



Summary of Proceedings

Public Hearing

Joint Select Committee on Finance and Legal Affairs

Held on **Friday May 5th, 2017**

Subject matter: An Inquiry into Commercial Banking Fees in Trinidad and Tobago

Venue: A public hearing was held on Friday May 5th, 2017 from 9:23 a.m. to 10:50 a.m. at the A.N.R. Robinson Meeting Room (East), Level 9, Office of the Parliament, Tower D, The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre, 1A Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain.

Committee Members

The following Committee Members were present:

- Ms. Sophia Chote, S.C. (Chairman)
- Mr. Michael Coppin (Vice-Chairman)
- Mr. Prakash Ramadhar, MP
- Mr. Clarence Rambharat
- Mr. Wayne Sturge

Witnesses who appeared

The following officials of the Bankers Association of Trinidad and Tobago appeared:

- Ms. Anya Schnoor, President;
- Mr. Nigel Baptiste, Vice-President;
- Mrs. Karen Darbasie, Treasurer;
- Mrs. Kelly Bute Seaton, Executive Director;
- Ms. Kimi Rochard, Chairperson, Legal Sub-Committee;
- Ms. Rachel Laquis, Vice-Chairperson, Legal Sub-Committee; and
- Ms. Lindi Ballah-Till, Legal Committee Member.

Key Issues Discussed

The following are the main issues highlighted during discussions with the Bankers Association of Trinidad and Tobago:

- i. the role of the Bankers Association of Trinidad and Tobago (BATT);
- ii. the role of commercial banks in the economy and their contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product;
- iii. whether commercial bank charges and fees have increased annually over the past decade;
- iv. comparison of commercial bank fees and charges imposed in Trinidad and Tobago against other commercial banks in the region;
- v. the percentage contribution of fees and charges to revenues of commercial banks;
- vi. the factors which influence the setting of commercial bank fees;
- vii. commercial banks' considerable investment in new technology over the past decade to facilitate the needs of customers and reduce fraud e.g. internet and tele-banking;
- viii. the level of competition in the financial sector of Trinidad and Tobago;
- ix. whether the banking sector operates as an oligopoly;
- x. the market share distribution in the banking sector and its impact on competition in the sector;
- xi. the level of risk exposure of commercial banks in relation to secured and unsecured loans;
- xii. the impact of Property Tax on new and existing mortgages;
- xiii. the BATT considers the household debt ratio in Trinidad and Tobago to be reasonable;
- xiv. the level of risk encountered by commercial banks relative to credit cards;
- xv. the banks' responsibility in educating and improving the financial literacy of the public;
- xvi. the independence of commercial banks to make individual pricing decisions based on their respective strategies and focus;
- xvii. the regulatory authority exercised by the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago in accordance with the Central Bank Act;
- xviii. a lack of adequate customer protection in the financial services sector;
- xix. the quality of customer services/interface provided at branches of Commercial Banks;
and
- xx. the criteria used to determine the distribution of foreign exchange by commercial banks.

This public hearing can be viewed on demand via our YouTube Channel.

<https://youtu.be/y4Y1IEB69Oo>

Contact the Committee's Secretary

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Committees Unit

Friday 5th May, 2017.