

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE – HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ON THE SYSTEMS IN PLACE TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM ABUSE
MINISTERIAL RESPONSES**

Report Ref.	Report Recommendations	Ministerial Responses
4.26 Pg. 41	The Committee recommends the finalisation of the Trinidad and Tobago National Child Abuse Protocol: A Guide for Stakeholders by July 2017.	<i>The Children's Authority has been working assiduously in collaboration with national stakeholders to achieve agreement on and finalisation of the Trinidad and Tobago National Child Abuse Protocol. Meetings have been scheduled with medical social workers and Global Medical Response of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (GMRTT) to garner support and participation in the process.</i> <i>The Authority has also recently recommenced its working engagement with National Family Services. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Authority and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) is awaiting feedback from the Police on recently made changes, while the Memorandum of Understanding between the Authority and the Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) has been finalised and is pending approval from the Authority's Board of Management.</i> <i>Consistent progress is being made to achieve the goal of finalising and implementing the National Child Abuse Protocol. During to varying external factors, the national protocol will not be ready for finalisation by July 2017, however the Authority anticipates that the protocol will be finalised by the end of 2017.</i>
4.27 Pg. 41	The Committee recommends that the Office of the Prime Minister seek additional funding to address the infrastructural deficits at the Community Residences and Rehabilitation Centres.	<i>I. Works on Block 3 dormitories (upper and lower floors) were completed in November 2016. The balance on this contract (\$3.2M) will be paid via a Cabinet approved government guaranteed loan arrangement.</i> <i>II. In fiscal 2017, OPM was allocated \$3M for upgrade works at the St. Michael's School for Boys. There works are expected to upgrade the physical infrastructure of the Lara and Yorke dormitories and refurbish the Interim Rehabilitation facility, as well as upgrade the kitchen. Based on the scope of the works relative to the allocation, the Ministry of Works and Transport has been engaged to provide the architectural and engineering support, as well as labour on this project.</i> <i>III. As a result of some of the works done for the establishment of the Interim Rehabilitation Facility, primarily the installation of the high security fence, exiting drains were disrupted, which resulted in flooding problems at the school. The outstanding works will alleviate this problem and upgrade the landscape behind the dorms. No money was allocated for 2017 toward this project, however \$6M was allocated during the course of the fiscal year. This amount, along with monies wired from another vote, is</i>

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		being used to settle outstanding payments. Works are expected to be completed by August 2017, when the final payment will be made. IV. An allocation of \$3.5 M has been requested for renovation works at the facility in fiscal 2018.
4.28 Pg. 41	The Committee acknowledges the programmes and services provided by the agencies and suggests that the agencies broaden programmes and sensitisation sessions to ensure a wider range of awareness amongst the population.	The geographical distribution of all reports of children in need of care and protection brought the attention of the Authority during the period May 18, 2015 to December 31, 2016 is as follows: Tobago- 2.6% Diego Martin8.1% San Juan-Laventille – 13.8% Port of Spain – 6.3% Tunapuna-Piarco – 12.9% Arima – 6.1% Sangre Grande – 6.0% Chaguanas – 7.8% Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo – 9.6% San Fernando – 5.3% Rio Claro-Mayaro – 2.4% Princes Town – 6.4% Penal-Debe – 4.3% Siparia – 4.2% Point Fortin – 1.9% The Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago continues to record monthly an average of 500 cases of children who are in need of care and protection. As seen in the map above, reports are received from all areas of the country.

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		A key component of the Authority's Public Education programme will be to make the public more aware of their role in the protection of children and to make children aware of how to protect themselves from possible abuse. At present, the Authority is conducting sensitisation sessions within primary and secondary schools throughout the country. The main objectives of the sensitisation sessions being conducted in schools throughout the country include: • To increase the public's awareness of child abuse issues • To encourage a national response that supports positive parenting • To reduce instances of child abuse and create safe communities for children • To increase the number of persons who report abuse to the Police and the Authority • To improve parenting skills by increasing the number of persons who attend parenting workshops or seek family support services • To identify risk factors that lead to abuse • To provide children with tips on how they can protect themselves
4.30 Pg. 41	The Committee suggests that increased child sexual abuse sensitisation sessions be conducted in the south-western area of Trinidad by the CATT and TTPS.	The geographical distribution of reports of child sexual abuse brought to the attention of the Authority during the period May 18, 2015 to December 31, 2016 is as follows: Tobago - 2.4% Diego Martin – 7.7% San Juan-Laventille – 15.2% Port of Spain – 6.4% Tunapuna-Piarco – 13.2% Arima – 6.8% Sangre Grande – 5.8% Chaguanas – 6.2% Couva-Tabaquite-Talparo – 8.4% San Fernando – 4.9% Rio Claro-Mayaro – 2.7%

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		Princes Town – 7.0% Penal-Debe – 3.8% Siparia – 4.8% Point Fortin – 2.1% The data collected by the Authority identifies the areas from where the Authority has received reports of child sexual abuse. Resultantly, the Authority has planned to conduct child sexual abuse sensitisation sessions firstly in the identified areas from which the highest reports of child sexual have been received, such as San Juan/Laventille and Tunapuna/Piarco. The Authority will subsequently conduct child sexual abuse sensitisation sessions in other areas of the country. The aim of these sensitisation sessions is to work collaboratively with community-based organisations in order to reach a wider cross section of the population. The Regional Corporations will be engaged to assist in identifying the various community groups as well as co-ordinate outreach activities. The Authority, therefore, will not be specifically targeting the south-western area of Trinidad, however, as a result of the community based approach which will be utilised by the Authority in sensitising the national population about child sexual abuse, information will also be disseminated to the south-western areas of Trinidad.
4.31 Pg. 41	The Committee recommends that the OPM increase the funding to the CATT to allow for increased child abuse programmes and services.	• Customisation and Outfitting of an Assessment Centre ◦ Allocation 2017 - \$1670,000.00 ◦ Requests 2018 – N/A • Customisation and Outfitting Centre in Sangre Grande ◦ Allocation 2017 – N/A ◦ Requests 2018 – N/A • Establishment of Places of Safety ◦ Allocation (2017) - \$1500,000.00 ◦ Request (2018) - \$1000,000.00 • Development and Implementation of a Regulatory Regime for Nurseries

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		○ Allocation (2017) - \$3000,000.00 ○ Request (2018) – N/A • Establishment of a Child Protection Library ○ Allocation(2017) – N/A ○ Request (2018) – N/A • Conduct of Key Research Studies by the Children's Authority ○ Allocation (2017) - \$400,000.00 ○ Request (2018) - \$4000,000.00 • VII. Database Management System Expansion for the Children's Authority ○ Allocation (2017) - \$382,000.00 ○ Request (2018) - \$2500,000.00 • Digitization of Adoption Records ○ Allocation (2017) - \$2900,000.00 ○ Request (2018) – \$550,000.00 • Child Justice Assessment Centre ○ Allocation (2017) – N/A ○ Request (2018) – \$2000,000.00 • Juvenile Justice Implementation ○ Allocation (2017) – N/A ○ Request (2018) - \$1350,000.00 • Information Systems Stabilisation and Security ○ Allocation (2017) – N/A ○ Request (2018) - \$1650,000.00 • Record Management System – phase 1 ○ Allocation (2017) – N/A ○ Request (2018) - \$2800,000.00

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		• Expansion of Office Accommodation ○ Allocation (2017) – N/A ○ Request (2018) - \$700,000.00 <i>Note: The Project Management Unit does not deal with nor is it responsible for recurrent votes. As such, I am unable to advise on the allocation or requests related to recurrent funding</i>
4.32 Pg. 41	The committee recommends that the MOE, the TPS and the CATT take steps to reduce the critical shortage of qualified human resources at their facilities.	<i>The Authority's approved organisational structure makes provision for a staff complement of 242 persons. In order to treat with the volumes of reports received, the Authority revised its strategy and manpower plan and submitted a request for an additional 200 persons to be added to its approved staff complement.</i> <i>The Office of the Prime Minister subsequently requested the Authority to submit a list of all critical positions within the organisation. The Authority has submitted and been granted approval of 39 critical positions for its Head Office location. This approval list of critical positions does not include the approved headcount for the anticipated offices in Chaguanas, Manahambre, Sangre Grande, Juvenile Justice and Tobago. The total number of critical positions which the Authority will require in light of its growing operations has risen to 72, while the present headcount for all staff is 132 persons.</i> <i>The Authority is presently engaged in an extensive recruitment exercise based on the budget approved by the Office of the Prime Minister. Currently the Authority has identified 28 candidates to fill the 72 identified critical positions for various positions within the Authority. The Authority continues to work diligently towards ensuring that all Units are adequately manned based on current budget parameters.</i>