



**GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**  
MAJOR GENERAL (RET'D) THE HONOURABLE EDMUND DILLON  
MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY

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NS: 35/27/4 Vol. IV No. 2.

October 03, 2017

The Honourable Bridgid Mary Annisette-George  
Speaker of the House  
Parliament  
Level 2, Tower D  
The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre  
1A Wrightson Road  
Port of Spain

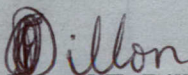
Dear Honourable Annisette-George,

Re: Third Report of the Joint Select Committee on an Inquiry into the Operations of the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre and the Issue of DNA Sampling in Trinidad and Tobago

Your letter *Parl.: 14/3/43 Vol. IV*, dated June 7, 2017 on the subject above, refers.

In this regard, please find attached, the response of the Minister of National Security to the recommendations/comments on the Report at caption.

Yours respectfully,

  
Edmund E. Dillon  
Major General (Ret'd)  
Minister

**THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY'S RESPONSE TO THE JOINT SELECT  
COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY RE  
*An Inquiry into the Operations of the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science  
Centre and the Issue of DNA Sampling in Trinidad and Tobago***

**Recommendation No. 1**

**That the TTFSC:**

- a) Continue to pursue measures to ensure that the Centre is accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 as soon as possible;**

**Response:**

An Accreditation Project Committee comprising personnel of the Trinidad and Tobago Forensic Science Centre (TTFSC) and General Administration, Ministry of National Security (MNS) has been established to ensure the accreditation of the analytical services provided by the scientific sections at the TTFSC. All the sections have identified and documented outstanding activities required for compliance with ISO 17025 and provided timelines for completion. In instances where the expertise is not available in-house, sourcing and engagement of external parties is in progress. Also, the procurement of materials and supplies necessary for compliance is in progress. Based on the timelines provided, it is anticipated that most of the sections would complete outstanding activities by January 2018, following which an application could be made to an Accreditation Body to formally initiate the accreditation process.

- b) Conduct periodic follow-up with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of National Security toward operationalizing the comprehensive timeline for the implementation of solutions as identified by the Director, TTFSC, including:**
- iii. the resources required by the TTFSC;**

**Response:**

- **Human Resources** – The MNS has continued to liaise with the Service Commissions Department with a view to ensuring the availability of adequate Human Resources at the Centre. There are two (2) vacancies for Junior Forensic

Scientist, one (1) for Scientific Officer III, one (1) for Light Instrument Equipment Technician, one (1) Photographer vacancy, one (1) Chief Mortuary Attendant vacancy and seven (7) Scientific Officer I vacancies for which, to date, the Service Commissions Department has not filled.

- **Equipment** - The purchase of a Genetic Analyser and FTIR was approved in June 2017. Following this, funds were released and orders placed with the relevant suppliers. Approved down payments have been completed and the TTFSC is now awaiting delivery of these items.
- **Accommodation** – The Ministry is exploring options for a suitable location for the accommodation of the TTFSC. The Government has identified land in Mt. Hope for this project and the matter is currently engaging the attention of the Commissioner of State Lands.
- **Financial** – To ensure that operational supplies were available as needed, critical equipment properly maintained and serviced as per manufacturer’s guidelines and timely payment of utility bills, the TTFSC suppressed expenditure for additional equipment and transferred funds among the various votes within its 2017 budgetary allocation.

#### **iv. recommendations for the improvement of the operations of the TTFSC using current resources;**

##### **Response:**

- Implementation of the measures listed on page eight (8) of the document submitted via email on August 12, 2016, has resulted in significant increases in productivity and the operational efficiency of the laboratory sections. Furthermore, several of the measures also facilitate compliance with the documentation requirements of ISO 17025.
- During the period October 20, 2016 to July 4, 2017 the TTPS collected a total of 4,532 completed reports and the related evidence. However, there are still several thousand completed reports and related evidence awaiting collection.

- The Project Manager (NIPDEC), the Contractor and the Project Unit, MNS have been engaged in discussions since January 2017 to resolve issues pertaining to outstanding customization requirements for full functionality of the Justice Trax LIMS. In June 2017 NIPDEC recommended that the variation work be met from the contract contingency and requested Permanent Secretary approval for same. The Permanent Secretary has sought the advice of the Legal Unit, MNS on this matter and a response is imminent.
- No progress has been made with respect to the relocation of the HR and Accounts Sections from the current premises.

### **Recommendation No. 2**

**That there be a review of the process for the granting of scholarships in the area of forensic pathology as well as the process for hiring internationally-based Forensic Pathologists with the objective of addressing the challenges in procuring qualified and experienced Forensic Pathologists.**

### **Response:**

- In March 2013 officials of the Human Resource Management (HRM) Unit, Ministry of Justice, the TTFSC and the Scholarships and Advanced Training Division agreed to a revision of the Scholarship Evaluation Framework for the award of scholarships in the area of Forensic Pathology. The framework facilitated scholarships to individuals to include specialization in Pathology and further sub specialization in Forensic Pathology.
- In 2015 the Ministry of Justice engaged GHRIS to recruit qualified persons to fill the vacant positions of Forensic Pathologist at the TTFSC. The positions were advertised locally and abroad and two (2) of the international applicants were recommended to fill the positions. However, owing to issues pertaining to the registration of the personnel as specialists by the Medical Board, the Ministry aborted the process in 2016. The MNS is currently seeking to collaborate with the Ministry of Health in the engagement of pathologists. Additionally, the MNS is also considering the engagement of medical examiners to conduct post mortems.



### **Recommendation No. 3**

**That the Ministry of National Security:**

**c) Assist the Custodian Manager to advance all efforts for the establishment, commencement and operationalization of the DNA Databank in accordance with the work programme outlined in the Permanent Secretary's submission to the Committee dated March 23, 2017;**

#### **Response:**

- c) The MNS has undertaken the following measures to further the establishment, commencement and operationalization of the DNA Databank:
- The Implementation Committee has concluded its deliberations on the Regulations and has had two (2) presentations at LRC and a working session with CPC. A Cabinet Note is currently being prepared by the Ministry on the policy for Regulations to the Administration of Justice (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) Act. This Cabinet Note will be submitted to Cabinet by October 2017. Following approval and finalisation before the LRC, it is expected that the Regulations will be laid in Parliament.
  - The US Embassy indicated that it would not be able to provide the DNA Database Software, CODIS, unless the TTFSC is accredited. As such, an alternative Database software was identified. A procurement exercise was undertaken and as of August 4, 2017, the Custodian Unit acquired the SmallPond Database software.
  - A preferred provider has been identified for the provision of the hardware for the DNA database. The recommendation has been forwarded for consideration. A decision on the award is pending.
  - The procurement process for the provision of 15,000 buccal swab kits has been initiated and is expected to be completed by November 2017. The acquisition of the buccal swab kits is to facilitate the collection of DNA samples, particularly from incarcerated persons pursuant to the Act.
  - The Facilities Management Unit completed the evaluation of responses to the RFP for builders' works at the ABMA building to house the Custodian Unit. A contractor was selected and works initiated. These works are almost complete.

- Two positions were advertised in April 2017 and applications were received as follows: Database Specialist – 12, Database Analyst – 14. Interviews for Database Analyst were conducted in September 2017, while interviews for Database Specialist are expected to be conducted in early October 2017.
- Discussions have been held with the Prison Service on the taking of DNA samples from incarcerated persons.

**d) Assist the TTFSC in:**

- v. sourcing additional staff;**
- vi. filling the current vacancies;**
- vii. sourcing required equipment; and**
- viii. acquiring suitable accommodation**

**Response:**

Updates on v, vi and vii are included in responses to recommendations 1 and 2. With respect to viii the Ministry is considering options for a suitable location for the accommodation of the TTFSC.

**Recommendation No. 4**

**That the Commissioner of Police ensure that all Officers/Qualified Persons responsible for taking DNA samples be made aware of the provisions of the Administration of Justice (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) Act, 2012 regarding the taking of DNA samples whether non-intimate or otherwise.**

**Response:**

The Commissioner of Police published Department Order 104 of 2012 (**Appendix 1**)– Trinidad and Tobago Standing Orders 58 DNA Recovery Procedures to ensure that members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) are aware of the Deoxyribonucleic Acid Act, 2012 and the related procedures involved in taking DNA sample. Additionally, Departmental Order 202 of 2007 (**Appendix 2**) – Packaging and Handling of Firearm Evidence on Recovery guides Police Officers in the retrieval of DNA samples when Firearms and Ammunitions are found and seized.

These Departmental Orders are posted on the TTPS Portal and are accessible to all Police Officers through this medium. Additionally, approximately one thousand (1000) TTPS Officers have been specially trained in the retrieval of non-intimate DNA samples. The TTPS will continue to educate and train officers on the requirements for taking DNA samples during the course of developmental training programmes.

**Recommendation No 5.**

**That the Office of the Attorney General expedite the drafting and presentation to Parliament of regulations required under Section 34 of the Act.**

**Response:**

The recommendation is to be directed to the office of the Attorney General.