



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LAND & FISHERIES
OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

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AGR: 5/3/5 Vol. II

April 3, 2018

Mrs. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel
Clerk of the House
Parliament
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Level G -8, Tower D
The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre
1A Wrightson Road
Port of Spain

Dear Mrs. Sampson-Meiguel,

Eleventh Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Examination of the Audited Financial Statements of the Land Settlement Agency for the Financial Years 2008 and 2009

I refer to your letter **Parl: 5/1/6** dated January 25, 2018 on the subject at caption and I am pleased to submit for your attention and that of the Senate and House of Representatives the attached response of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries to the comments and recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee.

Respectfully,

Farook Hosein (Mr.)
Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries

PERMANENT SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LAND AND FISHERIES

Response of the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries to the Eleventh Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Examination of the Audited Financial Statements of the Land Settlement Agency for the Financial Years 2008 and 2009

Overview

The Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) acknowledges the Public Accounts Committee as a critical entity within the Parliament and reiterates that the work of the Committee is foundational to ensuring good governance and sound public administration within our public institutions.

Recommendation:

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MHUD), Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries and Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government should initiate inter-agency collaboration between the Central Statistical Office (CSO), Town and Country, Municipal Corporations, and the Commissioner of State Lands and Land Settlement Agency (LSA) to properly manage state lands and review and implement the existing laws and standards to regularize persons;

The MALF notes the comments of the Committee and agrees that the Ministry should collaborate with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MHUD) and Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government to initiate an inter-agency collaboration among the Central Statistical Office (CSO), Town and Country, Municipal Corporations, Commissioner of State Lands and Land Settlement Agency (LSA) to properly manage state lands and review and implement the existing laws and standards to regularize persons applying for state lands. The MALF wishes to note that the call for inter-agency collaboration has been made in several Parliamentary reports and while the absence of such collaboration is at the heart of problems identified, more could be done among the relevant agencies to share information and make better use of existing resources. The MALF has invested in building out its own IT and data resources to serve as a platform for such collaboration and the MALF is also taking steps towards having the critical legislative changes brought before the Cabinet.

Recommendation:

LSA when conducting its patrol of sites should report its findings to the Commissioner of State Lands and Regional/Municipals Corporations effective immediately;

The MALF agrees with this recommendation of the Committee. Further the MALF believes that the relevant agencies should collaborate on law enforcement activities to maximize the use of existing resources.

Recommendation:

The Commissioner of State Lands and Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government should identify liaison officers to receive and process this information in a timely manner. MHUD should ensure that reports are indeed submitted to the Commissioner of State Lands and Regional/Municipal Corporations;

The MALF agrees that the Commissioner of State Lands and Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government should identify liaison officers to receive and process the reports from the LSA. Further the MALF believes that all the relevant agencies, including the LSA, should collaborate on law enforcement activities to maximize the use of existing resources.

Recommendation:

As a matter of urgency, LSA, the Municipal Corporation and the Commissioner of State Lands, should set out how they intend to improve the regularization of state lands for which they are responsible and submit a report to the Committee by February 28, 2018.

The MALF has been reviewing its internal procedures relating to land management and administration. The MALF's Land Management Division has a wide range of responsibilities in relation to State Land and will submit to the Committee in a reasonable timeframe a plan to improve the regularization efforts on State Lands.