



*SIXTH 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 Audited Accounts, Balance Sheet and other Financial Statements of The Trinidad & Tobago Solid Waste Management Company Limited (SWMCOL) for the financial years 2008 – 2013.



## 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

### 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@tpparliament.org](mailto:paec@tpparliament.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>7</b>
Establishment .....	7
Mandate .....	7
Ministerial Response .....	7
State Enterprises Performance Standards .....	7
Election of the Chairman and Vice Chairman.....	7
<b>METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Determination of the Committee’s Work Programme.....	8
The Inquiry Process .....	10
<b>SWMCOL PROFILE .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>ISSUES, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendix 1 .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Minutes of Meetings .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Present were:.....	20
<b>Appendix 2 .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Attendees .....</b>	<b>24</b>
Attendees.....	25
<b>APPENDIX 3 .....</b>	<b>26</b>
List of entities falling under the purview of the PAEC:.....	27
<b>APPENDIX 4 .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>VERBATIM.....</b>	<b>30</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 Audited Accounts, Balance Sheet and other Financial Statements of The Trinidad & Tobago Solid Waste Management Company Limited (SWMCOL) for the financial years 2008 – 2013** and produced this report to highlight its findings and recommendations.

This report focuses on the issues, endorsements and recommendations made by the Committee in an attempt to assist SWMCOL in better performing its duties while also commending their initiatives. The issues identified are applicable to the period under examination (2008 to 2013).

During this discussion, the following issues arose:

- Late submission of the audited financial statements for SWMCOL for the period 2014-2016;
- Restatement of accounts for the year 2010;
- The recurring losses faced by SWMCOL;
- Lack of a Strategic Plan for the period 2016-2019;
- Benefits offered to employees in the event of mishaps;
- The hazardous effects of fires and toxic chemicals present in the water sources on citizens; and
- Measures in place to prevent dumping of tyres.

Based on the Committee's examination, the following recommendations were proposed.

- SWMCOL should implement more stringent measures to adhere to the stipulated deadlines set out in the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual.
- Additional ways of boosting revenues and reducing operating expenses should be investigated so as to generate favorable profits in the near future.
- SWMCOL should have its Strategic Plan for the period 2016-2019 approved by the Minister of Public Utilities by April 30, 2017.
- SWMCOL should submit a copy of the Strategic Plan to the PAEC no later than May 30, 2017.

- SWMCOL should conduct an investigation into the cost of upgrading the facilities to ensure that it meets the OSHA standards and liaise with the Ministry of Public Utilities to obtain funding for the improvement of facilities.
- The company should provide safety training sessions for both staff and contractors on a quarterly basis as a way of minimizing on-site accidents.
- SWMCOL should prioritize their allocation of funding to ensure that improper landfill management does not have a detrimental effect on the nation as a whole and look at ways of increasing revenues so as to assist in the expenses that will be incurred in ensuring effective environmental monitoring.
- The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Utilities should seek the support of the Minister to make representation under the mid-term review to get additional funding to ensure proper landfill management.
- SWMCOL should work more closely with the relevant Ministries to implement the tyre deposit policy at all tyre firms throughout Trinidad and Tobago and to educate the general public of this initiative and the negative effects of improper dumping.

# 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;
- 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.

## Establishment of Quorum

The Committee is required by the Standing Orders to have a quorum so that any decisions made by the Members during the meetings can be considered valid. A quorum of four (4) Members, inclusive of the Chair or Vice-Chairman), with representatives from both Houses was agreed to by the Committee at its First Meeting.

---

<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 Tecknologies 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 (T\*TMF)\*
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);
- vi. National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (NGC);
- vii. Telecommunications Service of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT);
- viii. Caribbean Airlines Limited (CAL);
- ix. Estate Management and Business Development Company Limited (EMBDC);
- x. Tourism Development Company of Trinidad and Tobago (TDC); and
- xi. National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited (NEDCO).

## The Inquiry Process

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

- I. Identification of issues in the Audited Accounts, Balance Sheet and other Financial Statements of The Trinidad & Tobago Solid Waste Management Company Limited (SWMCOL) for the financial years 2008 – 2013;
- II. Preparation of Inquiry Proposal for SWMCOL. 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 SWMCOL on February 1, 2016. Written responses were received from SWMCOL on April 4, 2016;
- IV. Preparation of an Issues Paper, based on written responses received from the SWMCOL. The Issues Paper identified and summarised any matters of concern in the responses provided by the SWMCOL;
- 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 February 15, 2017.
- VI. Written request for additional information was sent to the SWMCOL after the public hearing on February 17, 2017.
- VII. Report Committee's findings and recommendations to Parliament upon conclusion of the inquiry.

# SWMCOL PROFILE

## Background:

The principal activity of SWMCOL is the management and control of all wastes severally or jointly with any other company, statutory authority or persons in Trinidad and Tobago. The Company is the executing agent for specific programmes implemented by the Ministry of Public Utilities.

In 1983, SWMCOL was mandated with the responsibility of managing three major waste disposal sites namely, Beetham Landfill, Guanapo Landfill and Forres Park Landfill.

In an effort to safeguard the environment, in the year 2003, this mandate was expanded from management of landfills to include the preservation and upgrade of the environment. As a result, SWMCOL now offers a wide range of waste management, environmental protection and consultancy services. Their services include:

- General Waste Collection – (Domestic and Commercial Waste, Wood and Construction Debris);
- Special Waste Disposal – (This waste type may be injurious to the population and environment, and can range from tyres and condemned foods, to asbestos and industrial waste from processing plants.);
- Landfills;
- Liquid Waste Services;
- Bulky Waste Services;
- Portable Sanitation Product Rentals (Trailer toilets, Trailer Showers, Tank and Sink Sets);
- Faecal Waste Disposal; and
- Recycling (paper, dry cell batteries).

There are a number of programmes which SWMCOL manages in an attempt to provide these services. These include:

- The Community-based Environmental Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP) responsible for cleaning, enhancing and beautifying the environment
- The Community Environmental Improvement Initiative (CEII) responsible for educating the general public on the need to conserve the environment
- The Dead Animal Removal Team (DART) who oversees the removal and disposal of animal carcasses from the roads
- The Disaster Emergency Response Team (DERT) which was developed after Hurricane Ivan's impact on Grenada in 2004 is to be assisted by CEPEP in times of disaster relief
- "I LOVE MY BEACH PROGRAMME" whose aim is to help with the cleaning of the nation's beaches

**Vision:**

SWMCOL's Vision is to become the provider of choice for integrated environmental services in the region, with a reputation for rendering highly reliable services at competitive prices, and for ensuring the satisfaction of the customer<sup>3</sup>.

**Mission:**

Our Mission is to protect and enhance the environment in Trinidad and Tobago through the provision of high quality, efficient, customer oriented, cost effective and sustainable waste collection, treatment, disposal, resource recovery and educational services.

**Line Ministry** – Ministry of Public Utilities

**Minister** – The Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds

**Permanent Secretary** – Mr. Maurice Suite

**Chairman**- Mr. Shamshad Mohamed

**CEO** – Mr. Ronald Roach

---

<sup>3</sup> SWMCOL's website, accessed on December 28, 2015, <http://www.swmcol.co.tt/>

# ISSUES, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the Committee's examination of SWMCOL, the following issues were identified and the corresponding observations and recommendations proposed:

## **I. Audited Financial Statements and Internal Audit Reports**

Accountability to Parliament for the utilization of public funds was weakened by the failure of SWMCOL to submit its audited financial statements and internal audit reports in a timely manner for scrutiny. It was noted that the Company was late in submitting the necessary documents for the financial years 2014 and 2015. In oral response, SWMCOL indicated that the late submission of these audited financial statements was due to a change in the company's auditors and consequently, SWMCOL had to await the necessary approval from the Ministry of Finance. However, these documents were completed and currently awaiting Board approval. The Committee was advised that these documents should be submitted within a month of the Public Hearing which was held on February 15, 2017.

### **Recommendations:**

- *SWMCOL should implement stringent measures to adhere to the stipulated deadlines set out in Section 3.1 of the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual.*
- *Strengthen the internal controls and processes to ensure the timely preparation and submission of Financial Statements.*
- *The Ministry of Finance – Investments Division should take a more proactive role in monitoring the management of the operations of State Enterprises to ensure the timely submission of relevant documents.*
- *The Ministry of Finance – Investments Division should collaborate with the Treasury Division by May 30, 2017 to determine ways of enforcing the guidelines outlined in the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual, including strict financial sanctions that should be imposed in the event of non-compliance.*

## **II. Sustainability and Viability of SWMCOL**

The Committee was concerned about the sustainability and viability of SWMCOL after continuous losses were recorded for the period 2010-2013. It was noted that in the original accounts for the financial year 2010, an operating profit of \$18Million was recorded and was later restated as an operating loss of \$0.5Million in the subsequent year. It was understood that the persistent trend of losses recorded on SWMCOL's statements arose after the CEPEP Company was created and the CEPEP function of SWMCOL was removed in 2009. It was

important to note that SWMCOL had the responsibility of CEPEP since its inception in 2002 and brought in a significant cash flow to the Company through its management fees. From 2010 when CEPEP was removed, SWMCOL became dependent on its core functions of removing the country's waste to generate revenues. Thus, the decline in profits recorded on the Company's financial statements highlighted the inefficiencies within SWMCOL's core operations. In addition, there has been an increasing level of concern of the viability of the company since from 2013, wages and salaries exceeded fifty (50) per cent of revenues whilst managing operating losses. SWMCOL stated that in going forward the solution lied in increasing the revenue streams based on the existing staff structure and equipment resources. In addition, the company intends to create new lines of business, expand the existing lines and regain some of the lines that were lost such as the vacuum tanker service. The company stated that a very good vacuum tanker activity was in effect but due to the lack of maintenance of the equipment, the vacuum tanker line virtually went to zero.

**Recommendations:**

- *SWMCOL should reintroduce the vacuum tanker service in attempt to increase revenues and implement internal control policies to ensure adequate maintenance of equipment by July 30, 2017.*
- *SWMCOL should continue the tyre shredding initiative in attempt to boost revenues.*
- *The Ministry of Finance- Investments Division should work closely with SWMCOL by monitoring more effectively the performance and activities of the company.*

### III. Status of Strategic Plan

The company appeared to be in breach of implementing its Strategic Plan. According to the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual, a strategic plan “is the process of developing organization wide statements of policy, strategies and goals so communicated as to ensure participation by the entire organization. It involves the establishment by the Company of objectives, guiding policies and strategies for reaching the goals, which are to be in alignment with the Strategic Plan of the respective Line Ministry. Changes in long range Strategic Plans alter the character and direction of an organization”<sup>4</sup>. SWMCOL stated that the last Strategic

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.finance.gov.tt/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/State-Enterprise-Performance-Monitoring-Manual-2011.pdf>

Plan was implemented for the period 2010-2012. A plan is currently being prepared for the period 2016-2019. However, it was advised that the reason for the delay of the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan was due to the change of government in 2015.

**Recommendations:**

- *SWMCOL should have its Strategic Plan for the period 2016-2019 approved by the Minister of Public Utilities by April 30, 2017.*
- *SWMCOL should submit a copy of the Strategic Plan to the PAEC no later than May 30, 2017.*

**IV. Health and Safety**

The company has been operating below the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) standards, including both local and international standards, due to the lack of funding necessary to effectively operate sanitary landfill sites. Though no health and safety issues have arisen among existing workers, there were reports of salvagers on sites, including death, to employees of contractors. However, it was advised that SWMCOL's employees are all covered with life and health insurance.

**Recommendations:**

- *SWMCOL should conduct an investigation into the cost of upgrading the facilities to ensure that it meets the OSHA standards by May 30, 2017.*
- *SWMCOL should liaise with the Ministry of Public Utilities to obtain funding for the improvement of facilities by June 30, 2017.*
- *SWMCOL should provide safety training sessions for both staff and contractors on a quarterly basis commencing from the second quarter of 2017.*

**V. Environmental Monitoring**

The entity failed to actively participate in environmental monitoring which is a critical factor in ensuring proper landfill management. However, SWMCOL advised that due to lack of funding available, the company was unable to do so. In 2014, studies conducted by the University of the West Indies revealed that there was an issue with the presence of leachate in the nation's water sources. Moreover, SWMCOL continued to be challenged with effectively monitoring the perennial issue of fire at the landfills that affect the nearby environs causing serious economic and medical difficulties to the population. These issues raised a high level of concern to the Committee because if not treated in an urgent manner, the health of citizens

can become endangered, resulting in various illnesses such as cancer, asthma, disabilities in children, etc. SWMCOL advised that the company was currently engaging in a pilot study at the Guanapo site with respect to treating the issue of leachate. The company stated that no further measures were implemented to effectively monitor environmental issues as the Company had requested \$24Million to address the health and environmental issues emanating from the landfill sites but only received \$1Million which was not sufficient to rectify these issues.

**Recommendation:**

- *SWMCOL should prioritize their allocation of funding to ensure that they effectively manage the landfill sites.*
- *Upon completion of the pilot studies being undertaken regarding the lead content in water sources, the company should make the public aware of the findings and recommendations no later than May 31, 2017.*
- *The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Utilities should seek the support of the Minister to make representation under the mid-term review to get additional funding to ensure proper landfill management by April 30, 2017.*
- *SWMCOL should look at ways of generating additional revenues to assist in effective environmental monitoring practices.*

## **VI. Tyre Disposal**

The success of SWMCOL's efforts at tyre shredding has been hampered by indiscriminate dumping practices by several contractors. The company advised that in order to mitigate the practice of tyre dumping, proposals were made to several Ministries to implement a deposit on tyre purchases which would be used to pay for a proper disposal system and upon return of old/used tyres, fifty (50) per cent of the deposit will be refunded as a reward for returning them as opposed to dumping. Moreover, by implementing this policy, SWMCOL can aid in achieving the following:

- a) Reducing the amount of tyres entering the nation's landfills by ninety eight (98) per cent within an eighteen (18) month period.
- b) Assisting the Regional Corporations in their fight to eradicate the threat of breeding grounds for the deadly Aedes aegypti mosquito.
- c) Attaining a return on investment of this operation.
- d) Assisting in repositioning the brand as an innovator in the industry.

- e) Assisting in changing the attitudes of the population as it relates to recycling and environmental initiatives.

**Recommendations:**

- *SWMCOL should work more closely with the relevant Ministries to implement the tyre deposit policy at all tyre firms throughout Trinidad and Tobago by July 31, 2017.*
- *SWMCOL should conduct meetings with tyre companies across Trinidad and Tobago in order to sensitize those companies as to the need of the implementation of the new policy.*
- *SWMCOL should educate the general public of this new initiative/approach through an effective marketing strategy involving the use of print, media and flyers.*
- *SWMCOL should seek discussions with the Ministry of Public Utilities and relevant stakeholders to consider implementation of International Best Practice for the disposal of waste.*

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-Chairman**

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 SIXTEENTH MEETING HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2017 AT 9:35 A.M.  
IN THE A.N.R ROBINSON (EAST) MEETING ROOM, LEVEL 9,  
OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENT, TOWER D, THE PORT OF SPAIN  
INTERNATIONAL WATERFRONT CENTRE, 1A WRIGHTSON  
ROAD, PORT-OF-SPAIN.**

Present were:

Dr. Tim Gopeesingh	-	ViceChairman
Mrs. Jennifer Baptiste-Primus	-	Member
Mr. Foster Cummings	-	Member
Mr. David Small	-	Member
Mrs. Cherrie-Ann Crichlow-Cockburn	-	Member
Ms. Shamfa Cudjoe	-	Member

Ms. Keiba Jacob	-	Secretary
Ms. Melanie Chin	-	Research Assistant

Excused were:

Mr. Wade Mark	-	Chairman
Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds	-	Member

### **COMMENCEMENT**

- 1.1 At 9:35 a.m. the Vice-Chairman called the meeting to order and welcomed those present. Mr. Wade Mark and Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds were excused from the meeting.

### **THE EXAMINATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING**

- 2.1 The Committee examined the Minutes of the Fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>) Meeting held on Wednesday February 1, 2017.
- 2.2 The following corrections were made to the **Sub-heading** on Page 1:  
Delete the word “Foutheenth” and replace with the word “Fourteenth”.
- 2.3 There being no other omissions or corrections, the Minutes were confirmed on a motion moved by Mrs. Jennifer Baptiste-Primus and seconded by Mr. David Small.

### **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING**

- 3.1 With reference to item 3.1, the Committee requested an extension in the deadline date of February 13, 2017 to make comments and/ or suggestions on the Committee’s Reports by February 22, 2017.

## **PRE-HEARING DISCUSSION RE: SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMPANY LIMITED (SWMCOL)**

- 4.1 The Vice-Chairman reminded Members that the purpose of the meeting will be the examination of the Audited Accounts, Balance Sheet and other Financial Statements of the Solid Waste Management Company Limited (SWMCOL) for the period 2008 - 2013.
- 4.2 Members discussed the issues of concern and the general approach for the Public Hearing.
- 4.3 There being no further business for discussion *in camera*, the Chairman suspended the meeting at 9:58 a.m.

## **SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMPANY LIMITED (SWMCOL)**

- 5.1 The Chairman called the public meeting to order at 10:16 a.m.
- 5.2 The Chairman welcomed officials from the Ministry of Finance – Investments Division, the Ministry of Public Utilities, SWMCOL, members of the media and the public and introductions were exchanged.

### **The following officials joined the meeting:**

#### **Solid Waste Management Company Limited (SWMCOL)**

- Mr. Ronald Roach - Chief Executive Officer
- Mr. Shamshad Mohammed - Chairman
- Ms. Ria Ramdeen - Corporate Secretary
- Ms. Sylvia Derby - General Manager of Finance and Corporate Services
- Mr. David Manswell - General Manager of Communications, Sales and Marketing

#### **Ministry of Public Utilities**

- Mr. Maurice Suite - Permanent Secretary
- Ms. Vashti Jitman - Deputy Permanent Secretary
- Mrs. Arlene Lawrence-Johnson - Senior Project Officer
- Ms. Anika Farmer - Director of Legal Services
- Ms. Melanie Phillip - Senior Planning Specialist

#### **Ministry of Finance – Investments Division**

- Ms. Yvette Babb - Director, Social and Economic Transformation (Ag.)
- Ms. Mala Mohammed - Senior Business Analyst (Ag.)
- Mr. Inshan Mohammed - Senior Audit Analyst

## **Key Issues Discussed**

1. The role of PA(E)C in assisting SWMCOL to improve its delivery of services in an efficient, effective and economic manner.
2. The history and function of SWMCOL.
3. The role of the Permanent Secretary in ensuring accountability and transparency in monitoring and accessing the performance of SWMCOL.
4. The role of the Ministry of Finance-Investments Division to ensure oversight and accountability in state enterprises.
5. The reason for the late submission of the audited financial statements for SWMCOL for the years 2014 to 2016.
6. The reason for the restatement of accounts presented in the 2010 financial statements.
7. The reasons for the declining trend in revenues between fiscal years 2008 and 2010.
8. The status of the 2016-2017 Strategic Plan.
9. The lack of funding provided to SWMCOL to effectively implement an Integrated Solid Waste Management Approach.
10. The effect of Education Facilities Company Limited's outstanding debt on SWMCOL's cash flows.
11. The number of staff employed by SWMCOL.
12. The health and safety programs in place at SWMCOL.
13. The monitoring of environmental issues such as fires and the presence of toxic chemicals in the water sources.
14. The benefits offered to employees in the event of an accident.
15. The ways in which the Ministry of Public Utilities can urgently assist in the remediation of environmental issues.
16. The measures in place to assist areas affected by environmental issues.
17. The status of the disaster recovery plan.
18. The measures in place to prevent the dumping of tyres.

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

- 5.3 The Chairman thanked the representatives from the Ministry of Finance – Investments Division, the Ministry of Public Utilities, and SWMCOL for attending the Public Hearing.

## **SUSPENSION**

- 6.1 At 12:46 p.m., the Chairman suspended the *in public* meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

- 7.1 The Chairman thanked Members for their attendance and the meeting was adjourned to **Wednesday March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 9:30 a.m.**

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

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY

*February 15, 2017*

# Appendix 2

## Attendees

# Attendees

## **Solid Waste Management Company Limited (SWMCOL)**

- Mr. Ronald Roach - Chief Executive Officer
- Mr. Shamshad Mohammed - Chairman
- Ms. Ria Ramdeen - Corporate Secretary
- Ms. Sylvia Derby - General Manager of Finance and Corporate Services
- Mr. David Manswell - General Manager of Communications, Sales and Marketing

## **Ministry of Public Utilities**

- Mr. Maurice Suite - Permanent Secretary
- Ms. Vashti Jitman - Deputy Permanent Secretary
- Mrs. Arlene Lawrence-Johnson - Senior Project Officer
- Ms. Anika Farmer - Director of Legal Services
- Ms. Melanie Phillip - Senior Planning Specialist

## **Ministry of Finance – Investments Division**

- Ms. Yvette Babb - Director, Social and Economic Transformation (Ag.)
- Ms. Mala Mohammed - Senior Business Analyst (Ag.)
- Mr. Inshan Mohammed - Senior Audit Analyst

# 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 ExportTT)
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. ExportTT (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. InvestTT
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 SIXTEENTH MEETING OF THE  
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (ENTERPRISES) COMMITTEE HELD IN THE  
ANR ROBINSON MEETING ROOM (WEST), LEVEL 9 (IN CAMERA),  
AND THE ANR ROBINSON MEETING ROOM (EAST), LEVEL 9 (IN  
PUBLIC), TOWER D, INTERNATIONAL WATERFRONT CENTRE,  
#1A WRIGHTSON ROAD, PORT OF SPAIN, ON WEDNESDAY,  
FEBRUARY 15, 2017 AT 10.15 A.M.**

**PRESENT**

Dr. Tim Gopeesingh	Chairman
Mrs. Cherrie-Ann Crichlow-Cockburn	Member
Miss Shamfa Cudjoe	Member
Mrs. Jennifer Baptiste-Primus	Member
Mr. Foster Cummings	Member
Mr. David Small	Member
Miss Keiba Jacob	Secretary
Miss Melanie Chin	Researcher

**ABSENT**

Mr. Fitzgerald Hinds	Member
Mr. Wade Mark	Chairman

**MINISTRY OF FINANCE –INVESTMENTS DIVISION**

Ms. Yvette Babb	Director, Social and Economic Transformation (Ag.)
Ms. Mala Mohammed	Senior Business Analyst (Ag.)
Mr. Inshan Mohammed	Senior Audit Analyst

**SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT COMPANY LIMITED (SWMCOL)**

Mr. Ronald Roach	Chief Executive Officer
Mr. Shamshad Mohammed	Chairman
Ms. Ria Ramdeen	Corporate Secretary
Ms. Sylvia Derby	General Manager of Finance and Corporate Services
Mr. David Manswell	General Manager of Communications

Sales and Marketing

**MINISTRY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES**

Mr. Maurice Suite	Permanent Secretary
Ms. Vashti Jitman	Deputy Permanent Secretary
Mrs. Arlene Lawrence-Johnson	Senior Project Officer
Ms. Anika Farmer	Director of Legal Services
Ms. Melanie Phillip	Senior Planning Specialist

**Mr. Chairman:** May I express a very warm welcome and good morning to each and every one present here this morning, particularly, welcome to the officials from the Ministry of Finance, Permanent Secretary and colleagues, members from the Investments Division; the Ministry of Public Utilities, members of the Solid Waste Management Company Limited, SWMCOL; members of the media and the public who are viewing. This meeting is being held in public and is being broadcast on the Parliament Channel 11, radio105.5 FM, and the Parliament's YouTube Channel, *ParlView*.

The purpose of this morning's meeting of the Public Accounts (Enterprise) Committee is to examine audited accounts, balance sheet and other financial statements of the Solid Waste Management Company Limited for the period 2008 to 2013. And the Committee is also desirous of hearing from the key stakeholders of SWMCOL to learn the challenges being faced and determine some of the possible solutions and measures to overcome these challenges. The role of this Committee, as has been the role of this Committee with previous hearings, is to help the relevant company, and in this case SWMCOL, to improve the delivery of its services in efficient, effective and, of course, economic manner.

First of all, let me ask the members of the Committee to introduce themselves and we will start on our left.

*[Members introduced themselves]*

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much colleagues and now I ask the officials from the Ministry of Finance, Investments Division to introduce yourselves.

*[Introductions made]*

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you. Now can we ask the officials from Ministry of Public Utilities to introduce yourselves.

*[Introductions made]*

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much Ministry of Public Utilities. Can we ask for the introduction from SWMCOL.

*[Introductions made]*

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much, thank you very much for the introductions from all of you. We generally start the meetings by asking the main company or enterprise that comes before this Committee to make some opening statements and as such I will now invite the President of SWMCOL to give us a brief opening statement.

**Mr. Mohammed:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am the chairman of SWMCOL. Thanks to the panel for inviting us, for sharing information which you require and I am glad to hear you say that the panel is willing to work with us, to assist us in our effectiveness and efficiency as well. Just to give you a little overview on who and what SWMCOL is.

SWMCOL was established on 12th of November, 1980 as a limited liability company wholly owned by corporation sole. SWMCOL is responsible for the management, collection, treatment and the disposal of all waste, including solid, liquid, special and hazardous waste in Trinidad and Tobago and it is stated in the company's Memorandum of Association. SWMCOL's vision statement speaks to leading the attainment of environmentally responsible waste management and to be the preferred service provider in Trinidad and Tobago. SWMCOL's mission statement is to provide integrated and environment solid waste management solutions that promote maximization of resource value and culture of care for the environment.

SWMCOL receives government funding to manage the three largest national landfills, namely, the Beetham Estate which serves the north-west region of Trinidad; Forres Park which serves central and south Trinidad and Guanapo which serves the north-east region of Trinidad. We have a total staff of 223 people, 97 are permanent monthly paid and 119 are permanent daily paid. We have seven contract officers with us. Our recognized bargaining unit are one, Banking, Insurance and General Workers Union and two, the Industrial, General and Sanitation Workers Union. SWMCOL is also involved in commercial solid waste management services, for instance, general waste collection and disposal. We provide rental and collection services of waste reciprocals of varying sizes to commercial and industrial businesses.

Additionally, special waste collection and disposal, where for a fee, we collect and dispose services for wastes that require special treatment and encapsulation before disposal. Also, liquid waste collected and disposed, where we collect, for a fee again, waste such as residential and industrial waste water, grease, fat, et cetera, that we treat biologically. We are also involved in portable sanitation rental services, so we rent products like portable toilets, tanks and sink sets, trailer washrooms and showers.

We have just established or resource recovery services. SWMCOL provides the collection and shredding of tetra packs, plastics, cans at its PT Recovery Facility located at

NAMDEVCO compound in Sea Lots. SWMCOL also provides tyre shredding services as a result of ownership of a tyre shredder and a multipurpose shredder. SWMCOL has also installed a Pilot Material Recovery Facility and Paykel Station at the Guanapo landfill site. Over the past decades SWMCOL has moved to three separate Ministries. Presently, we are under the Ministry of Public Utilities and I must say that our line Ministry has given us great support over the past year that we have been here. Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. My colleague has indicated to me that you gave some statistics related to the amount of employees. I think 224, you gave 97 monthly and seven contracts. How many daily in that?

**Mr. Mohammed:** One hundred and nineteen.

**Mr. Chairman:** One hundred and nineteen. Thank you very much. Okay, thank you very much. Good morning Permanent Secretary, Mr. Maurice Suite, and it is a pleasure to see you again and looking well. Well, all of us know that in accordance with Part I, section 4 on page 37 of the Financial Regulations:

“An accounting officer shall be responsible for ensuring—

- (a) that the financial business of the State for which he is responsible is properly conducted; and
- (b) that public funds entrusted to his care are properly safe-guarded and are applied only to the purposes intended by Parliament.”

That is the Preamble to the responsibility of the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry, of all Ministries. And the Review of the Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure showing annual allocation to SWMCOL are as follows:

The Sub-Item is Government Subvention, 2015 actual was \$75,150,000 and the estimate for 2016 is the same \$75,150,000 and the revised 2017 estimate is \$75 million. For the period 2015 to 2017, the total allocation of Government Subvention to SWMCOL; that is 2015/2016 to 2017 is in the sum of approximately \$225,300,000 and, of course, the onerous responsibility is on the Permanent Secretary.

So this morning can you possibly give an account of how does the Permanent Secretary deal with the funds that have been allocated from the subventions? And how the Permanent Secretary, as the main accounting officer and all Permanent Secretaries are accounting officers, how do you continue to ensure accountability and transparency in performance of your role and responsibility in monitoring, in this case, the SWMCOL, to ensure that a proper system of accounting which you will of course request at all times from your state enterprise, how do you ensure that they commit themselves to accountability and transparency in performing their

roles and responsibility in monitoring in this case, this morning SWMCOL?

How do you ensure that a proper system of accounting as prescribed by the Treasury is established and maintained? How do you exercise supervision over the receipt of public revenue and how do you make proper provision for the safekeeping of public money. How does the Permanent Secretary ensure that the value for money has been achieved from the use of public funds by SWMCOL? And how does the Permanent Secretary, accounting officer, monitor, evaluate direct and control the activities of the units, departments, statutory authorities and state enterprises of the Ministry, in this case we are dealing with SWMCOL this morning. So, Permanent Secretary, just a short/brief response from you on these matters. Thank you.

**Mr. Suite:** Thank you very much Chair. Well this morning we are dealing specifically with SWMCOL. SWMCOL as you appreciate would be a limited liability company that is fully owned by Government. So there is a dual reporting function between the company reporting to the Ministry of Finance, as well as to the Ministry of Public Utilities as the line Ministry.

Now as the line Ministry we will deal with SWMCOL more or less on the operational aspects of the company. The Ministry of Finance, they are the ones who would monitor in terms of the reporting of the Board and meeting those sort of reporting requirements and the internal auditing, et cetera, of the company. For instance, within the Ministry of Finance one of the bodies will be the Central Audit Committee which would have oversight of the internal audit function of SWMCOL and it is from that aspect that they would be able to evaluate the company in terms of value for money, in the inefficiency of operation, et cetera.

The Ministry of Public Utilities, in monitoring SWMCOL it is really dealing with the operational aspects of it and carrying out the Government's policy. I think for clarification I should point out that the \$75million subvention that goes to SWMCOL is really to assist with the management of the three main landfills that the chairman would have alluded to in his opening statement and again those landfills are not revenue earners by themselves for SWMCOL. So it is really the Government paying for the operation of the landfill and I might add that the \$75 million, which will come out later in the discussion, it is not adequate for SWMCOL to be able to operate the landfill at the international standards and levels that is required. Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much Mr. Maurice Suite, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Utilities. Can I just turn our Committee's attention to the Investments Division for a brief moment? According to the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual:

“The Investments Division is responsible for executing the investment policy as

prescribed by Cabinet. Accordingly, the mandate of the Division includes oversight, monitoring and where necessary, the rationalization of the GORTT”—Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago’s—“equity holdings in commercial enterprises. The Division acts on behalf of the Minister of Finance”—who is the—“(Corporation Sole) and carries out the corporate function. This includes representation of the Minister at shareholders’ meetings; establishment of new Enterprises and rationalization of the investments portfolio of the Shareholder.”

Previously, SWMCOL was under the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, I think the Chairman mentioned where they were prior to that and now under the Ministry of Public Utilities. Can we ask, is there any additional support provided to SWMCOL and other state enterprises like this, when there is a change in Ministry as evidenced in this change? What is the role of the Investments Division ensuring oversight and accountability in this state enterprise and other state enterprises? Can we have some comments from you on that from the Investments Division?

**Ms. Babb:** Thank you, Chair. The role of the Investments Division with respect to the state enterprises including SWMCOL is more of an oversight role with respect to more corporate governance in areas of, let us say, the procurement policies. That is one of the main ways we monitor them. We review their procurement policies. We also receive reports, internal audit reports and we review them to make sure that the internal controls and other risk are in accordance to standards. We also look at other areas of the strategic plan where we look to make sure that the company’s plans are in line with Government policies and their mandates.

We also look at the financial statement, that is one of our main areas of monitoring them, to ensure that they also—they prepare the financial statements timely. We know that SWMCOL has not been up to date so far but we have been in contact with them and they are preparing their 2014 and 2015. We also look at the board minutes, this is one of our main areas of monitoring them, where we would see what are the main decisions of the board of directors and the areas the company would be looking at. We look at the status of their loans, what loans they have, what is outstanding, the quarterly returns, where we look at employment figures, ratios for things like how liquid they are, how profitable they are, the monthly cash flows. We also make sure that the monthly cash flows of state operations if they have sufficient funding to carry out the operations. And those are the main areas we looked at so far.

**Mr. Chairman:** Can I ask, when was the last time that you received any internal audit from SWMCOL?

**Ms. Babb:** Well the last one we got from them is a while now.

**Mr. Chairman:** We have only, for this Committee, up to 2013. Have you sort to get any more for 2014/2015?

**Ms. Babb:** We did send out compliance—we normally send out compliance reports, status reports to the state enterprises. We did send out to SWMCOL to let them know that we have not gotten those internal audit reports and other reports so far.

**Mr. Chairman:** Based on the hon. Minister of Finance, he did say recently, that they are asking all state enterprises and statutory authorities, et cetera, to ensure that their audits are completed up to 2015 and now, 2016. Are you seeking to ensure that those from 2014, 2015 and 2016 come to your attention as early as possible? What deadline you are looking at?

**Ms. Babb:** With respect to SWMCOL?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yeah.

**Ms. Babb:** SWMCOL indicated to us that they have completed their financials and I think they are waiting on board approval for them. So soon they will submit it to us and we will hold an annual general meeting and forward it to the Committee.

**Mr. Chairman:** So, including all for three years, 2014, 2015 and 2016?

**Ms. Babb:** No, not 2016. For 2014 and 2015 that is completed, not 2016.

**Mr. Chairman:** What period of time you are looking at to complete this?

**Ms. Babb:** Probably, in the next month or two.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay, thank you. Okay, I will now switch our attention to asking members of this team, our team, to commence their questions to the relevant personnel and there are a number of areas that our colleagues have indicated that they would want to seek some answers. So I will start with Sen. Small who will seek your answers to some questions.

**Mr. Small:** Thank you very much, Chair, for giving me the floor and I appreciate—I want to say good morning to everyone again and I appreciate the powerful team that is here from the Ministry of Public Utilities. It is really important that the line Ministry is so torridly represented. It is something that is to be recognized, Mr. Chairman, given that some other challenges we had with that in the past.

Mr. Chairman, I want to do a quick follow-up question before I go to my first question with the Ministry, Investments Division. I understand the Ministry has resource challenges but the officer went through a process of describing what they do for monitoring and it is all post facto. And that is my concern, that it is difficult to monitor something that has already happened. So I would like to understand within the structure of how the Investments Division does its work, is there any ability to call in agencies to say, what is your annual operating plan? Let us meet in the first quarter of the year and let us understand what your plan of activity is,

because everything you have laid out is after it has happened and you are trying to fix things after the problems have evidenced themselves. I would like to see some measure of trying to be a little more proactive with how we manage the operations of these state enterprises. I am not sure what is possible within the existing system at Investments Division. Is this something you have considered, because as it is now, what effectively happens is that you look at the problems after they have happened and I am suggesting that it may be useful to consider. You would not be able to call in everyone, but you target a certain amount of agencies every quarter and say, listen let us call in and understand your operational plan as you go along rather than wait until the end of the year, you get financial reports, you get everything at the end, after everything has happened. Could I have a response from the Investments Division?

**Ms. Babb:** Through you, Chair, currently we are looking at our operations in the Investments Division and that is an area we are looking at. But through their budgets, when they prepare their annual budgets which is at the beginning of the year, we have an opportunity to look at what they are doing and what they want to do and based also on that we would also look at the reports they send during the year, some of these reports, and match it with their budgets to see if they are really doing what they say they were going to do. So that is just one area, but we are also looking at what you said there.

**Mr. Small:** Thank you very much. Mr. Chair, if you would permit me I would like to direct my first question to SWMCOL if you would permit me, Mr. Chairman. Good morning members of SWMCOL. I have a concern about the sustainability and the viability of this enterprise. I have your financial statements in front of me from 2008 to 2013, that is what we have on our record here, and I have seen, based on what is in front of me, prior up until 2010 the company was relatively profitable. Since then the company has been operating at a loss and there is something interested in the accounts.

In your 2010 accounts, your original accounts, you have restated them on the 2011 accounts and it has moved from an operating profit of \$18 million to an operating loss of half a million, an \$18.5 million swing. So I would like somebody to explain what happened because that trend after that period then the company's performance, operating profits started to go negative, negative, one hundred and something thousand dollars, negative half a million dollars, negative \$6 million, negative \$4 million. So something happened in that period and I am interested in why these accounts were restated, because a \$20 million restatement on your account is significant on the revenue line. Could someone help me with that?

**Mr. Roach:** Right, through you, Chair, morning again. With respect to the financial statements 2008 going forward, one of the things we need to recognize is the fact that in 2008

SWMCOL, the CEPEP Company was created and the CEPEP function of SWMCOL was removed. SWMCOL had the responsibility for CEPEP from its inception in 2002 until 2008 and, of course, SWMCOL was—CEPEP brought in quite a large cash flow into SWMCOL and through the management fees we were able to show some decent profits on that.

The bad thing about that is what that did really was to hide the inefficiencies within SWMCOL's core operations and SWMCOL was set up primarily to manage the disposal of the country's waste. So those inefficiencies and those problems really manifested themselves when CEPEP was removed from SWMCOL and SWMCOL was able to go back to its core functions. And, hence, you will see that loss-making position. What we have tried to do is to consolidate the situation and slowly rebuild the company to what it should have been and focusing on the core areas of collection and disposal of waste and that is why we are in the position. I would hand you over to Ms. Derby to just talk about the reversal of the accounts.

**10.45 a.m.**

**Ms. Derby:** Good morning. I think the reversal is mainly due to the statement of revenue with the project accounting in 2010—

**Mr. Small:** Mr. Chairman, to optimize time, through the Chairman, could I request that the company provide a report to the Committee outlining what transpired that led to this restatement of the accounts, because it seems that they are having a challenge giving us a cogent response. So I will leave that because I think that, for me, I need to understand what happened there and so far the response has not been able to assist me.

In your reply, let me get it correct, CEPEP was no longer part of the operation from 2008?

**Mr. Roach:** Correct.

**Mr. Small:** All right. Because in 2008 your revenue line was \$63 million. In 2009 your revenue line was \$91 million and in 2010 your revenue line was \$70 million in the original accounts. So that if CEPEP left, I would have thought your revenue line—I heard what you said, that CEPEP left and you would have suffered a loss in revenues. So I am not understanding because if your information is correct that CEPEP left in 2008, no longer part of your operation, then perhaps your revenue may have gone down—

**Mr. Roach:** Sorry, my correction. It was, in fact, 2009 that CEPEP did, in fact, leave.

**Mr. Small:** 2009. Okay.

**Mr. Chairman:** Is there any answer you would want to give as a summary and then we can rely on you and SWMCOL to send the rest of the information to us in writing? Is there anything in summary you would like to give an answer to?

**Mr. Roach:** All right. We would send it in writing.

**Mr. Chairman:** But is there anything at all you would like to proffer as a summary answer to the question by Sen. Small?

**Mr. Roach:** In terms of the reversal of the accounts?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes.

**Mr. Roach:** I am sorry, I do not have that information and I would need to look into it further and provide you with an answer in writing.

**Mr. Chairman:** All right. Thank you very much. Sen. Small, go ahead.

**Mr. Small:** I have one last question in this rounds—

**Mr. Chairman:** Put your mike on.

**Mr. Small:** Forgive me, Mr. Chairman, my bad manners. I apologize. I have one last question in this rounds and I will allow Madam Members before I ask questions again. I have heard that the chairman, or the CEO, has indicated you are trying to streamline the company's operations. What I have noticed also is that your administrative cost for salaries and wages has remained fairly stable from all the accounts I have. From 2007 it has fluctuated in a very narrow band between about \$18 million to \$20 million a year.

So that even when CEPEP was there, it seems that—so I am trying to understand. Right now, when you look at 2013, the latest accounts we have, your revenue line, your wages and salaries staff cost is a little more than 50 per cent of your revenue. So that is why I am starting to ask the question about the sustainability of a business. If you have a business you are running and over 50 per cent of your revenue goes just to paying staff cost—not operational, just staff cost—then I have a concern about the viability of that business going forward. And I am not saying about trying to streamline the company and remove jobs, but I am trying to understand what else can you do to manage your cost profile to turn the business around?

**Mr. Roach:** The solution lies in really increasing the revenue base based on the existing staff structure and equipment resources that we do have, and that is the approach going forward. So what we are trying to do is to create new lines of business, to expand our existing lines and to regain some of the lines that we previously had that were, in fact, lost. A good example of that is our vacuum tanker service. We had a very good vacuum tanker activity going on in the company. Because of the lack of maintenance of equipment and so, the vacuum tanker line virtually went to zero. We still believe that we have the potential to do very good work throughout the country and there is a need and there is a demand for that, and that is one line that we have revamped and we now have three pieces of equipment working—operating—in that line, and it is doing quite well and we expect it to continue to do well.

Similarly, our general waste services, we were at a point where we had one truck, out of a fleet

of 15 trucks, working. We are now back up to six trucks and we intend to continue with the expansion of those services. We have started a tyre shredding operation which is a revenue-generating operation for us. And besides tyre shredding, we also have a multipurpose shredder and both of those services are, in fact, revenue-generating services. So the plan of the company is, in fact, to increase its revenue base, and as you would have pointed out, to continue to keep the operating expenses at bay; manage the operating expenses very closely and increase our revenue base.

**Mr. Small:** Mr. Chairman, I pause for now.

**Mr. Chairman:** Minister Jennifer Baptiste-Primus will now ask some questions to the committee.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Thank you, kindly, Mr. Chairman, and good morning once again, ladies and gentlemen. I would just like to wrap up the discussion with regard to the financial statements and this question is directed to you, Mr. Chairman of the Board. What is responsible for this state enterprise's submission of its audited financial statements to be outstanding for such a period?

**Mr. Mohammed:** The years 2013 and 2014 are what we have before us at this time. The years 2014 and 2015 have been submitted to us. We do have a board meeting tomorrow where we will go through it and finalize, and we want to submit within three weeks, if not before. So we should have that ready before the end of the month. Okay? Yes, it is outstanding. We received it about two months ago. It was the month of November when we received it, and we have been going through it and at tomorrow's board meeting we plan to ratify it and send it forward.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** My question was, Mr. Chairman, what is, or was, responsible for these audited financial statements being outstanding? We are in 2017 and the board is now poised to examine the audited financial statements for 2014 and 2015. There must be a plausible explanation, I am sure.

**Ms. Derby:** Madam Chair, through the Chair the—

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Well, I would not want to usurp the authority of the acting Chair.

**Ms. Derby:** The financials for 2014 and 2015 were delayed mainly because we have a change in auditors, so we had to get permission from the Ministry of Finance. So that is the cause for it being delayed at this point.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Well, if that is so, what is responsible for the delay with the reports from 2008 to 2013?

**Ms. Derby:** The reports—no, these reports have already gone out.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Where were they submitted?

**Ms. Derby:** They were submitted through the Ministry of Finance.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** When were they submitted to the Ministry of Finance? Do you have that information available? If the Investments Division can assist the board, we welcome the information.

**Ms. Babb:** From our records, we had the last annual meeting for SWMCOL on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2014, so it would be somewhere around that time that we received the last 2013 financial statements.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** It seems to me that there is a problem with SWMCOL submitting its financial statements on time and we would want to encourage—Mr. Chairman, we would want to encourage the board to ensure—I am quite sure the board was in attendance at the Minister of Finance’s meeting where boards, state enterprises, have been mandated to meet the deadline. Having said that, Mr. Chairman—

**Mr. Roach:** Through the Chair, if I may just ask our Corporate Secretary to just shed some light on the situation as well, please.

**Ms. Ramdeen:** The audited financial statements for the years 2014 and 2015 have been approved by the Board of Directors of SWMCOL. They have, in fact, been forwarded to the Ministry of Public Utilities on or around October/November last year and in January of 2017 it was supposed to be submitted to the Ministry of Finance. I just have to confirm that one. But, I, personally would have delivered the audited financial statements for 2014 and 2015 to the Ministry of Public Utilities.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Thank you kindly, Ms. Ramdeen. That has clarified—

**Mr. Roach:** And I would just like to add, as well, that to the best of my knowledge we have not had delays in any of the financial statements up to 2013. Those have always been submitted in a timely fashion. We did have a delay, 2014 and 2015 because of the change of the auditors and the need to get Ministry of Finance’s approval. But now that we have this new auditor, again, we will continue to operate on a timely fashion because the auditors right now are reviewing our 2016 financials.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Having said that, I just want to turn the attention somewhat to the strategic plan. The information submitted by SWMCOL indicated that you all were currently preparing a strategic plan for the period 2016 to 2019. May we be informed on the status of that strategic plan?

**Mr. Roach:** Right. Essentially, the plan was completed. However, with the change of government and the new thrust of Government we discussed at board level that we would

ensure that Government's vision with respect to recycling and with respect to waste to energy, in particular, would be incorporated into that strategic plan. However, having said that, the strategic plan is, in fact, a working document for us at this point in time and we are guided by that strategic plan as we go forward.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** So is it that the board—and, Mr. Chairman, this question is directed to you based on the information offered by the CEO. Is it that the board has plans for reviewing the strategic plan to realign that strategic plan with the current administration's vision?

**Mr. Mohammed:** Through the Chair, yes that is the plan. We have already looked at the strategic plan submitted to us about four or five months ago and we are, yes, streamlining the plan. We hope to have this ready within two months.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** So the review is a work in progress?

**Mr. Mohammed:** Yes, it is a work in progress and we should have that completed around Easter.

**Mr. Chairman:** Can I stick a pin and just ask you if there are major areas that you can inform us within that strategic plan that you see are some of the major areas in the way forward; if you can enumerate them?

**Mr. Mohammed:** I will just tell you of two of them and Ronald will take over afterwards. But two of the areas we are looking at very critically would be the closure of the landfills. Beetham is about 96 per cent saturated; Guanapo is completed. It is filled. Forres Park is the only landfill that we really have that is functional at this time and we want to convert it into an engineering landfill, which would be the only engineering landfill in Trinidad. So that is part of our strategic plan and we have to firm up how exactly we do that. The other thing is, with respect to waste to energy it was not part of the document. We want to bring this in and we are looking at some of the best practices, and we have actually had some companies who actually brought proposals to us to look at, how we can do this. So that is basically what we are doing.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thanks, chairman. Our colleagues will ask you a few more detailed questions on those. So go back to Mrs. Jennifer Baptiste-Primus.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Thank you kindly, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chairman, so there is a strategic plan in place, 2016 to 2017, that is under review. May I enquire whether or not a strategic plan existed prior to 2016? And if yes, for what period?

**Mr. Mohammed:** The present plan is 2016 to 2019.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** The period before that. Was there a strategic plan prior to 2016?

**Mr. Mohammed:** Yes, there was.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** For what period, please?

**Mr. Mohammed:** 2010, 2011 and 2012.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Okay. 2010 to 2012.

**Mr. Mohammed:** Right.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Was this plan a board-approved plan?

**Mr. Mohammed:** At that time, yes.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** So emerging from that situation, what measures are in place to ensure that the strategic plan achieves the organization's mission and vision?

**Mr. Roach:** If I may answer, through you, Chair. Essentially—and you asked the question whether we had strategic plans before. Since 1980 the solid waste master plan for the country, which was developed by a consultant team of planning and Stanley Associates, since then it called for an integrated solid waste management approach in the country and that has not since materialized. So you would find that there is a repeat in all the strategic plans since then, of the need for an integrated waste management system.

The problem has always been the lack of funds for such a system. As PS Suite would have indicated before, one of the challenges with waste management in the country is the lack of funding towards the waste management function and the fact that Government chooses to bear the cost of waste management. That does not happen in much areas of the world anymore, and waste management is usually paid for by either user fee or a taxation, or a bill coming to users on a monthly basis, and so. And because of that, we have found that there was just lack of implementation.

So one of the critical aspects of SWMCOL implementing its strategic plan is the availability of funding for the major developments that need to take place. Some of those major developments include the construction of a new sanitary engineered landfill site and/or a waste-to-energy facility. But also the closure of sites like Beetham and Guanapo require major investments. Because we have been storing waste in these sites for 50/60 years in the case of Beetham and Guanapo, it is not just a question of closing the gates one day and say the landfill is closed, we have to remediate those sites and ensure that the waste that will decompose over the next hundred years does not present any challenges to the environment and ill-effects to humans and public health and so on, and there is a cost to doing that.

So that, essentially, is what prevented previous strategic plans from being implemented and that is the critical aspect of us, of SWMCOL, ensuring that this plan that we have is, in fact, implemented.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** I see a statement with regard to increasing cash flow that the Education Facilities Company Limited is indebted to SWMCOL to the extent of how much money?

**Ms. Derby:** \$5.9 million.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Pardon me?

**Ms. Derby:** \$5.9 million.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** 5.9 million?

**Ms. Derby:** Yes.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** And finally, Mr. Chairman, for now, I am looking at the information SWMCOL shared with us regarding your plans and proposals as outlined in your strategic plan, and the update you provided which span from increasing revenue, decreasing administrative expenses, increasing assets, increasing profitability, increasing cash flow, minimizing financial risk by reducing debt, human resource management and development, improving communications systems and refining the company's business model. Interestingly, although I am seeing human resource management/development, there is an absence of any kind of information regarding that aspect, outside of the information shared by the chairman earlier, 223 staff. You have a staff population of 223: 97 monthly; 7 contract; 119 daily paid, but there is an absence of any kind of information. So do you have a human resource manager?

**Mr. Mohammed:** Yes we do, Chair. We have a human resource manager who was engaged about six months ago.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Chairman, I know my colleague has many questions to ask in that respect, so I would pause for now. Thank you kindly.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Baptiste-Primus. We now turn to Minister Crichlow-Cockburn.

**Mrs. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, you would have indicated just now that SWMCOL is responsible for the management, treatment, collection and disposal of all waste, including hazardous waste. What safety programme do you have in SWMCOL in light of all of this? Because safety has to be a major issue for your company. What is your safety programme like?

**Mr. Roach:** If I may, through you, Chairman. Yes, SWMCOL does have quite a robust safety programme. We are headed by a Manager, Quality, Health, Safety and Environment, and we have a Safety Officer, Quality Officer and a Quality Coordinator. They are the ones responsible for ensuring that the policies and programmes of the company are rolled out. So as part of that programme we ensure proper uniforms for our staff, we have annual medicals and we have a very robust programme of safety briefings and toolbox meetings for all members of our staff on a scheduled basis.

Having said that, though, from an overall health and safety perspective we are very much

lacking through the facilities that we do have and that is one of the major constraints that we are faced with now, and that exist on each of our sites right now. So the welfare facilities, in particular, are very much lacking and the conditions of the sites themselves, because of the lack of funds to operate proper sanitary landfill sites, they are very much below any OSH standard, including our local standards, and certainly any international standards, and we definitely need to address that.

We have begun working with the Ministry of Public Utilities and we have been provided with some amount of funds for the development of a welfare facility for Beetham. So we are proceeding with that, but that is just the start and there is a lot more work that needs to be done in the overall area of health and safety in the company.

**Mrs. Crichlow-Cockburn:** In light of all of this, what percentage of OSHA compliance would you say exists at your facilities?

**Mr. Roach:** We measure OSHA compliance and basically, offhand, we are at about 47 per cent right now. So, again, there is a lot more work that needs to be done.

**Mrs. Crichlow-Cockburn:** And what impact has this had on staff? For example, what is your level of accidents? What impact has it had on staff, also on their health? Because the data suggests that persons who work in environments like this are subject to exposure to certain things. What is the situation in the company?

**Mr. Roach:** You know, despite it all, we have had a very good track record with respect to health and safety amongst our existing workers. One of the fortunate things is that we have a lot of long-standing workers who have been well trained and who have continued to be part of our safety meetings and briefings and so. So they very well understand what the dangers are and they can operate safely within the environments.

We, of course, have had problems with contractors on sites and, of course, we have had problems with salvagers on sites, including deaths to contractors' employees and to salvagers. So that is not something we are proud of and we are happy about. With respect to health surveillance, so far we have had no major problems but we do know that it is a risk and that is why we have the annual medical surveillance taking place.

**Mrs. Crichlow-Cockburn:** And what benefits do you have in place in the event something happens? You said, for example, you would have had deaths. What benefits do you have in place for your employees?

**Mr. Roach:** We would have insurance programmes for the employees. The deaths that I did refer to, though, are not with employees but with—there was a recent death with an employee of a contractor and there was also a recent death of a salvager at our Forres Park site. In cases

like that, they are not covered by any of our insurances, but our employees are covered by insurance.

**Mrs. Crichlow-Cockburn:** What does the insurance cover, for your employees? What does it cover?

**Mr. Roach:** In terms of—there is a medical. We have both medical and life insurance. So offhand I cannot give you the values but we can always provide that to you.

**Mrs. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Is SWMCOL, or do they have a consultant that is engaged in environmental monitoring? You know, because I would expect SWMCOL would want to be able to determine the types and the amounts of the substances that emanate from the various landfills, because as a responsible organization there is the belief that the substances that emanate from these sites can cause potential health issues. So does your company engage in any environmental monitoring to determine what emanates from the landfills?

**Mr. Roach:** As part of proper landfill management there is a requirement to have environmental monitoring, monitoring of ground water, of surface water and of air quality. Unfortunately, because of a lack of funding, we have not been doing active environmental monitoring. However, we have engaged, for instance, UWI at our Guanapo facility where we recognize that there are problems associated with our operations there and UWI has conducted quite an extensive survey of the water quality in and around the Guanapo landfill site and they have produced a report for us. It is a public report, and that report clearly did indicate that we have problems with our leachate. It is something that we were aware of but that UWI report just served to verify and to quantify the extent of the problem. So we do have problems with lead, in particular, and lead is a dangerous heavy metal. So we have problems with lead effluent in the adjacent Guanapo River. That is something we are very much concerned about.

As part of our PSIP submission, we would have requested funds for the installation of a treatment plant to deal with that leachate. We requested a sum of \$24 million which is the cost of such a plant, and we only got \$1 million in PSIP, and what we were able to do with that is to just set up a pilot treatment project. So that is one of our major concerns, that we do not have the funds to properly address the environmental and public health concerns emanating from each of our landfill sites. So whilst that was done in Guanapo, we know that Forres Park and Beetham we have similar problems, if not as acute.

**Mrs. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Mr. Chairman, I defer to my colleague. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Chairman:** We now go to Minister Shamfa Cudjoe.

**Miss Cudjoe:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To you also, Mr. Roach, the CEO, I graduated from high school in 1998 and we have been having this conversation about the lifespan of the

landfills, the management of the landfills and developing our landfills from being glorified dumps into safe, more environmentally-conscious engineered landfills, and I can remember as a student in 1998 talking about Guanapo had reached its full capacity and should have been closed by 2001. Here we are, 16 years later and we are having the same conversation. However, the response to many of our questions related to why the different plans over the years have not been implemented or they have not been executed, the answer is shortage of funds.

So over that 16-year span, from 2001 to now, or should I say since I graduated from high school in 1998, could we say that the issue, really and truly, is only related to funding? What are the other challenges related to implementing these recommendations over the years, especially as it relates to Beetham, Forres Park and Guanapo, in particular? Because we are at a point now, what, 16 years later, where leachate is now found in the nearby rivers, which becomes a bigger problem for the Caroni River which is the biggest treatment site. So please help me understand, and the general public who is tuned in, what has happened over these years from the 1990s when I was in high school and especially with Guanapo, 2001 to now.

**11.15 a.m.**

Secondly, as a Tobagonian, and also as a Minister of Tourism, we speak about the importance of Port of Spain, the city as a tourism attraction, city of culture, one of my biggest challenges with Port of Spain and the landfills near Port of Spain, there seems to be a seasonal, or should I say a perennial fire issue at the landfill that cause like a smog, a really nasty smell across the city at times, and I want to know what is being done to treat with issues of this nature; and if it is not just financing, what are the other challenges so that we do not have this conversation for another 16/17 years?

**Mr. Chairman:** May I come in here to just ask in relation to Minister Cudjoe's question? What would SWMCOL be doing, bearing in my mind the dry season has started; and with your two major landfills where there are recurrent fires during the dry season particularly, with the release of toxic methane and fires, costing a lot of money to out the fires and, of course, in the Beetham here where there is dense smoke which causes serious economic and medical difficulties to the population, what would SWMCOL be doing during these few months, or within the immediate future, to prevent the fires at Guanapo, Beetham and Forres Park?

**Mr. Roach:** Thank you. If I may answer the question from member Cudjoe? We all at SWMCOL share that very concern because you are very right, we have been talking about it and you mentioned 1998, but I can go back to 1980 when the master plan for the country which was developed by a team of experienced consultants. Since 1979, we recognized that Guanapo

would have a finite life and that Beetham needed to be closed. Beetham is a landfill in a swamp. If we were to try to do that in today's time we would have the international community crying down on us and not allowing us to do that, but because it has existed since the 1960s it is allowed to continue.

The issue has in fact been, all the time, funding, but I mean, fundamentally, it has been an issue of not understanding the challenges and not understanding the concerns and the repercussions of not dealing with these things. So the slow emissions of lead at Guanapo—the one or two fires that we may have during the dry season and so, they created a short outcry from the population, but then everything goes back to normal and we do not have that full understanding of—

**Mr. Chairman:** CEO, can I come in here? You are beating round the bush. Let us hear what you as the CEO and the Chairman of SWMCOL will do, will do. Forget what has happened in the past. What are your intentions for dealing with the recurrent fires and the three landfills of Trinidad; and also what are you doing—now you indicated that there is a document with the release of lead from the Guanapo site. It releases toxins into the main water system of Trinidad and Tobago, the Caroni Water Treatment Plant. It is your onerous responsibility to protect the nation, to prevent the fires in these three areas, and to protect the nation from the toxic release of lead from Guanapo into the main Caroni Water Treatment Plant. What are your intentions and how swiftly are you going to move to avert these problems? Forget what has happened in the past. We know the history, let us see what you are going to do.

**Mr. Roach:** So as we speak we do have a pilot project that is ongoing at our Guanapo site for the treatment of the leachate there. That is only a pilot and we expect from that pilot that we would get results that will transform that into a full-scale project.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. CEO, a pilot project is an experimental issue. The population is inhaling, what is your definitive plan? You have a Ministry of Public Utilities, you have a Minister of Public Utilities, have you brought this to their attention so that they can assist you? The population needs relief. The children at Forres Park, and the population in the Spring Vale area, two villages are affected on an annual basis from the Forres Park dump. My colleagues who live in the east, and the population who live in the east inhale, on a daily basis during the dry season, toxic fumes emanating from Guanapo, and the Beetham now has major problems. Forget the pilot issue. We are not experimenting here. We need definitive action. What is your definitive action? Can you do the job, or can you not do the job?

**Mr. Roach:** Thank you, Chairman. Definitely we are working with our line Ministry. They do understand, they do recognize these problems, and at the end of the day we can only do as

much as our funds allow us to do. We have lobbied time and time again, and we have shown that to operate the landfill sites in Trinidad and Tobago require a minimum of \$120 million. The landfill sites are civil projects and there are specific requirements that we have to fulfil, there are specific activities that we have to undertake, and when we add up the cost of those activities it is \$120 million. Unless we have \$120 million I cannot guarantee, and nobody that sits in this position can guarantee, that there will be no fires at any of the sites. So once we do not get the \$120 million there is the risk of fires.

Notwithstanding that, we as a team have done all that we can do and we have focused our resources in terms of firefighting for the dry season. We will minimize the chance of fires, and when we do have fires we will minimize the time in which those fires will be dealt with, but we cannot at this point guarantee that there would not be fires during the dry season.

**Mr. Chairman:** This is a sad situation, CEO.

**Mr. Roach:** It is a very sad situation and has been—

**Mr. Chairman:** Chairman, could we hear from you? You are responsible for it and then we probably come to the Permanent Secretary. Well before I go there, my colleague just asked me to ask you to give us a report of that \$120 million you are speaking about; what are the major constituents or elements that may necessitate that \$120 million; and a breakdown of what you consider that you need that money for? I do not think members of this Committee and the national population will be happy to hear you say that you cannot do anything between now and then, but I will give way to my colleagues. Let them ask the questions and if we are not happy we will come back to you. Yes, go ahead Sen. Small.

**Mr. Small:** Thank you, Chairman. This is an area that I wanted to ask about because I have a particular interest in this. This is an ecological disaster. For those of us who live downwind of the Guanapo, that is only one element of it. Could you tell me Mr. CEO, the Guanapo landfill, when it was constructed was it done with what is called geologically impermeable materials lining the landfill; or was it just dug out of the earth and stuff dump in there? I need to understand that.

**Mr. Roach:** We have no site that has linings.

**Mr. Small:** That works for me because what that means is that all of the leachate, which is the liquid that comes through from rain and other decomposition, goes into the earth. So all of the landfills in Trinidad and Tobago now, none of them have—when you are building a landfill, for the information of the Committee, you are supposed to create a layer of something called geologically impermeable material so that the liquid does not get down into the earth and into the water system.

So we are saying here now that all of the terrible stuff that comes from the land is going into our ground water system as it is now. Have you impressed upon the line Ministry the ecological disaster that this could turn out to be for Trinidad and Tobago? I need to understand that because I have a really good understanding of the SO<sub>x</sub>s and NO<sub>x</sub>s, and then the alkalis are particularly bad. I understand quite a bit of this.

**Mr. Roach:** I would just like to add to that, that it is not just municipal solid waste that is received at those landfill sites. So whilst we would like to believe that it is the municipal solid waste sites, we do have medical waste, we do have hazardous waste coming in. So it adds to the problem, and I would just like to ask my colleagues from the Ministry to answer that question about the understanding of the issues that are faced.

**Mr. Chairman:** Before you go there, you are responsible for solid waste, you are the CEO. The Ministry of Public Utilities, you have to take recommendations to them. What are your urgent recommendations that you believe that must be implemented to prevent this situation, or to mitigate the disaster that the national population is subjected to? What are your issues? I think Sen. Cummings may want to ask matters in relation to that. You hear my questions and Sen. Cummings will ask you some more on it.

**Mr. Cummings:** Thank you, Chairman. I now have more questions than I intended to ask initially. Let me start by getting some background information. Can I ask Mr. Mohammed, how long have you been Chairman of SWMCOL?

**Mr. Mohammed:** January of last year.

**Mr. Cummings:** January of last year. Mr. Roach how long have you been the CEO?

**Mr. Roach:** May 2015.

**Mr. Cummings:** May 2015. Before that you were employed at solid waste in another capacity?

**Mr. Roach:** I was General Manager from May 2014—General Manager, Operations.

**Mr. Cummings:** How long in total have you been at that organization?

**Mr. Roach:** I have been back there from May 2014. I came back as the General Manager, Operations. I previously worked at SWMCOL from 1993 to 2001. Left in 2001.

**Mr. Cummings:** So you are quite familiar with the organization. You have been around a while?

**Mr. Roach:** Yes.

**Mr. Cummings:** I am quite alarmed by what I am hearing here this morning because if what we are hearing is true, it means that the country is in a very bad situation—we are being poisoned slowly—and the matter does not seem to be one that is being given the sort of urgent

attention that it should get. So I am asking from SWMCOL now, and this is for the Board and the management, have you put together the urgent proposals and sent to the line Ministry for action on these matters? Apart from just saying that you only get \$75 million and you really need \$120 million, have proposals been placed at the doorstep of the Ministry to put this matter as an urgent matter for attention; and if so, when were those proposals sent and what is the response from the Ministry?

**Mr. Roach:** Definitely in terms of the urgency and the magnitude of the problems, we have made everyone aware of the situation including our line Ministry and including the Ministry of Finance, to the extent that—

**Mr. Cummings:** Let me stop you, Mr. Roach, please, just to let you understand my question. Has the Solid Waste Management Company Limited, in documented form, submitted to the line Ministry the status of where we are at with our waste management and the fact that immediate and urgent attention is required, has that been done?

**Mr. Roach:** Yes, it has been done in no uncertain terms. It has been done through various mechanisms: through our budgets, through our reports, through our position papers with respect to the situation. So we have drawn—

**Mr. Cummings:** So the answer is no? Because what I am asking is have you—you are detailing to me, in the routine normal course of matters, that you have submitted your budgets and so forth to the Ministry, and that is not what I am asking. What we have heard here this morning is that we have a situation where our watercourse is being poisoned by lead and other toxic substances, and what I am asking specifically is, has the Solid Waste Management Company put this matter to the attention of the Ministry as an urgent matter that requires immediate attention? If it was not done, it is not a problem. It has to be done.

**Mr. Roach:** And again the answer is, yes, and again I would like to allow the representatives from the Ministry to answer that as well.

**Mr. Cummings:** Okay, let me ask the PS, Mr. Suite. Let me just ask the PS. Mr. Suite, is the Ministry in receipt of information from SWMCOL in relation to what I just asked earlier on?

**Mr. Suite:** Yes.

**Mr. Cummings:** The answer is yes?

**Mr. Suite:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** Could we therefore be privy to the report that you sent to the Ministry of Public Utilities so we could have a clear understanding; and could you enunciate in a few short sentences what are some of the mitigation procedures or processes that you are asking the Ministry of Public Utilities to support you in, particularly with one instance where the Minister

of Public Utilities has indicated publicly that the Beetham site will be relocated? So in context of what Sen. Cummings is asking, could you elucidate with some clear sharp points what your proposals are, what you are asking the Ministry of Public Utilities to do? And we will look for submissions from you on the paper that you sent to the Ministry of Public Utilities.

**Mr. Roach:** Definitely. So both Beetham and Guanapo sites, they need to be closed. There is no doubt about that. Beetham and Guanapo, collectively, they receive about three-quarters of the country's waste. So there is no way to close those sites without having an alternative. What that alternative is, is to have a centrally located site. That central site is earmarked for Forres Park. So the country needs one central landfill site and that site has been identified through various studies throughout the years for Forres Park.

So the first thing that needs to be done is that we need to develop a brand new sanitary landfill engineered site with liners, with leachate collection and treatment systems, with gas venting, with air quality and water quality monitoring on an ongoing basis and that needs to be set up, and that in itself is a tremendous investment.

The second thing that needs to be done is that Beetham and Guanapo, they need to be converted to transfer stations. So waste will still come in there because the waste from the East-West Corridor, it needs a place to go and waste will still come into each of these sites. But instead of being buried, the recyclables would be sorted out and the residual waste will then go to the central landfill site through a system of mass transfers—so trailer trucks and walking floor trailers and so.

And then thirdly, we need to remediate both sites because the waste that has already been buried will continue to decompose and will continue to cause problems for the environment. So we need to have systems that will collect the leachate, systems that will collect the methane, or at least fend the methane to avoid explosive build-ups and so. So it is a three-pronged approach. Of course, added to that, we need a proper public education programme, we need support services, we need rehabilitation of the scavengers that use these sites currently. So those are some support services that go along with that.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Roach, thank you for that information. How advanced are the plans for the development of the site at Forres Park?

**Mr. Roach:** We have the conceptual designs completed and we now need to go out for detail, the designs and tender documents.

**Mr. Chairman:** What time frame are you looking for if you are to implement Forres Park as the main dumping site? And I have some questions for you on that, but Minister Crichlow-Cockburn will also ask some questions, following Sen. Cummings

**Mr. Roach:** We are looking at, by the end of fiscal year 2016/2017 to have the tender process completed.

**Mr. Chairman:** The end of this fiscal year?

**Mr. Roach:** Yes.

**Mr. Cummings:** I just have some other questions unrelated to what we were discussing. In terms of indiscriminate dumping in legal dump sites, does the Solid Waste Management Company Limited play a role in the control of that?

**Mr. Roach:** No, we do not. Our original mandate was for collection and disposal of the country's waste. Due to objections from the regional corporations in particular, that mandate was reduced only to the disposal of the waste at our three sites. So that is what we are responsible for. Having said that, we do work with other regional corporations in the past, with Ministry of Local Government, to assist and to do work in remediation of some of those older dump sites as well.

**Mr. Cummings:** In terms of the industrial waste from the various industrial estates that we have in the country, how is that treated with?

**Mr. Roach:** There are various mechanisms for the treatment of that waste. SWMCOL is not fully involved in those. We do assist again where possible and we can receive some amount of treated waste. However, the responsibility for treatment of the waste, we do not have those capabilities and there are other private companies that are involved in that. A number of those companies in the industrial sector, they do re-export their waste to avoid having to treat it in Trinidad, but there are some other private companies involved in treatment of special types of waste.

**Mr. Cummings:** Which is the agency that monitors that activity?

**Mr. Roach:** That is the responsibility of the Environmental Management Authority.

**Mr. Cummings:** Just before I move on, you mentioned that there is a shredding facility now for tyres, where is that located?

**Mr. Roach:** So it is a mobile facility. However, generally, we have it based at either our Beetham location or our transfer station site in Sea Lots. However, depending on the volumes, we do go to different clients and to different regional corporations including the Tobago House of Assembly. We would have done work in Tobago during the course of last year.

**Mr. Cummings:** I am concerned about that because I have noticed that there are a lot of illegal dumping of tyres and it might be because that facility is not yet ready to accept the volume of tyres that we have coming in from the various tyre dealers.

**Mr. Roach:** That is not the case, but I will let my General Manager, Communications, Sales

and Marketing, just give you a little bit more information on the services that we offer and some of the constraints that we face.

**Mr. Manswell:** Pleasant morning. Member, regrettably I have to disagree with you in that regard. We charge a fee for the disposal of the tyres.

**Mr. Cummings:** Not sure exactly what you are disagreeing with.

**Mr. Manswell:** As it relates to why the tyres are indiscriminately dumped on the landscape of Trinidad. What we have found is that certain garages, they prefer to have someone come and collect the tyres and they do not care what happen to tyres after. Notwithstanding though, we have some of the larger garages—which I will not call their names—or tyre dealers, who came to SWMCOL and we provide what is known as a disposal certificate. So if you walk in to those dealerships they will have a disposal certificate saying X amount of tyres were shredded. We took it as far as going into some of the regional corporations and I must compliment Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation, where they held meetings with their tyres dealers and they instructed their tyre dealers that they will send the litter wardens to make sure that their tyres were being disposed of. Now why we applaud them, because without any involvement of major legislation they took the initiative, and that is what we plan to see rolling out through the other municipalities throughout Trinidad and Tobago. So it is a matter of people having the will and desire to make sure that their tyres are properly disposed of.

We compliment Tobago as well. When the Zika virus just came in—we have the tyre machine here and the THA was the first. We have 14 municipalities in Trinidad, but Tobago is the first that called us and said, “Listen, we have an issue at our landfill. We need the tyres disposed of”, and the machine was there within four days. So that is what I am saying, it is not as matter of the system not in place, or the infrastructure not in place, at all.

**Mr. Chairman:** Minister Crichlow-Cockburn or Minister Shamfa.

**Miss Cudjoe:** I am very aware of the collaboration between SWMCOL and the Tobago House of Assembly and the good work that have been done as it relates to tyre shredding, can you bring us up to speed on the Tobago Pride project that would have started, I think a year ago, with the Tobago Heritage Festival where you sort the bottles in the trash and so on, what is the status of that?

**Mr. Manswell:** The status at this time is based on two things. One, they were going into the THA elections and then a matter of funding. But as it relates to the status, they have the elements in place and I am talking about the THA as well. We provided a form of consultancy to the THA as it relates to how they could go separating their waste, and we believe it will work there due to the size and volume of waste.

They came on board and, as you said, Miss Cudjoe, at the heritage festival last year they started separating their waste. They encouraged their population to separate the waste at source and we see that as an important initiative, and we see the viability in it. What we told them going forward is that SWMCOL would provide stuff like bailers and further training and development for the staff so that they could become entrepreneurs out of it. They could either send the waste abroad and get revenue, or that waste could be transferred into other useable items.

So that is the status as it relates to that, but we must compliment the Tobago Pride initiative because one of the other areas that we spoke about and we gave them advice on, is all the green waste that they have there is to turn it into compost which will then aid with the hoteliers there because most of their clientele like to eat organic foods. So that is some of the consultancy that we have given them and that is the status at this point in time.

**Miss Cudjoe:** I have one more question since you raised the matter of green waste. Has there been a waste characterization study so that we know what amount or what percentage of waste is domestic, industrial, or commercial, or even the type of waste as it relates to the different studies over the years? Because our waste today would be much different from our waste 20 years ago and as our lifestyle change and our economic activity changes, then there is need for different types of sub-policies and even strategies in treatment of waste. I know at one point in time, for instance, in Tobago, we had a challenge with how do you dispose your old computer CPU because we are now getting laptops. Are there sub-policies and strategies at SWMCOL for matters relating to that? Even people administering medicine at home using needles at home, what are the policies and strategies relating to that, please? If you do not have one could you tell when it would be done; and if you do have one could you provide a copy of those sub-policies and recommendations to the Committee?

**Mr. Roach:** Right. The last waste classification exercise that would have been done for Trinidad—I am not too sure Tobago, but certainly in Trinidad—was in 2010. So that is the latest available information. And you are very right, since then population would have changed, the lifestyles would have changed and so on, and the waste characterization would in fact have changed.

**11.45 a.m.**

So there is definitely a need to do a new one especially in light of waste energy as well. For waste energy, a waste classification is critical to determine sizing of plant and the BTU output. With respect to policy and dealing with the different types of waste and so, one of the things that I do need to say as well is that within the last year and a half or so, an inter-ministerial team was established and we were responsible for overseeing a consultant to

develop a national waste strategy for the country. And that strategy is now in final draft form and, in fact, it should have been finalized by the end of January of 2017, but it seems to be a little bit delayed. And that strategy and action plan actually deals comprehensively with waste management in Trinidad and Tobago and looks specifically at all the different waste streams, including the food waste stream for composting, including the streams for recycling and so. So that document certainly is a road map for waste management into the future and deals comprehensively with waste management in the country.

**Mrs. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Roach, I would have gone through your submissions. I also looked at the responses made in response to questions posed and nowhere in any of those documents would I have seen any information to the effect that Trinidad, in particular, is facing a situation where our watercourses are threatened. So I want to know in doing, in preparing your strategic plan, did you present a current state analysis that would have clearly indicated that our watercourses are under threat, lead is being leaked into our watercourses or did you simply indicate, as stated here, that you are going to engage in the remediation of the Guanapo and Beetham landfills and that one of your major projects is installation of the leachate treatment system. Because if it is just stated like that it does not give—

**Mr. Cummings:** Urgency.

**Mrs. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Yes, the urgency that is required and I am wondering because if the Ministry of Public Utilities would have received that document we certainly did not pick up how urgent it was. So I am wondering in your submission, what did your submission contain? Did you indicate the urgency of the situation or did you simply indicate these are projects that we would like to engage in which may suggest that it is not as critical as it is.

**Mr. Roach:** That is a fair enough statement. In responding to the questions, yeah, I simply did respond to those questions. However, with respect to correspondence to the Ministry and so, they certainly do understand the urgency. They are very well aware of the critical challenges that we face in all aspects at all the sites and they have been working with us to address those problems.

**Mrs. Crichlow-Cockburn:** So the Committee would like to be presented with all of those documents. In addition, you said that the company does not engage in any environmental monitoring. So what tests have been done to determine, yes, there is lead in the system or how serious is it? What tests have been done that SWMCOL understands that, listen, there really is a problem?

**Mr. Roach:** So that project would have been done with UWI, through UWI. So UWI would

have in fact done that testing to confirm that there was lead among other things in the watercourse.

**Mr. Chairman:** How long ago?

**Mr. Roach:** At the end of 2014.

**Mr. Chairman:** Have you done any subsequent to that?

**Mr. Roach:** We are currently doing tests based on the system that we have there for the treatment—

**Mr. Chairman:** So you are relying on information given three years ago and telling us how much lead is in the system? Is the general population aware of that report? And we as the members of this Committee must become aware of that and this is what the Minister is asking for. Could you send a copy of that for us? But tell us, what does it have inside it, 2014? What does the report have?

**Mr. Roach:** So the report would have looked at the effluence within the Guanapo River and there is another river on the other side, I cannot remember the name right now, and it would have identified that there were three parameters in particular, lead was the main one that was above the requirements set out by the EMA for—

**Mr. Chairman:** How many times above, the requirement? You are the CEO, you should have that basic understanding. What is the minimal requirement and what value, how many times that minimal requirement was that lead within the system.

**Mr. Roach:** It was slightly above the minimum.

**Mr. Chairman:** Slightly is not very comparative. Was it one time, two times, three times?

**Mr. Roach:** It was not two times. So it was between what it should have been and two times that.

**Mr. Chairman:** You have the values for that?

**Mr. Roach:** I do not have the values offhand but that—

**Mr. Chairman:** Can you send that report to us?

**Mr. Roach:** That is definitely something I would send.

**Mr. Chairman:** Would you undertake to do another report, quickly?

**Mr. Roach:** So as I said, we are currently doing testing now and once those results are available we would as well submit that.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Thank you kindly, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Roach, you did indicate that you became the General Manager, Operations in 2014. May I enquire when in 2014, please?

**Mr. Roach:** June 2014.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** May I further enquire, you said in 2014 UWI identified that there is

lead in our watercourses. May I enquire when in 2014 such a report was received?

**Mr. Roach:** May have been October or in the latter months of 2014.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** In October. May I further enquire upon such a frightening report being sent to the organization, was this information a subject of a special report to the Ministry to which SWMCOL was aligned?

**Mr. Roach:** I am not too sure if it was a separate report, but it was certainly a separate meeting that we had with the Ministry to discuss the situation and of course—*[Interruption]*

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Mr. Roach, now we are dealing organizationally here. There are certain processes that have to be gone through. If such a report is sent to SWMCOL I would expect that SWMCOL, through your good self, would have penned an urgent report to the line Ministry requesting urgent action. I am just trying to determine whether or not SWMCOL reacted in the manner it should have in the protection of the public's interest. Because lead in our watercourses is a very serious problem that requires urgent attention.

So that if in 2014 such a report was submitted, what was the response, having a meeting is a follow-up to SWMCOL documenting the fact that, listen, based on this report from UWI we have a potential ecological disaster on our hands, and thereby allowing the line Ministry or the then line Minister to take an urgent note to Cabinet for the allocation of the necessary funds. And I am trying to determine whether or not SWMCOL laid that kind of important groundwork so that the Cabinet of the day could have addressed that issue.

**Mr. Roach:** We definitely did and everyone was aware of the seriousness of the situation and what was required to deal with the situation. So that information was communicated to the Ministry. We had meetings with the Ministry based on that situation and we provided information as to what was the resolution, which was to install a treatment plant.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** So what was the resultant effect of such discussions on this grave issue? Did a plan emerge? If a plan emerged, what was the plan to address the issue?

**Mr. Roach:** Yeah, I think I answered that. The plan was to install—we have a problem with leachate and the only solution to that is to treat with the leachate and that requires the installation of a treatment plant. SWMCOL went out and we got cost for a treatment plant and we submitted our documents to get funding for the installation of that plant. That plant was 24—

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** When were those proposals submitted for the installation of the plant?

**Mr. Roach:** At that same time. It would have been just after that.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Are we looking at 2014, 2015? When did you all submit it?

**Mr. Roach:** At the end of 2014, beginning 2015, within that time frame and I will provide the

specifics of that.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Just as a follow-up, SWMCOL did indicate that a consultant was hired to perform an operational review of the landfill activities. Is that consultant the same consultant you mentioned a little while ago regarding the development of a national waste strategy and action plan? Is that the same consultant?

**Mr. Roach:** Sorry, I am a little bit confused. The consultant that I referred to was the one to develop the national waste strategy.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Now I am asking you, Mr. Roach, in SWMCOL's responses, the response if I should really give you a little background. In response to the question that was posed, "How was the allocation of funds evaluated to assess value for money in terms of economy efficiency and effectiveness?", SWMCOL advised that a consultant was hired to perform an operational review of the landfill activities. So I am asking whether or not—  
[*Interruption*]

**Mr. Roach:** Okay, sorry, no that is not the same consultant.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** That is another consultant?

**Mr. Roach:** Correct.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Mr. Chairman, this is a very serious situation and I think all of us here and the whole population have a right to be extremely worried at this point in time.

**Mr. Chairman:** A follow-up from—well, before—I will let Sen. Small ask his question.

**Mr. Small:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This issue has overtaken the enquiry. I would like the Chairman and the CEO to state for the public record, my understanding is that there is no safe level of lead for children. Children are drinking water. Every medical, anybody with any scientific journey will tell you there is no safe level of lead tolerable in the bodies of children. What you have said here is that since 2014 you know for a fact that lead is going into the water system. In any other more developed country they would have told people to stop drinking the municipal water and start drinking bottle water. So I am struggling mentally here to understand that if you had gone and said we have found that there is lead going into the national water system and tell the Ministry, we need to shut this down now and we need to put out an advisory to those being affected. Instead, we have a benign document and some really benign responses that do not seem to capture how grave this issue is.

**Mr. Chairman:** And the urgency of the situation.

**Mr. Small:** The urgency of this. There is no safe level. So if the children are drinking that water, our children are drinking lead. And lead causes learning disabilities, all sorts of challenges.

**Mr. Chairman:** And what is even more disturbing is that this was done, the last one was done in 2014—

**Mr. Small:** It is scary.

**Mr. Chairman:**—and there has been no subsequent determination by SWMCOL to determine any future action, whether 2015, 2016 and 2017. And up to today you have not told us what you are prepared to do about it. That is very frightening.

**Mr. Small:** I would have liked to see, Mr. Chairman, with respect, that the company put out and say listen we have found lead, make it a national emergency and allow the Ministry to tap them up after.

**Mr. Chairman:** Can we get some understanding from between the Permanent Secretary, the Minister—*[Interruption]*

**12.00 noon**

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Mr. Roach, I seem to recall you indicating that UWI is undertaking— SWMCOL has requested another study to determine the level of lead still in our water courses. Did I get that correctly a little while ago?

**Mr. Roach:** Well, it is happening now. I did not say UWI but, yes, we are—

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Who is doing it?

**Mr. Roach:** There is a consultant that is doing it as part of the pilot project that we are doing.

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

**Mr. Roach:** That consultant is Oceans EWS Treatment Limited engineering.

**Mr. Chairman:** When was it commissioned?

**Mr. Roach:** About four months ago.

**Mr. Chairman:** And four months later you have not gotten a report of that, just to test the water system?

**Mr. Roach:** The project to install the pilot system was commissioned four months ago.

**Mr. Chairman:** When do you expect to get a report from that, to tell us how much lead is in the system?

**Mr. Roach:** I would say within another month or so we will have a comprehensive report.

**Mr. Chairman:** Are you satisfied it is taking five months for a company—is it a local company or a foreign company?

**Mr. Roach:** Oceans EWS is an international company. It is based in Canada but they do work—

**Mr. Chairman:** Are you really satisfied that five months you are waiting? Because you know that lead is in the system. You commission another enquiry, investigation into it for analysis

and you are waiting five months? Is that satisfactory, CEO?

**Mr. Roach:** No, no, it is certainly not satisfactory. It is not satisfactory that we are doing a pilot project and—

**Mr. Chairman:** So what are you doing about your dissatisfaction?

**Mr. Roach:** I am discussing and dealing with the Ministry for their urgent support.

**Mr. Chairman:** You think that it is time for you to demit your office?

**Mr. Roach:** And I will take note of that. Thank you.

**Miss Cudjoe:** Chairman, allow me to intervene at this time because I am having much difficulty listening to this conversation now, because we are talking about this discovery like it is a new discovery of 2014. We are in 2017 and a discovery in 2014 is not so new. And if our records take us back to a joint select committee in December of 2011, it was reported to the Joint Select Committee that this problem at Guanapo of this black juice running off of Guanapo had been happening for 30 years—right—which takes us all the way back to 1980, before I was born.

And then in 2009 CARIRI would have done a study that stated that there was 0.03, whatever the measurement is, which was more than what the US would have stated as it relates to lead being in the water. I might not have the right terms, Chairman, but this is not new. So I “kinda” understand the CEO’s frustration but I want us all to understand the impact and the challenges and the concern of the national public. This is older than I am.

So this is a systematic problem and I see us here throwing the ball between the Ministry, the state enterprise and all the systems over the years. What is being done as we go forward? Thirty years from now when I am 65, I “doh” want to be having this conversation. I might not even live to see the other 30 years. Chairman, I think you have my point.

**Mr. Roach:** Thank you, Miss Cudjoe, and I am glad you said that and, yeah, you are so right. So, I mean, I am glad to be the one taking the stick for it but this is not a problem overnight, this is a problem from decades of neglect of the waste management sector. I just happen to be the one here and I am glad that I am the one here to have to deal with it. But it has to be dealt with and I am as exasperated as anybody else and I am glad to see the shock amongst you all because it is the same shock that I had when I have asked for \$24 million, when everybody seemed to have understood the problem, and then we got \$1 million. It is a slap in the face and it is an insult to waste management in the country.

And I would further add, I was also part of the programme for the lead remediation project in Demerara, which was a similar situation and that came about because a child in the Demerara community died, and it was only when that happened that people got up and took

notice and started dealing with the problem. And I am questioning whether we need to wait on something like that to happen again, because we have done as much as we can do and we have communicated the problem.

This came up in another Public Accounts Committee last year which I was in front of a panel just like this and questions were asked and everybody was in an uproar and then life went back to normal. Carnival is coming up and I am sure life will go back to normal until somebody decides that we need to have an urgent intervention and get the money that is required, not just to deal with this—because this is Guanapo and this is one site—but we also have the problem at each of our other sites and it will continue and it will get worse until something is done about it.

**Mr. Chairman:** Who is going to undertake the responsibility to urgently remediate this situation? You have the permanent secretary from the Ministry; you have the chairman of the board. Can we get some answers?

**Mr. Suite:** Perhaps I can bring some clarification. One needs to look at the process by which we allocate funding to the different projects. I mean, SWMCOL, over the years, whether it is this Ministry or the previous Ministries, I am sure in the budget submissions would have highlighted this issue, would have made the various recommendations and would have indicated what is the funding required for it. There would be internal discussions at the Ministry and SWMCOL to get a deeper understanding of the issues involved, and then the Ministry, along with SWMCOL, would have discussions with both the Ministry of Finance in terms of recurrent funding, as well as the Ministry of Planning and Development in terms of what is required for the development programme.

The CEO would have indicated earlier that based on their studies and their discussions, he would have asked for \$24 million for the leachate to deal with at that particular site. In the previous fiscal year the allocation was \$1 million. In this fiscal year the allocation is zero. And it is really in terms of determining what are the priorities because based on all the requests that you get perennially, year after year, it is five and six times what is available for the funding. So it is a matter of determining what the priorities are in terms of allocation funding. And I think in this discussion that is coming out here, it is sort of crystallizing a little more and it is good that these sessions are, in fact, open to the public and bringing forward some of the issues, and I will give the undertaking that for this budget exercise that is now beginning for the next fiscal year, that in addition to the discussions and the submissions coming from SWMCOL, perhaps we need to include some of the recordings of this meeting and these discussions to further emphasize the point, because it is, in fact, a serious point.

Yes, you can do certain things to mitigate it, but in the end it comes down to funding. And a policy decision has to be taken in terms of how it is to be funded, whether or not you take funding from other projects or other priorities, or whether you generate additional revenue, as we talked about the tipping fee and fees for disposal. And that is the discussion that needs to take place at a policy level, at a more holistic level in dealing with some of these issues.

I mean, we speak about waste-to-energy. Now, waste-to-energy may not—if you take it as an energy policy, it may not be feasible because it is not the most economic form of treating with—providing fuel for energy. But if you deal with it from a waste disposal issue in terms of reducing the amount of waste that you put into your landfills, then you have a different discussion. And, again, this has to also take into consideration when you deal with an overall waste management policy in terms of recycling, et cetera. If you were following the news recently you would have seen where, in Sweden, they started off with a waste-to-energy policy and then they went into recycling and their recycling efforts were so successful they are now having a problem in terms of the amount of waste to provide for energy, and they are actually importing waste from neighbouring countries to feed their waste energy policy.

So it calls for prioritization, and I think we have established here this morning that it is a very urgent and critical environmental matter and it is not theoretical. You do not need to do, to my mind, further studies to emphasize how bad it is, because between 2014 and now, when the study was done, things would have only gotten worse because you would have added more trash to the area and you have not been dealing with the leachate issue. And I think, going forward, priority has to be placed in terms of an overall, overarching environmental policy which falls under the Ministry of Planning and Development and the waste management component of it which falls under the Ministry of Public Utilities.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much, Permanent Secretary. But bearing in mind your conversation here, is there anything you believe within your portfolio at the moment that you can do to help remediate the urgent situation, particularly, one, in relation to the release of the lead toxin and, two, the recurrent fires at the three landfills? Is there anything that you believe in your portfolio, as Permanent Secretary, you could make recommendations and help in the remediation of this disastrous situation?

**Mr. Suite:** All right. I will do the second question first. In terms of mitigating the fires at the various landfills, we are having discussions with WASA in terms of using the silt from the reservoir to cover the waste at the various landfills and that would mitigate it to a certain extent. In terms of the leachate, well, there are two discussions currently taking place. One is the waste-to-energy discussion and part of the expression of interest that is going out speaks to the

waste characterization issue. That has to be part of the consultancy dealing with the expressions of interest. So that waste characterization will give you some idea of what is going into the landfills and dealing with the consequence, leachate, coming out of that.

But in terms of actually removing or taking out the leachate, there are only two things which can be done. One is the plan that the CEO had spoken about before, and we cannot really address that at this point in time, I mean in this fiscal year, unless you get some additional funds at some point in the year. And the second would be the more long-term plan which is the new site for the Forres Park and the consequent permeable layer at the bottom. Thank you.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Thank you, Chair. Mr. PS, well let me just go back to the point I was making earlier to Mr. Roach, because if lead is discovered in our watercourses, that is of national import and concern, and therefore ought to have been a subject of a special report to be placed before the Cabinet so that the Cabinet could understand the potential disaster for the citizenry of Trinidad and Tobago, and as a consequence of that, a policy position would have emerged. Am I not correct? So the situation has not changed. The allocation for the funding for such a project ought not to be dealt with in the common run of things that Ministries are allocated under your PSIP projects—the normal, and your mid-year review. This is a national problem that required a concentrated focus.

In terms of the waste-to-energy discussions, one would have to deal with it in a holistic way, but the priority issue has to be the lead in our watercourses and what are some of the effects it is likely to have, and what kind of corrective action, whether it is a phased corrective action: phase one, phase two, phase three.

As a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago, I am very concerned, and I know every other citizen ought to be concerned, and I am saying it is not too late for a special report to be placed before the Cabinet on this issue so that the Minister of Finance could be sensitized that it is not a situation to merely allocate funds for some project, some PSIP project, in SWMCOL, but it is a situation that requires a concentrated focus. And if such information is not brought to the attention of the Minister of Finance, how is he expected to respond in giving SWMCOL the necessary allocation?

**12.15 p.m.**

**Mr. Chairman:** Follow up to that. Could you consider, Permanent Secretary, seeking the support of the Minister, to make representation under the mid-term review to get some funding for that?

**Mr. Suite:** Certainly, Minister. Sorry, Chair. Just for clarification, all projects in the PSIP would, by necessity, require Cabinet approval. I do not know what, if anything went in 2014

to Cabinet. So I will undertake to review what went, or did not go, and we could review this. As the suggestion of the other Member, we can treat with this with a matter of urgency and submit to Cabinet a full report on what came out in 2014, and they need to address this.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Yes, certainly.

**Miss Cudjoe:** Chairman, might I add, while I join my colleagues in needing SWMCOL to speak to, or to react to, or request for the corrective measures, I think that the conversation and the direction in going forward should also speak to preventative measures. I think that SWMCOL and all stakeholders related to solid waste management have a bigger role to play in the development of the country, in all different Ministries, because as I said, as lifestyles and even Government policy changes, even something as simple as you expand a CDAP or health care programme to allow people to use certain health care tools and equipment at home, how you dispose of those things. A computer in every house, things of that nature, how does SWMCOL intervene, or play a role from the very early stages so we are not just treating with preventative action?

I will give you an example from Tobago at Cove Eco-Industrial Park. For somebody to get on to the park, to be an applicant to be admitted to the park, we have to have a good understanding and an appreciation for how they are going to manage their waste. Does SWMCOL play that kind of role, or have that relationship with the Ministry of Trade and Industry at it relates to waste management at the different industrial parks? Are we moving towards simply having industrial parks to eco-industrial parks? What kind of role is SWMCOL playing in collaborating with not just Government Ministries, other state entities like the EMA and other bodies that treat with waste disposals? So it calls for a comprehensive review of what we are doing and not just corrective measures, but preventative measures as we go forward.

**Mr. Roach:** Yes, definitely. One of the things that would have happened in 1980 was that SWMCOL was formed, but it was based on the recommendation from the Planning and Standing Associates Consultancy, and that recommendation actually called for the establishment of a solid waste management authority for the country and that authority was never established. Since then, SWMCOL and other players have called for that authority and that is still what is required. So the national strategy and action plan, again, does indicate the need for an authority, and you would find that in the rest of the Caribbean, in the rest of the world, where waste management is done to the international accepted levels, and so.

PS spoke about Sweden and so. They have waste management authorities that have the authority to get involved in waste management even from the planning issue and, importantly

as well, from the public education issue, because one of the challenges in Trinidad is that the public is not aware of what is involved in waste management. So we again, we are very much in favour and very much in support of the need for a waste management authority to deal with these things because as a company, our mandate is solely for disposal of the waste when it is received at our gates and that limits us to a great extent.

So we are hoping that with this document being finalized, and being approved by the Cabinet, that it would be a way forward for that proactive approach that you speak about.

**Mr. Chairman:** So you are saying that work is under way for the development of this national waste management authority for submission to Cabinet?

**Mr. Roach:** It is a national strategy that has to be submitted and that as one of the action items, yes, calls for a waste management authority.

**Mr. Chairman:** And where are you in relation to it?

**Mr. Roach:** The draft final document was prepared. There was an established committee amongst all the stakeholders, we reviewed and provided our comments, and the final document should have been prepared and submitted by the end of January gone here, but it seems to be a little bit delayed. So it is imminent that the final document would be prepared. The Ministry of Planning and Development, they have taken charge of that and they are the ones following up on that, but as I said it is imminent.

**Mr. Chairman:** You said that part of the proposals is to close the Guanapo and the Beetham and relocate it to the Forest Park dump.

**Mr. Roach:** Well to—yeah, to transfer the residual waste to the Forest Park. So what is planned is that Guanapo and Beetham will become transfer stations and material recovery facilities. So waste will come in there, the recoverables, the recyclables, the metals, the plastics and so will be taken out for recycling, and then the residual waste, things that cannot be recycled, will then go toward to the final disposal site at Forest park.

**Mr. Chairman:** Well, you are taking it to a site that is already creating problems, and two villages are affect—

**Mr. Roach:** Right and—

**Mr. Chairman:** Hold on—Spring Vale, and there is found to be an increase incidents of cancer in that surrounding area. I am a cancer specialist—1988 to now—nearly 28 years. This is a worrying issue, and the Member of Parliament for Tabaquite is extremely concerned for his constituents and for the school children who are affected by this emission of smoke regularly from the Forres Park dump. So you are taking problems from Beetham and Guanapo and you are putting it to another problem situation already existing in Forres Park, and then the

roadway to the dump at Forres Park is thrown with over 1,000 truckloads of dump on the way and there are scavengers using guns to threaten people and so on, are you aware of that and what is your role? Have you brought it to the attention of EMA and so on? How are you going to deal with that situation already a disastrous problem at Forres Park, where on the regular basis children have to leave their schools, villagers are affected by the fumes and increase incidents of cancer in that area? So we have a national disaster as far as waste management is concerned, and therefore, this needs urgent, urgent attention. Let us hear your views on it.

**Mr. Roach:** Right. So in the national integrated system that is proposed, it cannot be that we have a smoking dump site. It has to be that it is a properly engineered site, and in any properly engineered site it has to be a showcase, it has to be an area where those same students can come and learn about proper waste management, about the need for recycling, where they can commune in a park-like environment and so. That is how a modern sanitary landfill site should be run and that is what we need in Trinidad. There is no reason that we cannot have such a site—

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Roach, what are you doing? You said that you are taking material from Guanapo and Beetham, you are taking it to Forres Park. Forres Park is burning, Forres Park emitting smoke. It has greater incidents of cancer, what are you doing at SWMCOL?

**Mr. Roach:** By no means are we going to take waste from Beetham and Guanapo to our existing site at Forres Park. What I would have indicated is the first step is to build a sanitary engineered landfill site at Forres Park. That was step No. 1. We cannot do anything without doing that. It has to be a sanitary engineered landfill site. It has to operate according to international standards, and once that is done then, as I said, communities can exist. All around communities can be part of the landfill site. Communities can be part of the golf courses that are created from the fill waste that is properly manicured and so. That is how an international site must run—

**Mr. Chairman:** Are you going to make recommendations for that, and when, and how? The PS wants to speak about it.

**Mr. Suite:** I just wanted to clarify for the Committee, that the Ministry of Planning and Development is responsible for environmental policy, planning and management. As we speak, they are presently developing an integrated solid waste management plan and that will deal with some of the questions you have in terms of recycling disposal, et cetera, and placing of sites in terms of a more holistic approach to dealing with waste—because management is just one component of that solid waste management plan. SWMCOL is the implementing agency to deal with the waste management which is really managing the dump sites per se, and

the construction of a new dump site that meets international standards. But the overall overarching policy is something that is coming out of the Ministry of Planning and Development and they are involved in that.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, PS. Mr. Roach, is there anything that you contemplate doing to ease the affected population in that area close to the Forres Park area, and to remove the thousands of truckloads of dump on the way to that dump site?

**Mr. Roach:** Certainly. I and my team, we are very much concerned about that as well. When there are fires we are out on the sites, we are in that community. So I am very familiar with the problem that exist. We have spent a lot of time within the last year at Forres Park focusing on reengineering what we have there to minimize the impacts of fires and to minimize as well the response time. So I am quite comfortable that this year, of all years, we would have much less problems at all our sites, but in particular at Forres Park with respect to fires we have done quite a good job at relocating what is called the tipping area to an area that we can more comfortably work along and cover the waste much more regularly than we would have done before.

So I am hopeful that in the immediate future that we will have minimal problems. The problem of the entrance way to that site, again is of concern to us and we have been in discussions with the regional corporation and with the EMA. We have formally brought that matter to the EMA's attention—

**Mr. Chairman:** There seems to be a shift in allocation of responsibilities, one blaming the regional corporation, blaming the EMA, blaming you, how are you solving it?

**Mr. Roach:** The thing about it is that we see ourselves as having an integral role to play in that situation, but we do—

**Mr. Chairman:** Where the dump is?

**Mr. Roach:**—need the help of the regional corporation as well, and we have indicated that and they have agreed. In fact, this weekend gone was the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo leg of the national clean-up. So we would have to some extent addressed that problem. One of the challenges that we do have on the site as well is—

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Permit me, Mr. Chairman? Mr. Roach, are you saying that last weekend the clean-up campaign that the hon. Minister of Rural Development and Local Government would have focused on cleaning up that landfill?

**Mr. Roach:** Not the landfill, the Couva—

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Would have cleaned up the road to that—

**Mr. Roach:**—Tabaquite area.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Are you sure about that? Because I was part and parcel of that initiative last weekend and I am not too sure that the information you are giving is totally accurate.

**Mr. Roach:** In what respect?

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** In terms of focus being paid last weekend to starting the clean-up on the roadway to the dump that you are referring to.

**Mr. Roach:** Yes, yes. I mean, the focus was not paid on it, but that would have been part of plan when it came to Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo.

**12.30 p.m.**

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** No, I am saying the information you just gave to the Chairman and the rest of us may not have been completely accurate to the extent that focus would have been paid to that particular problem that the Chairman is raising.

**Mr. Roach:** All right, let me be clear—*[Interruption]*

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** And attention would have been paid or begun to be paid last weekend and I am challenging the veracity of such a statement.

**Mr. Roach:** Let me just clarify what I am saying. So this weekend there was the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo leg of the clean-up. We had a meeting between SWMCOL and the Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation where we agreed that we will take this opportunity to have that area properly cleaned up. One of the problems that we have had is the lack of policing in that area. SWMCOL does not have a police force on the Forres Park site and that is a major problem for us with respect to keeping that road clean and that is something that we have asked the regional corporation to help us with and once we got that we would have been able to clean up the road and they agreed to provide that support at this time so that we can have that road cleaned up and it is our intention at SWMCOL to bring back the police force on that site so that we can continue to have that road cleaned.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Mr. Roach, one, we are very mindful of that information, but I was challenging what you said that the clean-up campaign that began with Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation did not focus on beginning the clean-up in the area that the Chairman—that is what I was clarifying.

**Mr. Roach:** If I gave that impression, I apologize. That was not the impression and I was not—*[Interruption]*

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** And I accept that.

**Mr. Roach:** I was not trying to give that impression.

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** I accept that because I know it is not true, I was there, I was part of it.

But just to advance the discussion a bit, in your written responses to the questions posed and this is the question that was posed to SWMCOL by us, “Has an approved documented disaster recovery plan been prepared?” In your responses you said, no documented disaster recovery plan has been prepared. To you, Mr. Chairman of SWMCOL, against that background is your board focusing on the development of a disaster recovery plan? And if your answer is in the affirmative, how soon do you anticipate a draft document?

**Mr. Mohammed:** Mr. Chair, we have not really looked at that as separate. We are in fact looking at a lot of policies for the whole of SWMCOL. That is one of them. And we have a list of—was it 10 policies? It is a series of them that we are looking at, at this point in time, inclusive of the recovery plan and we expect to have all of those in draft form within about three months, inclusive of the recovery plan.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay, we are coming close to the end. We might not be able to get the answers from this meeting, but can you be kind enough to consider sending information to us on what mechanisms that you will be putting in place or have put in place to prevent the dumping of tyres. I know you have started the shredding, but at a national level, what mechanisms SWMCOL—or what policy you would put into place to implement and to prevent the dumping of tyres and, of course, work with other corporations?

The second, is there any consideration for a modern incinerator system at a national level to help in this? And the third, could you give us the country, if you may have this answer here, what sort of tonnage we are looking at nationally that we deal with waste on a national basis. Because my understanding is that we are rated very high as in terms of the international scenario on the waste material per national population. So that third question, you have any answer to that?

**Mr. Roach:** Right, let me deal with the question of quantity of waste that we generate. Trinidad and Tobago generates 1.4 kilograms of waste per day. That makes us quite average in terms of developed country status. So there would have been erroneous reports circulating one or two years ago that Trinidad was the highest per capita waste generator in the world. So those reports were completely erroneous. It was caused by a mistake from the World Bank themselves in interpreting the data that was provided from Trinidad and Tobago with respect to the waste generation quantities. However, it is 1.4 kilograms and, as I said, it is average for the developed countries. It is one of the highest in the Caribbean and in Latin America.

**Mr. Chairman:** One point four kilograms—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Roach:** Per person, per day. With respect to dumping of tyres—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Chairman:** And in terms of the highest around internationally?

**Mr. Roach:** One point six. I believe there may be a country that has 2.1 kilograms as a one-off, but generally 1.6. Countries like the US and so, 1.6 kilograms per person per day going down to least developed countries of 0.4 kilograms per day.

**Mr. Chairman:** But the other two points—*[Interruption]*

**Mr. Roach:** Dumping of tyres. Unfortunately, we have no jurisdiction over the dumping of tyres. However, as part of our business operations we have made proposals to our various Ministries in the past where we believe that there should be a deposit on tyres at the time of purchase which would be used to pay for a proper disposal and we believe that that is still the best system that should exist. So when you buy a tyre, you pay a \$10 deposit. When you drop back your tyre, you get back \$5 out of that, so it will give you an incentive to give back the tyres for proper recycling and the other \$5 will be used for processing. That has been our proposal throughout.

Modern incineration systems. Generally incineration systems tend to be more expensive than landfilling. Just to give you an example, our cost of landfilling right now based on our current subvention is US \$17 per ton of waste. World Bank has recommended that for proper landfilling it should be in the order of US \$40 to US \$80 per ton and for incineration it is upwards of US \$80 as much as US \$200 per ton. So incineration generally is a more expensive means of disposal of waste. However, there are specific areas that incineration does have its benefits for some special waste and hazardous waste that cannot be landfilled. That is a recommended approach, but of course, incineration itself, to install any incinerator is quite a big capital investment.

**Mr. Chairman:** You have any idea on the national tonnage?

**Mr. Roach:** National tonnage is approximately 1,500 tons per day coming into the sites and that would have been based on 2010 figures. So it would be somewhat higher at this point in time.

**Mr. Chairman:** Any colleague has any last question?

**Mrs. Baptiste-Primus:** Mr. Chairman, I would just like to say that despite the rigorous and robust questioning, I do believe that SWMCOL is operating in a way that they are trying to do their best under considerable challenges, considerable, considerable challenges, but in terms of your operations I would advise you, Mr. Chairman, to pay a little more attention to the operations, in particular, the development of the revenue streams. SWMCOL is a bawling baby at this point in time requiring urgent attention.

**Mr. Chairman:** Any other member?

**Mrs. Crichlow-Cockburn:** Mr. Chairman, I would just like to thank the team from

SWMCOL. I know today might have seemed as if you have been grilled but it was because of the information that is coming forth and I would also like to advise that you all also look at your whole area of risk management. And thank you all for being here today.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Small.

**Mr. Small:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I also want to join in thanking the team that came here. What they have been able to share with us is that we have a national health issue; we have a public health issue to deal with and it requires urgent attention. But also I think that the company itself has systemic challenges within the way it is currently structured. They have challenges with the way in which, in terms of their revenue stream and their ability to sustain the operations, even under the mode of getting a subvention.

Inside of here, in their submission, Mr. Chairman, I did not get chance because the whole public issue overtook the session. But inside of here there are issues about the company's Risk Management Strategy which they clearly indicated that they have none. So that I am concerned about an entity that is in charge of solid waste that does not understand project management, has no project management system in place. So those are some of the things that I did not get around the time to really grill you guys on. So those are things that you really need to look at internally to see how it can be fixed, but we have been overtaken by the public health issue which is a major problem.

So I think the Chairman and the CEO indicated that they are really running their heads in a wall and they are struggling to get the thing moving. They are aware of the severity issue but getting the message across, if nothing else, you have been successful today, through this session, to get the message across that we have a potential national crisis that needs urgent attention. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Sen. Cummings.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Chairman, I too want to join with the rest of the Committee and thank the team from SWMCOL. You may have come under a bit of unusual heat today, but Mr. Roach it is not that we are trying to whip you. This matter is a matter of national concern and you are the person who shared the time to answer the questions. Imagine if anyone, the members of the Committee were sitting there would be in the same situation.

It appears to me that we may have to have some further discussions with SWMCOL in the not too distant future, as we try to assist you in any way that we can in getting to where we need to be and in bringing this matter as a matter of urgent attention, one that requires urgent attention that is. So from a Committee point of view we will do all our best to assist you in getting this matter on the national agenda, but you also have to do your part in getting the

information to the Ministry and, of course, PS, we count on your word that, the words, “onward transmission” to the relevant authority. So thank you all once again.

**Mr. Chairman:** All is left for me now is to indicate, well my colleagues have summarized the issues and summarized the morning’s proceedings and to indicate to you our gratitude to SWMCOL, to the Ministry of Finance, Investments Division, so we look forward to you bringing the reports for 2014 and 2015 to us as quickly as possible. And, of course, to the Permanent Secretary and his team from the Ministry of Public Utilities, who have been able to give us some very supporting and cooperating type of movement on the way forward and, of course, your communication with the Ministry of Planning and Development on some of these matters. We want to thank all the members of the media and our staff here at our Parliament and, of course, our stenographers. So Chairman, I would leave it over to you, if you want, to make some closing remarks.

**Mr. Mohammed:** As I said in the beginning, we are happy to be here and now that the session is over, we are really glad that we were here. Never mind, yes, we feel grilled, but as Mr. Roach said, it is better us than somebody else, because we are here now, we understand what is required. This, for me was my first time here, not knowing what to expect. So we have a fair understanding on what you expect of us and what we need to do. We appreciate all the help and guidance you have given.

I just want to end on one, what I consider to be a brighter light, because for the past eight months we have been doing the Public Education Campaign with the children, with the primary schools. It is not advertised well out there, but we have been going to the primary schools and we have been giving them the message of waste, waste management, where to put their waste, et cetera. Just as some of us who would be as old as me would remember in the 70’s when we had the, “Put Charlie in the Bin Campaign” and then we had, “Chase Charlie Away” in the 80’s. That is happening now, but again our budget is tight so it is difficult really to advertise and let the nation know about it. So it is school by school by school and I would prefer if Mr. Manswell who is heading that to just tell us in a minute, how many children, how many schools and the response we have been getting please.

**Mr. Manswell:** Just in a nutshell, it is a project where we start in terms of educating about proper waste management and we believe that is one of the immediate—to help reduce waste from going to the landfill. And so far we have touched 60 per cent of the schools in Trinidad and we are due to go to Tobago. But all of that would add in preventing the waste from coming into the landfill and help reduce the issues that we have. All of that is part of the plan, but I will pause there for now.

**Mr. Mohammed:** To continue, Mr. Chairman, this is a one-year project or programme. It is not sustainable at this time. We are going to try to make it sustainable, because if it does not happen, five years down the road we are going to go back into the same old way and we believe that the best place to get the education out there at this time is with the primary school kids. That is what we are doing and we are continuing it. We have to find ways to make this programme an annual event. It would be our continuous drive along with our waste management programme.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you very much. Now the meeting is adjourned.

**12.46 p.m.:** *Meeting adjourned.*