



*SECOND REPORT OF THE*

# PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

( E N T E R P R I S E S ) C O M M I T T E E

*SECOND SESSION OF THE 11<sup>TH</sup> PARLIAMENT*

Examination of the Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on a Special Audit of the Operations of the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago with particular reference to the development and upgrading of Sporting Facilities in Trinidad.



## Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee

The Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee (P.A.(E).C) established under Section 119(5) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is mandated to consider and report to the House of Representatives accordingly on:

*“(a) the audited accounts, balance sheets and other financial statements of all enterprises that are owned or controlled by or on behalf of the state; and*

*(b) the Auditor General’s Report on any such accounts, balance sheets and other financial statements.”*

### Current membership

Mr. Wade Mark	Chairman
Dr. Tim Gopeesingh	Member
Mrs. Jennifer Baptiste-Primus	Member
Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds	Member
Mrs. Cherrie-Ann Crichlow-Cockburn	Member
Ms. Shamfa Cudjoe	Member
Mr. Foster Cummings	Member
Mr. David Small	Member

### Committee Staff

The current staff members serving the Committee are:

Ms Keiba Jacob	Secretary to the Committee
Ms Hema Bhagaloo	Assistant Secretary to the Committee
Ms Melanie Chin	Parliamentary Intern
Ms Anesha James	Administrative Support

### Publication

An electronic copy of this report can be found on the Parliament website: [www.ttparliament.org](http://www.ttparliament.org)

### Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to:

The Secretary

Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee

Office of the Parliament

Levels G-7, Tower D

The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre

1A Wrightson Road Port of Spain Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Tel: (868) 624-7275; Fax: (868) 625-4672

Email: [paec@tparliament.org](mailto:paec@tparliament.org)

# Table of Contents

<b>MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (ENTERPRISES) COMMITTEE .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Establishment.....	6
Mandate.....	6
Ministerial Response.....	6
State Enterprises Performance Standards .....	6
Election of the Chairman and Vice Chairman.....	6
<b>METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>7</b>
Determination of the Committee’s Work Programme.....	7
The Inquiry Process.....	9
<b>THE SPORTs COMPANY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (SPORTT) PROFILE .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>ISSUES, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Appendix 1 .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Minutes of Meetings .....</b>	<b>18</b>
Present were:.....	19
<b>Appendix 2 .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Attendees .....</b>	<b>23</b>
Attendees.....	24
<b>APPENDIX 3 .....</b>	<b>25</b>
List of entities falling under the purview of the PAEC:.....	26
<b>APPENDIX 4 .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>VERBATIM.....</b>	<b>28</b>

## MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (ENTERPRISES) COMMITTEE



Mr. Wade Mark  
**Chairman**



Dr. Tim Gopeesingh  
**Vice-Chairman**



Ms. Shamfa Cudjoe  
**Member**



Mrs. Jennifer Baptiste -Primus  
**Member**



Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds  
**Member**



Mr. David Small  
**Member**



Ms. Cherrie-Ann Crichlow-Cockburn  
**Member**



Mr. Foster Cummings  
**Member**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee (PA(E)C) is the Parliamentary Financial Oversight Committee tasked with the responsibility of examining the audited accounts of all State Enterprises that are owned or controlled by the state. The Committee examined **the Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on a Special Audit of the Operations of the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago with particular reference to the development and upgrading of Sporting Facilities in Trinidad** and produced this report to highlight its findings and recommendations.

This report highlights the issues, endorsements and recommendations made by the Committee in an attempt to assist the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago (SPORTT) in better performing its duties while also commending their initiatives. During this discussion, the following the issues arose:

- The lack of an approved strategic plan for the period 2012-2016;
- Frequent Changes in Chief Executive Officers;
- Staff shortages existing at SPORTT;
- The lack of sports registered by SPORTT;
- The lack of the Strategic Approach to Sport Development;
- Non-Compliance with Occupational Health and Safety Act;
- The absence of project management tools and techniques in the implementation of projects; and
- The absence of an approved fixed asset policy and fixed asset register.

Based on the Committee's examination, the following recommendations are proposed:

- The company should urgently draft a new strategic plan for the period 2017-2022;
  - The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs should conduct an extensive investigation into the high turnover rate of Chief Executive Officers and generate a report which would then be submitted to the Committee by May 2017;
  - SPORTT should revise and approve its disciplinary and grievance policy handbook by May 2017;
  - SPORTT should seek to settle the remaining cases in the most cost effective manner by adhering to Industrial Relations best practices;
  - SPORTT should submit a Report by May 2017 highlighting the challenges, lessons learnt and how the company intends to prevent recurrences;
  - SPORTT should take immediate steps to expand the registered sports in keeping with the Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee's 42 sporting activities;
- SPORTT should make every effort to have all its facilities 100% OSHA compliant;
- SPORTT needs to take measures to upgrade its remaining facilities that do not carry access for the differently abled; and
- SPORTT should urgently seek to have its current draft fixed asset policy approved by its current Board of Directors.

# INTRODUCTION

## Establishment

The PA(E)C of the Eleventh Republican Parliament was established by resolution of the House of Representatives and the Senate at the sittings held on Friday November 13, 2015 and Tuesday November 17, 2015 respectively.

## Mandate

The Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago mandates that the Committee shall consider and report to the House on the audited accounts, balance sheets and other financial statements of all enterprises that are owned or controlled by, or on behalf of the State.

In addition to the Committee's powers entrenched in the Constitution, the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives and Senate also empower the Committee (but is not limited) to:

- a) send for persons, papers and records;
- b) have meetings whether or not the House is sitting;
- c) meet in various locations;
- d) report from time to time; and
- e) communicate with any other Committee on matters of common interest.

## Ministerial Response

The Standing Orders<sup>1</sup> provide for the Minister responsible for the Ministry or Body under review to submit within sixty (60) days a paper to the House responding to any recommendations or comments contained in the Report which are addressed to it.

## State Enterprises Performance Standards

The PAEC used the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual as a benchmark for State Enterprises. The manual outlines the framework for compliance with official policy and the monitoring mechanisms to be used in assessing such compliance. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago monitors the performance of State Enterprises to ensure that these enterprises successfully execute their mandates and maximise value for money for the national stakeholders and shareholders.<sup>2</sup>

## Election of the Chairman and Vice Chairman

In accordance with section 119(6) of the Constitution, the Chairman must be a member of the Opposition in the Senate. At the first meeting held on Wednesday December 2, 2015, Mr. Wade Mark was elected Chairman and Dr. Tim Gopeesingh was elected Vice Chairman of the Committee.

---

<sup>1</sup> Standing Order 110 (6) in the [House of Representatives](#) and 100(6) of the [Senate](#).

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.finance.gov.tt/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/State-Enterprise-Performance-Monitoring-Manual-2011.pdf>

# METHODOLOGY

## Determination of the Committee's Work Programme

At its second meeting on Wednesday January 13, 2016, the Committee agreed to prioritize thirty-four

(34) State Enterprises as follows:

1. Caribbean Airlines Limited (CAL)
2. Caribbean New Media Group (CNMG)
3. Caroni Green Limited
4. Community Environmental & Protection Enhancement Programme Company Limited (CEPEP)
5. Education Facilities Company Limited (EFCL)
6. Estate Management and Business Development Company Ltd. (EMBDC)
7. Evolving Technologies and Enterprise Development Co. Ltd (eTECK)\*
8. National Commission for Self Help Limited
9. National Entrepreneurship Development Company Ltd. (NEDCO)
10. National Enterprises Limited (NEL)
11. National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (NGC)
12. National Infrastructure Development Company Ltd. (NIDCO)\*
13. National Insurance Property Development Company Ltd. (NIPDEC)
14. National Quarries Company Limited (NQCL)
15. National Schools Dietary Services (NSDSL)\*
16. Palo Seco Agricultural Enterprises Ltd (PSAEL)
17. Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago (PETROTRIN)
18. Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corporation Ltd. (PLIPDECO)
19. Port of Spain Waterfront Development Ltd.
20. Rincon Development Ltd.
21. Rural Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Ltd.
22. Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago (SportT)
23. Telecommunication Services of Trinidad, Tobago (TSTT)
24. Trinidad and Tobago Fashion Company Ltd.
25. Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited (TTMF)\*
26. Trinidad and Tobago National Petroleum Limited (NP)
27. Tourism Development Corporation (TDC)
28. Union Estate Electricity Generation Company Limited
29. Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago (UDECOTT)
30. Solid Waste Management Company Limited (SWMCOL)
31. Vehicle Management Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago (VMCOTT)
32. National Flour Mills Limited\*
33. Community Improvement Services Limited
34. Government Human Resource Services Company Limited (GHRS)\*

---

\* Examined in the First Session of the Eleventh Parliament. The Report can be accessed via the following link:

<http://www.ttparliament.org/reports/p11-s1-j-20160913-PAEC-R1.pdf>

At a meeting held on September 7, 2016, the Committee identified the following entities for examination in the Second Session of the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament:

- i. Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago (SporTT);
- ii. Community Improvement Services Limited (CISL);
- iii. Community-Based Environmental Protection & Enhancement Programme (CEPEP);
- iv. Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corporation Limited (PLIPDECO);
- v. Solid Waste Management Company Limited (SWMCOL); and
- vi. Estate Management and Business Development Company Limited (EMBD);
- vii. National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago (NGC);
- viii. Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT);
- ix. Tourism Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago (TDC);
- x. Caribbean Airlines Limited (CAL); and
- xi. National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited (NEDCO).

## The Inquiry Process

The Inquiry Process outlines steps taken by the Committee for conducting the inquiry into the operations of SPORTT. The following steps outlines the Inquiry Process agreed to by the PA(E)C:

- I. Identification of issues in the Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on a Special Audit of the Operations of the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago with particular reference to the development and upgrading of Sporting Facilities in Trinidad.;
- II. Preparation of Inquiry Proposal for SPORTT. The Inquiry Proposal outlines:
  - a. Background;
  - b. Objective of Inquiry; and
  - c. Proposed Questions.
- III. Consideration and approval of Inquiry Proposal by the Committee, when approved, questions were forwarded to the SPORTT on February 1, 2016. Written responses were received from SPORTT on March 1, 2016;
- IV. Preparation of an Issues Paper, based on written responses received from the SPORTT. The Issues Paper identified and summarised any matters of concern in the responses provided by the SPORTT;
- V. Determination of the need for a Public Hearing based on the analysis of written submissions. In this instance, a public hearing was held on Wednesday November 2, 2016;
- VI. Written request for additional information was sent to the SPORTT, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Finance after the public hearing on November 11, 2016; and
- VII. Report Committee's findings and recommendations to Parliament upon conclusion of the inquiry.

# THE SPORTs COMPANY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (SPORTT) PROFILE

## Background:

SPORTT is a fully State-Owned Company (100% GORTT), and was established by the Companies Act, Chapter 81:01, in 2004 as a limited liability special interest company geared towards the management, administration and programming of sport as well as the construction and operational maintenance of sporting facilities throughout Trinidad and Tobago. SPORTT is the premier organisation for the development of sport, athletes and sporting organisations in Trinidad and Tobago.

SPORTT is the key implementation agency for the Ministry of Sport and its varied and comprehensive policies for the promotion, sustainable growth and development of sport in Trinidad and Tobago. Its major goals are:

- To develop sport through national sporting organizations;
- To provide pertinent advice and recommendations to the Ministry of Sport;
- To initiate suitable programmes for total participation in sport and high performance sport;
- To administer and fund sport in a timely and professional manner; and
- To construct, manage and maintain facilities.

The company's core activities are divided into four main areas:

### **1. Construction and Facility Maintenance**

The Construction, Operation and Maintenance of high quality sport and recreation facilities for both communities and high performance athletes who are called to national service.

### **2. Sport for All**

The promotion of the concept of sport for all, by making programs accessible and affordable to all those who want to participate and at the same time encouraging participation in sport at a localized community level and at the national level.

### **3. National Oversight and Support**

Providing oversight and financial and technical support to the Management of 14 National Sporting Organisations with an aim to building their capacity/membership (talent pool) to ensure the highest level of national competition.

### **4. Support for Elite Athletes**

Enhancing the sporting potential of Trinidad and Tobago Athletes through establishment of a transport framework for athlete selection and a performance development and monitoring system for optimization of physical.

**Line Ministry** – Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs

**Minister** – The Hon. Darryl Smith, MP

**Permanent Secretary** – Mr. Natasha Barrow <sup>3</sup>

**Chairman** - Mr. Michael Phillips

**Chief Executive Officer**- Mr. Adrian Raymond

---

<sup>3</sup> At the time of the Inquiry, Mr. Ian Ramdahin served as Permanent Secretary

# ISSUES, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the Committee's examination of SPORTT, the following issues were raised and the corresponding observations and recommendations made:

## **I. Strategic Plan**

SPORTT was operating with an unapproved 2012 – 2016 draft strategic plan. Officials indicated that SPORTT was also operating in accordance with the 2002 National Sport Policy. It was also noted that SPORTT's key performance indicators were not identified in its draft strategic plan. According to the Auditor General's Report, the performance indicators were neither well-defined nor measurable, therefore, SPORTT had not been able to adequately measure its success in the delivery of its objectives. The Committee acknowledged that in an effort to address the immeasurable key performance indicators, SPORTT created an Action Plan in an attempt to adequately measure its performance indicators.

### **Recommendations:**

- *The company should draft a new strategic plan as a matter of urgency for the period 2017-2022 and include the implementation of sport tourism.*
- *The Committee adopts and endorses the Auditor General's recommendations that SPORTT should measure performance by developing a comprehensive performance regime, which covers both its delivery of projects, as well as the key objectives of total participation and elite performance in sport.*
- *SPORTT should:*
  - *Define measurable Performance Indicators that fit with the approved Strategic Plan 2012-2016 and compare performance annually;*
  - *Explore the scope for using international benchmarking of sporting performance to inform these indicators;*
  - *Develop systems to collect data on athletes' performance that include:*
    - I. collecting qualitative data on athletes' needs;*
    - II. capturing feedback from key stakeholders including the National Sporting Organisations, coaches and event organisers; and*
    - III. making use of the performance information generated to identify objective measures of sport funding effectiveness.*
- *The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs should review and update the National Sport Policy in collaboration with the Ministry of Education with a focus on the re-stimulation of sporting activities in schools.*

## **II. Frequent changes in Chief Executive Officers**

According to the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) manages the business and affairs of the Company and is responsible for implementing the strategic objectives established by the Board. From 2004 – 2015, there were seven (7) CEOs at SPORTT with three resigning and three terminated. As a result of this instability in the office holders, Annual General Meetings which were held to approve

financial statements and other important decisions were not held, financial statements were not produced and construction deadlines could not be met. According to submissions made by SPORTT to the Committee, the office of CEO is a contracted position for a maximum of three (3) years, SPORTT is of the view that the compensation range for the office of CEO does not attract the quality of individuals necessary to fill the position as well as the high turnover of the Board, Minister, and Permanent Secretaries since 2014 all add to the high turnover rate of CEO's. The Committee, however, is of the view that the SPORTT's reasons for the instability in the office does not adequately address the issue. In particular, the contract length is the standard length and the compensation package seems to be better than most.

**Recommendations:**

- *The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs should conduct an extensive investigation into the high turnover rate of Chief Executive Officers and generate a report which would then be submitted to the Committee by May 2017;*
- *SPORTT should implement an Exit Interview process to facilitate a proper and effective change in Executive Leadership; and*
- *SPORTT should maintain proper documents and develop a handover procedure to facilitate a proper and effective change in Executive Leadership.*

**III. Restructuring of SPORTT and contract with De Edge Consulting Limited**

The Board of Directors of SPORTT implemented an Organisational Review and Redesign exercise in 2011. The De Edge Consulting Limited was contracted on January 05, 2011 to carry out the exercise (at a cost of \$1.06 million). However, on January 07, 2011, the initiation date of the exercise, 32 of the 75 employees including the Chief Executive Officer were dismissed. According to submissions made by SPORTT to the Committee, *“There was no proper protocol established in the dismissal of the employees. There was no consultation, nor was there any invocation of contract clauses (termination), observance of policy and/or proper industrial relations practices. It was done under the guise of retrenchment.”* SPORTT also used an unapproved 2012 disciplinary and grievance policy handbook to dismiss employees which was also worrisome to the Committee.

**Recommendations:**

- *SPORTT should revise and approve its disciplinary and grievance policy handbook by May 2017; and*
- *The Company should adhere to good Industrial Relations practices.*

**IV. Litigation cases following the restructuring of SPORTT**

As a result of the Organisational Review and Redesign exercise and the dismissal of employees, SPORTT faced several lawsuits from dismissed employees. Settlements from nine cases cost the state in excess of \$2.5 million dollars with legal representation (for one of the nine cases) costing over \$137,000.00.

**Recommendations:**

- *SPORTT should seek to settle the remaining cases in the most cost effective manner by adhering to good Industrial Relations practices; and*
- *SPORTT should submit a Report by May 2017 highlighting the challenges, lessons learnt and how the company intends to prevent recurrences.*

**V. Sport Registry**

In Trinidad and Tobago there are fifty four (54) registered and seven (7) unregistered sports played. The Sport for All Initiative is supposed to take into consideration all the sports being played, whether registered or unregistered. SPORTT appeared to be unaware of the full range of sports played in Trinidad and Tobago. According to SPORTT, the focus was on the fifteen (15) sports of the fifty- four (54) which were registered with the company.

**Recommendations:**

- *The Committee adopts and endorses the Auditor General's recommendation that SPORTT should make efforts to build a database of sporting statistics that would include participation and medal performance, particularly as these statistics are crucial for effective monitoring of progress against SPORTT's performance targets;*
- *SPORTT should develop strategies and partnership arrangements to encourage sporting participation and usage through the setting of action plans with targets for the utilization of each facility by May 2017;*
- *SPORTT should collaborate with the National Sporting Organisations to develop the implementation of appropriate systems for regular review and evaluation; and*
- *SPORTT should take immediate steps to expand the registered sports in keeping with the Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee's 42 sporting activities.*

**VI. Strategic Approach to Sport Development**

The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and SPORTT play a very important role in the development of sport in Trinidad and Tobago as well as the development of elite athletes. According to the Auditor General's Report, the winning medal records for Trinidad and Tobago would suggest that athletics is the key strategic sport for which resources should be allocated. For example, 14 of the 18 medals won in the Olympic Games from 1948 – 2014 were in athletics.

**Recommendations:**

- *The Committee adopts and endorses the Auditor General's recommendation that SPORTT should;*
  - *develop a clear strategy for funding the various National Sporting Organisations, elite performance and youth camps;*

- *ensure that funding encourages wider participation in more sports and focus on elite performance; and*
- *SPORTT should review how it distributes the total available financial support in light of its research into wider participation and elite performance funding.*

**VII. Project and Facility Management**

SPORTT seemed ill-equipped to efficiently manage its projects. Approval was granted to SPORTT in 2005 to commence work on three multi-purpose facilities at an estimated cost of \$51 million with no work being initiated after six years. Approval was granted in 2011 to commence work on the same facilities at an increase of \$114 million which took the total to \$165 million. Eventually only the multi-purpose facility in Sangre Grande was built by SPORTT.

**Endorsements:**

- *The Committee adopts and endorses the Auditor General’s recommendation that SPORTT should:*
  - *recognise the importance of managing risks associated with the delivery of construction projects within agreed timeframes and budgeted costs.*

**VIII. Compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Act;**

SPORTT carried out risk assessments on all the facilities under its remit in an attempt to ensure safety for staff, athletes and patrons. SPORTT admitted however, that the company was not in full compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration due to the age of some of the facilities.

**Recommendation:**

- *SPORTT should make every effort to have all its facilities 100% OSHA compliant.*

**IX. The shortage of staff in the Human Resource and Accounts departments.**

SPORTT seemed reluctant to improve its hiring practices by not filling key positions when contracts were expired or staff was terminated. Information submitted stated the company advertised for the post of Human Resources Officer and candidates were being shortlisted. Once this position is filled and the backlog of work is completed, one additional person will be sufficient. With respect to the Accounting department, the company stated that there were currently seven (7) persons employed in the accounting department. They further stated all of the employees are deemed suitably qualified.

**X. Management of Facilities.**

SPORTT was asked to provide a list of facilities under its purview which are outfitted to facilitate differently abled persons as athletes and spectators of sport.

**Recommendation:**

- ***SPORTT needs to take measures to upgrade its remaining facilities that do not carry access for the differently abled. This should be made a priority in the current fiscal year. Facilities to be updated are:***
  1. *Hasely Crawford Stadium;*
  2. *Jean Pierre Complex;*
  3. *Woodbrook Youth facility; and*
  4. *Sangre Grande Indoor Complex.*

**XI. The rationale for the construction of sporting facilities.**

In construction of the sporting facilities, SPORTT was fulfilling a mandate by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago based on cabinet minute#1370 dated May 16th 2013 which agreed to a variation in scope from cabinet minute#835, for a change in location for the 3 Multipurpose Sport Facilities to be relocated to Jerningham Junction, Cunpia; Ojoe Road Sangre Grande and Aranguez Savannah. However, due to land ownership issues SPORTT encountered in 2013 and 2014 the company was unable to get approval for the lands in Cunupia and Aranguez. In August 2014, SPORTT's Board was dissolved and a Board was not appointed until April 2015. Without a Board, SPORTT was unable to process payments or approve contracts and as such works were unable to be completed. Once a Board was in place work commenced on the following new grounds which approved by Cabinet Minute #1374 dated June 3, 2015:

1. ERISA;
2. North Eastern; and
3. Bourg Multarese.

Therefore no works were started on the Alescon Comets Ground in Chaguanas. SPORTT confirmed that there was no developmental works to construct a Multi-purpose Facility in Cunupia nor was there was any work on a Regional Ground in the same locality.

**XII. The status of fixed asset policy and fixed asset register;**

SPORTT currently has a draft fixed asset policy that was never approved by the previous two (2) Boards. Currently, this policy was submitted to the current Board for approval.

***Recommendations:***

- ***SPORTT should urgently seek to have its current draft fixed asset policy approved by its current Board of Directors; and***
- ***SPORTT should also have continuous updates on its fixed asset register as this is critical to tracking all assets owned by the company.***

The Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee respectfully submits this Report for the consideration of the Parliament.

Sgd.  
Mr. Wade Mark  
**Chairman**

Sgd.  
Dr. Tim Gopeesingh  
**Vice-Chaiman**

Sgd.  
Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds  
**Member**

Sgd.  
Mrs. Cherrie-Ann Crichlow-Cockburn  
**Member**

Sgd.  
Mrs. Jennifer Baptiste-Primus  
**Member**

Sgd.  
Ms. Shamfa Cudjoe  
**Member**

Sgd.  
Mr. Foster Cummings  
**Member**

Sgd.  
Mr. David Small  
**Member**

# Appendix 1

## Minutes of Meetings

**THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS ENTERPRISES COMMITTEE –  
SECOND SESSION, ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**MINUTES OF THE TWELFTH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY,  
NOVEMBER 2, 2016 AT 9:31 A.M.  
IN THE J. HAMILTON MAURICE ROOM, MEZZANINE FLOOR, OFFICE OF  
THE PARLIAMENT, TOWER D, THE PORT OF SPAIN INTERNATIONAL  
WATERFRONT CENTRE, 1A WRIGHTSON ROAD, PORT-OF-SPAIN.**

Present were:

Mr. Wade Mark	-	Chairman
Dr. Tim Gopeesingh	-	Vice- Chairman
Mrs. Jennifer Baptiste-Primus	-	Member
Mr. Foster Cummings	-	Member
Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds	-	Member
Mr. David Small	-	Member
Ms. Keiba Jacob	-	Secretary
Ms. Hema Bhagaloo	-	Assistant Secretary

Excused were:

Mrs. Cherrie-Ann Crichlow-Cockburn	-	Member
Ms. Shamfa Cudjoe	-	Member

**COMMENCEMENT**

- 1.1 At 9:31 a.m. the Chairman called the meeting to order and welcomed those present. Mrs. Cherrie-Ann Crichlow-Cockburn and Ms. Shamfa Cudjoe were excused from the meeting.

**THE EXAMINATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE ELEVENTH MEETING**

- 2.1 The Committee examined the Minutes of the Eleventh (11<sup>th</sup>) Meeting held on Wednesday September 7, 2016.
- 2.2 There being no other omissions or corrections, the Minutes were confirmed on a motion moved by Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds and seconded by Dr. Tim Gopeesingh.

**PRE-HEARING DISCUSSION RE: SPORTS COMPANY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO LIMITED (SPORTT)**

- 3.1 The Chairman reminded Members that the purpose of the meeting will be the examination of the Report of the Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on a Special Audit of the Operations of the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago with particular reference to the development and upgrading of Sporting Facilities in Trinidad.
- 3.2 Members discussed the issues of concern and the general approach for the Public Hearing.
- 3.2 There being no further business for discussion *in camera*, the Chairman suspended the meeting at 9:55 a.m.

**SPORTS COMPANY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO LIMITED (SPORTT)**

- 4.1 The Chairman called the public meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.
- 4.2 The Chairman welcomed officials from the Auditor General’s Department, the Ministry of Finance – Investments Division, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, SPORTT, members of the media and the public and introductions were exchanged.

**The following officials joined the meeting:**

**OFFICIALS FROM THE AUDITOR GENERAL’S DEPARTMENT**

Mrs. Jaiwantie Ramdass	-	Assistant Auditor General
Mr. Louis Hernandez	-	Assistant Auditor General (Ag.)
Mr. Cyril Barran	-	Assistant Audit Director
Ms. Nicole Cockburn	-	Legal Officer

**OFFICIALS FROM THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (INVESTMENTS DIVISION)**

Ms. Yvette Babb	-	Social and Economic Transformation
		(Director (Ag.))
Mr. Ryan Maharaj	-	Senior Business Analyst (Ag.)

**OFFICIAL FROM THE MINISTRY OF SPORT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS**

Mr. Ian Ramdahin	-	Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
------------------	---	---------------------------

Mr. Lyndon Burton	-	Assistant Project Co-ordinator
Ms. Violet Joseph Evaluation	-	Director of Monitoring and

### **SPORTS COMPANY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO LIMITED (SPORTT)**

Mr. Michael Phillips	-	Chairman
Mr. Jason Williams	-	Financial Comptroller
Mr. Dexter Browne	-	Project Consultant, Regionals
Mr. Anthony Blake Manager	-	Facilities and Maintenance
Ms. Mellie Pryce	-	Project Administrator
Mr. Jeevan Kowlessar	-	Internal Audit
Mr. Naveen Maraj	-	Legal Officer

4.3 The Chairman of SPORTT made a brief opening statement.

**4.4 The following issues arose from the examination with the officials from SPORTT:**

- I. The criteria used to identify SPORTT for Special Audit by the Auditor General's Department;
- II. The status of the implementation of the recommendations from the Auditor General's Special Report;
- III. The frequent changes in Chief Executive Officers of the SPORTT;
- IV. The status of the strategic plan, direction and measurable targets of SPORTT;
- V. High rate of turnover of staff and Board of Directors;
- VI. Litigation cases following the restructuring of SPORTT;
- VII. The process for contracting De Edge Consulting for the organizational review and redesign exercise of SPORTT;
- VIII. The mandate and responsibility of SPORTT;
- IX. The number of Sports played in Trinidad and Tobago;
- X. The shortage of staff in the Human Resources and Accounts Department;
- XI. The management of regional and in-door multi-purpose facilities and whether the facilities are outfitted to facilitate differently abled persons as athletes and spectators;
- XII. The status of projects being implemented;
- XIII. The rationale for the construction of sporting facilities;
- XIV. The development and upgrading of sporting facilities;
- XV. The status of the fixed asset policy and fixed asset register;
- XVI. Whether the sporting facilities are in compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act;
- XVII. The possible recommendations to improve the delivery of service provided by SPORTT in an efficient, effective and economic manner.

**Please see Verbatim Notes for the detailed oral submission by the witnesses.**

4.5 The Chairman thanked the representatives from the Auditor General’s Department, the Ministry of Finance – Investments Division, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, SPORTT for attending the Public Hearing.

**SUSPENSION**

5.1 At 12:40 p.m., the Chairman suspended the *in public* meeting to resume a post-hearing meeting *in camera* with Members only.

**RESUMPTION**

6.1 At 12:46 p.m. the Chairman resumed the post-hearing meeting *in camera*.

**POST-MORTEM DISCUSSION**

7.1 The Members held a post-mortem discussion to determine the way forward, following the public hearing.

7.2 The Committee agreed to examine the audited financial statements of the Community Improvement Services Limited (CISL) for the financial years 2008 – 2012 at the next meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

8.1 The Chairman thanked Members for their attendance and the meeting was adjourned to **Wednesday November 16, 2016 at 9:30 a.m.**

8.2 The adjournment was taken at 12:53 p.m.

**We certify that these Minutes are true and correct.**

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY

*November 2, 2016*

# Appendix 2

## Attendees

# Attendees

## OFFICIALS FROM THE AUDITOR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Mrs. Jaiwantie Ramdass	-	Assistant Auditor General
Mr. Louis Hernandez	-	Assistant Auditor General (Ag.)
Mr. Cyril Barran	-	Assistant Audit Director
Ms. Nicole Cockburn	-	Legal Officer

## OFFICIALS FROM THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (INVESTMENTS DIVISION)

Ms. Yvette Babb	-	Social and Economic Transformation (Director (Ag.))
Mr. Ryan Maharaj	-	Senior Business Analyst (Ag.)

## OFFICIAL FROM THE MINISTRY OF SPORT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

Mr. Ian Ramdahin	-	Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mr. Lyndon Burton	-	Assistant Project Co-ordinator
Ms. Violet Joseph	-	Director of Monitoring and Evaluation

## SPORTS COMPANY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO LIMITED (SPORTT)

Mr. Michael Phillips	-	Chairman
Mr. Jason Williams	-	Financial Comptroller
Mr. Dexter Browne	-	Project Consultant, Regionals
Mr. Anthony Blake	-	Facilities and Maintenance Manager
Ms. Mellie Pryce	-	Project Administrator
Mr. Jeewan Kowlessar	-	Internal Audit
Mr. Naveen Maraj	-	Legal Officer

# APPENDIX 3

### List of entities falling under the purview of the PAEC:

1. Agricultural Development Bank (ADB)
2. Caribbean Airlines Limited (CAL)
3. Caribbean Leasing Company Ltd (owned by ExporsTT)
4. Caribbean New Media Group Limited (CNMG)
5. Caroni Green Limited
6. Clico Trust Corporation Limited
7. Cocoa Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago Ltd
8. Community Environmental & Protection Enhancement Programme Company Limited (CEPEP)
9. Community Improvement Services Limited
10. East Port of Spain Development Company Limited
11. Education Facilities Company Limited (EFCL)
12. Estate Management & Business Development Company Ltd. (EMBDC)
13. Export Centers Company Limited
14. Export Import Bank of Trinidad & Tobago (EXIMBANK)
15. ExporsTT (formerly BDC: Business Development Company Limited)
16. Evolving TecKnologies & Enterprise Development Company Limited (eTeck) (formerly Property & Industrial Development Company of Trinidad & Tobago)
17. First Citizens Bank (FCB)
18. First Citizens Holdings Limited
19. Government Human Resource Services Company Limited (GHRS)
20. Government Information Services Limited (GISL)
21. Human Capital Development Facilitation Company Limited
22. InvesTT
23. Lake Asphalt of Trinidad & Tobago (1978) Ltd.
24. La Brea Industrial Development Corporation
25. Metal Industries Company Limited (MIC)
26. National Agricultural Marketing Development Corporations Limited (NAMDEVCO)
27. National Commission For Self Help Limited
28. National Energy Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Limited
29. National Entrepreneurship Development Company Ltd. (NEDCO)
30. National Enterprises Limited (NEL)
31. National Flour Mills Limited (NFM)
32. National Gas Company of Trinidad & Tobago Limited (NGC)
33. National Helicopter Services Limited
34. National Information & Communication Technology Company Limited (NICTCL)
35. (iGovTT) (ttconnect)
36. National Infrastructure Development Company Limited (NIDCO)
37. National Insurance Property Development Company Limited (NIPDEC)
38. National Maintenance, Training & Security Company Limited (MTS)
39. National Project Development Services Ltd
40. National Quarries Company Limited (NQCL)
41. National Schools Dietary Services Limited

42. National Training Agency (1997) Ltd.
43. Natpat Investments Company Ltd.
44. Oropune Development Ltd. (owned by UDECOTT)
45. Palso Seco Agricultural Enterprises Limited (PSAEL)
46. Petroleum Company of Trinidad & Tobago Limited (PETROTRIN)
47. Phoenix Park Gas Processors Ltd.
48. Point Lisas Industrial Port Development Corporation Ltd (PLIPDECO)
49. Point Lisas Terminals Ltd. (owned by PLIPDECO)
50. Portfolio Credit Management Limited
51. Port of Spain Waterfront Development Ltd.
52. Rincon Development Ltd.
53. Rural Development Company of Trinidad & Tobago Limited
54. Seafood Industry Development Company Limited
55. Sports Company of Trinidad & Tobago Limited (SportT)
56. Taurus Services Limited
57. Telecommunications Services of Trinidad & Tobago Limited (TSTT)
58. Tourism Development Company Limited (TDC)
59. Trinidad Nitrogen Company Limited (TRINGEN)
60. Trinidad Northern Areas Ltd.
61. Trinidad & Tobago Entertainment Company Limited (TTent)
62. Trinidad & Tobago External Telecommunications Ltd.
63. Trinidad and Tobago Fashion Company Limited
64. Trinidad & Tobago Film Company Limited
65. Trinidad & Tobago Fish Processors Ltd.
66. Trinidad & Tobago Food Processors Ltd.
67. Trinidad & Tobago Free Zones Company Limited
68. Trinidad & Tobago International Financial Centre Management Company Limited
69. Trinidad & Tobago Marine Petroleum Company Ltd.
70. Trinidad & Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited (TTMF)
71. Trinidad and Tobago Music Company Limited
72. Trinidad & Tobago National Petroleum Marketing Company Limited (NP)
73. Trinidad & Tobago Solid Waste Management Co. Ltd. (SWMCOL)
74. Trinidad & Tobago Tourism Business Development Limited
75. Trintoc Services (owned by PETROTRIN)
76. Union Estate Electricity Generation Company Limited
77. Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad & Tobago Limited (UDECOTT)
78. Vehicle Management Corporation of Trinidad & Tobago Limited (VMCOTT)
79. Youth Training & Employment Partnership Programme Limited (YTEPP)

# APPENDIX 4

## VERBATIM

**VERBATIM NOTES OF THE TWELFTH MEETING OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (ENTERPRISES) COMMITTEE HELD IN THE J. HAMILTON MAURICE MEETING ROOM (IN PUBLIC), MEZZANINE FLOOR, TOWER D, INTERNATIONAL WATERFRONT CENTRE, #1A WRIGHTSON ROAD, PORT OF SPAIN, ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 02, 2016 AT 10.03 A.M.**

**PRESENT**

Mr. Wade Mark	Chairman
Dr. Tim Gopeesingh	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds	Member
Mrs. Jennifer Baptiste-Primus	Member
Mr. Foster Cummings	Member
Mr. David Small	Member
Miss Keiba Jacob	Secretary
Miss Hema Bhagaloo	Assistant Secretary

**ABSENT**

Mrs. Cherrie-Ann Crichlow-Cockburn	Member
Miss Shamfa Cudjoe	Member

**INVESTMENTS DIVISION, MINISTRY OF FINANCE**

Ms. Yvette Babb	Director, Social and Economic Transformation (Ag.)
Mr. Ryan Maharaj	Ag. Senior Business Analyst

**OFFICIALS OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL DEPARTMENT**

Mrs. Jaiwantie Ramdass	Assistant Auditor General
Mr. Louis Hernandez	Assistant Auditor General (Ag.)
Mr. Cyril Barran	Assistant Audit Director
Ms. Nicole Cockburn	Legal Officer

**OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY OF SPORT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS**

Mr. Ian Ramdahin	Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mr. Lyndon Burton	Assistant Project Co-ordinator
Ms. Violet Joseph	Director of Monitoring and Evaluation
Mr. Tyrone Marcus	Senior Legal Officer

**OFFICIALS OF THE SPORT TEAM**

Mr. Michael Phillips	Chairman
Mr. Jason Williams	Financial Comptroller
Mr. Dexter Browne	Project Consultant, Regionals

Mr. Anthony Blake

Facilities and Maintenance  
Manager

Ms. Mellie Pryce

Project Administrator

Mr. Jeewan Kowlessar

Internal Audit

Mr. Naveen Maraj

Legal Officer

**Mr. Chairman:** May I call this meeting to order and may I extend a very good morning to all. And on behalf of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee, may I welcome all the officials from the Auditor General's Department; the Ministry of Finance, Investments Division; the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs; the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago, members of the media and the public.

Let me advise that this meeting is being held in public and is being broadcast live on the Parliament's Channel 11 and Radio 105.5 FM and the Parliament's YouTube Channel ParlView. Viewers and listeners can send their comments related to today's topic via email, that is [Parl101@ttparliament.org](mailto:Parl101@ttparliament.org), [Facebook.com/ttparliament](https://www.facebook.com/ttparliament) and [Twitter@ttparliament](https://twitter.com/ttparliament).

The purpose of this morning's meeting of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee is to examine a special audit of the operations of the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago, with particular reference to the development and upgrading of sporting facilities in Trinidad.

May I just remind all of us that the Auditor General's Report represents an overview of the Sports Company's operations, with particular emphasis on the delivery of high expenditure sporting facilities and the extent to which the government's objectives of sports for all is being achieved. The report is based on fieldwork, which was undertaken during the period October 13 to March 2014.

The report also captures some of the major challenges of the Sports Company such as frequent changes in chief executive officers, fluctuations in staff departures, litigation following restructuring, performance indicators are not well defined or measurable, rationale for construction of sporting facilities, justification of national facilities in delivering elite performance, justification for the national facilities in encouraging sport tourism, progress in delivering the national facilities has been slow, and construction of facilities in the same locality.

The report also proposes the following recommendations:

- develop a comprehensive performance regime;
- define measurable targets;
- monitor robustly the cost effectiveness of the associated projects and programmes;
- apply lessons learnt from internal projects and programme activities;
- develop a clear strategy for funding national sporting organizations;
- develop risk management plans and processes that include risk identification;
- evaluation of the probability and impact of risk;
- risk mitigation, monitoring and review;
- implement a communication strategy in order to facilitate any future organizational change process;
- maintain proper records and produce audited financial statements on a regular

basis; and

- review regular financial information on its activities to exercise sufficient oversight of its handling of public moneys.

In light of what I have said, this Committee is desirous of hearing from the key stakeholders here today to determine the status of the implementation of the recommendations and other measures to overcome the challenges and findings that were highlighted in the report. The role of our Committee is to help the Sports Company to improve its delivery of services in an efficient, effective and economic manner.

At this time, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the officials with us this morning. First, I will ask my colleagues to introduce themselves. Then we would ask the Auditor General's team to introduce themselves, after, the Ministry of Finance, Investments Division, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and finally the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago. So I would ask my colleagues on my right to start with introductions.

*[Members of PA(E)C introduce themselves]*

**Mr. Chairman:** May I ask members of the Auditor General's Department to introduce themselves.

*[Introductions made by all officials of the teams]*

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much and once again welcome. Is there anyone else? Well may I, on behalf of—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Hinds:** Thank you for your ear, Mr. Chairman. Through you, of course, since this report affects business as far as back as November 2014, and prior to that, of course, I think it is important for me to understand whether any of the operatives here were actually with the company at that time. I know it is not about personalities but I know it would help if we have an idea of whether we are all dealing with an historic record, having come to it, like I have now, or whether we have people who were actually on the scene at that time? I think it would be very helpful, from 2011, sort of.

**Mr. Chairman:** Well, what I will do is that the Chairman of the Sports Company is about to make some opening remarks, so maybe in your opening remarks you can address the issue raised by Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds as to whether the team that is here today is a completely new team or has been around for a few years.

**Mr. Hinds:** 2011 and thereafter.

**Mr. Chairman:** 2011 to the present time. So, I would now like to open to you, Mr. Chairman, to bring a few opening remarks and we will begin to deal with the issues thereafter. So the floor is yours, Sir.

**Mr. Phillips:** Thank you everyone. Just as the question was asked, that is the first thing I would like to deal with. Yes we have several members who have been involved with the Sports Company or on board with the Sports Company during the period of which the audit would have been conducted. So, yes, we do have, as well, as some new people who, I think, can still make a contribution as to some of the things, in terms of the direction forward.

Now, we see this as an opportunity because we know particularly the auditors are focusing on a lot of the functions of the Sports Company, but we also see this as an opportunity to have dialogue with the national sporting bodies and people that are involved and following these fraternities that we aim to serve, because a big part of it, in terms of sport, is what are the actual outcomes that we want to derive, based on the things that we do. So, we hope to be able

to give a sound idea of what the vision in going forward is.

The fact that the time we have spent, myself, coming on as chairman, and having almost a year, in terms of reviewing the company and the way that it communicates with sporting bodies, the way that it communicates and interacts with contractors, and so on, and its objectives, and really finding ways, in terms of recalibrating the Sports Company because I think now, given the particular time that we find yourselves in, it is time for us to become a bit more creative and to really stretch all of the resources that we have to the point where we are optimized. We provide a function that is of worth to the general community.

In addition to that, it is really about redefining what are our objectives in sport, both SPORTT and the sporting landscape, to bring to you the concept of the sporting industry because what we have found is that we have a sporting sector, but there are things that need to be put in place, and gaps that are there that we need to fill to be able to create this sporting industry. To bring to your attention that we believe that sport function in its own ecosystem, its own environment, and to be able to have that environment or that ecosystem flourish, there needs to be a balance.

Now, there are certain things that are on the books that we cannot change, in terms of the facilities that we have. What we can do is implement strategies, and so on, that we get the best utilization out of these facilities, and also it is to try to change, I think from the discussions that we have heard in the past, even for the justification of such facilities, what the measurable outcomes are, because we find that it is measured in a dollars and cents perspective and not really what the value of it to the national community is. So, we see this. We know we have members at the table who have been involved in sport and have an idea of sport and how it is that, as Members of Cabinet who are here as well could help us, in terms of achieving those objectives from a national perspective.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much. May I begin by addressing a question to the Auditor General and I will come back to the Sports Company. I would like to know, on behalf of the Committee, how is the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago identified for this special audit by the Auditor General's Department?

**Mrs. Ramdass:** Well, we have various criteria that we use to determine what to audit and some of those criteria used were: we looked at the impact—would the report have an impact to produce financial savings? We looked at the materiality of the amount of moneys that were put forward to SPORTT; we looked at the interest, citizens' interest, Parliament's interest, media interest; we also looked at the resources that we had in-house to do the audit. So, we looked at all those things. We also did a risk analysis of the company to put forward a justification for choosing this audit.

We approached the audit by looking at two things, answering two main questions: were the right things being done in the right way and are the right things being done for the future? So those are the reasons and the criteria used to determine the audit.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay. If I could come back to the Sports Company, through its Chairman. Could you tell us what is the status of the implementation of the many recommendations in the special audit reports from the Auditor General?

**Mr. Phillips:** Well, I think, as I said a little earlier, one of the things that we had to do when we came in was review the Sports Company. Of course, the Auditor General's report was a great tool, in terms of us being able to look at particular departments, I think it was quite comprehensive, and identified quite a lot of things that myself as an individual outside of the

loop, so to speak, may have speculated on us as to how things were to come into being.

And yes, one of the first things that we did, we recognize that there were quite a bit of policies that were in draft form. The first one we tackled was the procurement policy. We also have been dealing with several other policies, in terms of making the Sports Company compliant, in addition to being more transparent and as far as delivering a better service. We do recognize part of the importance of this is we are one of the very few institutions that has a back page dedicated to it every day, 15 minutes or 25 per cent of every newscast dedicated to what we do and we see that as a significant area, in terms of which we are being held accountable from a public perspective.

A big part of it, in coming back into the actual sporting aspect of it, I have several members or heads of departments here who can help, in terms of their particular departments, but I will start with sports because that is my strength and background in leading that role.

Now, one of challenges that we face in adapting and driving sport forward is the fact that we have sporting bodies, which we have 15 under our umbrella. The majority of them are Olympic-type sports or Olympic contenders or have ambitions for Olympic participation besides cricket. With that, we deal with many organizations that are still functioning on a voluntary basis. So, therefore, we are putting resources behind the sporting bodies but reaching—we have identified that there are some blocks there, in terms of these sporting bodies that are functioning on a voluntary basis. Some of them to a certain extent. One or two of them outside of our umbrella because there are many sporting bodies that still operate out of the trunk of their car and some of the things, in terms of optimizing their functionality have been office space, in terms of them having a home, in terms of getting them to understand the importance, as I said earlier, the ecosystem and where events and activities come under that whole idea of a catalyst and an emulation factor/a motivation factor. So, some of the things that we found is that we had to push them in the direction of trying to increase membership. Now, some of the stumbling blocks that we faced with that, because we had to get into more of a social sciences type of perspective, with regard to these things.

**Mr. Chairman:** May I interrupt you for one moment?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yeah.

**Mr. Chairman:** Are you familiar with this audit?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes, correct.

**Mr. Chairman:** There are 15 recommendations. Could you tell us, within the year that you would have been in receipt of this report—28<sup>th</sup> November, 2014, today is 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2016—how many of the 15 recommendations have the Sports Company implemented thus far? That is what we at the Committee level would be interested in hearing at this time. Could you share with us how many recommendations have been implemented?

**Mr. Phillips:** Okay, so I started off by sharing with you the fact that we have sent forward and dealt with the procurement policy of the company, which was a major part of the findings of the Auditor General.

With regard to, we have internal audit, there were some issues and recommendations made particularly in the areas of audit. So I would like to pass you on to Mr. Kowlessar who could tell you some of the work that has been done there. The sub-committees of the Sports Company—*[Interruption]* Sorry.

**Mr. Chairman:** No, what I am saying, Mr. Chairman is that, if you can just—we would like a sequencing of what we are dealing with. There are 15 recommendations. If you can help the

Committee by saying in terms of recommendation number one, we have not yet—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Phillips:** Okay. Sorry, what page are you on?

**Mr. Chairman:** I am on page 11. You can go through the 15 and let the Committee know which ones you have begun to implement, which ones you are yet to implement and when are they going to be implemented? That is what we would like to know, so we can seek further clarification, so we can help you as we go along?

**Mr. Phillips:** Sorry, the copy that I have, page 11 has no—or sorry, page 12.

**Mr. Chairman:** And seeing that the PS is near you and the PS is accountable as well to this Parliament and to the people, maybe he can help you deal with this matter in a very sequential way.

**Mr. Phillips:** Okay, understood.

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Good morning. Basically, the report is November 2014. I came to the Ministry in June 2014, so I would have brought across members with some institutional memory, the more senior officials in the Ministry.

So when you look at the Auditor General's report there is expectation that there will be a written response submitted within a time frame of corrective actions to be implemented.

I would have searched our files and I found no written response, basically, to document what action has been taken. But since I came on board I know the Ministry has been taking action to rectify a lot of the anomalies, in terms of the mismanagement and malpractice that has been taking place. So like you go through the comprehensive performance regime. Right? Both the Ministry and SPORTT, we have been sitting together troubleshooting the systems to find out where are the weaknesses, because if you have a chain and you have weak links, the system is not functional. So we basically are removing all the weak links.

**10.30 a.m.**

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. PS, may I stop you for a moment? How long have you been PS?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** I have been PS, acting from September 08<sup>th</sup>.

**Mr. Chairman:** September 08<sup>th</sup>, when?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** I came on board as Deputy PS from June 03, 2014. I acted interim, short periods between then and September 08<sup>th</sup>. So I started acting as from September 08<sup>th</sup>, 2016 consecutively.

**Mr. Chairman:** Also from the September 08<sup>th</sup>, 2016—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Right, yes.

**Mr. Chairman:**—you have been acting as PS?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Yes, but before that after PS, I would have worked with like monitoring evaluation to go out into the projects that SPORTT has been implementing to find out—right? So—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Chairman:** Could you indicate to this Committee in a very direct way, whether any of these recommendations, 15 as submitted by the Auditor General under your watch, and with your institutional memory sitting next to you and near you? Could you indicate whether any of these recommendations have so far been implemented, any of them out of the 15 in full?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** Could you identify which ones?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Okay. In terms of the strategy for funding sport administration—*[Interruption]*  
Let us go through each one.

**Mr. Phillips:** What I could say in terms of understanding the sequence in which you want to

have the items dealt with, our services level agreement with the sporting bodies, have been updated. With regard to being able to conform to some of these things in terms of tracking—  
[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Chairman:** Which recommendations are you referring to?

**Mr. Phillips:**—so most of these recommendations here from recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, deal with the interaction between our Sport Development Unit, and the Elite Development and Performance Unit that interacts directly with the sporting bodies, in terms of—because remember through them we collect all of this information.

Now, it is important to note that the way that we implement these changes is through a compliance for funding. So the collection of all of this information comes through the sporting bodies, through the sporting officers, then through to the department head. So this is an ongoing process in terms of us developing the sporting—the NSO, in helping us to create those—in helping us to get that information and collect that database.

Now, one of the things that we have, that we have discussed at the Board—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, go ahead.

**Mr. Phillips:** So one of the things that we are looking at in terms of the strategy and—is identifying that we actually need a sport directory, covering item 7, to assist us in developing that part of the sport. The other items here with regard to—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Chairman:** I will come back to you, but I will open the floor now to other members, and I will come back to you later, because I have some other vital questions—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Phillips:** Okay, okay. Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:**—that I will like to put forward, but I will like my other colleagues to join us at this time. Any member?

**Mr. Small:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity. Welcome again to all members present from Sport Company, Auditor General and my former colleagues from the Ministry of Finance. I have listened intently to the responses we received so far, and I want to be clear about my perception of what has come as responses. I am not sure if they were answers. I am very concerned about some of the responses also within this document here that you supplied. I am sure you are familiar with it. This is a document that would have been prepared by your company.

I want to—my first question, Mr. Chairman, has to do with the issues around the strategic direction of the company, and correct me if I am wrong. I just heard in your response that in respect to the recommendations of the Auditor General, you have dealt with, I think, with one through seven in part or in whole in some of them.

**Mr. Phillips:** Through the upgrading of the service level—[*Inaudible*]

**Mr. Small:** Okay, because I would give you the opportunity to refine that answer because the question I have, if you have an entity that—according to the Auditor General’s Report, in their findings, you are operating without any strategic direction, in the context that you are doing things and there is no way to measure what you are doing. Then, if you are doing something, you are not able to measure what you are doing, who knows what you are doing? There is no system in place to measure what you are doing, capture what you are doing and then report. So I would like to understand, what have you as the Chairman coming in and the Auditor General—you would have met this findings there. You would have met the finding from the Auditor General that, “Listen, the company has been operating with a plan that has no structure, that allows for capturing what you are doing, measuring”—because if—there is an old saying, “What gets

measured, gets done”. So if you are not able to measure it, then you may really not sure what you are doing, and it is a critical finding from the Auditor General. So I would like to find out from you, as you are the Chairman, and you come in, and you have seen this report, and these are—that is a critical finding here. What have you done to try to ameliorate or deal with that particular issue?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yeah, and it comes back to what we are saying in terms of a significant portion of that work, is done through the national sporting organization, through our sporting officers. We then work with them in terms of interacting with the sporting bodies because at this point in time, we have no—how should I say it?—direct coaching programmes with the majority of these sporting bodies, apart from in athletics, where it is we have employees like Keshorn Walcott’s coach and so on, that actually tracks and measures performance. *[Interruption]* You wanted to ask a question?

**Mr. Small:** Permit me, Mr. Chair, through you, let me probably rephrase my response. You are the Chairman of Sport Company. The Auditor General had a finding that the Sport Company has been operating without proper strategic direction and measurable targets. You came and met that finding. What have you done to help the Sport Company fix that problem about the company operating without a defined plan and targets that are measurable? What have you done to date?

**Mr. Phillips:** As I said, some of the things that we have done, we had to work with the sporting organizations in establishing those targets in the first place, all right? So some of the things that were communicated was one, we need to have information with regard to the amount people that are subscribers to our fraternity. Our strategy really has been in terms of—you would have seen we put an ad in the paper. We had an incident earlier this year, where it was being—the Sport Company and the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, is being called upon as to what we will be doing in terms of intervening in a particular national issue with regard to qualification to the Olympics. That was where it was clearly defined, that we are limited in terms of how we treat with sporting bodies, with regard to the running of their institutions. Now, are you now speaking—because this portion of it dealt with the sporting bodies? Are you now going into areas of facilities and so on? Or are we dealing with the sporting bodies in this first section that they would have identified?

**Mr. Small:** Mr. Chairman, I will not detain the proceeding, because I think that the responses that I need, that I am not getting, we will have to—through the Chairman, I think we will have to request it in writing, because the response—but I want to shift my questioning to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, because the line Ministry would have also received the Auditor General’s Report, and I have a similar question.

You have a report that one of your line agencies has been operating without a system that allows them to track what they are doing and measure how they are spending the money of the taxpayers of this country. What would—I would like to find out what the Ministry, through the current Permanent Secretary or some of the supporting team, what would have been your communication to SPORTT, that we have received this document and critical findings here of the Auditor General, is that you are spending taxpayers’ money, and you are not able the measure and report on what you are doing properly? What would have been the guidance that the Ministry would sent to the Sport Company? Mr. Permanent Secretary, or a member of your team?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Morning again. Well, basically this report was dated 2014, right? And

Permanent Secretary who was there at the time, I cannot really say exactly what communication would have, you know, happened between two entities, between the Ministry and SPORTT, but I would like to highlight something just for clarification. The governing bodies are split between the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and SPORTT. There are 16, well, reduced now to 15, that is the bigger ones at SPORTT, and the 36, right?—smaller bodies, medium sized are based at the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, okay?—both entities have project departments. We have a project department which looks after the swimming pool, indoor sporting arena. The SPORTT looks after the bigger facilities, the stadia and those mega-sport facilities in Couva, right? So you find that there is a split in the operational framework.

Now, the Ministry would have dealt with this way back in terms of putting forward the concept of the Sport Commission, where the proposal was to bring every, you know, put the operations together under one entity, right? So the management of the national governing bodies was supposed to fall under the Sport Commission. The management of facilities, you know, bring it under the Sport Commission. The Ministry was supposed to assume a regulatory and monitoring evaluation status, in terms of—and policy, right?—that did not happen.

When the proposal was made to create the Sport Commission. The SPORTT was, you know, came on board as an interim entity to deal with the continuation of the administration of sport on the other side, because the problem we have with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs is that, the funding we get from the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, under the MPI, is for non-profit. The Ministry cannot apply our funding for profit entities like sport promoters who create the industry, right? So the sport entity has the mandate to do the business side of sport, sport tourism, engaging with private/public/partnership to promote sport, so that we will have a return on investment. Legally we have a restriction in terms of how we can operate, and that is why SPORTT was created to further the mandate of the governance of sport.

*[Sen Small indicates he wants to ask another question]*

**Mr. Chairman:** All right. One final question, then Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds.

**Mr. Small:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for your indulgence. I just have one final question in this round, and it is to the Chairman of SPORTT. I want to direct you to page 6 of your submission. It is page 6 on the copy I have. There is a statement that I would like to get a response on, from the Chairman. It is at—close to the bottom of page number 4. I will quote, it says:

The role of the Board of Directors and management of SPORTT is for oversight and to ensure that the Minister's vision and objectives are met...

—and it continues. Is it the—I am struggling with this statement that—it is in writing. It is something in my respectful view should not even be said, but what is written here is that the role of the Board of Directors—paraphrasing here—“is to ensure that the Minister's visions and objectives are met”. So that I would like a response, please from the Chairman on that, given that this is a document generated by SPORTT. You have the floor, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes. I think I understand what you are saying in terms of the comment being a bit broad. *[Interruption]* Sorry?

**Mr. Hinds:** I agree with the implied undertone of my friend. It should really be the Government, rather than the Minister.

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes, true.

**Mr. Hinds:** Sorry about that, yes. We should make that correction.

**Mr. Phillips:** I do understand what you are saying. At the end of the day, we are an

implementation arm, and when we get directives, those directives or those things come from the Cabinet, in terms of what it is they expect us to do with regard to particular projects.

However, just to go back to the issue of what you were asking, in terms of what have we done? I think, to let you know the situation is one where we had an extensive time of assessment, an assessment with a moving target so to speak, because the environment was changing. The priority was opening the national facilities that were to a certain extent 75 per cent complete. We saw that as a very important thing to be done, because a significant investment was made in those facilities, and to bring them online was critical. So we did get, you know, that imperative in terms of being able to move forward, but, you know, to answer your question in terms of what did we find during this period of assessment, and the various levels of implementation along the period of time was, understanding the importance of talent ID; and communicating that to the sporting bodies and putting things in place to assist with that; identifying the importance of communication and understanding.

Coming back to the original point that I was making in terms of a directory, there is no way—that has ever been done, that the general public has access to information with regard to who are the coaches in the various sports, and where do they train. What is the availability of times and slots facilities, everything from physiotherapists to massage therapists, to anybody involved in the sporting industry. So this is one of the things that we identified as a gap that needed to be put in place.

**Mr. Chairman:** All right, thank you very much.

**Mr. Hinds:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Just as backdrop, we had the Uff Commission of Enquiry in this country, that issued 92 recommendations as it related to UDeCOTT, and when I last checked, I am not so sure, what became of those. PS, we are told that this company, as many others, does not earn money, does not retain money. Its funding comes through the line Ministry. That is correct, is it not?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** That is correct.

**Mr. Hinds:** And the Permanent Secretary is the accounting officer and, therefore, Sen. Small's question to you is very, very relevant as the Permanent Secretary, and happily I am speaking to someone who was there at the material times under review. So with that as backdrop let me ask, you went into that Ministry after the LifeSport fiasco, and I am calling it that deliberately.

**Mr. Ramdahin:** I was there when the Ministry was in meltdown mode; LifeSport.

**Mr. Hinds:** In throes of the LifeSport, and you would have lived through and witnessed all of this as Permanent Secretary, am I correct?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Yes.

**Mr. Hinds:** Deputy Permanent Secretary?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Yes. I would have had the opportunity to examine some of the questionable things that happened in the Ministry.

**Mr. Hinds:** I find the answers to the questions as put by the Chairman and Sen. Small thus far, in relation to what has been done in respect of the Auditor General's recommendations in these horrendous circumstances, I find the answers unpersuasive, unexciting, without comfort to the citizens of this country, that is what I think. And for you as Deputy Permanent Secretary, and now Acting Permanent Secretary, in light of the backdrop that I have said, the UDeCOTT, which was of national interest, Uff Commission and the LifeSport in particular which would have been of interest to you, the recommendations of the Auditor General in this report are to be the guiding light, the *Bible* for your deliberations and advance, since they were issued in 2014,

would you agree with that?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** I totally agree.

**Mr. Hinds:** How then do we hear these watery, flimsy, unpersuasive responses to the firm question that the Auditor General's Report and its recommendations ought to be carried out to the letter? We are today in the same position as we were when this was issued, on the basis of what I am hearing here today and, therefore, likely to repeat it.

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Just to give a background, basically, there have been a lot of corrective measures instituted within the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs as well as SPORTT, right? A lot of the system—the reason there was a breakdown in the system, when we looked at it is—when we look at records management, a core area, manipulation from junior-level staff, you know, that has been fixed, right?

In terms of who has authority to sign off within the Ministry, as well as—if you look at the statement here made Minister's Vision/Objective, that was the tone at the time, that was the modus operandi at the time. In terms of—we have a strategic a plan. We are supposed to have an implementation plan which the Board is supposed to follow, but then again we have an ad hoc request coming in to make adjustments according to those plans, it may be situational, and it comes at the—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Deputy Permanent Secretary or Acting PS, could you point us to the recommendation that you are referring, as you make your submission?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** So, we are speaking about recommendation No. 14.

**Mr. Chairman:** Recommendation No. 14?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Right. So the maintenance of proper records and produce audited financial statements on a regular basis.

**Mr. Chairman:** Have you done this?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** This has been instituted in terms of—we did it for the Boxing Board as well as SPORTT, right? In terms of getting the accountability, before releases are to—request for releases in terms of accounting for how they would have expended their releases for the previous month, right? These measures are in place and doing like a fiscal projection for the year to say that how—like, you get a release, an allocated amount in the budget that may not be the request that was made, then you have to do some prioritisation. So they have to do adjustments in terms of where they are going to prioritise and how they are going to apply the budgetary allocation, right? So in terms of managing the financial records, you basically—these documents are submitted back to us in terms of the adjustments to be made, and we would use this in the execution of the SPORTT Programme of Activities.

**Mr. Hinds:** PS, I must admit I am still not comforted, right? Your job, and when I say “your”, I mean as PS and, of course, the Board and the management, I know some persons were there then, it is your duty to fix the obvious problems that were identified by the Auditor General. As the Chairman of this committee indicated earlier, what we are most interested in, while the history is horrendous, we are most interested in the way forward, that we on the advice of those paid from the Office of the Attorney General, will not be condemned to repeating this.

Now, let me get in a little bit—*[Interruption]*

**Hon. Member:** The Auditor General.

**Mr. Hinds:** Yes, the Auditor General. Let me get in a little bit to “the this”, that I am troubled about, because I did not want to get into “the this”, you know, because until we are satisfied that “the this” and what led to it, is truncated, stopped, blocked and would not happen again, it is

almost useless getting into “the this”, because we could repeat “this”, you with me PS?

**Mr. Ramdahn:** I agree.

**Mr. Hinds:** You with me, Mr. Chairman?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Hinds:** Now, let me get in a little bit to “the this”. Sen. Small alluded to it earlier, this is a company that expended and continues to expend substantial millions of public funds, purportedly to bring about total sports in Trinidad and Tobago, to promote healthy lifestyles and the objectives that are listed here. I am just paraphrasing them, and doing so efficiently and it is driven I take it, by public need, professional analysis of the thing and public need.

We have a situation here where at the very top, we are told that several chief executive officers, over a 10-year-period, five left the organization, the services of three were terminated and two resigned. I would like to get in writing the reasons for the termination and the—through the Chair, of course, Mr. Chairman, and the resignations because it is clear to us, that that kind of turbulence and instability at the very top has, in fact, the Auditor General has indicated clearly, that that kind of chopping and changing has affected the work of the Sport Company, but it did not affect the spending. It affected the efficiency and all of that, but the spending went on apace; interestingly enough.

The other thing is, we see here that the staff numbers increased by 76 per cent between 2009 and 2013, which suggests to me, that we went on a hiring spree, and if I know Trinidad and Tobago good enough, it is about new people in position, and we have jobs to create. So we increased staffing by 76 per cent.

The recent Olympics and the results—and I want to congratulate sincerely all of those citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, who went out there on the world stage to represent our country, and did so to the best of their abilities. In particular, I would like to congratulate the second medal winner, young Keshorn Walcott. All of them did us proud to the best of their ability, but they depended to a large extent, on the support that the State would have offered largely through the Sport Company, is that correct?

**Mr. Ramdahn:** Yes.

**Mr. Hinds:** Good.

**Mr. Ramdahn:** Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs.

**Mr. Hinds:** The general results are not, in my view, commensurate with the kind of expenditure that was directed to the athletes, the large number of them as athletes through the Elite Athlete Assistance Programme. The general result in my view, is not commensurate with the kind of expenditure that went in there. I hope you would agree with that. Are you wanting to agree with that or you would like to reject that proposition?

**Mr. Phillips:** No, I would agree that from the general public’s perspective and the citizens of the country—regards the investment made, you know, greater results would have, you know, we would expect that they would want greater results.

**Mr. Hinds:** Something is obviously wrong from the Auditor General’s findings with the Sport Company, the administration, right? Let me tell you, this report tells us very dramatically, that on January 05, 2011, and I am not going to pretend that date is significant. On January 05<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the Sport Company contracted at a cost of \$1.06 million, that is \$1,060,000, a company call De Edge Consulting Company Limited, to begin an exercise of reviewing the staff and the human resource issues at the Sport Company on January 05<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

**Mr. Phillips:** Excuse Mr. Hinds, just a correction. The company was hired by the Ministry of

Sport and Youth Affairs, not the Sport Company.

**Mr. Hinds:** Well, it was put to work at the Sport Company to carry out a human resource exercise, dealing with the staffing question. On January 07<sup>th</sup>, two days, less than two days later, 43 per cent of the staff members including the CEO were dismissed, yes. We then found that these matters were taken to the court. It is my understanding that no defences were filed in these matters, is that correct?

**Mr. Phillips:** Can I put that to our legal, please, who would be familiar with the process?

**Mr. Hinds:** Yes. In other words, the Sport Company offered no answer to the allegations against it for wrongful dismissals in the court, none, and I am seeing in one case, in one of nine completed cases, the fee for the lawyers or lawyer was \$137,000. No defence was offered. Is that correct?

**11.00 a.m.**

**Mr. Maraj:** Member, good morning. Yes, that is indeed correct. Those matters predate my appointment at the Sports Company, but to answer your question directly, yes that is correct.

**Mr. Hinds:** So we paid a company—as I break to allow one of my colleagues to enter—\$106 million, within two days—let me ask another question then. Those dismissals, less than two days later, was it on the advice of the De Edge or was it just done notwithstanding their costly engagement?

**Mr. Maraj:** I am not in a position to answer that.

**Mr. Hinds:** We would like to know that in writing—

**Mr. Maraj:** Yes, please.

**Mr. Hinds:**—with some urgency. I would give way to one of my friends.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a very short statement before I ask some specific questions, because I am sitting here and it seems as though we are in a maze and going around in circles at the incredible, weak and troubling explanations that are being offered here this morning, by not only the Sports Company Chairman, but the Acting Permanent Secretary, and it points to a serious knowledge and capability gaps and both the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and, particularly, at the level of the board.

It appears to me, based on the responses that the board continues to operate as a law unto itself. It has clearly disregarded the recommendations of the Auditor General. They can point us, Mr. Chairman, to not a single recommendation. We were pointed to recommendation 14. When you go to recommendation 14, it states:

“SPORTT should maintain proper records and produce audited financial statements on a regular basis...”

We have heard nothing to support the indication that either the Ministry or the board would have engaged in such an exercise.

If we were in Parliament, Mr. Chairman, I would say that the Sports Company and the Ministry are engaging in filibustering. I am astonished, Mr. Chairman. I am very, very much sensitized and knowledgeable about the public service, and how the public service function, and I sit here astonished at what is emerging. I have formed my own point of view.

The Chairman of the Board, Mr. Michael Phillips, a short while ago told this Committee in response to my honourable colleague, Minister Fitzgerald Hinds, with regard to this company the De Edge that the Sports Company did not employ that company. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Michael Phillips, I would like to draw your attention to page 8 of this document. All right. Your

document, page 8, the paragraph directly under No. 4. No. 4 reads:

Who has been responsible for verifying and approving reports internally?

Under “No. 4”, not that paragraph, the following paragraph that begins:

Issue: Fluctuations in staff departure

I draw your attention to the third to last line, and I would like to read it for you, Mr. Phillips:

On 5th January, 2011 SPORTT contracted De Edge Consulting at a cost of \$1.6 million to begin the exercise.

Would you like to reconsider the information that you have placed before this Committee, Mr. Phillips?

**Mr. Phillips:** What I can say is we have no record of payments.

**Mr. Chairman:** No, no, no, wait, wait. Before you speak, just to consolidate what Minister Baptiste has said, Mr. Phillips, do you have a copy of this report?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** I want you to turn to page 6 of this report and go to para two. The Auditor General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is saying that your company contracted De Edge Consulting at a cost of \$1.06 million. I think what Mrs. Jennifer Baptiste-Primus is asking, whether you are denying your company contracted this firm, because the Auditor General is stating in its report that you did. So are you denying, are you challenging what the Auditor General has said, because you have just said that you did not hire that company, it was the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs? That is what you just told this meeting. In the Auditor General’s Report on page 6, it states that your company was contracted. We would like an explanation because the Auditor General is here. Who is telling the truth?

**Mr. Phillips:** What I would like to say is based on the board’s request for information, we requested that if there were any payments made to De Edge Consulting one; two, the information that is given here lower down with one of the questions, it clearly states that coming from the Sports Company, that De Edge was not hired by the Sport Company. So, in regard to that, because this pre-dates me, we have to go based on the information that was presented to us. So I could only present what was presented to us as a board and put it forward to you.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Mr. Chairman, permit me. Mr. Phillips, when did your tenure as Chairman of the Sports Company commence?

**Mr. Phillips:** December last year.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** December 2015?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** When you became the Chairman, did anyone draw to your attention the report of the Auditor General?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Did you read it as Chairman?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes, hence one of the reasons why we would have asked the question with regard to that and that is the information that we would have gotten.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** But if you read it as Chairman, you would have informed yourself that it was the Sports Company which contracted the services of De Edge, because to me the report is as clear as the sultry suns of summer.

**Mr. Phillips:** Well, as I could say again, that was based on the information that we had, and further research with regard to that there was no payment made to them. So it is either we hired them and the services were done for free or the money did not come from us or it was hired

elsewhere. Just to bring you back to points 14 and 15 in terms of the recommendations, we are fully compliant as far as that is concerned.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Mr. Phillips, one second please, one second please. Mr. Chairman, permit me. This report by the Auditor General is not written in highly technical language that seeks to confuse the average reader. It is written in plain flowing manner. Anyone assuming the position of Chairman of the Sports Company reading this report must be troubled. Would you agree with that?

**Mr. Phillips:** Alarmed.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Good. So then one would expect that as Chairman, you would have engaged very robustly with a work plan. The recommendations of this report becomes the work plan of the board. That is what the Chairman, Mr. Small, Mr. Hinds and myself are trying to extract. What have you all done as a board to implement these recommendations?

**Mr. Phillips:** I would like to draw your attention to items 14 and 15 that we are totally compliant on and several of the other items, as I said, in my estimation, they dealt with the sporting bodies and that is why I said the Service Level Agreement, which is a contract that we signed with the sporting bodies that are under our umbrella with regard to that, it addresses a lot of the things that came out of those recommendations where they are the ones where we interact with them for a great majority of the data collection with regard to that, and the changes in terms of how we deal with those sporting bodies. So, if it is you would like greater details with items 14 and 15—because what happened we were going through the recommendations and we never got to that point on that page. So if you would like further clarification with 14 and 15, we have Mr. Jason Williams, our Financial Comptroller, who will be able to answer any questions with regard to that.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** I do not know what to believe, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** We want to acknowledge that the financials are up-to-date from the Sports Company. We want to acknowledge that. What I want to ask the PS—just give me yes or no. I do not want further. Could you tell this Committee whether De Edge Consulting was contracted by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Okay. Basically, having looked at this particular—

**Mr. Chairman:** Just yes or no.

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Yes. De Edge was contracted by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. I have the documents before me here. I would have done the research prior to this Committee to find out why it is we had this anomaly in the report. Basically—

**Mr. Chairman:** Auditor General, may I ask the Auditor General: could we have some clarification on this matter or would you want to submit it in writing, because we are confused?

**Mrs. Ramdass:** Chair, I think we will have to double-check, but I am 100 per cent sure what is in the report is the documentation that we have at the office, but I could always forward what we have to you, Chairman.

**Mr. Phillips:** We are quite willing to cooperate on our side as well if there is any and go into this to—because as I said, what I am stating here is information that I would have gotten.

**Mr. Chairman:** Before I ask Dr. Tim Gopeesingh to intervene, the documentation that you have quoted from, Acting Permanent Secretary, we would like it to be submitted to us.

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Certainly.

**Mr. Chairman:** That certified that the Ministry contracted.

**Mr. Ramdahin:** I would like to add some clarification to De Edge. Basically, I explained before

there are 16 national governing bodies and SPORTT and 36 across the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. De Edge was brought on board to help build institutional capacity in these national governing bodies for sport administration.

**Mr. Chairman:** All right. Listen. Submit that certified statement that you made a short while ago that the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs contracted this company. I turn over to the hon. Dr. Tim Gopeesingh.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Good morning, good morning everyone. I would just take you to the macro picture now for your answers. The Sports Company was established in 2004 which is S-P-O-R-T-T—this is now 12 years old—and part of its mandate and responsibility—are you clear what is the mandate and responsibility of the Sports Company now based on what is happening and the Auditor General’s report? Are you aware of what your mandate is as the Sports Company as S-P-O-R-T-T from a macro perspective?

**Mr. Phillips:** Well, yes, on a broader perspective we are an implementation arm. We are charged with the responsibility of facilitating sport, sport activities, sporting facilities, the maintenance of sport facilities and also providing services to the sporting bodies which is one of the main customers of the Sports Company.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Can I direct you to the issue of you are an implementation arm to achieve the objectives of the national sport policy of Trinidad and Tobago. Are you aware what the national sport policy of Trinidad and Tobago is?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes. We have looked at that document for guidance in terms of how we implement or execute.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Do you have that with you or does the board have that national sport policy with them? Have you created a strategic plan based on the national sport policy of Trinidad and Tobago? When was that last national sport policy given to you? That is one of your main responsibility, is to achieve the objectives of the national sport policy of Trinidad and Tobago. It is based on identifying two key areas: total participation in sport and high-performance sport. I will come back to the recommendations of the Auditor General subsequent to your answer.

**Mr. Phillips:** What I could tell you Sir, is that policy, as far as we understand, is being reviewed and updated at the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, and from that we will take any new directions that come from that.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Are you working under the direction of any—there have been a number of national sport polices, Governments come Governments change: which sport policy are you working on at the moment? Can you tell us? Establish when? Given to you when or that you became aware of? Yes, that is a question for you as well.

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Can I answer this? Basically, the sport policy is currently being reviewed. It is in the consultation phase right now. There are a series of consultations being held. The previous policy, there were some areas of shortcomings and we have added some new areas to improve the sport policy.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** When was the last national sport policy given from the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** It is 2002.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** 2000 and what?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** 2002.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right. So you were working on a national sport policy?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** We have an advanced sport policy that will be coming out pretty soon.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So you are working on a 2002 national sport policy still?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** That is the default, but barring that—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So, in your strategic plan and your objectives and your policies, you are working in 2016 based on a sport policy of 2002?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** There are some elements of it.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Do you think as Permanent Secretary your responsibility is to assist the Government and assist the Minister to help to devise a sport policy? You were the Deputy Permanent Secretary for two years, before becoming Acting Permanent Secretary and, basically, the Permanent Secretary is the accounting officer, but you account for things based on a policy of the Ministry.

**Mr. Ramdahin:** I was highlighting that the 2002 policy has deficiencies/ shortcomings.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes, but I am asking you—

**Mr. Ramdahin:** There are new measures implemented like the financial accountability of the entry base, which was not previously done in the previous policy. So these are interim policy measures in place right now pending—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes, my colleagues have found that you skirt around the answers to the questions, I am asking you a direct question. You as Permanent Secretary now in 2016 and Acting Permanent Secretary or Deputy Permanent Secretary for two years, three years prior to that: are you allowing the Sports Company to operate in vacuo with a sport policy as antiquated as 2002? Is it not your responsibility to assist in developing a sport policy that is more relevant and more up-to-date? Sports have changed considerably in 14 years. So, I am just putting that to you. I think it should be your responsibility and the responsibility of your colleagues to assist the Sports Company, because they cannot do anything unless you design a proper policy, a national policy for sport. So I wanted to make that point and then come to the issue—that had total participation in sport and high-performance sport.

If we go to recommendations 5 to about 10, in this Auditor General's Report. It indicates "under 5" that:

"SPORTT should develop a clear strategy for funding in various National Sporting Organizations, elite performance and youth camps."

Could you—if you do not have the answer now—give us the information with regard to how much funding has been available to the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, and then how much was given to the Sports Company over the last five years and how much of it was spent and for what was spent, the Sports Company? I am looking for that and I am not finding that information available. How much was given over the last five years to the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs? How much was given to the Sports Company? How much was spent and in what areas were they spent?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** That information will be submitted in writing.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So, let us come to the national sporting organizations and this goes to the Chairman. Chairman, how many national sporting organizations are there in Trinidad and Tobago? How many of these national sporting organizations do you support? What support do you give to these?

**Mr. Phillips:** We have 15 under our umbrella at this point in time. The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs facilitates the rest of those sporting bodies that may be an increasing or a decreasing number depending on application.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** PS, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, how many national sporting

organizations are there in Trinidad and Tobago?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** There are 16. Sixteen were previously at SPORTT. One has been removed and assigned to the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs which carries our count from 36 to 37.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I know that there are about 39 different sports that are played in Trinidad and Tobago and, therefore, if you only support about 16, what happens? Mr. Phillips, Chairman, you know, you have been involved in sports yourself as a cyclist. You would know how many sports are played in Trinidad and Tobago throughout the country.

**Mr. Phillips:** Sir, the question that you are asking there—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I am asking a general question. How many sports are being played in Trinidad and Tobago at the moment?

**Mr. Phillips:** That are registered with the Ministry?

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No. How many sports that you are aware of? I can tell you when I was Minister of Education, 17 sports were played in the schools, but you as a person responsible for sports in Trinidad and Tobago you cannot tell us how many sports are being played? Well cricket, football, basketball, table tennis, badminton.

**Mr. Phillips:** I am trying to—there are 15 sports under our umbrella. Other than that, there are the sports that are registered with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, and in addition to that there are unregistered sports. That could be from BMX freestyle to different types of sports.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** To your knowledge, how many unregistered are there then?

**Mr. Phillips:** I cannot give you a confirmed answer, because they are not registered as bodies.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Is it not part of your responsibility as the Sports Company to understand and appreciate what is going out there when you have participation by all or you are only looking for just the sporting organizations that are registered with the Ministry? Part of the national sport policy is participation by all.

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes, correct. If I can give you an update on that.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** If they are registered or not registered, your responsibility is to find those that are not registered and give them some support to build their sporting ability. Are you only going to focus on the 16 that are there registered with you?

**Mr. Phillips:** All right. So one of the sports that has been taken back over to the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs is draughts and checkers.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right. I am not going into the details.

**Mr. Phillips:** So, with regard to the system that is put in place with regard to how we deal with sporting bodies, we deal mostly with high performance. The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs deals mostly with sport-for-all. However, there was a sport-for-all component in our line items that were budgeted under “community sports” that people apply to the Sports Company. There has always been, I should say before that vote has—how should I say it—taken out of our budget item and put to the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts. However, the process has always been submissions to the companies, because at this point in time what we do is, we would have reviewed request for funding, whether it be for sport days and so on, but right now at this point in time—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I am just trying to get the macro picture, Chairman. How many sporting organizations do you support and what is your support?

**Mr. Phillips:** Right now, currently, we support 15 sporting bodies. Our remit is high performance at this point in time.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So the 15 is what you consider high-performance bodies?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes. Apart from, as I said earlier, those are the bodies that vie for Olympic participation or in one instance cricket which also has a world championship or high stakes component.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** May I direct you to the Auditor General's report which states on page 14:

“SPORTT's main responsibility is to achieve the objectives of the National Sport Policy of Trinidad and Tobago. This Policy is based on the principle of equality of opportunity for all citizens. The Policy identifies two key areas:

- Total Participation in Sport”—which involves those organizations which you do not accredit and give support to which you should be giving some attention to—  
“and
- High Performance Sport”

So, you are only conducting your business in one area of the two areas which you are responsible for.

**Mr. Phillips:** Not necessarily, because through those sporting bodies, what we have is a clear pathway in terms of understanding that part of their remit is to go out and do talent identification, also to the Sports Company summer camps—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Recommendation No. 7 speaks about:

“...deliver the key objective of total participation in sport, should compile a database of the people participating in all types of sporting disciplines and events, which includes information on their age, gender, ethnicity and disabilities. The overall information should be reported annually.”

Have you attempted to do any of that in the past?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes, we get that information through the sporting bodies.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** And you have some of that for the 15? So if we ask you to—

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes, so through the Sport Development Unit, they will be able to give those numbers in terms of their reporting.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Do you have available that answer?

**Mr. Phillips:** I would have to submit that in writing. I cannot tell you that off the top of my head.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Have you sought the bodies, the sporting organizations to give you that answer?

**Mr. Phillips:** That is part of the Service Level Agreement.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Have you received them? Have you asked for them and have you received them? Because you cannot go on as sport not knowing your empirical data to make the determinations of implementation policies.

**Mr. Phillips:** That is part of their requirement to receive funding.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So, you have it or you do not have it?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes, that would be able to be submitted in writing.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right. Okay. The last one:

“...strategies and partnership arrangements to encourage sporting participation and usage through the setting of action plans with targets for individual facilities.”

That is recommendation No. 9 from the Auditor General, which I would like to humbly suggest to you that in addition to your 18 or 19 organizations that you look after, you begin to search for the other 20 activities in sports that you seem to be not paying attention to and to help to

develop those sporting areas, because item No. 8 speaks about that—8 and 9 speak about those two—and pay particular attention to those recommendations. Thank you, Chair.

**Mr. Chairman:** I recognize, Mr. Foster Cummings.

**Mr. Cummings:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning to everyone. I want to draw our attention to page 21 of the report of the Auditor General, and it deals with the same matter of this company in 2011, De Edge Consulting Limited, which we are, based on our deliberations here this morning, still not properly able to determine whether this company was contracted by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs or by SPORTT. However, it says here that the company was contracted to conduct an exercise in relation to staffing arrangements.

**11.30 a.m.**

**Mr. Cummings:** If you go to page 22 under “Litigation following the redesign exercise”, you would see that in 2011 the chairman of the Sports Company called a meeting of all staff at the Hasely Crawford Stadium, and at 2.12 the chairman proceeded to write all staff and as a result 32 members of staff were dismissed with one month’s salary.

Further down, as a result of this action, several members of staff took legal action for compensation. Nine cases have been finalized with total settlements in excess of \$2.5 million. In five of the nine cases SPORTT had no record of contractual agreements for the respective staff. However, the respective terminated staff had their contracts in their possession. I am flagging that for a response. Mr. Chairman, this is very alarming to me as I continue to read.

In one of the concluded cases, a former employee who worked for less than one day was awarded \$90,000 for unfair dismissal. I would like to get, through the Chair, from the legal representative of SPORTT the circumstances that led to this situation developing and, in particular, where the court would have awarded \$90,000 to a former employee who worked for less than one day.

Before I move to my other question, can I get a response to those two questions?

**Mr. Phillips:** Let us be clear surrounding the facts which led to the dismissals, again that predates me, member. Sen. Hinds also asked whether. It was predicated upon the advice of the AG. I would have to do some investigations into that. What I do know that they were served retrenchment letters within a 48-hour period after receipt of it. Naturally they took recourse in the Industrial Court. The court was very clear in outlining the fact that the dismissals were harsh and oppressive and not in keeping with proper industrial relations. That individual who received the \$90,000 was part and parcel of the 33 workers. I think it was the way in which the dismissal was done was the reason for that award.

**Mr. Cummings:** Can I through the Chair and ask SPORTT to provide this Committee with additional information in relation to this mass dismissal that took place in 2011, why no defence was put forward by the Sports Company in these matters and the justification in terms of what would have been in the judgment for this type of award?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes.

**Mr. Cummings:** Let me then draw our attention to page 12 of the same report and recommendation 11:

“...SPORTT did not recognise or manage well the project risks, in that projects were not delivered on time and projected costs to completion increased. For example:

- a. Assumptions should be supported by feasibility studies that are realistic as possible from the outset.
- b. Project risks should be assessed appropriately to allow for change in design or

location requirements.

- c. There needs to be greater realism regarding the timescales set for delivering projects based on Cabinet decisions.”

Can I ask specifically in relation to this recommendation, what has been done to address the concerns raised here?

**Mr. Phillips:** I would like to first indicate that there have been no new projects at Sports Company since we have come on board. That being said, we had a lot to review and to learn with regard to using this audit report as a benchmark. Someone who can help us in terms of some of the challenges that would have been faced and some of the things that were put to us in terms of recommendations and how to fix that, would be our project consultant, Dexter Browne.

**Mr. Browne:** What I would like to say is that some of the findings listed here are assuming that the time frames and stuff that were adopted for the projects were somehow misguided. The reason for the time overruns and the cost overruns was because as an organization we were unable to make payments and so it threw us into a situation of default with respect to the FIDIC contract framework that guided both parties. When we could not make payments, it resulted in interest rate penalties, sometimes the contractors terminated at their own convenience and the cost overruns were associated with that and not with bad judgment in terms of construction durations and so forth.

**Mr. Small:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not want to comment, other than to say that I fully support the views espoused by my members on this Committee, in particular Minister Hinds and Minister Baptiste-Primus because my brain is still revolving. My intelligence is being challenged by some of the responses I am getting here, so that I have a couple of very easy questions to ask now to which I am going to ask direct questions, and I will like to get direct answers. I would like to refer you to the Auditor General’s report to Recommendation seven. I want to take from Member Gopeesingh, and this is the context of the database, and we are talking about the organization looking at sport for all. My question is this: what is the status of your facilities to accommodate differently abled persons, both as participants and as spectators?

**Mr. Phillips:** There are a couple things with regard to that that we can answer in terms of again coming back to interacting with the sporting bodies, the Paralympics Committee which we support through the Olympic Committee and then in terms of what accommodations are made at sporting facilities. So first let us start with sporting facilities, and I can put you on to Mr. Anthony Blake who could answer those questions.

**Mr. Blake:** Good morning again, Committee. For the national level, facilities which would be the new facilities recently constructed, we would have done a lot of review with the Paralympic Committee and with the disabled organizations in Trinidad and Tobago. If you visit any one of these facilities you would realize we are fully functional in terms of disabled access to any one of the new facilities—

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** I am sorry to interrupt, “differently abled”.

**Mr. Blake:** Apologies—differently abled. So we are fully functional with respect to differently abled persons before we opened the facilities during our testing and commissioning period which was earlier in the first quarter this year. We also invited a lot of these differently abled organizations to visit the facilities and to see the level of access that we have provided. There is some challenge in terms of the older facilities such as Hasely Crawford Stadium which was constructed in the 1970s. A lot of retrofitting is needed in terms of access to the facility coming

up to the standard of the existing ones. We have plans in place, however funding continues to be a challenge in terms of implementing those plans, but what I can say is that all new facilities that have been constructed have been constructed with that requirement in mind.

**Mr. Small:** Mr. Chairman, through you, I would like to request from the company that they give a listing of all the facilities under their control, and to identify those that are fully compliant, partly compliant or non-compliant with being able to accommodate differently abled persons, both as participants in the sporting activities and as spectators.

I have one other question; another easy question, and the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Sport would be familiar with this, because I know the young professional from another place. I want to find out from the Sports Company, do you have, one, an emergency evacuation plan for all of your major facilities that you can share with this Committee, and two, are your facilities compliant with the existing OSH regulations? I would like to be able to get a response to that.

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes we do, and the person to deal with that is the officer in charge of facilities, Mr. Blake.

**Mr. Blake:** The answer to that question is yes. We have done risk assessments on all the facilities under the remit of the Sports Company. We have also done emergency evacuation plans on all the facilities under Sports Company. We have our health and safety consultant that is currently engaging OSHA in terms of compliance with the facilities. Honestly to the Committee, we are not 100 per cent compliant in all our facilities, because of the age of a lot of the facilities. With reference to the new facilities we have engaged, OSHA, Fire and all of the regulatory agencies in terms of coming up to compliance, and we can provide the information in writing.

**Mr. Small:** Mr. Chairman, I will again like to request that similarly to the issue with the differently abled persons, could the Sports Company provide to this Committee a schedule of all of the facilities under their management and the status of OSH compliance and the status of emergency evacuation plans for those entities. Mr. Chairman, two easy questions. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Hinds:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am deeply concerned. I heard a response from Mr. Dexter Browne a moment ago which was tantamount to taking difference with the view clearly expressed by the auditor in the report, and it is not the only occasion, because in this document where we have responses from the SPORTT they take difference insofar as the number of projects. At question No. 5 it was asked of them:

“Of the 182 projects undertaken how many were completed to date?”

And in their response they said that that is an inaccurate number. Now, the Auditor General does its work in a way that we respect, since 1962, and I am not going to easily digest a challenge to what it has expressed very clearly.

One of the recommendations of the Auditor General is that the Sports Company should ensure that proper financing arrangement should be settled before embarking on a contract or project, and if you had money matters along the way it means clearly that that was not done. Whoever is responsible, that is another question. But we did not have, clearly identified, a stream and a source of funding to deal with those matters. Therefore, the response that has been put does not bring me any comfort, in the face of the Auditor General’s report. But I have another matter that I want to address.

**Mr. Browne:** Can I reply?

**Mr. Hinds:** When you get a moment, but I want to address another matter here, if you would

be gentle enough with me as indeed I am with you.

At page 6 of the Auditor General's report in paragraph 4 under the rubric "Performance indicators are not well defined or measurable", a point that Mr. Small and my sister across the floor Madam Baptiste-Primus, made over and over ad nauseam. The auditor says and I quote very quickly:

"The performance indicators included in SPORTT's 2012-2016 draft Strategic Plan are neither well-defined nor measurable."

That is a serious comment about a professional intervention. All of you as professionals, being paid, no doubt, hefty salaries where you are, the auditor is finding from their tremendous collective experience since 1962 that the strategic plans offered by you are neither well-defined nor measurable.

"Consequently, SPORTT is unable to measure appropriately its success in the delivery of its objective."

This is repeated in this report:

"Also, SPORTT's Strategic Plan did not include information relating to baseline data, two-yearly targets and time-frames for completion of annual activities over a five-year period."

This suggests to me—and then when you look at paragraph 5, the "Rationale for constructing sporting facilities", I describe this to my colleagues as wildness—Trinidadian wildness. The rationale is not clear. Where is it coming from? Is it driven by public need? In fact, Mr. Chairman, just before I go, at page 14 of this report, at the very bottom of the Auditor General's report, it says that we need to:

"...assess whether SPORTT Company is developing and upgrading sporting facilities economically, efficiently and effectively throughout Trinidad and Tobago."

I want to know, in the absence of a clearly defined and measurable strategic plan, this development—all of these projects and so on—where is it coming from? On what policy is it based? Is it driven by public need? Does it take into account current economic circumstances?

I am saying it appears to me that the Sports Company is running at large on whim, spending plenty money and as I close, for the benefit of members of the public if they do not understand what we are talking about, let me just read a quick statistic here. Insofar as the annual allocation in the Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure to the Sports Company is concerned, in 2014 we were talking about a \$132 million. In 2015, \$153-plus million. The estimate in 2016 has gone down in light of our current economic circumstances—where this country simply cannot afford any waste and wildness—it has gone down to \$104 million, and the estimate for 2017 is the same amount.

No doubt what you all have to do is very important. Sport is a critical element of the society's well-being. However, in light of that kind of allocation, and salaries and wages for the period 2014 and 2015—your salaries—amounted to \$20.8 million in 2014, and in 2015, \$16.7 million. I am simply saying we are not comforted. It appears to me that this Sports Company is running at whim, running at large, not driven by any clear philosophy, not concerned about public expenditure, because it is not coming out of your pocket. "You getting paid good, bad or in different." We have just been going along like that. To learn this morning—and this might be my final comment—that the recommendations of the very astute Auditor General has not yet even been approached in a meaningful way, is frightening to say the least. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Would anyone want to respond?

**Mr. Phillips:** I would like to respond, Sir. A lot of the just made comments we agree with, coming in as a board—we agree with. We could not answer as to the rationale why a lot of things were done. We tried to look at it from the perspective of what outcome we can have from this at this point in time. This is the predicament that we are in, and we are dealing with a situation where these very proceedings can impact in terms of the perception of sport and whether or not we are wasting money in sport, and I want to make that very clear.

A lot of those questions that you have had are questions that I had in my own personal, private view before coming into this. We got into a situation, as one director would have said, we are trying to fix a plane while it is in the air, and we looked at all of those things in terms of the expenditure and how it was calibrated, and we find great discomfort in it. However, we have facilities that are on the books. We have two choices: it is either we blow them up with dynamite or we maintain them and utilize them. Those are the two choices. Are we going to put in place the utilization plan which we have developing with the sporting bodies, to get use out of them? Yes, because the first option is not on the table, so the second option is let us get utilization out of it.

What we would like to go in here today that is useful to us is to express the challenges that we face in trying to fix this situation or make best of the situation. One, we have no sporting industry; let us get that clear. We have a sporting sector. The reason why we do not have a sporting industry is because we do not have the consumers to support that industry. So therefore we have ended up in a situation—and let me make this clear—the Sports Company acts on directives coming from Cabinet. All the rationalization and why it is we do this and why we do that, does not come to us. There is an instruction—build.

There can be a certain amount of push-back being in light of what the circumstances are, and then that directive—the employees then face the choice of move on or execute the directive. There is no whim and fancy there; that is the process in which things come.

That being said, if we were to look at what the cost of the facilities are, in one particular case—and I am drawing serious reference, because this is me being not just as Chairman of the Sports Company, but a sporting enthusiast—one facility was constructed at a cost of over 220 years of the allocation of what we give that sport for the year. So 220 years of their allocation equals one venue. When we put that into perspective, and we are now coming in this and doing okay, we have heard that these facilities are going to make money; these facilities are going to bring sport tourism; these facilities are going to—and those were not utterances by SPORTT or Sports Company. Now I am saying this as somebody who has just come into to this situation.

With regard to the line items, we clearly identified 14 and 15, and several of the line items being addressed through the service level agreement with the sporting bodies, who are the conduits of which we interact with the sporting bodies. We have no autonomy other than telling them this is how we are going to spend money, this is how we want you to direct it to achieve the objectives of what we want to see, how we want these facilities utilized.

I want to draw your attention to something. We probably have more seating capacity per capita than anywhere else in the world. Do we need more facilities? No, what we need are utilization plans. The challenges that we face are the allocations that we get, and even now in recognizing all of these things, we are debilitated based on how those allocations come; and I will give you an example. We need to deal with this at a social sciences perspective, and I beg that you indulge me so people understand the environment of sport.

We have sporting products, so part of this is merchandizing. We have sporting products and sporting drinks that spend more money in Carnival than they do in sport. Why is that? Because the Government prefers to spend more money on Carnival, upward of \$200 million, \$300 million at times, and we as an allocation in terms of sporting activities may have \$10 million, may have \$15 million for the entire year. What happens is that we have the responsibility of maintaining the facilities and constructing the facilities. There was a directive given that no religious organization or no sporting organization pay to use any of the facilities for their events. So therefore the issue of revenue generation becomes debilitated. That being said, we are depending on private promoters. That is the only think that I can see myself being, a promoter, as to why some sort of utilization option came to be on the table.

With regard to that, the feasibility of it is a flawed and failed one across the board. If you were to look at it from dollars and cents, which is being proposed over and over again, and I hear all different sorts of speeches and so on, this is what is going to happen; it is a catastrophic failure. This is my personal opinion. And now it is one that we are brought to account for.

In addition to that, I would like to shift. Given the fact that we now have these assets—over \$3 billion in assets—that function now like liabilities. Why? Because we are not given the funding, and I am talking about historically, I am not pointing at anyone in particular, to activate or to put activities in place.

So we have the sporting bodies for which the allocations are given, and they have no coaches, and we cannot help. And then we are telling them to go out and find funding, but guess what? Carnival competes directly with sport for space and for funding. Sport does not have the sin factor to compete with Carnival that is exactly what it is, and I gave you it from a basic level so that you have an understanding.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Thank you kindly, Mr. Chairman. I would want to ask both the Chairman of SPORTT and the Acting Permanent Secretary, the following questions. My questions emerge from the main findings of the Auditor General’s report under “Litigation following restructuring”.

I would like to ask the rationale which resulted in the organizational review and redesign exercise initiated by the Ministry of Sport on October29, 2010—the rationale. I would also like to find out who are the personnel comprising De Edge Consulting—who are they? I would also like to find out the terms of reference that were given to De Edge Consulting and what were the deliverables.

Mr. Chairman, on page 23 of the Auditor General’s report at 2.14 states:

“Legal representation of SPORTT has cost over \$137,000 for one—one of the nine settled cases. Legal costs for the remaining eight cases and the six outstanding cases have yet to be clearly quantified.”

This report dates back to 2014; today is November02, 2016, I would like to ask either the Chairman or the Permanent Secretary (PS) Acting, have you all sat and quantified the cost for the remaining eight cases and the six outstanding cases?

I would also like to ask, given the fact that there was mass dismissal from the organization, what is the human resource competency in the organization right now?

**Mr. Phillips:** I will address your last question first. When we came into the organization there was no human resource manager. We filled that position.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** May I enquire what is the nomenclature of the position? Is it director, manager, what?

**Mr. Phillips:** Manager, yes.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** So you are saying the organization now has one human resource manager?

**Mr. Phillips:** And of department.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** In a department? Is the department manned, staffed?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes. There is an assistant.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** So you are talking about a human resource capacity of two persons and you have a staff of? The current staff is how many?

**Mr. Phillips:** It is under 100; it is now 99.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** The current staff, Mr. Chairman, is how many employees?

**Mr. Phillips:** Ninety-nine, that is where we are at, at this point in time.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** So you have two human resource, one manager, one assistant with a staff of 99 persons.

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to find out also, the remaining cases before the Industrial Court, given that no evidence was laid for the previous cases, is it the same with the other cases before the court?

**12.00 noon**

**Mr. Phillips:** According to legal, yes.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** So it means therefore, that in 2010 someone or persons went on a frolic of their own costing the citizenry of this country in excess, to date, of \$3million. Hence my question: have you all quantified what it would cost with the remaining cases before the court? I want an answer.

**Mr. Phillips:** Okay. What we can provide for you in writing is what has been paid so far. I would not want to get into speculating on what—

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Mr. Chairman, through you.

**Mr. Phillips:**—with regard to the legal—

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** One second Mr. Phillips, one second. Mr. Chairman, the documents we have before us are pellucidly clear. They give information as to how much moneys have been paid out. I do not wish Mr. Phillips nor the Permanent Secretary acting to provide information for which the Auditor General has already certified. My concern is how much more moneys that we, the citizenry, the taxpayers have to pay out for the reckless action that took place in 2010?

**Mr. Phillips:** What I have before me is what we paid to date. All right? And what I can tell you is \$8 million—can I put you onto legal who has been dealing with that specifically?

**Mr. Maharaj:** Member, good morning. There are two outstanding cases which, as I said before, are part and parcel of the entire set of employees who were dismissed. At this juncture we are pursuing negotiations with the unions because and, I am sure you would appreciate the matters that were tried and sought to be defended by the company, they were lost with judgments emanating therein. So therefore, for the both it is approximately, one is \$119,000 which I think will be settled at, and the other is approximately \$845,000. But in that matter without going too much into it, there is a legal issue that would be raised and it would be sent to Registration Recognition and Certification Board. But those are the only outstanding two matters.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Is it then that you are saying that in the case where the negotiations are taking place for \$845,000, that SPORTT has raised the question on worker in good standing?

**Mr. Maharaj:** Yes. Yes, member. If I may? We have reached the negotiations stage. The IRA

consultant was brought in.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Who is the IRA consultant?

**Mr. Maharaj:** Mr. Norman Romany; and that question was raised.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Mr. Chairman, through you. SPORTT has already acted recklessly. I would strongly advise that SPORTT does not pursue that direction because it would mean that acknowledging what you did was wrong, but you are now trying to prevent an employee from what is rightfully his or hers. You cannot commit a wrong and in trying to fix it you inflict deeper wounds. That is my strong advice to SPORTT in that regard. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yeah. All right. Dr. Gopeesingh and Mr. Hinds raised their questions. I just want to deal with an earlier matter that you raised. Do you have an estimate or a concluded figure on what it costs T&T athletes to participate in this year's Olympic? Do we have a figure?

**Mr. Phillips:** What we can give is the figures that we supplied the athletes. Of course, athletes would have sponsorship and so on that they would receive and derive funding from other areas. Other than that, to give you what their budgets would have been, that would have more than likely been to the sport development or the Elite Development and Performance Unit. So it would have been dependent on the various athletes. We can give you an estimate per athlete or in total. So our outside participation at the Olympics would have cost the Sports Company a \$1 million to the Trinidad and Tobago Olympics Committee as a figure. In addition to that there would have been several athletes that would have been supported as the elite athletes, both through the elite athlete funding at the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and Sports Company, so it depends based on the sport.

So, you want a total figure expended for what period, if you could be specific? We can give you that information.

**Mr. Chairman:** No. I am talking about for this year's participation. If you could have provided the Committee with an estimated amount in writing?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes. Yes, we can. Those are very specific figures.

**Mr. Chairman:** All right. I think Dr. Gopeesingh wants to raise a question.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Thank you. Earlier on I was alluding to the issue of how you conduct your business in the absence of any defined policy which you said went back to go 2002 which is antiquated. My understanding that your previous board appeared before a joint select committee of Parliament and had provided in 2012 a strategic plan 2012 to 2016. Are you aware of that? And the joint select committee indicated then that that plan was incomplete. Are you aware of that plan and is it now complete to carry you forward or that has been carrying you forward for the last year? PS? And if there is any new strategic plan to carry you forward from 2016 to 2020?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** There is a new strategic plan being developed that would take us forward.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** But you indicated that you were tweaking on the 2002.

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Sport policy.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Sport policy?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** And there is a plan, a strategic plan also in conjunction, being developed in conjunction with the policy.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** No. But there is an existing plan as indicated by the Auditor General, 2012 to 2016, a strategic plan. Are you aware of that or are you working in vacuo or are you utilizing that plan to carry you forward, or are you utilizing a new one from 2016 to 2020? Because that forms the core of your movement forward for the implementation of programmes and policies. And if you are work in vacuo without a strategic plan, where are you going? And the Auditor General

highlighted that, that there is a plan 2012 to 2016. Can you give us, PS, what is your take on it?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Yes. The plan, the strategic plan, you know, is projected over five years.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** But are you aware of that strategic plan to 2020?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Yes. We are aware of the plan.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Are you directing the Sports Company to work in accordance with that plan?

**Mr. Ramdahin:** Yes. The Sports Company—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Now, can I ask the Sports Company, are you aware of that plan?

**Mr. Phillips:** We—I personally was not aware of the specifics of the plan.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right. So there is a 2012/2016 as indicated by the Auditor General? It might not have been complete, as stated by the joint select committee in 2012 to the previous board. So I will ask you to avail yourself of that because it seems as though you are not acting on any national visioning policy, you are working with an antiquated 2002, and you are working in the absence of a strategic plan. So therefore, you are bound not to succeed and therefore, this is why there is a chaos in your operatives and your entire implementation of programmes and policies. Enough, suffice for that.

Now part of this audit was to look at the upgrading of the reference to the development of an upgrading of sporting facilities in Trinidad, I know Tobago does it separate. Could you give this country, through this, an understanding, at a national level, how many sporting facilities we have and in terms of development and upgrading of sporting facilities? How many do we have? What sporting facilities we have? And I would like to ask you to include in that the multipurpose indoor facilities, the corporation grounds, the stadia and the regional indoor complexes. I am asking you that question because in your answer, on page 14 of your answer, the response to the request for written submission to the PA(E)C February 2016, there is money allocated to you for that, \$74million. So do you have that answer now or?—but it is important for the national community to understand what SPORTT looks after at this moment.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Chairman, would you be able to answer?

**Mr. Phillips:** I would prefer, because it is a very specific question, to provide that in writing so you do not have any gaps, please.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Off the cuff, you are chairman and the PS is here, could you give us a little understanding how many stadia there are? How many regional complexes? How many centres? Well, we know the Cycling Velodrome, the Aquatic Centre and the Tennis Centre, are they complete at the moment?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes. The three nationals are complete. In fact, the Sport Company has moved its office to the velodrome.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right. What about the Brian Lara Stadium, is complete now?

**Mr. Phillips:** No. And that is under UDeCOTT.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Could you give us an idea of the total cost of the Brian Lara Stadium from inception?

**Mr. Phillips:** We—that is under UDeCOTT so we cannot give that information.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Okay. Fine. The multipurpose indoor facilities, what is the state of the construction now? There are three.

**Mr. Phillips:** Okay. So, I can put you on to Mr. Blake who will give you a greater detail on that.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Just a quick answer, percentage, completion.

**Mr. Blake:** Yes. Good day again, Chair. In terms of the indoor facilities, the only one that is totally complete would be Sangre Grande indoor that is 100 per cent complete in terms of the

project listing that they have there.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Right. What about the others? What are the others? Where they are? How much completion?

**Mr. Blake:** In terms of the other facilities, we have Irwin Park in Siparia which is 100 per cent complete also. Apologies.

**Mr. Browne:** Yeah. Just to continue on what Mr. Blake is saying. We commenced a total of four regional facilities. Phase one was completed for two of them that is India and Carapo grounds and the other two, Brian Lara is about 85 per cent complete with a scheduled completion in December of this year, and Irwin Park which is in Siparia is a 100 per cent complete.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** What about the three indoor—

**Mr. Blake:** Brian Lara regional—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:**—multipurpose facilities? You said there are four, what about the other two? You said—

**Mr. Blake:** There were four regionals, the two, Carapo and India. Phase one is 100 per cent completed. The other two, Brian Lara and Irwin Park. Irwin Park is at 100 per cent, Brian Lara is at 85 per cent.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** All right. Thank you. Multipurpose facilities, which ones there are now? Multipurpose indoor facilities, there are three.

**Mr. Blake:** The scope was changed and there is only one now, Sangre Grande indoor facility. The loan for the facilities was repurposed and the money was diverted to the construction of the national facilities.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** But in your answer here on page 14, you have for fiscal year 2016 sport was given an allocation of \$74million for all projects as displayed in the spreadsheet below. And under item 135, you have three multipurpose indoor facilities and \$5million was allocated. Has that been changed?

**Mr. Blake:** Yes. It has been changed and I think in the answer there you see changed to 148.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** I am not seeing 148, but I saw in—

**Mr. Blake:** Through the multipurpose indoors, and you would see under 135 we have changed to 148.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes.

**Mr. Blake:** All right. So what I was explaining is that—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Where is 148? It is not here. You did not show us what 148 was about.

**Mr. Blake:** Right. So the 148 would have been under the nationals projects. We got money for one and that would have been the Sangre Grande indoor. That is what we would have done. We would have utilized money under that vote to do the national level facilities because of the change of site for the Aquatic Centre and the Cycling Velodrome and so on, we had an increase in scope in terms of the type of foundation, the amenities

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Okay. All right.

**Mr. Blake:**—that go with it and so on.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** What about the other two? Which were the other two that is supposed to be done and you have only changed to one now? The multipurpose indoor facilities.

**Mr. Blake:** Bourg Mulatresse and Ojoe Road in Sangre Grande.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Those are the other two?

**Mr. Blake:** Those were the other two identified by Cabinet at the time.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** The regional indoor complexes.

**Mr. Blake:** Those are the facilities Mr. Browne would have just gone over in terms of India, Carapo and so on, the four facilities, Irwin Park and Brian Lara.

**Mr. Chairman:** Could you put those things in writing? We will ask for those things in writing.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Just a last question.

**Mr. Chairman:** Finally, and then we go to Mr. Small.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You said you do not generate any income, but the opportunity is available for you to generate income by the use of these three complexes that have been completed, the tennis, the Aquatic Centre and the Cycling Velodrome. Are you in any discussion with the Ministry of Tourism so that jointly you can produce a plan for quick implementation to make sports tourism an important aspect of your gaining funding? Is there any discussion whatsoever with the Ministry of Tourism to bring sports tourism in these three centres?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** Just give us a brief response and then you could write.

**Mr. Phillips:** Okay. Firstly, yes, we do generate revenue. We do not retain revenue. So that means then that any money that is gotten from people or promoters and so on, it goes into the Consolidated Fund. And, yes, with regard to sports tourism, we have been in collaboration with the Tourism Development Company and one of the things we are suggesting in going forward is that there are several promoters and people who are already doing the job and we do not want to duplicate the efforts. So what we are trying to do is to look at who the winners are in terms of already having activities that attract destination arrivals.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** One final question on that. When do you expect these facilities to be put to use so that they could generate some income from sport tourism? It is 2017? 2018? When?

**Mr. Phillips:** We already have—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** It would be nice to think about it.

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes. We already have teams that are booked to come here particularly for the Aquatic Centre. We have already had opening events, Pan American championships at the national velodrome. There were a number of arrivals for that event as well. So, yes, that has already begun.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** So when are you going to generate funds?

**Mr. Phillips:** When are we going to generate the funds directly to the—

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Sports tourism.

**Mr. Phillips:** That has already happened. So every arrival, every person that arrives here would have paid some sort of a registration fee.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You have a plan for 2016 /2017 and 2017/2018? Is there something concrete that the people of Trinidad and Tobago could say that these centres now are generating funds?

**Mr. Phillips:** Right. So we are at the stage now where the final rate structures have gone forward for approval, and just to bring you back a bit. What we had to do was a lot of consultation and a lot of research in terms of making the right decisions. We find off-the-cuff decisions in terms of going forward we end up in trouble in the long term.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** Yes. But you still have not answered the question. If you cannot answer it now, could you submit that in writing to us?

**Mr. Phillips:** Yes. Yes. We can.

**Dr. Gopeesingh:** You still have not answered the question, Mr. Phillips. You are beating around the bush.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Phillips, we will put it in writing and you will respond. Mr. Small.

**Mr. Small:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question, well I think I will, given the essence of time, I just want to make a comment and I will ask through the Chairman. I am not enamoured of state companies or any, in particular state entities, forgive me, persecuting employees who have been wrongly dismissed. I do not want to put it any plainer than that.

I think that as an entity, as a chairman and you come in and you recognize and assess the facts, and rather than pay attorneys and pay IR consultants to try to fight matters that, very likely, you are going to lose, I think that as an entity you should call in the respective employees and try to settle the matters and avoid paying, because for me, it damages the reputation of the company, and as a state entity you represent, are being funded by taxpayers. So, I have a challenge with that. And my suggestion for now and for going forward, that when these matters come up, I would like for the board to consider, say let us see how we can settle these matters rather than trying to go through the Industrial Court.

My one request through the Chairman, is that I would like to understand, I would like a schedule from the company of all the legal costs, for all of the matters, all the costs for the various IR consultants and how much has been spent and then how much the company eventually had to pay out? Because my concern is that there is going to be a large legal bill, there is going to be a large IR consultant bill that could have been avoided.

**Mr. Chairman:** We will put that in writing and you will supply that. Mr. Hinds.

**Mr. Hinds:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I just want to say, that the Auditor General as well spoke on the question of fixed assets. It said that the company did not present to the auditors a formal fixed asset policy, and it said more. The Sports Company—it indicated that the Sports Company has drafted a—has a draft fixed asset policy that was never approved by two previous boards. Currently, this policy is being tabled and so on.

So, I would like to suggest, Mr. Chairman, that for starters that the company—because you did tell us earlier that you have a number of assets which you do not want to dynamite. We have them. We need at the very least to have a fixed asset policy and an updated register. That is the least we can do in those circumstances. I want to say that we understand that you have come and you have inherited a dynamite with a short fuse and many have exploded before you did, and we appreciate that your role is to improve things, but we hold you to doing just that.

Finally, the Auditor General at page 41, paragraph 417 had a look at a sample of 18 per cent. It visited 19 of the corporation grounds, representing 18 per cent of that, corporation grounds. And the situation with respect to these 19 corporation grounds was as follows: 10 have been completed; work was in progress on three; work was yet to commence on four; one had been abandoned and one the subject of a legal matter. I have a suspicion because the Auditor General pointed out that you would have gone ahead to work without the land acquisition issues being properly and in advance sorted out. That happened with the Point Fortin Highway and my experience tells me it causes all kinds of problems.

Going forward, you get land issues sorted out first before you begin any work, to avoid this. And finally, I have not, like the auditor, had the benefit of visiting these sites, but I see some images on page 42 of the auditor's report of a couple of them, the Beaucarro Recreation Ground that cost \$5million. Yeah? It looks to me like a little shed. I do not know what else was done, but value for money is a very critical issue. There is another one here the Grande Riviere Recreation Ground. We are talking about the 5<sup>th</sup> of November, 2013 now, because this is all historic. Right? But in February 2007, SPORTT awarded a contract for just over \$2.4million to undertake works

at that ground. The completion date was supposed to have been April 2008. Payments in excess of \$2 million, 93 per cent of the contract value was made, but the SPORTT did not ensure completion of the works.

In March of 2012, five years later, SPORTT awarded a contract for almost a quarter of a million dollars to ExeQtech—yeah?—Limited for consultancy services in relation to it. SPORTT paid \$125,000, but the project was still not completed. And in March 2013, SPORTT contracted another company at the cost of \$307,000 for design works. The works are unfinished and worse, Mr. Chairman, deteriorating.

Now, in conclusion it appears to me that a successful business venture or enterprise requires intellect and it requires business acumen. From all that I have seen in the Auditor General's Report it appears to me that in this company both those two elements are woefully short. And not only the Sports Company, there is a lot in Trinidad and Tobago that is done on the basis of emotions and wildness, as I described it earlier, and in the absence of good business acumen and intellect. Let that not be the way forward. We cannot afford it anymore. I close.

**Mr. Chairman:** Foster Cummings will be the last person.

**Mr. Cummings:** Thank you, Chairman. Chairman, on January 7, 2011, something occurred in this country in relation to the Sports Company that should not happen again. As I read this I am alarmed and the country should be alarmed that something like this can happen where this sort of mass firing could take place and cause taxpayers to be spending money to correct this ill after so many years. It is unacceptable and I would hope that the current management, the board of the SPORTT would be taking the necessary action at this point in time to fix its HR situation to the extent that such a thing should not ever occur again. And it is unfortunate that the taxpayers now have to pay for this very heinous act that took place in 2011. I am alarmed at this that something like this could happen in Trinidad and Tobago. That is my contribution.

**Mr. Chairman:** Well, Mr. Chairman of the SPORTT, Acting Permanent Secretary, there are a number of areas that we could not pursue this evening or today. First of all, we will be writing to you seeking details on a number of areas. For example, we did not have time today to deal with the issue of staff shortage in the accounts department and we will be writing to you on that one. We would like to have a detailed submission on the implementation of the 15 recommendations in the special report issued by the Auditor General. We will be writing. Do you have an internal audit policy, may I ask?

**Official:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** You have. Could you submit that in writing for us? Okay? [*Crosstalk*] No. No. Acting Permanent Secretary, could you submit that for us in writing?—the internal audit policy.

**Mr. Phillips:** We will attach that as part of the response, eh? I think it is in the response. The framework—yeah—is submitted already.

**Mr. Chairman:** The Aquatic Centre as an example, when is it going to be opened to the public?

**Mr. Phillips:** To the public with regard to—

**Mr. Chairman:** Access.

**Mr. Phillips:** Okay. So, we already had opening events at the facility where the public was invited and also it is opened for national team training at this point in time. So that is being scheduled between water polo and—we have no divers at this point in time. However, we did do a diving demonstration at one of the openings where we brought the Jamaican diver who participated at the Olympics.

**Mr. Chairman:** There is an area that deals with kids, when is that going to be opened.

**Mr. Phillips:** That is the fun, the leisure centre.

**Mr. Chairman:** When is that going to be opened?

**Mr. Phillips:** We have some works to do there in terms of fencing the area because we could not secure the area properly in terms of having other activities. So the challenge that we face now is that we always have to have security posted there whenever there are any activities going on. So that is presently on the way in terms of getting that done. So we are hoping to have that opened by January in terms of being able to have ticketed arrivals or participation.

**Mr. Chairman:** All right. Mr. Phillips, given the discussion today and as Chairman, given what is going on or what has gone on at that organization, what would you do differently in going forward and would you want to share with us what you as chairman would do differently going forward?

**12.30 p.m.**

**Mr. Phillips:** Okay, I think the first thing is that we started to gather pertinent information in making any moves forward, whether it be through utilization, or even in terms of looking at our expenditure as far as how we deal with the sporting bodies. It is a critical part of our operation, because—I mean, today we spoke a lot about the concrete and steel, and the accounting, and so on, but we spend little time speaking about the athletes and the programmes and so on, and that is one of the things that we are doing differently in terms of going forward. *[Interruption]* So, in going forward, some of the things we are doing is, as I said, collecting information before we make decisions, greater utilization, and in fact one of the things that we realize that we have to do, and a simple thing in terms of our sporting bodies and promoters, utilizing those facilities that it is to the benefit not only to the participants of the sport, but spectators.

We do not have—put it simply—what we are trying to correct, is we do not have annual events that have justified the construction of those facilities. That is the long and short of it. There is no Super Bowl, there is nothing like that, and we now have to get involved in creating and assisting to create content. And out of content comes economics/expenditure, it comes where people sell shoes, merchandise and all of those sort of things, and we understand, unlike before, the catalyst of that spinoff is through the activities.

**Mr. Chairman:** In order for you to make your company more efficient or more effective and more economical in its operations, would you want to submit in writing for the Committee's consideration your recommendations, your plans for consideration? Because, remember, we are here to help sport to become more efficient, more effective. So, could you generate a report or a statement to us as it relates to your thinking on making that body, that organization more efficient, more effective, and more economical in its operations?

**Mr. Phillips:** Would be very happy to.

**Mr. Chairman:** And Acting Permanent Secretary, I would like to ask you to refer to page 8 of the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual, and if you could do some homework in terms of understanding the relationship between the line Ministry and these state enterprises that fall under your jurisdiction? And as I am on that point, the Investments Division of the Ministry of Finance, there is on page 8 of this manual, one of the responsibilities of the Minister of Finance, and of course the line Ministry collaboration, is the need to review strategic plans, and Dr. Tim Gopeesingh was asking the question earlier, there is a strategic plan for the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs for 2012 to 2016, and the question was being asked whether that plan is still being implemented, and we did not get a proper answer from the Permanent Secretary. So I want to ask the Investments Division whether you are aware of this strategic plan 2012—2016,

and whether you are aware of a review that is on its way for 2017 to 2022 as it relates to the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs?

**Mr. Maharaj:** Chairman, what I can say is that the plan, before it comes to the Ministry of Finance, it must be approved by the board and also countersigned by the line Ministry. What I can say is that we may have a plan, and I stand corrected, but I can get back to you on that whether a plan was submitted for 2012 to 2016 to the Ministry of Finance. Going forward, I am not aware of any plan being developed by the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago at this time.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay, thank you. Mr. Chairman, we would like to give you the last say in terms of submitting your final comments. What I would like to tell you before you speak is that you can expect from us a number of questions that we would like answers to, and we will give you a timeframe for responding to those questions as it relates to this particular exercise that we are about to conclude, and we hope that we will get those answers within the timeframe that we have advanced when they come to you. The Committee will determine, when we meet, based on our discussions, whether we need to bring you back at an appropriate time. So, we will want to ask you—Jenny, you have any—

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, I would really want to re-enforce my earlier advise to SPORTT about the direction they are going in with their new industrial relations consultant Mr. Norman—something, I cannot remember his full name—and the advice on challenging “worker in good standing” to deny the worker his or her just due, they should abandon going in such a direction.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Phillips, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Phillips:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. We would like to thank you all for having the opportunity to come here and to report. We are quite happy to come back again. Rest assured that the members of the board of directors and the members of staff are keenly interested in sport and have a vested interest in the development of sport in Trinidad and Tobago. We take a lot of your questions on board and comments on board, and some of us who the activities of which questions were asked that predated our coming into the company, it is one where it is a bit challenging to try to go back and get all of the information. We recognize we have to get all of the information to make sure that in going forward, for whatever reason decisions were made, that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past and we continue to do the things that were successes.

So, I would like to thank everyone here who has—for me personally my baptism of fire into an experience like this, I appreciate that. I would like to thank the staff of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, and members of the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago who we recognized coming into the company, they were all over the place in disarray and in different levels of emotional state having gone through a difference in several directions in time over a five-year period or even before that, in terms of us trying to find our way. It is important to note that we have been consulting with other such institutions around the world and finding out that they themselves have a lot of similar problems, and that we are not unique in the problems that we face on all counts of things that you have mentioned, and we are looking at how it is we can interact with them.

We have already signed an MoU with Sport England in terms of learning from them and how unique it was, even though they had such a high medal hall that they still had so many of these issues dealing with the sporting bodies, dealing with the political directorate and all of the

other issues. So, we have a vested interest in turning this thing into something golden and something that the public can look forward to, and turn what we now consider \$3 billion in liabilities into assets, by rethinking or having the public rethink how they look at sport, whether it is a dollars and cents proposition alone. But we think it should be a utilization and success on an international scale, the type of proposition that we are looking at instead, and not just dollars and cents.

**Mr. Chairman:** May I on behalf of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee extend to the members of the Ministry of Finance, Investments Division, the Auditor General's Department, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago, members of the media, members of the public, on our collective behalf we want to thank you for being here with us for the period that you have been here, and I want you to leave with the clear assurance that our responsibility is to ensure that there is efficiency, there is efficacy, there is effectiveness, and there is economy in the operations of all state enterprises that come before us, and that the population is getting value for money. That is what we are here about. So, thank you once again for being here. This meeting is now suspended, because we have a meeting thereafter. Thank you very much.

**12.40 p.m.:** *Meeting adjourned.*