members of the Committee, colleagues, all, on behalf of the Ministry's team I thank you for this opportunity to share on the execution of our Public Sector Investment Programme for 2021.

The Ministry of Public Utilities is mandated to provide leadership and governance to the sector and to facilitate the delivery of affordable quality public utilities through the stewardship of our implementing agencies in water and wastewater, coastal and waste management. The Ministry also has responsibility for providing social intervention for the unserved and underserved

through its electrification programme, residential electrification assistance programme, community water improvement programme and the utility assistance programme, the last of which falls under the recurrent expenditure. The Ministry subscribes to the *Vision 2030* ethos of optimizing the quality of life for all citizens, and its programmes and projects are thus aligned to the five developmental teams with the aim of providing a foundation for the future development of the country's industrial, commercial and residential landscape. And so we look forward to today's discussion and to any recommendations arising from the Committee or our colleagues on this meeting in moving forward in this thrust. I thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Madam PS, and now might I invite the PS of Ministry of Works and Transport to make her brief opening statement.

3.10 p.m.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Good afternoon, once again, Chairman and members of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee, as well as colleagues from the Ministries of Planning and Development, Public Utilities, and Rural Development and Local Government. As my colleagues would have indicated, I thank you for the invitation to undertake an examination into the implementation of the Ministry of Works and Transport Public Sector Investment Programme, for the fiscal year 2021, spanning the period of October 2020 to September 2021. As identified by Mr. Ali in the Ministry, the Public Sector Investment Programmes is funded via two funds: the Consolidated Fund and the Infrastructure Development Fund.

The Ministry works with and along other agencies towards the implementation of its overall Public Sector Investment Programme. In fiscal year 2021, the Ministry of Works and Transport received a revised allocation in the sum of over \$1 billion. Its overall expenditure rate was 87.2 per cent with a 90.6 per cent expenditure rate under the IDF and 87.2 per cent under the Consolidated Fund.

Under the Public Sector Investment Programme, the Ministry continues to pursue over 86 programmes and projects. Officers of the Ministry's divisions and state agencies stand ready this afternoon to provide clarification in respect of projects undertaken to the extent possible, and to provide further information in writing as we may be required to do. Once again, we thank you for the ability to be here this afternoon.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Madam PS. And, finally, may I call upon the PS in the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government to make his brief opening statement. No, I believe the PS is here. It is not the Deputy PS. So, Ms. Bascombe.

Ms. Bascombe: Thank you again, Chair, members of the Committee as well as members of the listening and viewing public. It is certainly a pleasure, once again, to meet with the PAAC to discuss PSIP 2021. As the Minister notes, that the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government is one of the closest Ministries to the population. At head office, as well as the 14 corporations, we provide services ranging from disaster management to garbage collection to public health; a whole range of services to our burgesses from the cradle to the grave. So, it is our pleasure to be here having this discussion, and we thank you for the opportunity given to us. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Thank you to you all. And I think to start off the discussion, I would like to pose my first question to the PS in the Ministry of Planning and Development. When you spoke about, you know, grounding the projects in *Vision 2030*, I would like if maybe you can share with the Committee your view on the progress of—this would be the Ministries across the board—in either meeting or surpassing the goals set out in *Vision 2030* and the Sustainable Development Goals that they are aligned to, if you could give us some insight into where we are at. Mr. Ali, your mike? Thanks.

Mr. Ali: Thank you, Chair, for the first question. Firstly, well, the Ministry of Planning and Development proposed that programmes and projects ought to be aligned with the national policy and priorities as identified in *Vision 2030* and the Roadmap to Recovery, specifically those that supported digital transformation, food security and the rebuilding of the economy with focus on key sectors, such as, manufacturing, construction, energy and energy industries, tourism, the creative industries, the green and the blue economy and financial services.

Now, the total PSIP, as was requested by various Ministries, Departments and agencies, for total PSIP funding amounted to \$1,400,985 million and the total number of projects amounted to 1,597 projects. The Ministry of Finance dictated a total PSIP ceiling of \$4,000,111,000. I apologize there. It is \$4.111 billion and that comprised a total of 1,079 projects. That was disaggregated in terms of \$2,222 million out of the Consolidated Fund and \$1,889 million from the Infrastructure Development Fund.

The criteria that the Ministry of Planning and Development used for both the inclusion and the exclusion of projects within the PSIP were detailed in the Call Circular and, therefore, those criteria guided the PPRD in the selection of projects and programmes. I do not know if that gives you any insight, Chair, in terms of your question, but that was our guidance at the Ministry.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, I understand your guidance, and I think more what I am looking for is outcomes. Okay? Where do you see us in terms of achieving the goals that you set out in

the National Development Strategy in terms of projects and programmes that are deliverables in terms of attaining *Vision 2030*?

Mr. Ali: My apologies, Chair. Your questions are focused with respect to PSIP 2021? Chair, my apologies. I do not have that data in front of me at the moment. I would commit to supply the Committee with our response in writing, if you would so allow.

Madam Chairman: Yes, please. Because I think it is important. We are in 2022, and I think there are eight more years left. So, you know, you grounded a lot of your own contribution in the *National Development Strategy* and *Vision 2030*. So, that is why I went there. So, maybe I could ask you another question. Again, having regard to what your opening statement was, I got the impression that one of challenges that Ministries faced is the high turnover of staff in their divisions that deal with project implementation. So, I would like to ask you, in terms of the PSIP 2021, from where you sit in the Ministry of Planning and Development, what challenges you would have observed that Ministries and Departments would have encountered in the implementation of the PSIP?

Mr. Ali: Okay. Thank you very much Chair, for your question. In respect of PSIP 2021, it is noted that there is a historic trend across many PSIPs that the utilization of resources is typically relatively low in the first quarter of each fiscal year, and this is followed by steady increases over the remaining three-quarters of the fiscal year. The reason for that is based on the fact that Ministries, Departments and implementing agencies undertake the necessary pre-planning, re-prioritization and review of their implementation during the first quarter after the budget allocations have been made.

Now, this is typically followed by an acceleration of the actual implementation, and that usually continues at a steady space until the end of the fiscal year. Of course, in 2021, they had social and economic shocks that arose from the COVID-19 pandemic, and these shocks would have fundamentally disrupted the implementation of several PSIP programmes and projects as a result of the various Public Health Regulations that were instituted to contain the spread of the virus. Now, the implementation of quarantines inevitably reduced the labour force and resulted in a deceleration in the execution of some key projects, and a resultant decrease in output regarding the completion of tasks within NBAs. Our construction industry was closed from May to July, and in order to facilitate the containment of the spread of the virus—and this closure obviously resulted in delays in construction activities for many major infrastructural work projects. I am certain that the Ministry of Works and Transport would be able to support on that statement.

Now, there is always the typical—not typical, but very common reference to the lack of timely releases of funds, and that may result in the late start of projects and slow down of work and

work stoppages, which can eventually and ultimately result in delays in the completion of projects. Of course, the Ministry of Finance would be in the best position to address the issues regarding releases of funds.

Now, your question about the challenges, the two major challenges which I may have referenced previously are that programmes and projects sometimes are not sufficiently in a state of readiness for effective implementation, and this sometimes is as a result of lack of requisite statutory approvals, land and construction and delays in acquiring rental approvals. Again, the Ministry of Works and Transport, I am certain will be able to expand on these for many of their major construction projects that would involve typically for land acquisition projects, et cetera.

My reference to the understaffing and the lack of trained and dedicated staff to project implementation earlier is because of the reports coming in from Ministries and Departments in their interactions with the Ministry of Planning and Development, where they have reported a high turnover of qualified contract project management professionals in the various project implementation units of their respective Ministries. So those are the major challenges that I would say the Ministry of Planning and Development has noticed, generally across the PSIP, particularly, in respect of fiscal year 2021, Madam Chair. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Okay, thank you. And I am just going to ask one last question. Your project screening brief, which on early occasions I have heard your Ministry espouse as, maybe if I say a panacea that might be creating it too high, but as one of the solutions for what would have been the issue with pre-planning and approvals and all the start-up things. Has that been successful?

Mr. Ali: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Our project screening brief has been in operation for approximately two years, and the measure of success may be not at 100 per cent. The intention of the project screening brief is to ensure that the projects are adequately conceptualized, and that there is a state of readiness before funding is recommended.

Now, in the initial phase of this PSB, this project screening brief, the Ministry has recognized that not all of the projects which may have been scrutinized using the project screening brief method, especially over these first two years, have sufficiently met and sufficiently satisfied the rigid conditions that were intended in the conceptualization. So, that being said, I would acknowledge that the Ministry of Planning and Development recognizes the need for the PSB process, the project screening brief process, to be comprehensively detailed and rigorous. And I would also want to highlight that in March 2020, during this fiscal year for which today's discourse is about, in March 2020, there were two working sessions, two project screening brief working sessions, that were conducted with various respective planning units and project implementation units of various line Ministries so as to provide guidance with respect to the

preparation of these documents. That being said, however, I would acknowledge that the PSB, the entire PSB operation is not yet at 100 per cent success, and it has room to evolve and to be developed into a more rigid analysis of projects, especially at that conceptualization phase, when Ministries are introducing them for consideration for financing.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And then, would I be wrong then in saying that that lies with you, meaning your Ministry?

Mr. Ali: That is correct. Yes. And we acknowledge that and we are working on it as we all move into the next fiscal years.

Madam Chairman: So, what I would ask you to do is, if you can present to us in writing what you have seen as the areas of, I do not want to say weakness, but deficiencies, and how you intend to address that. Okay? So, you will give us that in writing. And, therefore—I will therefore, at this stage, invite my members of the Committee to open the discussion with respect to the other entities that they may wish to address, and I will initially call upon member Deonarine, if you could start off the discussion please.

Ms. Deonarine: Thank you, Madam Chair. Before I go to the other Ministries, I have some follow-up questions to the Ministry of Planning and Development. Madam Chair, are you hearing me properly?

Madam Chairman: I am hearing you very well.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. So, PS in Ministry of Planning and Development, you indicated in your introductory statement that the Ministry of Finance gave an initial ceiling, PSIP ceiling of \$4.11 billion. Is that correct?

Mr. Ali: Yes, that is correct.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. All right. So, I just needed to confirm. When I look at the Development Programme for 2020, which gives a revised estimate of 2021 of the PSIP, I see that the figure, the total figure under the Consolidated Fund and the IDF combined was approximately \$3.06 billion. So, is it possible for you to explain to us perhaps—I am assuming it is because of the onset of the pandemic—could you give us some insight as to what contributed to this reduction in the estimate?

Mr. Ali: Ms. Deonarine?

Ms. Deonarine: Yes, PS.

Mr. Ali: Fair enough. I am just going to refer this question to Mr. Brooks.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay.

Mr. Brooks: Good afternoon. Good afternoon, member.

Ms. Deonarine: Good afternoon.

Mr. Brooks: Could you repeat the question?

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. So, in the PS's initial statement, he indicated that a PSIP ceiling was given by the Ministry of Finance for fiscal 2021 of \$4.11 billion. But when I look at the Development Programme, I see that that figure, that \$4.11 billion was revised downwards to \$3.06 billion. And my question is, what contributed to that reduction in allocation for the Development Programme which is the allocation of funds to both the Consolidated Fund and the Infrastructure Development Fund; both of which form the PSIP, if I understood correctly from PS? Your mike is muted.

Mr. Brooks: Right, so the figure of \$4.1 billion would have represented the overall ceiling. The figure, however, that you are quoting, which is a revised estimate, is the projected expenditure. That is how much would have been utilized by Ministries, Departments and agencies as at September 30th. So, it is not that it would have been revised downwards, that is how much the Ministries and Departments would have utilized as at September 30th at the end of the fiscal year.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. I understand. So then, could you explain to us what probably would have contributed to well, I want to say an under-utilization of the amount allocated from \$4.11 million to \$3.06 million?

Mr. Brooks: I believe it would have been a result of the pandemic, the effects of the pandemic, and also the challenges faced by Ministries and Departments in terms of capacity, in terms of capacity in project management. So those factors would have—and probably also the untimely release of funds. Those factors would have influenced the utilization or the expenditure.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. So, let me go back to the PS of the Ministry of Planning and Development. PS, you indicated that there were two primarily challenges that you are experiencing with the implementation of the PSIP, and one of them has to do with the state of readiness for implementation by Ministries and Departments and the second has to do with a high—which I thought was quite interesting—turnover of project management professionals in different Ministries. So, could you tell me from the Ministry of Planning and Development side, what is being done to resolve this problem?

Mr. Ali: Thank you, member Deonarine, for the question. In respect of the high turnover of the contract staff, it is recommended or I indicated initially that the Ministry of Planning and Development intends to make recommendations to expand the human resource capacity of the establishments of the various Ministries throughout the public service, and in doing that establishment expansion, to recommend that the positions of the project management positions be standardized so that there will not be that disruption caused by regular turnover.

Ms. Deonarine: Ministry of Works and Transport, is this a problem that your Ministry is experiencing at the moment with the PSIP implementation? Because being one of the Ministries that implements a large chunk of the PSIP, I am assuming that this is a problem that you face.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Member, in terms of the question of implementation rate as to whether we are experiencing a high turnover of project management staff, I do not say that we are experiencing a high turnover. We are seeking to make sure that in those areas where we need project management staff that we are recruiting. So, at this time, we are in certain areas, we are recruiting. But, generally speaking, we are not experiencing a high turnover.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. Thank you. And with respect to the Ministry of Public Utilities, is this a challenge that you are being faced with? Why I am asking each PS, is because what I am trying to ascertain is as to if a root cause analysis has been done to understand why there is a high staff turnover rate, especially in the field of project management, because the implementation of the PSIP is primarily based on project management and project management expertise. So, the statement by the PS in the Ministry of Planning and Development could pose a severe risk to the entire implementation of the PSIP. So, to the Ministry of Public Utilities, is this a problem that you are facing at present?

Ms. Duke: I would not say that we have a problem of high turnover. We do, however, have two vacancies that we are seeking to fill, and we are about a couple of months away from filling those, because we have already gone through the recruitment and selection process. We have five positions at the project management and senior project management levels, and the positions, the three at the project management levels are currently filled, and those officers are operating and within the shortest possible time, we believe that the other two positions will be filled because, of course, we have already identified the successful candidates from our interview process.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. Thank you. PS in the Ministry of Planning and Development, did your Ministry do an analysis into which Ministries, in particular, or Departments this challenge that you spoke of is occurring?

Mr. Ali: The answer to your question Ms. Deonarine, is yes. The Ministry of Planning and Development would have engaged in such. I believe it should have been in and around the time of April 2021.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. So, could you tell us which Ministries are those? Okay. If you do not have the information, could you submit it to us in writing?

Mr. Ali: No problem, member. I will commit to submit in writing.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. So, as I have you on the floor, let me continue with some follow-up questions that I have with respect to what Madam Chair would have asked. Now, Madam Chair initially asked with respect to how has the PSIP programme been contributing towards the attainment of *Vision 2030*, and I know you would have committed to submitting that answer in writing. However, I want to draw your attention directly to the PSIP 2021 document. This is the orange book that was published and available to the general public. On page 193, you have some key performance indicators and targets that were identified for 2021, and I want to draw your attention to “Item 6.0: Building Smart and Quality Infrastructure”.

Ministry of Planning and Development being the Ministry that is responsible for monitoring the overall implementation of the PSIP, could you give us an idea as to whether you were able to increase the kilometres of roads paved per year by 10 per cent? You can also feel free to refer this question to the Ministry of Works and Transport after you have initially answered.

Madam Chairman: But Member, might I just guide and suggest that in the interest of time, in terms of that attainment, maybe we should go directly to the Ministry of Works and Transport. Yes? Thank you.

Ms. Deonarine: Sure.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes, member. Chairman, should I continue?

Madam Chairman: Yes please, Madam PS.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: So, in terms of the percentage in the kilometres of roads paved per year, based on our analysis for the 2020/2021 period, we would have achieved approximately 7 per cent, 7½ per cent of the PSIP in terms of our capital programme and we would have achieved, at least, 2 per cent under our current programme. So, we have estimated that they are averaging around 9 per cent, 9 to 10 per cent.

Ms. Deonarine: Sorry, I was muted. So, 9 to 10 per cent of roads were paved in 2021?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: It is repaved. Yes.

3.40 p.m.

Ms. Deonarine: Yes, repaved. Sorry. Okay. And with respect to the other indicators, the average age of the PTSC bus fleet, was it reduced by 10 per cent?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: The average age would not have been reduced by 10 per cent. The reduction in the average age was hinged on the introduction of a fleet of new buses. The approval process for that was delayed and as such, the average overall fleet age was not reduced by that 10 per cent.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. And let me—the last indicator I would ask on before I pass over to another member is with respect to the increase in the number of buses in the PTSC bus fleet by 10 per cent.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: That is linked to the other question. While we did have an increase in the numbers, it would not have been to 10 per cent because the major re-fleeting project did not get underway as expected.

Ms. Deonarine: Sorry, I am not hearing you clearly. Could you repeat the answer, please?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: My apologies, Member. I am saying that the two questions are linked in that there was a re-fleeting process underway—it is still underway and because the approval process for that was delayed, the number of buses—the increase was also delayed which also would have not—resulted in the average age being reduced also not occurring. So I was just indicating that the two issues are directly linked.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. So is the intention to have—to achieve this target in 2020?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: In 2022. We are moving towards 2022.

Ms. Deonarine: Yeah, 2022.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes. We are moving towards that target once that approval process and the engagement of a provider. It is not expected that it would be achieved fully in 2022, because the purchase of buses, once you have placed in the final order it then takes a relatively long real time in terms of the manufacturing process. So we will look at—we are averaging between 2022—2023.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. Madam Chair, I would pause.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Thank you so much, member Deonarine. I just wanted to get some clarification from the PS, Ministry of Works, on the buses. This projection of increasing or reducing the age of the fleet by 10 per cent, was that related to the project of buying 100 buses?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Chair, you see, me pausing because the 100 buses would have been purchased with over—I believe it is a three-year period to four-year period with the last five buses coming in this fiscal year. I cannot say in terms of this metric the exact period identified by the Ministry of Planning and Development, if it is over the last four years. It would have been—we would have reached the target. But if it is between 2019—2020 to 2020—2021, then we would not have.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So just let me make sure I am understanding; of the 100 buses that were targeted, that project, there are only five left to be purchased, so you got 95?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Yes?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes.

Madam Chairman: And that five that are left, that is what is going to be complete—the procurement of those would be completed in fiscal 2022?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes. Yes. [*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: Now, in the PSIP booklet at page 193—and I think this is what member Deonarine was asking about—there was a statement that in terms of the percentage of number of buses that the PTSC has, they were going to increase or they would decrease the average age by 10 per cent. Okay?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes. Yes.

Madam Chairman: All right. We understand that that was not achieved because you did not procure the buses. So what I want to find out is if the five buses that were not procured, if that is what resulted in the average age of your fleet not going down by the 10 per cent?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: I do not believe that is the case, Madam Chair. In addition to the project which aimed for 100 buses—the purchase of 100 buses—there was also on the books or in the pipeline, project pipeline, of another project to purchase an increased amount of buses.

Madam Chairman: “Um-hum”.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: So if that project had gotten off the ground then we would have definitely achieved the 10 per cent.

Madam Chairman: Right. So it is as a result of that second project. Do you recall how many buses were to be procured in that other project?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: The intention—the proposal is to purchase over a period of time, 300 buses.

Madam Chairman: Three hundred buses.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Over a period of time, yes.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And therefore, in fiscal 2021, could you tell us how many of those 300 buses were to be procured? If you cannot tell us now, if you could tell us in writing. Okay?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Definitely, Chair. Definitely.

Madam Chairman: Yes? And the other thing I wanted to find out is that you said in your submission that even though your average age of your fleet went up—because you did not get the new additional buses—that in fact your functional fleet, your average daily functional fleet improved from 232 buses to 245 buses.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Yes?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes.

Madam Chairman: So I want to ask firstly, how was that achieved? And, secondly, because as you indicated procurement of buses is a protracted thing, whether you can see any further efficiencies being realized from your existing fleet based on what you achieved in 2021 to redound to better service for the people of Trinidad and Tobago?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: So, Madam Chair, I can say that that increase would have been directly attributed to the maintenance programme being undertaken by the PTSC. I would want to ask Mr. Richardson if he can identify how that programme is continuing. But it is based on the maintenance programme implemented by the PTSC to bring buses back on that.

Mr. Richardson: Thank you, PS. Madam Chair, that programme is a programme where we implemented a system to improve the maintenance of the buses by performing regular maintenance checks on the buses; planned maintenance schedules that are held by the

engineering department, identifying issues before they become greater issues and working with the suppliers and the manufacturers to ensure that all the repairs that could cause the current fleet that we have to diminish are addressed in a timely manner. So because of that, the PS would have been explaining, that has resulted in us being able to maintain the current fleet that we have to provide the service to the general public.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And thank you, Mr. Richardson. And what I want to ask is can you envisage any further efficiencies coming through that programme based on your existing fleet and all the vagaries that are concerned in acquiring new buses? Can you foresee increased efficiencies from your existing aged fleet?

Mr. Richardson: Madam Chair, could I—

Madam Chairman: Your mike.

Mr. Richardson: Yes. Madam Chair, could I provide that response in writing, please?

Madam Chairman: Yes. And if you can, by doing what?—you would put in writing. Okay? Thank you. And just before I invite other members, I just want to ask the PS, in terms of—you said earlier that you think you are wrong about—would have done about 10 per cent, achieved your target in road repaving in 2021. At the date of your submission, I think there was about 6 per cent. Okay? So it would mean that between September—middle of September and the end of the fiscal you would have achieved the other 3 or so per cent. So could you give us a listing of the roads that were paved as of the 17th of September, 2021, which gave us 4 per cent under PURE and 2 per cent under the recurrent programme, and the additional roads which would have repaved—which would have been repaved after the 17th of September, up to the end of the fiscal year to bring us to the 9 or so per cent? Okay?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes, Chair.

Madam Chairman: You could give us that in writing.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes, Chairman.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Might it invite at this stage member Rambharat to join the conversation.

Mr. Rambharat: Thank you, Chair. My question is to PS, Planning. It deals with the references to the capacity of Ministries and the skills and the project designs. So my first question is, why are projects that are not ready for funding put into the PSIP? Why these are projects that are so

deficient that they cannot be executed right away? Why are they put into the PSIP in the first place?

Mr. Ali: I guess your question is more in a broader context. You are speaking about PSIPs in general and not specifically to 2021, because obviously 2021's PSIP would have been geared taking into consideration the global scenario that would have arisen as a result of COVID and the need for recovery.

Generally, if it is that projects are proposed that are in sufficient alignment with our national policy or our policy objectives, sometimes those projects, when Ministries present them, if not in a full state of readiness at the point in time when included onto the PSIP, it is expected that the Ministries would be able to somewhat catch up during the fiscal year in terms of the implementation because of the associated importance of those projects in alignment with our national policy.

Mr. Rambharat: Sounds to me like the project sounds good on paper but—so in terms of an outline it sounds good. But in the context of how you screen projects for the purpose of funding and how you screen projects for the purpose of implementation, many of these projects sound as though they are just words written on paper and unimplementable because they have not been conceived in a way a project should be conceived for the purpose of implementation and funding.

Mr. Ali: Well, without being able to analyze on a project by project basis, I do want to recognize that in this particular fiscal year the context, really and truly, had to deal with the—what is the word?—that the projects were in alignment particularly with our Roadmap to Recovery and community recovery reports. And whilst I do acknowledge that some of them do sound like ideas that are not fully fleshed out, I think that it may be better that if we analyze—instead of generalizing them all into that category, if we analyze them on a case-by-case basis, with all due respect, member.

Mr. Rambharat: So, is it that the Ministry of Planning and Development would, through some sort of exercise during this fiscal in preparation for the next one, put some of these projects on a—having maybe now noted the deficiencies in terms of ability to implement and execute, to strengthen these projects and make them implementable in the next fiscal?

Mr. Ali: That is correct, member. Only as recently as February 2022, the Ministry of Planning and Development has started a workshop. They are interacting with various MDAs in respect of implementation of the PSIP and refocusing of projects, particularly to ensure the alignment with our national policy objectives, RRR, R2R and the CRR.

Mr. Rambharat: Okay. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, member Mark, can I invite you now to join the conversation?

Mr. Mark: Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, before I deal with some issues as it relates to the Ministry of Works and Transport, if I may seek your indulgence? I would like to ask the Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Planning and Development if he can share with us what are some of the factors or reasons for the heavy turnover of staff as it relates to the project management unit within the various Ministries? What is driving persons to leave those particular offices and positions within the public service? Has any analysis, any studies, anything has been done to guide Planning and Development as it relates to that particular situation? May I ask the Acting Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Planning and Development?

Mr. Ali: From the information that is available to the Ministry of Planning and Development at this time, it appears that the most popular factor or the most critical factor that may influence the heavy turnover that we have referred to seems to be the remuneration package that is associated with the respective position.

Now, I may have indicated earlier that the Ministry of Planning and Development, having recognized this difference in remuneration across various MDAs, intends to make recommendations to strengthen the establishment such that the project management positions that exist across the public service may be standardized and therefore would all have the same remuneration package and therefore would discourage the turnover that is currently reported as a result of that difference.

Mr. Mark: Would you want to clear or clarify for us how many project management officers would have either left their posts in the last three years, maybe from 2019/2020, 2020/2021, and maybe up to the current time? What number are we really looking at?

Mr. Ali: Member, unfortunately, I would not have that data at my fingertips at this particular point in time. If it is that it is possible, I would commit to try to provide that information in writing. Of course, it does require that the various Ministries that would have reported this turnover may have to be consulted, especially if it is for the separate periods that you have requested being over different fiscal years.

Mr. Mark: Okay. Thank you so very much. May I now go turn to the Ministry of Works and Transport? Now, we all know—and I am directing this to the Permanent Secretary. Madam Chair, we know that the road transport network is a virtual nightmare, horror story for many, many citizens and motorists. In fact, protests seem to be the order of the day in many communities because of the poor road maintenance brought by the Ministry of Works and Transport and the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government.

Now, I would like to get from the Ministry of Works and Transport, and later Rural Development and Local Government, based on what I am seeing before me, in fiscal 2021, some \$666.3 million was allocated for continued enhancement of the road network. The road network inventory is some 2,135 kilometres in this country. What I would like to ask the Ministry of Works and Transport is, what is being done with this allocation to really enhance our road network in this country? Can we get some answers from the Ministry of Works and Transport given this \$666.3 million that was allocated? Can we get some clarification?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Thank you, member, for the question. I want to start by recognizing some of the statements that you made—the question. In the instance where there is a road network which is not meeting the needs of the communities that they are supposed to serve, the Ministry of Works and Transport is continuing to identify the areas to address those as quickly as possible. We have asked that, understanding the frustrations in certain areas, that these areas be brought to light—our attention in a certain way so that it does not further affect, in a negative way, the road network. I want to start with that.

The sums to money that you are speaking to within the document speaks mainly to capital works, which means works which are bringing about an increase in the kilometres of road available to different communities. So therefore, it would include projects such as the south highway which is a totally new roadway; Valencia to Toco, which is a totally new roadway and it seeks to open up the different problems of the country, mainly the east and to some extent, the south.

The Ministry is also undertaking works which are a more current nature in terms of repaving but also in terms of re-sheeting and rehabilitating, and some of that work is being done under our PSIP programme as well as under our current programme. We are more than willing to provide you with a full listing of all the works that have been worked on by the Ministry for the period 2020—October 2020 to September 2021. I am not sure if you would like me to try to get some of the listings at this time to read it out, but we can provide you with the listing.

Mr. Mark: No, you can provide us with the listing in writing. Could you tell us, Permanent Secretary, what is the actual sum released—well, first of all the sum allocated to the Ministry of Works and Transport for repaving of existing roadways in our country for 2021? What was the sum allocated and what was the sum released? And what was the sum allocated in 2022 fiscal year and what has been released thus far?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes, member, I can provide you with that in writing.

Mr. Mark: Would you also be able to indicate to this Committee, what specific projects were undertaken to enhance our road network and transportation in 2021 and 2022? Would you want to put that in writing as well?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Well, member, it is quite a number so we can do that as well. They are listed in the PSIP but under each—a number of the programmes we have individual projects. So, for instance, under project 247, I think we would have worked on approximately 57-plus roadways. So we can list them out and send them to you.

Mr. Mark: And what about your contractors who undertook or undertake these projects? Have they been fully paid and if not, why not?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: So I can say that at this time, which we are in March, the majority of our contractors, if not all, would have been paid for works undertaken for the 2020/2021 period. As at the end of September 2021, there would have been subcontractors not paid and that would result based on the timing of when bills would be submitted to the Ministry for payment, because once it is submitted it has to be reviewed. There is a certification process and then there would be a request for release process.

Mr. Mark: Yeah. Would you be kind enough to give us in writing the list of your contractors for 2020/2021? And when we come to 2021/2022, a list of contractors who have been paid and who are still owed? Could you provide us with that information in writing?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes, members. Just for clarity, it would be contractors from the 2020/2022 period who are still owed?

Mr. Mark: Well, in 2021, 2020/2021, they have been paid from what you have said.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes.

Mr. Mark: Could you provide us with the list of those contractors within your operations? And then when it comes to 2021/2022, a list of your contractors and who have been paid and how much money is still owing to those contractors in your arrangement for road works and projects in 2021/2022 fiscal year.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes, member.

Mr. Mark: Right. I would like, Madam Chair, if you would allow me to just ask the gentleman who is in charge of coastal protection programmes in our country given the high incidences of coastal erosion. We noted that in September of 2021, some \$15 million would have been expended for payments to contractors and consultants with outstanding requests for releases in the sum of some \$13 million; 1-3 that is.

Now, I would like to ask the person in charge of this programme, the officer, are there any outstanding payments owed to contractors or consultants in terms of this programme that we

have for the coastal protection? Secondly, if there are outstanding payments, could you tell us what is the sum owed and how many contractors are owed moneys for services provided thus far? Can I direct that to the official from the Ministry of Works and Transport, please?

4.10 p.m.

Mr. Shepherd: So, Chair. PS if I may. My name is Kerry Sheppard. For the fiscal year 2021, we had an allocation stated as—releases were 19million, and we had a commitment which is money owed, of a further 14,000,119. That is the amount owed. Further to that, we received some releases. We will submit the exact amount owed to the Committee.

Mr. Mark: What about the contractors that were engaged by your unit, or that the Ministry would have contracted, to deal with these matters of coastal erosion projects in our country? You have the list of contractors and the amount of moneys they were paid, and the amount of moneys that are still outstanding?

Mr. Shepherd: Yes, that will be supplied to you.

Mr. Mark: Could you provide us with an update on the percentage of works completed for fiscal 2021, under the Critical Coastal Protection Programme? What percentage of the works have been completed as far as 2021 is concerned?

Mr. Shepherd: I have my shoreline management specialist here, he will answer this question.

Mr. Rambaran: Hi, good day. Well, in terms of the projects under the Critical Coastal Protection, the south Cocos Bay shoreline stabilization works is 100 per cent complete. The Cap-de-Ville shoreline stabilization works is currently 82 per cent complete. The Matelot shoreline stabilization works and San Souci are all 100 per cent complete, as is the Cocos Bay shoreline stabilization works.

The Comprehensive National Coastal Monitoring Programme is in the final stages, very close to 100 per cent complete. It is in the high 90s right now. The Little Rockly Bay shoreline stabilization works, also 100 per cent complete. We have not done anything on La Brea Beach shoreline stabilization, because there is no critical erosion at this point, and we used the funds to help with the payments of other existing commitments.

With regard to the Mayaro/Guayaguayare Coastal Management Programme, we have the first project that will come on stream, which is the Calabash shoreline stabilization works that we are expecting to start commencing within this month.

Mr. Mark: Okay. Madam Chair, I have two final questions for this round. I would like to ask through the Permanent Secretary whether she could provide us with an up-to-date response on the feasibility study for the fast ferry port in Toco. We understand that there was supposed to be an environmental impact assessment study completed. Could the PS provide us with a status report on that, and while she is preparing to do so, may I ask her as well about the procurement and commissioning of one ship to shore Gantry crane by the Port Authority, in order to handle increased cargo capacity and efficiency at the Port Authority. Can I get clarification and guidance from the PS on these two matters?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes, member Mark. In terms of the feasibility study fast ferry port in Toco, there was an EIA completed in January 2020. However, in fiscal 2021, the EMA requested submission of additional data and analysis with respect to the response to the review and assessment report.

At this time, there is continuation of collection of data, and submission of such data to the EMA with respect to the obtaining of a CEC. So the work in terms of the EIA continues on that port.

In respect of your second question, which is the Gantry crane—the Gantry crane for the Port Authority was purchased in fiscal 2021, and just for me to see the commissioning date—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Oliviere: The crane was commissioned on 7th of June, 2021.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: So member, it was purchased and commissioned in June 2021.

Mr. Mark: Can you give us the value of that piece of equipment, what did it cost the taxpayers?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: We can submit that to you in writing, member, that figure.

Mr. Mark: Yeah. Madam Chair, can I ask the Permanent Secretary if she can provide us with a brief status report on the matter involving either the privatization divestment or some kind of partnership, PPP arrangement for the Port of Port of Spain? Can the Permanent Secretary provide our Committee with a little status report, and maybe she can put it in writing subsequently, as to what is the status of that whole project?

Madam Chairman: Member Mark, the difficulty is that that is not under PSIP either 2021 or 2022. So maybe that information you can obtain by another one of the mechanisms available under interrogatories in Parliament. I am sure you could get it.

Mr. Mark: Thank you so very much.

Madam Chairman: This again is to the PS Ministry of Works and Transport. I observed that in your submission, one of the projects referred to Ministry of Works and Transport and your transport officers. That is project No. 240. Were there 13 projects or less than 13 projects? Your submission suggests 13 projects, if I look at page 7 to page 9 of your submission.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes, Chair.

Madam Chairman: So, I might be misreading. Could you tell me what project is identified as No. 7?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: That is the project relating to the maintenance of sub office in Carenage.

Madam Chairman: Maintenance of sub office in Carenage?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes. The maintenance sub office in Carenage. The Ministry of Works and Transport, as you know, we work on a district system as well as head office, and we have sub offices across the country.

Madam Chairman: So there is just a mistake in numbering? That is all I really want to find out. If one was left out because I have that as 8. So I just want to ensure that your listing is comprehensive or not.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes.

Madam Chairman: So there were really 12 projects and not 13?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: No, there are 13 projects. I am not sure if—

Madam Chairman: Okay. So what I will do, I will give you an opportunity to look at it and see whether there are 12 or 13, because what we would like is a status on each of those projects as of today, and the time frame for completion. Okay? Because if what you are identifying as seven is eight, as recorded here, either one is missing or there are 12. But when you present it in writing you would get an opportunity to see what my concern is.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes, Chair.

Madam Chairman: I will now invite member Webster-Roy to join the conversation.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Thank you, Madam Chair. Through you, just a follow-up question to what member Mark asked about coastal protection measures. In the response to member Mark, it was noted that a number of projects were completed. I wanted to understand, out of the projects

completed, including Little Rockly Bay, if the same system or same measures were used, that is one. Two, if they have seen any reliefs from the measures, any improvements and, three, if the structural integrity of the coastal protection measures are being monitored on an ongoing basis. That is my first set of questions.

Mr. Sheppard: Okay member, can you repeat the questions please?

Mrs. Webster-Roy: You would have noted that a number of projects were completed, including Little Rockly Bay. Am I correct?

Mr. Sheppard: Correct, yes.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Under “Coastal Protection Measures”?

Mr. Sheppard: Yes.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: I wanted to understand if the system or technology used was the same across all the projects that were completed, that is one. And if you have noticed any relief or any improvements since the projects were completed, that is two, and three, if there is ongoing monitoring of the structural integrity of the protection measures on a continuous basis.

Mr. Sheppard: Yes, we have ongoing monitoring of the projects. We have drone flights scheduled. We have engineering checks. If we notice breaches, we have a maintenance schedule. Well, Mr. Rambaran will answer the rest of the questions.

Mr. Rambaran: Hi, to answer your questions. In conjunction with what Mr. Sheppard said, we have a regular maintenance app. We gave an inventory of our coastal protection structures, so roughly every fortnight we do some drone flights or inspections of one or more of these structures.

Now, to understand the first question about the design criteria, I hope you can appreciate that because some of the design consultancies would have been done by different consultants, the criteria tends to vary slightly from consultant to consultant. But overall, the standards of the Coastal Protection Unit, the main design resources are the same. So it is not a wide gulf in the criteria itself.

To give you an example of one inspection work and maintenance, we are close to going out to tender with the repair of the Manzanilla beach facility at the access ramp, where we have PVC sheet piles that have gotten broken over time, whether it is due to vandalism or impact with debris and so on. As regards the structures, we also send members of staff to inspect like the

rocks that we have in the “rubbled” structures, so we could see if there is any settlement, there is any sinking, there is any removal of the rocks and so on. I hope I answered all your questions.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Are you seeing any relief, the measures, are they working?

Mr. Rambaran: Right, so as far as we have heard, and we are very proud about our Cocos Bay projects in Manzanilla, that stretch of coastline has not flooded. In fact, we dare say that it has actually increased the amount of local tourism at the edge of the Nariva mouth, because we see a lot of people posting pictures on social media with the wall that we put up there. That and the areas in Cap-de-Ville that have been constructed, we do not see any flooding to the extent that we have completed it. So we have to complete the remaining lengths to address that entire shoreline stretch. I would assume that the same is the case for the projects we have done in the north coast as well.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: As it pertains to Little Rockly Bay, any reports in terms of not only the hotel but the residents or persons traversing that area, have they seen any improvements?

Mr. Rambaran: Well, we are very aware, like some of the complaints about Little Rockly Bay, but therein lies a tale, in the sense that, the purpose of a breakwater is to sediment the bay. So you want to increase the width of the beach. So people complaining about the lack of bathing area by the rocks, do not understand the function of a breakwater.

Now that said, we have further plans in the pipeline to augment the entire coastline, but that little part does show that the breakwaters function, and it is for the purpose, which is making a wider beach. So what we hope is that the other sections of the shoreline, they will be more of a tourist-friendly accessible area and there will be more of a reduction, erosion, as was originally planned from the start. That is back in the days of Miss Gray.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Thank you so much. Madam Chair, one other question and that is pertaining to the Port, and I think it might go to the PS. It was noted in your submission that five foam fenders were acquired and installed at the Scarborough Port. I wanted to know what was the procurement process, and the overall cost for the five foam fenders?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Member, the procurement process it would have gone through the Port’s tender rules and regulations and procurement process. We can provide you with the individual contractor and the individual cost.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: I did not get the last part. What did you say about cost, sorry?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: We can provide with the contractor and the individual cost.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Okay then, thank you, Madam PS.

Mr. Chairman: So I just wanted to ask. I saw something that piqued my interest, and I am directing this both to the Ministry of Works and Transport and the Ministry of Public Utilities, because I am not too sure of where this falls.

In the submission, the Ministry of Works and Transport was saying, in response to the number of incidents of flooding per year, the Ministry's Drainage Division is tasked with the responsibility of maintaining major rivers, riverine and tributary watercourses, but it does not maintain a record of such data. I wanted to know what was the reason for them not maintaining a record of the data of maintenance and, therefore, flooding, how that helps them plan, if it militates against their planning and tracking.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Chairman, I am just looking for the page. What we would have said is that we do not—the incidents of flooding for the year would not only result from the areas of major rivers, riverine and tributary watercourses. Now, the areas that flood related to that we would have the information at our various district offices, and also it would be that information that goes into our planning process in terms of desilting and in terms of our works under our 28 and some of our capital programmes. But we do not necessarily see ourselves as being the repository of all incidents of flooding within the country. That is the information we were seeking to convey, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Okay, but as far as your maintenance records, you do have the data relating to that?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: So on the other hand now, the Ministry of Public Utilities is saying to us that flood management falls under the remit of the Ministry of Works and Transport. However, the Ministry of Public Utilities has been collaborating with the Ministry of Works and Transport to explore the potential for establishing dual-purpose reservoirs to capture and store flood waters, thereby mitigating flooding while simultaneously augmenting the water resources available for treatment and subsequent distribution.

So the Ministry of Public Utilities says flood management is under you. It seems to me some confusion where that lies, and then secondly, this collaboration that the Ministry of Public Utilities speaks about that is going to start or has started, I want to know what progress has been made on that. It could go to you and both to the Ministry of Public Utilities, not necessarily the Ministry of Works and Transport.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: So maybe I need to start, Chair. The statement by the Ministry of Public Utilities in terms of flood management as it relates to major rivers, riverine and tributary watercourses, yes, we have identified that that is our remit, and we have started to work with the Ministry of Public Utilities. I think Mr. David may be able—I am not sure if he is online, but we have started to work with Ministry of Public Utilities through our Drainage Division.

Madam Chairman: So that would be with Mr. David? Is that not local government?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Sorry, yes. I believe local government will also be part of it, but I will have my Drainage Director just give a little more detail on what we have done so far.

Madam Chairman: Thank you.

Mrs. Badloo Doerga: Afternoon everyone. What our PS is alluding to is that Ministry of Works and Transport will be in charge of flood mitigation and management of water in that aspect. Ministry of Public Utilities will be in charge of like water harvesting and collecting water, and that aspect of it would be done by them. However, when it comes to flooding and reservoirs and all the different ideas to help to control the water, yes there is a collaboration that is something, but it is in the very, very early stages. It has not been fleshed out totally, because the responsibilities of the WRA, and the Public Utilities and WASA, and our responsibilities as Ministry of Works and Transport, need to be clearly defined, so that we do not have confusion when it comes to the management of the water, the excess run-off in the riverine, major watercourses and the water harvesting aspect leads to WI.

Madam Chairman: So could you, therefore, Mrs. Badloo Doerga—I could understand that we are just maybe four or five months from—well, more than that, because we are now in the month of March. So we are six months from September—could you give us some kind of timeline with respect to when this is going to move from its very, very early conceptual stages to something that the people of Trinidad and Tobago could see some tangible results?

Mrs. Badloo Doerga: Well, I would not be able to answer that, because it is really spearheaded by Ministry of Public Utilities.

Madam Chairman: It is spearheaded by the Ministry of Public Utilities?

Mrs. Badloo Doerga: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Then maybe I could, therefore, direct the question to Ms. Duke.

Ms. Duke: Good afternoon, Chair. I will have to give you that timeline in writing. What I can offer you now is some of activity that the Ministry of Public Utilities is already looking at in

terms of the harvesting of those flood waters, and one of the projects that we are looking to, to make this a reality, if you would like that.

Madam Chairman: So just before you go there, in terms of this collaboration—because it is in your submission, okay, that this collaboration is referred to—what steps have you envisaged for this being more than just an idea that has been put on paper? Because I think the Ministry of Works and Transport appear to be ready to do their part, but they you need you to furnish them with some sort of outline of this idea for it to start to get life. So yes, I am interested to hear what you are doing about harvesting of water, but I am also very interested, in that, this project which appears to be a good idea, does not just remain as five lines on a submission to us.

Ms. Duke: Okay, Chair. This collaboration would have come out of and been fueled by a previous enquiry into water security, in which several of the Ministries would have given contribution, and I believe they are all represented here today.

As far as I am aware, we would have had some initial meetings with both Rural Development and Ministry of Works and Transport. We at the Ministry of Public Utilities are at this time quite clear in terms of what are the roles of the various parties, the MET Office, WASA and the WRA, and I believe the point that we are at now is forming those memorandums of understanding, so that we all are clear on what each entity, each Ministry, is responsible for and how we move forward with the collaboration.

So that is the next step, and as I indicated we would provide you in writing with how we move forward with that, and what is the timeline we see for actually implementing and executing on our collaboration.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, PS Duke. I now call upon Mrs. Morris-Julian. I recognize you and I thank you for being so patient.

Mrs. Morris-Julian: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. You actually asked a lot of the questions that I was very interested in, and I am glad to know that the answers would be forthcoming. Madam Chair, through you to the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, I know we discussed briefly drainage with the Ministry of Works and Transport, but I would just like to clarify to PS Bascombe. Is the drainage cleaning programme ongoing with the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government?

Ms. Bascombe: I will put that question on to my Deputy PS, who would report on the corporations. DPS.

Mr. Seepaul: Thank you very much, member. Just to respond directly to your question. If I am correct, you are enquiring about the drainage cleaning exercise?

Mrs. Morris-Julian: Yes.

Mr. Seepaul: Can you confirm that please?

Mrs. Morris-Julian: Yes, I am asking specifically with regard to the partnership and the collaboration with the Ministry of Works and Transport, because this would definitely lead to flooding and flooding issues. So I would just like some clarification from your end what is happening please.

Mr. Seepaul: Okay, thank you. Let me say that this is a very critical issue that you are raising here this afternoon, because of the tragedy that occurs in many different communities in Trinidad as it relates to flooding.

As I am aware, there is no formal relationship right now with Ministry of Works and Transport as it relates to planning to address the drainage issue that especially impacts upon certain corporations. What I can also tell you is that the corporations are responsible for maintaining minor watercourses through their recurrent programmes. The issue of drainage is also mitigated through the corporations engaging under the Drainage and Irrigation Programme that falls under the PSIP, where paved drains are constructed.

What I would really like to suggest at this particular forum, is that some formal strategy be undertaken in partnership with the Ministry of Works and Transport, and I have been hearing that the Ministry of Public Utilities also has a role to play. If there can be this partnership between these three Ministries, and also include the municipal corporations in this exercise, I believe that we will be able to make a dent into some of the damages and the ravages that are being done in some of our communities through flooding in Trinidad.

4.40 p.m.

I also want to state that the corporations themselves, there is the mechanism where there is a monthly regional coordinating committee. And that could be an excellent forum through which these agencies can, you know, deal with the issue of drainage and other issues as well in a more specific manner. The corporations I know would be the best agency to identify what the problem is, where the problems exist so that we will be able to develop, you know, a very effective strategy especially since we are now in the dry season saying that with a pinch of salt because of the weather we have been having recently. But I think that if, you know, we can really partner early to address some of these challenges. I am not saying that the cleaning of drains, the desilting or

the dredging of major water courses would be the ultimate solution. That is not the case. But it definitely will make some significant impact in addressing flooding. I do not know if I would have answered your question.

Mrs. Morris-Julian: Thank you very much. I think that in answering my question we are seeing a gap that definitely needs to be looked into, the communication aspect. Through you, Madam Chair, I would just like to go on to, again, natural disasters. Now, I am from local government initially so I am very familiar with the community-centre concept. And currently more shelters are being made available to persons affected by natural disasters, Diego Martin south, Bagatelle, Chickland, Freeport, Tarouba, Guayaguayare, Mayaro, Arima, Quarry Village, Laloon and Tarodale. Can I find out how many shelters were available before? Can you let us know how many more shelters are made available to persons affected by natural disasters? And I will also like to know, what is the usual length of time can someone be facilitated in a shelter? What is the number of persons that usually utilize these facilities? And could you also give us the cost associated with the provision and the maintenance of these facilities? And I would also like to know what exactly do you provide? Mattresses, blankets, food items? And has the Ministry identified any additional area for the establishment of shelter facilities for fiscal 2022?

Ms. Bascombe: Senior Disaster Coordinator, Mr. Jerry David.

Mr. David: Member, that is a mouthful, quite a bit you have asked. And I can answer all of your questions. Whether I can answer all your questions within this sitting, I do not know but I am going to attempt. But you can definitely get those answers in writing. Okay?

Mrs. Morris-Julian: Through the Chairman, let me assure you whatever you cannot answer, we will accept it in writing. Thank you.

Mr. David: And that is it. There were 425 shelters or buildings that have been designated as shelters. Now I have to say that and make a distinction here. We have no purpose-built shelters in Trinidad. What we have are buildings that we use as shelters. So that—and the capacity of the shelters, again, is dependent upon the particular hazards that we are dealing with. For instance, because of COVID-19 we have had to establish COVID-compliant shelters, whereas the capacity in a community centre may have been 100 before we had COVID-19, it is now cut down to less than half because of social distancing and because of the space we now have to give—for where we can put our cots.

In addition to that, we did not have to establish medical treatment areas. Some people call it isolation areas. We like to call them medical treatment areas in a community centre. So we have had to take space that we would normally use, had it not been COVID-19, and create other areas.

In addition to that, we have had to put in the particular, the signage which we have done for 70 shelters, five for each municipal corporation. Our aim, because we think that COVID-19 is now going to be endemic, so we have to learn to live with it, so we will have—our aim is to set another 70 being COVID-compliant.

You asked about what we put in the shelters, cots, blankets and even some of the five shelters have shelter bins. In these shelter bins you would find boots and ropes, even chainsaws and a range of other PPEs at that community centre.

You asked about feeding. Now that is a big one. That is a big one. But I have had experiences where we have had in the past that have been in the School Feeding Programme. They had assisted in—when there was something major in feeding. But we have done something a little unique at the municipal corporations. We have attached NGOs, FBOs and CVOs to each community centre, so that if you are, in your case, Arima, where you work, we would have had—they would have had NGOs from that community and we would have asked them to help us and assist us with part of the feeding. So that is a unique one we are using because we are trying to get community volunteers attached to that particular community centre.

You also asked another question. Those are the ones I remember now. If you can juggle my memory a bit I will be able to answer all of them. I think I picked up quite a bit of what you asked in my answer. All of this I can put it in writing for you. Even the ones that I answered orally, I will put it in writing for you so you have a clear idea of what we are doing; the new ones, the new ones. Yes. You asked about the new ones, Diego Martin, the one at Bagatelle. You asked about the one—that is the one in Four Roads there, that is south Diego Martin. Yes. You asked about Tarodale. Yes.

And there are several others community centres that would be the new ones. So what we did, in addition to that, we wrote to the Ministry of Community Development and Family Services then whose responsibility it was for community centres. And we asked them, if we could trade the board of each community centre so that they became the shelter managers, and last year we trained 629 of those people, of those individuals. It means that they have a special interest, a vested interest in seeing those community centres run well. We decided to make those committees the shelter managers. And that has turned out well because when we brought in shelter managers in the past into a community centre from outside that community, we had a little pulling and tugging there. I could understand why. If you train the folks who are in the community council, in charge of the community centres, the facility managers, they are the best shelter managers. We have done that. We started that last year and we trained 629 throughout the months. I hope I have answered your question.

Mrs. Morris-Julian: Thank you. Thank you very much. And through again, Madam Chair, I am really happy that you brought up that, Sir, because that jogged my memory regarding CERT, CERT volunteers. I think it is an excellent programme that the Ministry has because I know all too well that councillors and even the Minister in the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government very often are the first responders, first on the scene. So this CERT programme that the councillors are doing, could you just elaborate for us about this particular programme? And how does it positively or not impact on our disaster response?

Mr. David: Thank you very much. When you talk CERT volunteers then you are coming down my alley. CERT, Community Emergency Response Team. This is where we train ordinary people how to recognize, respond and recover from disasters. What we are doing here is making the community responsible, prepared, give them the skills they need. If there is a major disaster and areas have been totally cut off, and remember, in a major disaster no one may be coming for 72 hours to that community. They may be totally cut off. It may take a week. It may mean that first responders will be concentrating, at that time, on critical facilities. How, if the hospitals are impacted on the intensive unit, the police stations, all the critical facilities. So we want the communities to be better prepared.

Last year, we are talking about 2021, we were able to train some 600—800 CERT volunteers because we did it virtually. We had CERT training for the general public. Then we had CERT training for men only, because we found that 75 per cent of the folks who were applying to do the CERT virtual programmes they were women. Thankfully, God bless you. But we had to bring in now, find a way to attract some men. So we asked for men only. We got about 150 persons who applied to do it. We did the training. About 80 of them completed the exercise. We did it, we are starting one this Saturday, 500 persons have applied, 75 per cent are women. So we would have to go again and ask, do another programme for men only. And that is not a problem. We are prepared to do that.

So that we are working together in the communities. And now that we are freeing up a little more and I must tell this august Committee that it is difficult to do virtual training. It is easy for us to do the lecture, but each person who has done, who is doing the programme has to give us almost 15 videos. Of what?—of his skills that we have been teaching. And myself and others have to sit hours on end looking. Just imagine, we had 200 persons and each one of them had to give us 10 videos of themselves doing the skills that we have taught. That is 2,000 videos and somebody has to sit down and watch all of them.

Thankfully we are going back into the age where the time when we can mix a little more so that we can actually bring them together in small groups and do the skills so we would not have to do the videos. But we are well advanced in the area of CERT training and we will continue at the

Ministry year after year after year. And by the time I am gone maybe 10 per cent of the population will be CERT trained. Thank you very much. I hope my answers were—

Mrs. Morris-Julian: Thank you very much, Sir. Madam Chair, if you would just permit me one more question please? With regard to the purchase of amphibious vehicles. Now, I am asking this, Madam Chairman, because I was there during the Greenvale floods. And the flood that happened in Greenvale was duplicated, replicated in Bamboo, in Brazil, Talparo. That particular year climate change really showed us who was the boss and local government in particular had a very difficult time and I think they did do their best and I think they should have really been lauded a lot more for what they did. But because I was in the situation at the time—amphibious vehicles, I see that there was supposed to be a purchase of amphibious vehicles, radio, public address system, but no action has been taken towards the procurement of the vehicle. I saw that the radios were procured. Could anybody tell me why no action has been taken to procure these vehicles? And when will these vehicles be purchased?

Mr. David: Now, that is a question that I was anticipating. When I presented this question about the amphibious vehicle to the Minister, the Minister of Rural Development and Local Government, hon. Kazim Hosein, he was head over heels, he was enthusiastic about, yes, we should get this. We then looked at the cost of it. And the cost was quite—it was costly. And so we went out now to look at, to see if we could get donors. We asked them to see if they can get donors, the Minister and his people, if we can get donors from overseas to bring in the amphibious vehicles. I am still hopeful that we can get donations of them. They are pretty expensive. And when we looked at them, some of them touched down on almost \$3million for one. We were thinking about maintenance of it. We were thinking about training the individuals to operate it. Quite a bit of those questions came in. The Port of Spain City Corporation actually allocated some \$500,000 in 2021 to purchase an amphibious vehicle. Because of the supply-chain problem, I knew that they would not have been able to get it and have it in bond and all that sort—any at all. So that particular project was not, did not come to fruition because of the supply-chain issues. And what they were trying to purchase was a small one. I know what you are talking about is what I have seen on YouTube and in some of the other areas that people sell these vehicles and they have buses that you can drive through water and pick people up and take—amphibious vehicles and bring people out and you can drive it on the road and take the folks to the shelter. Yes. They are available. It is a dream, member. It is a dream that I have and I hope that in the not too distant future I can convince my PS that it is a worthy investment.

Madam Chairman: So, Mr. David, maybe you could have the PS answer the question about the funding of the programme. Thank you for that.

Ms. Bascombe: There is always a plan B and we have been encouraging some of the corporations to utilize the dinghies. So that is the plan.

Madam Chairman: Excuse me, PS, I think you may be a little far from the mike, so you are very muffled.

Ms. Bascombe: Okay. [*Inaudible*] While we wait for the allocation of funds for the amphibious vehicles, we are utilizing a plan B where some of the corporations have begun acquiring dinghies for the function of going into the impacted area and retrieving some of the burgesses.

Madam Chairman: So you have no allocation for fiscal for 2022?

Ms. Bascombe: No. [*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: Okay. And while we have your ear, Mr. David was so eloquent about the training of CERT volunteers and so on, so maybe you all could tell us a bit about the programme for the training of community monitors which you all intend to commence, all again with the aid of the alleviating the hardships that people suffer when there is flooding.

Mr. David: Okay. Madam Chair, you are speaking about the community hydrological observers. Yes. That is part of the programme now. And this came about because of the community flood warning system that this Ministry actually initiated together with the Red Cross and the Water Resources Agency.

Madam Chairman: So when is the training likely to commence? Because I heard what you said about the difficulties in training people remotely, so in terms of this project and this collaboration if you could give us an idea of when this training is going to commence, how many people you are targeting and in what areas. Because you referred to seven flood-prone areas, so if you all could also identify the areas.

Mr. David: Okay. We have areas from—one is in Diego Martin. Madam Chairman, I suspect if I can give you that in writing, you know, because I cannot recall off the top of my head. But there is a programme and that programme starts next—we are starting CERT training this Saturday, Sunday. The following Saturday which will take us to the—[*Inaudible*] From that date we are starting the community hydrological training.

What that— module is being done by the Water Resources Agency. And there are not only the seven projects. The seven projects you are referring to is part of a project that the UNDP sponsored with some \$500,000 for these seven projects. But they were actually piggybacking on the 13 other streamflow stations that the Ministry had started. It started three years ago and we

have 13 streamflow stations. UNDP is adding another seven streamflow stations, so that we are to train—they have asked for 13 community hydrological observers in each of the areas where we have streamflow stations. So you can see that we have right now this particular project here which starts on Saturday is aimed at getting three 210 community hydrological observers. We have 500 persons who are registered to do the programme already on Saturday and they will be part of it.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, thank you. So in writing if you could give us brief synopsis of what this streamflow station is. How it aids the early flood-warming system, if used. And if you could get us the listing of 13 flood-prone areas that you talk about. Is it 13 and seven? Or six and seven?

Mr. David: Thirteen and seven, 20.

Madam Chairman: So that is 20. If you could identify them. And I would also like to know if you can give us in writing if those are the only the flood-prone areas in Trinidad and Tobago? If not, how many others? And what your plans are for that? We will take that in writing? Okay? Thank you.

Mr. David: Thank you. Thank you, Chairman.

Madam Chairman: Okay. I now invite member Deonarine to—and I thank you, again, for being so patient, to join the conversation.

Ms. Deonarine: Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to turn to the Ministry of Public Utilities. And in your submission, your written responses to our questions, you would have indicated on page 4 question 3 that the current percentage of the population that has 24/7 access to water supply is 22.83 per cent in Trinidad and 20 per cent—20.42 per cent in Tobago. And of course according to the PSIP targets that you all outlined, there was a target for 2021 to increase the percentage of the population that receives 24/7 water supply by 10 per cent in 2021. So we asked a question with respect to where we are with achieving this target. And the response was, you know, and quote:

Currently, WASA is focused on the measures to meet the minimum requirement of the RIC of 24/2 which is two days for the week and thereafter to improve the class of service provided to each community to achieve the 24/7 goal.

So, I just wanted to get some clarification. Is it that we no longer were trying to meet that target of increasing 24/7 water supply by 10 per cent and we have towards trying to achieve water supply for two days for the week for everyone?

Ms. Duke: No, member. I am not sure whether you are reading from someone else's submission. The quote that you gave about going to 24/2, I was looking for it here. I have not seen it but I will ask my—

Ms. Deonarine: So on page 2 of the submission—

Ms. Duke: I will ask my project manager who deals with WASA to indicate to you where we are at, at this present time.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Connor: Good afternoon, Chair. Member. As it pertains to the percentage increase that you have quoted there, I would say that we can get the exact increase in writing. However, I would say that the Ministry in collaboration with WASA has taken on several projects within the PSIP to help to increase the water supply to residents from 24/3 and 24/4 to 24/7. And we have done that in many specific categories. One is our strategic objective in providing water to underserved and unserved communities where we are able to hook rural communities up to the water connection that would, the main connection that would be coming towards closed areas. And we have done that throughout the country in different zones in fiscal 2021.

I would also say that, we have done one of the other strategic areas where we were able to help to increase the water supply was to establish a number of projects dealing with the transmission and distribution of water to various communities which dealt with the refurbishment and also the establishment of boosters.

We have also dealt with another strategic area which is the refurbishment and development of water treatment plants because what we had found was, some of our treatment plants there were various structure deficiencies and leaks and so forth that had actually impacted the water supply to many residents. So we are currently working on—we have actually completed water treatment plants in Maloney and other areas for fiscal 2021.

What I would also say is that, one of the other strategic areas that we had looked at from the Ministry to help to increase the supply was the reduction of non-revenue water which means water where there are a lot of leaks and so forth and we have dealt a lot with repairing of pipelines. So that is basically what the Ministry would have done pertaining to helping to increase residents' supply from 24/3 to 24/4 to 24/7. But what I can do in terms of the exact figures and in terms of the outcome of the increase, the percentage, we can supply that in writing to you.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Just may I interject? In terms of the initiatives you are giving us in fiscal 2021 that you said would have increased, in your submission you are telling us that the

current percentage of the population that has access to 24/7 water supply, Trinidad 24 per cent, Tobago 8 per cent. So these initiatives that you speak of, which are also contained in your submission, have those initiatives resulted in the 24 per cent and the 8 per cent? Or have those initiatives resulted in a greater percentage? And therefore what is that?

And I also want to ask, in your own submission you have said to us, WASA current system of measuring the flow of water leaving the production facilities and traversing the supply network is inadequate. That is under your non-revenue water. So if you are telling us that in your submission, then how do you base your increase to any percent, 10 or any? So if in what you are going to address, if you address it comprehensively in terms of this information that you have given to us. Okay?

5.10 p.m.

Ms. Duke: Madam Chairman, we will undertake to do that and outline based on our 2021 allocation and execution, the areas in which we would have moved from 24/3 to 24/7, et cetera, and give you the percentages for each of those initiatives.

Madam Chairman: All right. So, it is very likely then your submission on page 4 is not reflective of the end of your fiscal 2021 position, I guess. Okay. But we will await.

Ms. Duke: Yes, Madam Chair, thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. I now invite member Mark to join the discussion, followed by member Webster-Roy. I thank you both for waiting so patiently.

Mr. Mark: Yeah. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I would like to continue along the lines of WASA. Can I ask the personnel here, the personnel present, if they can provide us with details on the plan for the establishment of what they have called “district metered areas”, and is there a time frame for the operationalization of these same district meter areas and the projected cost for the implementation of same? Can someone guide us through it?

Ms. Duke: Thank you, member, I will ask my project manager to respond.

Mr. Connor: Yes. We have a programme relating to metering in terms of water that comes within our water infrastructure and those that leave. We are currently in procurement to get contractors to provide the services for the installation of those metering systems. Speaking with WASA, we understand that the procurement is currently taking place. It should be completed within this month and from there they indicated that it should take approximately four to six months for completion of that particular project.

Mr. Mark: Now, could you elaborate on whether this would need a nationwide programme of metering through this mechanism? Is it going to be nationwide or is it going to be confined to a few districts?

Mr. Connor: Yes. Well, first of all this particular programme is geared towards our water infrastructure, mainly the water treatment plants because we have to assess water that could possibly be lost, or you want to assess the water that is leaving the plants to the residents to kind of ascertain in terms of having enough water or having all our water reach the residents. Now, this is pertaining to our water infrastructure. As it pertains to residents, that is something that I would ask my PS if he could provide that in writing to you.

Ms. Duke: So member, just for clarity, this does not speak to domestic metering, right? We are not treating with that right now at this point in time at all. This district metered areas speaks to, as the project manager said, speaks to us looking at our infrastructure. WASA looking at its infrastructure, and being able to ascertain how the water is being channelled. So, for instance, you would put it in certain—certain of its infrastructure to gauge whether the production is actually reaching the customers or clients. When these areas are metered and you produce water you will then know based on the water that has reached its destination, how much water has been lost and where you need to channel your investigations in order to see what is preventing the water from reaching where it needs to go. So those are what the district meters are about, not about domestic or residential metering, just to clarify.

Mr. Mark: Thank you. Madam Chair, I just want to go to air transport at this time and turn my attention to the Ministry of Works and Transport once again. We have been advised that some \$43 million was allocated in fiscal 2021 for the development of infrastructure and safety requirements at our nation's airport facilities in keeping with international civil aviation requirements. Some 20.7 million was expended on the following: replacement of the existing perimeter chain link fence around the airport estate, that is Piarco airport, with new security fence in accordance with the Trinidad and Tobago Civil Aviation Authority security or the compliance requirements. And, the paving of runway and taxiway at the Arthur Napoleon Raymond Robinson International Airport at Crown Point in Tobago. Can the Ministry of Works and Transport, through the Permanent Secretary, provide us with a status report on these particular works or projects, please?

Ms. Francis Yearwood: Yes member, I would ask Mr. Baah of the Airports Authority—
[Inaudible]

Mr. Baah: Good afternoon, Chair and members, and all present. The project for the ANR Robinson Airport paving, it has been—the work on it has been completed in terms of the paving

of the ANR Robinson Airport. When it comes to the fencing, the fencing at the Piarco International Airport has been completed. There is one small area that work will be completed at a later date because there is a flooding issue that goes outside of the boundaries of the Airports Authority. But both the ANR Robinson paving projects and the airport fencing project are substantially completed. 99 per cent of the work in the fencing has been completed, and the other small area to be—for additional work will be completed when a permanent solution for the flooding in that area just outside our boundaries is achieved.

Mr. Mark: Can you share with us what was the cost of the paving of the ANR Robinson Airport at Crown Point, and the cost for the fence, the security chain fence thus far?

Mr. Baah: Sure. The paving at ANR Robinson Airport is \$54.7 million, and the fencing amounts to approximately \$19 million for the fencing.

Mr. Mark: Can you provide this Committee with the name of the successful contractors for both projects?

Mr. Baah: Yes. The successful contractor for the paving at the ANR Robinson Airport was Seereeram Brothers. There were four contractors involved in the paving—sorry, in the fencing. One package was done by Arlene Le Jean Limited, second package was done by Harry Persad and Sons, the third package was done by Mc Clatchie Construction and a fourth by Amnesty Limited.

Mr. Mark: Okay, thank you. Madam Chair, I just want to go on to PTSC where we are advised that PTSC was allocated the sum of \$14.2 million in fiscal 2021 to continue the development of infrastructure to enhance service and reliability to customers. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions this project was delayed in terms of implementation with the sum of some 7.5 million being finally expended from the allocation. Can I ask for some clarification on what works were undertaken using the \$7.5 million from the 2021 allocation? And how has the development of infrastructure enhanced service and reliability to customers, and what indicators and/or criteria were used to evaluate the corporation's efficiency? Can we get some clarification on those matters?

Ms. Francis Yearwood: Member, is it possible for you to provide us the page of the submission that you are referring to? I ask that because under the PSIP the PTSC has a number of projects for the 2021—2020/2021 period, inclusive of an upgrade to the number of the bus terminals as well as initiating work on—

Mr. Mark: What I shall do—

Ms. Francis Yearwood: Yes.

Mr. Mark: What I shall do, PS, is to submit it in writing so you can respond in writing. Okay?

Ms. Francis Yearwood: Thank you.

Mr. Mark: The other one I would like to go to is traffic management which is very, very important in our country. Could you tell us why no funds were expended on the Traffic Management Programme which was submitted by you? And, could you tell us what is the status of the Traffic Management Programme? And, how many staff are employed under this programme? And, what is the plan of works that you have under this programme? Four simple questions.

Ms. Francis Yearwood: Yes. So, member, under the Ministry of Works and Transport we have traffic management measures under a number of projects. Beneath the project that you are referencing is a part of our bridges, landslip and traffic management programme. Under that particular programme, a number of projects were identified, there was an issue in the procurement process which resulted in a non-award in 2021, under that particular programme. That matter has since been addressed and it is expect that two contractors—well, two of the packages will be awarded in 2022. Other than that project that you are referencing we also have traffic management measures under our PURE Programme, which is under 247 project as well as under traffic management branch of the Ministry, where we have done other programmes. Projects that we implemented included the marking of white lines, the implementation of barriers along a number of the adjacent highways, and the implementation of the number of traffic measures.

Mr. Mark: And the final question I would like to raise PS—

Ms. Francis Yearwood: Yes.

Mr. Mark:—through the Chair. With regard to the installation of CCTV cameras at both Piarco and ANR, to meet the security requirements of the Airports Authority and national security agencies, we recognized that there were due to competing demands, the funding allocated to this project was transferred to other critical and ongoing works. That is what we have been advised. Could you provide details of, on the projects, these funds were directed to? That is one. What is your expected time frame for the completion of the installation of CCTV cameras at both Piarco and ANR Robson Airport? Could you provide details on the other critical and ongoing works, and the sum of funds allocated to these works? And finally, what is the total sum allocated for this project in fiscal 2022? These are some of the issues PS, I would like you to clarify for us, and if possible you can also commit these things to writing. It would be appreciated as well. But if

you could give us a typed summary of what has happened, why did we reallocate funds that were designed to install critically needed CCTV cameras at both Piarco and ANR and they were diverted in other directions? What were these projects, we used that money for? And when are we going to install the CCTV cameras for both Piarco and ANR?

Ms. Francis Yearwood: So, member, as indicated we would provide you with something in detail in writing, but I will ask Mr. Baah from the Airports Authority to just give a general breakdown.

Mr. Baah: Thank you, PS. Member, the Airports Authority is very cognizant of the importance of security and safety at our airports. And the records will show that our request for funding for the CCTV was actually in the vicinity of \$9 million. Out of that \$9 million that was requested, \$2 million was allocated to Airports Authority for the period 2020 to 2021. At the same time, safety is also a very important issue and there was work being done at the ANR Robinson Airport for paving, and that is extremely important when you think about the fact that the economy of Tobago is so heavily dependent on tourism. So, given the fact that there was not sufficient allocation to do the investment in the CCTV upgrade that we needed to, that \$2 million of the funds for CCTV was put into completing the work on the paving at ANR Robinson. The authority continues to request the funding for CCTV, and we will continue to make our request for the allocation, but it is recognized that at least \$9 million will be required for the sort of work that we believe is needed, and in the time we will continue to put all the measures in place to mitigate risk as best as possible and to manage with the equipment that we have.

Mr. Mark: Can you tell this Committee, finally, how much money would have been allocated to the Airports Authority in the 2022 budget, our fiscal package, I should say, for this particular project? And if you had no money allocated, or if a small amount was allocated, what efforts are we making to ensure that that \$9 million is provided given the importance, as you rightly pointed out, and given the high standing that our airport is held by the international bodies, I would like to know what real serious efforts are being made to get that \$9 million so we can have our airports litre in the context CCTV for security purposes? I would like you to clarify. And after you, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Works and Transport.

Ms. Francis Yearwood: So, member, maybe I could start, if you do not mind?

Mr. Mark: Yes, thank you.

Ms. Francis Yearwood: So, for fiscal 2022, we have an allocation of approximately \$2 million under this particular item. The Airports Authority has been advised to undertake preparatory work which would be ensuring that the tendered documents are done to a standard they can be issued, and to initiate that work for this particular programme. We have also asked for a timeline

for implementation from the point of award to the point of final installation, so that while we have \$2 million we understand that we may not need a full \$9 million in this fiscal. And we have identified that one of those projects that is in the midyear review for request for the difference between the \$2 million and \$9 million that may be required for this financial year.

Mr. Mark: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So can I invite now, member Webster-Roy, and after member Webster-Roy, member Deonarine.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Thank you, Madam Chair. My questions would be around WASA. The Ministry of Public Utilities noted that a supplemental allocation of \$16 million was made to the Community Water Improvement Programme in the mid-year review of fiscal 2021 budget. A total of 22 projects were approved for execution with a mix of in house and external resources. Work on all projects would have begun at the time of you submitting your responses to the Committee. By the time of your submission it was stated that four projects would have been completed and that invoice submission would have been delayed due to difficulties in sourcing heavy equipment and materials and, extended delivery times. What is the current status of the 18 remaining projects? That is one. What additional expenses have been incurred as a result of the delays? That is two. Was the supplemental funding sufficient to complete the projects? After those questions are answered I would ask the other one, Madam Chair. Thanks.

Ms. Duke: Thank you for those questions, member, I will ask the project manager to update the Committee.

Mr. Connor: Minister, based upon your question I would just give you an update of those projects. From 2021 out of those projects that you have spoken about we can probably say we were able to complete nine projects. They were in the areas of: Comparo/Sangre Grande; Carapichaima/Freeport; Mayaro; Pitch Road, Morvant; Sabga Trace, La Romain; Champ Fleurs; Monroe Road; Williamsville; Windy Hill and Upper Wharf Trace. What I can also say is that we are still currently trying to finish those other projects and we are, I would say in a very good stage to complete those projects very soon. But as it pertains to 2019, we were able to complete those nine projects under that said programme. Sorry, for 2020/2021.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: So only nine of the 18 that you had remaining you were able to complete? Or is nine plus the four?

Mr. Connor: Within fiscal 2021, yes. I can definitely say that we will be able to complete the rest very soon. We normally have weekly meetings with WASA, and not only with the WASA directors but also with the support staff of procurement, of legal, the project managers on the

individual projects, and we have made considerable progress. We had encountered several issues with the projects, you know, several setbacks. Some stuff we had encountered pertains to the procurement of machinery and equipment, but nevertheless we estimate that we should be able to finish the rest of those projects within the coming months.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: So you initially had a target of 22 projects. You going to meet your target. You said you had some setbacks in terms of equipment, et cetera. What measures have been put in place to prevent future occurrence of you setting a target and you are not meeting that target? What are you going to do to improve on that?

Mr. Connor: Yes. So, one of the things that we try to basically do is to get more information pertaining to the suppliers that we would—that will supply the necessary equipment even if it is that we may not necessarily go with them, but we try to gather a bit more of the suppliers that would provide whatever particular type of equipment, so that even when we continue procurement, if we do not get from one supplier, we will be able to retain the particular type of equipment from another supplier and so forth. We have also put systems in place in terms of WASA, where we try to do a lot of lean management in terms of the time frame in which we would procure stuff. That is why I say that we have the meetings weekly, and we have the support staff where they would, you know, whether it is to raise a purchase order or whatnot, that they would actually move even faster than what would happen in the normal realm to get these things for the Ministries so that the releases can be given so that they can do procurement for whatever equipment is needed so that we can do it at a faster pace.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Is it safe to assume that we have had cost overruns because of the delays and setbacks?

Mr. Connor: At this time, Minister, no.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Okay. So you would be able to complete the projects with the funding allocated?

Mr. Connor: Definitely, Minister.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Okay, I am good. The other area I want to go on to is the leak repairs. Every time I walk my constituency—and this is not a Tobago situation, this is a national situation—we would see pipes leaking constantly and they will engage persons there. So you report it to WASA, nothing has been done as yet. However, in your submission it was stated that:

WASA continues to engage in a programme of high leakage pipeline replacement as well as leak repair in order to reduce water loss from leaking pipelines.

What percentage of the identified high leakage pipelines for fiscal 2021 have been replaced thus far? That is one. What is the cost of replacing the high leakage pipelines? Two. And if there is a programme in place for that high leakage pipeline replacement, how many persons would have been hired? And the other question I want to ask, is there a system in place where you have, I do not know, field officers going out to check the lines, because, I made a joke recently to someone at WASA, saying I need to get a commission because I am always reporting, [*Laughter*] you know, leaks. I want to know if there is anybody from WASA actually out there identifying these leaks and ensuring that we get back these funds from WASA.

Ms. Duke: Member, I think, unfortunately, many members of the team here and other members of the public share your pain. That is one of the great challenges that we have in terms of leaks on the system as well as the way in which we interact or engage the public in treating with the repair of these leaks. There are crews at WASA that are identified for looking at these leaks, or should I say reporting on these leaks, but we have found that, you know, there needs to be at WASA and with the Ministry's oversight, we need to look at that system again. We need to look at how we engage with the public. The situation we spoke about before with the district meter, the areas and the installation of bulk meters to have a more technological look at our transmission and distribution system.

5.40 p.m.

If we are able to engage that at a faster pace, that will also assist and relieve some of the inconvenience to the public and certainly make WASA more efficient at being able to treat with some of these challenges that they are now faced with in terms of knowing where the leaks are or being bombarded with calls from the public that a more efficient system would be negate. So we are aware, we know of the challenge and it is left now for the Ministry to work with WASA to fast-track that initiative to introduce these bulk meters and to make their system more technologically sensitive that we are able to know where the problems are and head off these problems before it continues to be an irritant to the public.

Additionally, we are at this time committed to looking at the customer service interaction between WASA and the public, which we know is another challenge, and making that system—finding something that is more technologically suitable so that people at all different levels can interact in different manners, different ways with WASA to be able to get the service they deserve. So we are working on those things right now.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: That is quite comforting to hear. However, I would still like for you to indicate in terms of—for fiscal 2021, in terms of the pipelines—sorry, the leak repair, what percentage would have been identified—would identify—would have been replaced and the cost?

Ms. Collis: And we are prepared to do that, member. We will do so in writing. We know that over the last three months or so, we have had about 6,000 leaks repaired and there is still a backlog, I believe of 3,000 plus leaks that we are working on with WASA. But that is the figure so far, but we will specify in writing the information you requested. We also have a number of projects on the PSIP that will also—the rehabilitation of wells and so on, that will impact the distribution and transmission system and will also lend, in some regard, to the reduction of leaks if we are able to get those particular projects well in hand and well executed. So we can also indicate that to you as well.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Okay. Thank you so much. Appreciated. Madam Chair, I have one more question for the Ministry of Works and Transport.

Madam Chairman: I think you should—

Mrs. Webster-Roy: May I proceed?

Madam Chairman: Yes, you should go ahead and ask it now.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Okay. It is about the Toco fast ferry port. I wanted to know if the feasibility study and the environmental assessment, if they were completed. Just a status update on that particular project, please.

Madam Chairman: I think member Mark asked that earlier on.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: He asked that question?

Madam Chairman: I believe member Mark asked about the environmental impact and the feasibility study on the Toco port. Okay?

Mr. Mark: Yes, I did.

Madam Chairman: Yes. Okay. I know, member Webster-Roy, we have been here long so some things may really escape us at this stage. Do you have any more questions at this stage?

Mrs. Webster-Roy: No, thank you, Madam Chair. But I was having problems hearing so I would have indicated that.

Madam Chairman: Yeah, yeah.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: So, thank you—*[Inaudible]*

Madam Chairman: Member Deonarine.

Ms. Deonarine: Thank you, Chair, and thank you all stakeholders for bearing with us at this late hour. Madam Chair, I know you would have interjected on my previous question but the response that was given had me a little bit more confused. So I just wanted to come back in to clarify. Is it that the—this is with respect to the 24/7 water supply and the move to achieve that 24/7 water supply nationwide within three to five years. However, in the interim, WASA, in your response you all indicated that WASA is focused on measures to meet a minimum requirement of the RIC for two days per week. Is that incorrect? Is that an inaccurate reflection in your submission? Kindly confirm, please.

Ms. Collis: Member, unfortunately, I do not have that submission before me, so I can only confirm what our project status reports indicate to us concerning the different projects and what has been the outcome or the planned outcome for each project.

So if I am to infer—and I really do not want to do that. But if I am to infer from what I have before me, in terms of the outcome of the projects in 2021, I would say to you that what you have just read to me would have been an oversight on the Ministry's part. Because definitely the things that I have here for each project, we have outcomes that are 24/3 to 24/7, 24/3 to 24/4. So, as I said, I am gainsaying you because I do not have that submission before me. I am only reading from what our status report indicates. So my apologies for that.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. Madam PS, I understand what you are saying but I am referring to your submission—to our—your written submission which is headed:

Ministry of Public Utilities' responses to the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee.

I understand that you are referring to the outcomes before you. But do you have this response in front of you? Because the only reason that I am pressing is because the response to that question went ahead on page 5 to say that, and I will quote exactly what is in the response:

In some instances, in order to meet the immediate objective of the minimum supply to affected communities, water is being redistributed from communities receiving 24/7 water supply. As such, the percentage of the population receiving 24/7 water supply may decline in the short term.

I am just trying to seek some clarification, based on your responses to our written questions, what is the gist of this indication and this initiative by WASA which falls under Ministry of Public Utilities.

Ms. Collis: Yes, member, I do understand and what I will commit to doing is to—as I said, I do not have that submission before me, so what I will commit to doing is to seek to get that

submission and to provide to you the response that you are seeking in writing, if that is okay with you.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. Thank you very much. But then, Madam Chair, my next question is with respect to the wastewater treatment plants, both in San Fernando and Malabar, and it comes from the same written submission from the Ministry of Public Utilities. So I am not too sure if I should pursue my line of—

Madam Chairman: No, go ahead. I am sure that the PS, through her team, should be able to access the submission because it is their submission that the enquiry is based on.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. Thank you so much, Madam Chair. Okay. So, I see that for the Multiphase Wastewater Rehabilitation project, we had an allocation of 88 million for 2021. And when we go lower down, we see that the San Fernando wastewater treatment plant is 95 per cent completed and the Malabar wastewater property connections were 99 per cent completed. My first question is with respect to the San Fernando wastewater treatment plant that is 95 per cent completed. How soon we will expect this to be fully completed and commissioned?

Ms. Collis: Thank you, member. I will ask the Project Manager to treat with that question.

Mr. Connor: Good evening, again, member.

Ms. Deonarine: Good evening.

Mr. Connor: So, those wastewater projects were a couple of the projects that we continued to liaise directly with WASA monthly—in our monthly meetings as well as day to day and weekly. So, what I can definitely tell you, pertaining to 2890, is that the contractor has proposed commencement of performance testing of the plant within a—and for a completion date of May the 1st, 2022.

Currently, overall, the completion percentage is 98.2 where the treatment plant itself is 98.7 per cent completion and the collection system is 94.1 per cent completed. I would say that we at the Ministry are pleased to say that for the wastewater treatment plant in Trincity, it is actually completed and the site is being prepared for our opening ceremony for the week starting in March 14th.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. Continue.

Mr. Connor: Okay. So as it pertains to the other wastewater under loan 2890, which are the designs for the Maloney wastewater treatment plant, those designs are completed. And the last

time we spoke with WASA, they are going to submit a report to the Ministry onwards, on our way forward, in terms of actually doing works for the Maloney water treatment plant.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. Are you in a position to tell us to date—because I know these projects have been ongoing for some time, I believe it is since 2012. Are you in a position to date to tell us how much money has been expended on these projects and how close we are to fully disbursing or fully utilizing all committed funds?

Mr. Connor: Yes. For the interest of giving a correct figure, I would like, through my PS, if it is okay to provide that in writing because the figures change quickly.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. I understand that. And then, there was something interesting that you mentioned in the submission. You all said that:

The current loan financing arrangement with the IDB for the San Fernando wastewater treatment plant did not make provision for the property connections.

But then, lower down you all went ahead and told us that there were 75 properties that were connected on the Malabar wastewater treatment plant. So, is it that you all did not have any moneys allocated for the San Fernando treatment plant? Is that correct?

Mr. Connor: No. We had moneys allocated for the San Fernando treatment plant.

Ms. Deonarine: No. The property connection and so on.

Mr. Connor: Property connections?

Ms. Deonarine: Yes.

Mr. Connor: I would actually, through my PS, would like to provide the answer for that in writing just to be sure.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. All right. And in providing that response in writing, could you also let us know what is the full cost of the moneys—the full cost of connecting the 72 properties to the Malabar wastewater treatment plant?

Mr. Connor: Definitely, we will do that.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. And as I have the Ministry of Works and Transport—okay, so no, I will move on to Ministry of Works and Transport. I know previous members would have asked questions about the Toco ferry port. I have a question with respect to the construction of the Valencia to Toco road. I noticed that there was a 55million allocation of which there was

30million expended in fiscal year 2021, with 3.3million coming from NIDCO and 6.36million from PURE. Could you indicate what exactly this money was expended on? Was it feasibility studies, what this expenditure of 30 million was on?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: So, through you, Chair, as identified, that project is undertaken by two co-entities, under the PURE Programme and under NIDCO. Works, under PURE, would have been in relation to construction. But I would let Mr. Phillip, who is the head of that programme, give you an—*[Inaudible]*

Ms. Deonarine: Okay.

Mr. Phillip: Good afternoon, member.

Ms. Deonarine: Good afternoon.

Mr. Phillip: The Valencia project at this point is almost 72 per cent completed. We have eight packages with eight different contractors working along the road. All those moneys would have been spent on actual construction activities. We are actually—there have been lots of drainage works, landslip works, bridges works, all of those things ongoing. As I said, the project as up-to-date is about 72 per cent completed.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. All right. Could you submit in writing for us the breakdown of the cost under these eight packages of works, through you, Madam Chair?

Mr. Phillip: Sure.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. Thank you. With respect to Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, in your submission you would have provided us with a breakdown in Appendix I on the Local Roads and Bridges Programme and an expenditure of 42 million that was expended towards the upgrade of local roads. I am trying to understand the level of collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government and the Ministry of Works and Transport when it comes to working on these upgrading of local roads.

Ms. Bascombe: The Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government and the 14 municipal corporations are responsible for local roads. So that is primarily what we deal with.

The Ministry of Works and Transport is responsible for highways and major roads. From time to time we collaborate in terms of—we sometimes get material from the Ministry of Works and Transport, sometimes we loan equipment to the Ministry of Works and Transport. So we have a good, collaborative working relationship with them.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. All right. So then tell me something. Since the upgrading local roads is entirely within the remit of Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, walk me through the process of how you go about identifying the roads—which roads needs to be upgraded at any one point in time. Because all Ministries, as you know, are working with limited resources and it may have some point in time where you may have to forego one road for another road so could you—to upgrade another road. So could you walk me through the process of determining which one of the roads that you all identify and choose to proceed with upgrading?

Ms. Bascombe: Okay. I will answer that question in two parts. I would answer, myself, how we do it from the head office Vote and my DPS would answer what happens in the corporations because he has functioned as a CEO in several corporations in his lifetime.

At the head office, we usually upgrade roads even landslips, bridges, drainage problems based on complaints from members of the public. That is why we at head office who do not have a constituency has that allocation. So, essentially, members of the public would complain, either verbally through our helplines, through the Minister's office and that is how we will prioritize projects based on whatever funds they may have allocated. So, DPS, could you now walk the member through what happens at the regional corporation?

Mr. Seepaul: Thanks, PS, and member, thanks for the question. At the corporation level, what happens would be these roads are identified by the local government representatives of the various electoral districts. At the end of the day, the council of the corporation determines what roads should be repaired and what roads should not be repaired and they would basically determine the priority. This is a very systematic exercise whereby the roads that are recommended for rehabilitation would be inspected by the technical officers at the corporations and they will do their estimates and justifications, and then these estimates are then referred to the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government for review. And once the project unit at the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government is happy with the estimates then the request for releases is then forwarded to the Budget Division, Ministry of Finance.

But going back to the corporation level, there are so many roads throughout the country that require this kind of attention that I could understand your concern because the funds that are normally allocated to the corporations under the PSIP and also under the recurrent programme is mere a drop in the bucket as to what is actually required to really provide proper motorable roads to the citizens in the country. And, as PS would have indicated before, the roads that we are talking about would be secondary roads that run and that span the different regions in Trinidad; the 14 regions.

So, just to summarize again. The roads are identified for repair and these roads are ultimately approved by the respective councils and then submitted for consideration under the PSIP.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. I understand what you are saying. So, I have two follow-up questions based on what you would have said, Mr. Seepaul. One is that—so the criteria in which to determine whatever roads get rehabilitated has do with the one, the number of complaints that are received and two, based on inspection visits, after the council sits and looks at the proposal from the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government?

Mr. Seepaul: Okay. So, normally before a road is actually recommended for approval through the PSIP, these roads are subject to investigations by the technical officers to ensure that they are really deserving of being funded under this programme. Right? So it is not just because a councillor may recommend that a road be upgraded the corporations would just go ahead and request funding to do the work. It is subject to inspections, it is subject to investigation and then estimates are made to determine the cost and, of course, request for funding is ultimately made. As I mentioned before, there is further review by the Ministry's project unit to ensure that there is justification for the request of funding under the PSIP.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. So then—and I do not know if you would have this information. You said that, you know, receiving the adequate amount of allocation to conduct the works or to conduct the rehabilitation of local roads that are necessary within the 14 municipal corporations, it is practically impossible to receive that amount. But if you have to put a number to it, do you have an estimate on how much it would cost to rehabilitate all the roads based on your data and analysis of requests?

Mr. Seepaul: Member, that is a question I really cannot answer, primarily because of the extent of poor road conditions throughout the country. Right? What I will want to say though is that based on our analysis of road works that were undertaken under the PSIP in 2021 by corporations, the corporations—all 14 corporations were allocated a sum of just under \$50million to spend on their Local Road and Bridges Programme. And this will not just involve road paving but it will also involve bridge infrastructure and the construction of retaining walls, et cetera.

So they were allocated—on the whole they received releases of just under \$50million. And based on what has been achieved would have been close to 29 kilometres of roadway being rehabilitated. Right? So, as I mentioned before, this is just a drop in the bucket and it is impossible for me to quantify or to estimate exactly how much it would cost to bring all our roads up to a proper standard.

What I also want to add would be that the corporations would in their draft estimates make submissions to at least address the rehabilitation of the—some of the more critical roads, those

arterial access roads that really are highly used. Right? They would try to not go to an extent where they will do a shopping list to have all the roads paved but these corporations will identify the major ones and many times—in fact, every single time you will find just a fraction of what is required to address this issue is actually released. And I do not want to comment on that, we all know that the country is faced with economy challenges but, you know, this is the reality, really.

Ms. Deonarine: Okay. Thank you so much, Mr. Seepaul. Madam Chair, I have one more question. I am not too sure who would be able to answer it but it is a question that I believe came from the public and I too noticed it in south Trinidad. There are a lot of reports of vandalized copper cables affecting a number of areas in south Trinidad where—who is responsible for these? I believe it might be Ministry of Public Utilities. And how soon—what is the approach to repair these vandalized cables or to replace them so that service can be restored in these areas?

Ms. Collis: Member, I believe you are speaking to TSTT cables?

Ms. Deonarine: It said vandalized copper cables.

Madam Chairman: And therefore, I think you are talking about—

Mr. Mark: TSTT.

Madam Chairman: Yeah. I think you are talking, member, about TSTT cables. Right? And remember, TSTT is a private—

Ms. Deonarine: [*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: Yes. Okay. All right. Is that all?

Ms. Deonarine: Yes, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, thank you very much. I just want to ask—and again, this comes from a member of the public and I am going to it in the context of the submission from the Ministry of Works and Transport. Madam PS, I am referring to page 14 of your submission which the question was the upgrade and modernization of navigational aids which was something in 2020. Apparently, it went to CTB, a tender was sent out, the tender was closed but nothing was awarded pending availability of funding and it came back in 2021. So, the member of the public is asking, when projects are presented to the Ministry of Planning and Development, if it meets the criteria but there is no funding available, are these projects still placed on the PSIP or deferred to the next year?

And in the context of the question, I also want to ask, and your submission, what has happened or where are we with the acquisition of these navigational aids?

6.10 p.m.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Madam Chair, I could answer the last question if you would permit me.

Madam Chairman: Thank you.

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: So in terms of the navigational aids, a contract was awarded. We made a verbalization agreement in February of this year. Work has commenced on the 14th. I believe it is six in Tobago and eight in Trinidad. [*Inaudible*] work has commenced on the ones in Tobago and then subsequently the ones in Trinidad. We are estimating a period of 76 days to complete. The one challenge we see is that the lights are to be shipped in from Canada and [*Inaudible*] so based on that there will be some challenges with the project. So that is where we have reached.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So it is not—I thought it was 20. It is not 20, it is 14?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes.

Madam Chairman: So was it ever 20?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: We would have had a previous phase yes.

Madam Chairman: So you would have had a previous phase?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So all right. If you could let us know—so there are 14 remaining and you said 70-something days? Did I hear you correctly?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: Yes, that is our estimated time for completion.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So can I ask what caused the slippage from 43 days to almost a double amount of days?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: That does have to do with the logistical challenges in getting the lights in.

Madam Chairman: So that is a supply chain issue?

Mrs. Francis Yearwood: It is a supply chain issue yes, Chair.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Madam PS, and then maybe I can direct the first part of the question to the PS of the Ministry of Planning and Development.

Mr. Ali: Chair, if I am to understand correctly you are saying that a project was approved and placed onto the PSIP in one fiscal year and—

Madam Chairman: So the question—just now PS, maybe I can clarify. The question from the member of the public is: When projects are presented to the Ministry of Planning, if it meets the criteria but there is no funding available, are these projects still placed on the PSIP or deferred to the next year?

Mr. Ali: The simple answer will be that it will be deferred to the next year. At the time when a project is presented for consideration for inclusion in the PSIP will be—that will precede the determination by the Ministry of Finance in terms of the total allocation that would be granted for a particular fiscal year. If it is that it is already known that funding will not be available, then that project would be deferred to the following fiscal year.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, PS. I hope that has answered the question to the member of the public. And I just want to wind up by asking to the Ministry of Public Utilities, and this focuses on solid waste management, and if they could let us know the status of the recovery and recycling facility plant and equipment at Forres Park?

Ms. Duke: Certain, Chair. I will ask the Project Manager to speak.

Madam Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Jones: Good afternoon, member. With regard to the recovery of the recycling facilities at Forres Park, the works are in progress. We have completed the procurement of some of the equipment for that particular installation. The total expenditure for that particular project amounted to \$1.6 million. The works, as I said, are in progress but—certain works were done with respect to the fencing aspect of the works and they were able to fabricate or to construct material bays. Works were executed by two contractors on that particular site. Also, the equipment is in the process of being procured. For example, like forklifts, and forklift way indicators, and trucks and so forth, and belt conveyors.

Madam Chairman: So might I ask: How close are you to completion?

Mr. Jones: Well, the total estimated cost of those works were \$3.2 million. We have expended 1.6. So we are approximately around 50 per cent completion of those works.

Madam Chairman: Is it accurate to make that kind of conclusion?

Mr. Jones: Well, actually the—

Madam Chairman: You are within budget?

Mr. Jones: We are within budget, but we have to do some additional works. The total request made by SWMCOL for the execution of this programme was 7 million. We had broken it down to 3.2 million in fiscal 2021, and of the 3.2 million they expended what the money spent amounted to 1.6 million. So we have some outstanding components of work to be done but the full detail and breakdown of this particular project in terms of the scope of the works and the cost could be detailed in writing to this Committee, Chair.

Madam Chairman: So then might I ask and I would ask for the details with respect to fiscal 2021 for these projects under SWMCOL in terms of the percentage of work done within the fiscal year and also your budgetary expenditure within the year; and whether there were funds for works done that were committed and not paid within that fiscal year—okay?—and for the names of the contractors under each of the projects. So the recovery and recycling facilities plant and equipment at Forres Park, the materials recovery facility, and also the engineered sanitary municipal solid waste landfill at Forres Park. Okay? And can I just ask as a last question and maybe your PS might be in a position to answer: In terms of the 3.7 million allocation to SWMCOL, what is the breakdown of expenditure on improving public awareness; improving site operations; disposal of infrastructure; and recycling at the community level?

Mr. Jones: [*Inaudible*] Chairman.

Madam Chairman: PS, are you in a position to answer any of those?

Ms. Duke: Chair, we will provide those to writing with your permission. I am sorry Chair, we are not hearing you.

Madam Chairman: I am so sorry. I am mindful of the fact that it is now close to twenty past six and I am going to ask the members of the Committee if at this stage if there any further questions if they can submit it the Secretariat that these questions can be posed to the entities in writing. It has been a long and very engaging session with the entities: the Ministry of Planning and Development; the Ministry of Public Utilities; the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government; and the Ministry of Works and Transport. I want to thank the various PSs and all their technocrats for being here and participating so fully in this conversation.

Usually at this stage we tend to ask the ,PSs if they can say to us in what way they think the Committee could assist them, I will leave that as a question for a written response. Okay? So that at this stage, I want to bring the public hearing part of this enquiry to a close. I thank you all

again. I wish you all a safe journey home. I want to thank the members of the listening public and the members of the media who have stayed with us. I thank you all. Pleasant evening. This part of the meeting is suspended.

6.21 p.m.: *Meeting adjourned.*