

Ministerial Response to the Ninth Report of the Joint Select Committee on Local Authorities, Service Commissions and Statutory Authorities (including the THA) on an Inquiry into Certain Aspects of the Operations of the Chaguaramas Development Authority (CDA)

3.1.17

- A. *The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Planning and Development assume a leading role in reviewing of the Master Development Plan, 2015 together with the input of the CDA. It is further recommended that in the Ministerial Response of this report, the Ministry must provide the Parliament with a status update on this review exercise as well as a plan/strategy for producing a new or revised development plan for the north-west peninsula.*

Response

As with all documents created by the previous Management and Board of the CDA, the Draft Master Plan 2015 came under review by the new Board of CDA. By a Board decision on June 8th 2017, the CDA Board agreed that Board Members Deborah Cheesman, Bliss Seepersad and Judith Primus-Chow be appointed as members of a committee whose mandate shall be to review the Statutory Development Plan of the CDA and the Draft Master Plan approved by the previous Board in 2015.

The committee members studied the respective Plans. It was determined that CDA did not have the necessary skill set to review the plans and make any possible amendments to the Draft Master Plan 2015. It was agreed that the drafters of the 2015 Plan be invited for a meeting. Such a meeting took place with Halcrow Group (T&T) Ltd and the CDA. The review thus far has shown that the Development Plan 1974 is already a very flexible plan and there is agreement with most of the land uses in the designated zones in that Plan. Such land uses are Residential, Resort Residential, Industry, Commercial Activity, Agriculture, Open Space, Forest/Nature Reserve and Marine Facilities. The review of the Development Plan 1974 continues. Certain discussions are to take place among the Ministry of Planning and Development, the Town and Country Planning Division and the CDA before any further steps are taken.

- B. *Given the operational challenges confronting the CDA and the consequential impact on the execution of its mandate, we recommend that the CDA collaborate with its line Ministry to produce a "recovery plan" to guide the reformation of this Authority. This plan should be completed and submitted for the attention of this Committee by July 01, 2018.*

Response

To achieve the objective of the CDA under the CDA Act, the organization required a clearly defined Strategic Plan to steer its management team. In November 2016 the Board approved a Strategic Implementation Plan 2016- 2019/20 for the CDA. The main purpose of the CDA's Strategic Implementation Plan was to establish the organization's priority objectives for the next three (03) years with a roadmap to achieve them within the agreed timeframe. In light of the critical state of CDA's finances, the Board in April 2017 revised the Strategic Implementation Plan to focus mainly on the strategic objectives of Achieving Financial Self-Sufficiency and Increasing Organizational Alignment. With its focus being narrowed and keeping in mind the core business of the CDA, there was specific dedication to reducing operating costs, increasing revenue from existing business, completing rent reviews, improving its collection rate of rent and proceeding with the Manpower Audit to increase organizational alignment. A recovery plan was therefore formulated and actions immediately taken by the CDA to drastically reduce expenditure and increase revenue. Details of the recovery plan are outlined below.

Reduction in Expenditure

Through improved cost management, expenditure was reduced by 52% from 2015 to 2017. With the implementation of cost cutting initiatives in respect of operational cost in 2016 was reduced by 44% as compared to expenditure for Financial Year 2015. Minimisation of operational costs continued to improve and showed a further reduction by 14% in 2017 as compared to Financial Year 2016. Salary and salary related expenses were reduced by 12% and overtime expenses were reduced by 73%. The finances are managed so that the CDA, for the period September 2015 to date, has not added to the debt that was met in 2015. The tables below shows how the CDA was able to better manage its cost for the months August, September and October from 2015 to 2017. Of greater significance is the monthly expenditure in September 2015, which was \$7,390,332.00 whereas the monthly expenditure in September 2017 is estimated at \$3,244,376.00.

Year	Month	Expenditure (\$)
2015	August	5,816,273.00
	September	7,390,332.00
	October	4,207,804.00
2016	August	3,372,825.00
	September	5,322,305.00
	October	6,056,651.00
2017	August	2,841,648.00
	September	3,244,367.00
	October	2,572,089.00

In particular the following is noted:

1. Reduction of Salary and Salary related expenses by retrenching workers who were not in alignment with the organization's core function resulted in a monthly savings of **\$98,881.50**. The implementation of the Manpower Audit continues to bring further alignment to the core function of the CDA.
2. Audit of utilities revealed a number of wasted costs. Steps were taken to eliminate such wastages with T&TEC, WASA, TSTT as well as providers for cable and internet and Insurance. In one instance alone a utility bill was reduced from \$38,000.00 to \$4,256.78 per month. There has also been a discontinuance of the Corporate Plan for cellular phones for employees with a savings of \$7,425.12 per month effective March 2018.

Increase in Revenue

Revenue was increased by 7% from 2015 to 2017 for the top three (3) revenue generating units (Tenancy income, Golf Course Income and Macqueripe Income). With the completion of long outstanding rent reviews for nine (9) tenants during the period 2016-2017, the rental income has increased for these tenants by 66%. A significant contribution to this increased revenue was from the Golf Course as revenue increased by 105% from 2015 to 2017. Further, an aggressive rent collection drive has resulted in an increase in the collection rate from 31 % to 72 % over the past eight (8) months. The CDA has been pursuing the collection of rental arrears as well as insisting on the payment of current rent on a timely basis in compliance with lease arrangements. Further, interest is being applied where applicable when rents are paid late by the tenants.

Efforts to increase revenue further are ongoing as the CDA has been meeting with key stakeholders as it moves to develop and market the Chaguaramas peninsula as an Eco-tourism Destination Site and National Park. Details of meetings will be outlined in subsequent questions below. The result of these initiatives has been an increase in the number of persons utilising venues such as the Boardwalk, Samaan Park and the Golf Course for events in the first quarter of 2018. A Calendar of Events for 2018 has been developed by CDA and the organization is working at an improved pace to increase the number of visitors to the peninsula and increase revenue.

The recovery plan has been successful thus far. Rapid recovery and progress is however stymied by the constant demands made for immediate payment of outstanding debt which date back to 2013 in some instances. Best efforts have been made to place debtors on payment plans but at times the payment schedules are interrupted by other critical payments such as utilities and judgment debts. Despite the setback progress continues at the CDA.

C. We recommend that the Compliance Unit of the CDA undertake a thorough examination of tenants'/leaseholders' records in order to determine whether they are compliant with statutory obligations. Following this review, the CDA must take appropriate legal and or administrative action against those who are non-compliant.

Response

There is currently a team of employees at the CDA who is tasked with reviewing tenants' files and conducting compliance visits so that all issues of non-compliance can be addressed between the parties. This includes an examination of files to determine compliance with statutory obligations as well. Approximately ten percent (10%) of the Authority's mainland tenants are in breach with respect to the non-submission of statutory approvals. In some instances, the EMA, IMA, DMRC, Commissioner of State Lands, Land Reclamation Committee, Town and Country Planning Division have been alerted where necessary. However, when communication is sent to the relevant agencies with respect to the particular breaches, the response time from the agencies is in most instances very tardy, thereby impeding the CDA's ability to effectively address the breaches in a timely manner.

Despite challenges, efforts are ongoing to address the stated breaches through legal and administrative action by the CDA.

Recommendation:-

The CDA continues to follow-up in a more diligent manner with the respective agencies.

Tenant	Breaches Related to Statutory Obligations	Tenant Status (Current)	Comments
1. JN Enterprises	Certificate of Environmental Clearance (CEC)	Non-Compliant	Tenant was notified via a letter with respect to the submission of a CEC. Subsequent follow-ups were made and the tenant promised to submit the CEC. The tenant has been written and is awaiting a response. The tenant has indicated that the CEC has been granted by the EMA and which shall be submitted during the week commencing May 7, 2018.
2. Fouraime Enterprises Ltd.	Final Approvals Outstanding- 1. Water and Sewage Authority (WASA)- water and waste water 2. Diego Martin Regional Corporation (DMRC)	Non-Compliant	General Manager sent a formal letter requesting the submission of the outstanding approvals. The tenant has promised to submit the relevant approvals by the end of May 2018.

Tenant	Breaches Related to Statutory Obligations	Tenant Status (Current)	Comments
	3. Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC) Inspectorate 4. Ministry of Works and Transport (MOWT) 5. Ministry of Energy (MOE) 6. Local Health and Ministry of Health		
3. Western Ship and Rig Supplies Ltd.	No Statutory Approval- No approval from Town and Country Planning Division (TCPD) for the Warehouses currently located on the premises which were constructed in 2013 and 2016. The garage to the front of the premises also has no evidence of TCPD approval.	Non- Compliant	This tenant was written to on these breaches and follow up actions were taken but to date the breaches have not been rectified A Stop Works Notice was previously issued to this tenant which was not adhered to. The CDA intends to present a Board Paper on this matter in the month of June, 2018. Any further proposed action by Management must be considered by the Legal and Business Development Committee and approved by the newly appointed Board.
4. La Soufriere Maritime Ltd	Coastal works	Non- Compliant	A letter was sent to the tenant. Tenant has submitted: A copy of the Certificate of Registration dated 5 th August 2015 for the Cascadura Restaurant and bar. A copy of the old liquor License. The person whose name is on old the liquor license is no longer an employee of the company. The tenant has subsequently applied for a special concession and that allows them to operate the bar

Tenant	Breaches Related to Statutory Obligations	Tenant Status (Current)	Comments
			in the interim using the old license. The tenant is currently awaiting the special concession license which is at their Head office. The license was to be sent to the CDA by Friday 27th April 2018. The tenant advised that a representative from the EMA recently visited premises and gave verbal approval to undertake the coastal works but did not give any written approval. The tenant was advised that they have to get written approval from the EMA and to forward same to the CDA. The CDA was informed that the CEC was granted and a copy was received at the CDA on May 7th 2018.
5. Peake Yacht Services	construction of a building without statutory approval	Non- Compliant	A letter was sent to the tenant and several verbal follow-ups were made. The tenant promised to submit the relevant approval. The tenant contacted the Town and Country Planning Division and they are currently awaiting a site visit from Town and Country.
6. O2 Park ltd	Installation of Desalination Plant without submission of a CEC	Non- Compliant	The tenant was written to on several occasions. The tenant subsequently advised that since last year (2017) their Attorney was liaising with the EMA for the necessary approval and to date they have not received same. To date the tenant has not commenced operation on site. CDA has confirmed that an application was made to the EMA for a CEC to install a

Tenant	Breaches Related to Statutory Obligations	Tenant Status (Current)	Comments
			Desalination Unit/Plant and has been in touch with EMA on the status of same. The CEC has not yet been granted. The tenant promised to provide the necessary approval (CEC) when it is received.
7. Across the Bay	Erection of a jetty	Non- Compliant	Information was reported to the EMA and several attempts were made for feedback from the EMA via telephone but to date there has been no response from the EMA.

D. There should be further collaboration between the CDA and the DMRC as ultimately both entities are required to perform crucial regulatory responsibilities as it related to various forms of activities in this region. In this regard, we suggest that:

- i. The CDA designate an officer to attend monthly Regional Coordinating Committee meetings of the DMRC. The Line Ministry should also seek to have a representative attend these meetings;***
- ii. A MoU to guide the parameters of cooperation between these two bodies should be formulated and encourage continuity regarding of changes in the management of both entities.***

Response

- i.** The CDA has a designated officer to attend all coordinating meetings of the DMRC. In instances where there are other pressing matters to be addressed on the same date by the original officer, an alternate officer attends the meeting. It is not quite clear to what end an attendee from the line Ministry would be of assistance in these meetings as these are designed to address the concerns of the burgesses of the Diego Martin area and comprise mainly of representatives from all the necessary utilities, regulatory and coordinating agencies who are able to lend the necessary expertise.
- ii.** Currently the CDA and the DMRC communicate regularly on varying matters of interest, for example building approvals, maintenance, event planning, and securing the Peninsula through collaborated efforts. There is continuous dialogue and cooperation between the CDA's Estate Police and HSE unit with the DMRC. During the Easter Weekend the DMRC Estate Police assisted the CDA with both foot and mobile patrols along the Western Main Road. They have given the undertaking to continue to give support on joint operations.

This has been working well, however the CDA understands that the development of a MOU may be useful in guiding the parameters of assistance and corporation by the CDA and the DMRC for the future.

- E. The Committee noted that Part 11 Section 6 of the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Act mandates that the Minister, “At least once in every five years after the date on which a development plan...is approved by Parliament...” must “carry out a fresh survey... and submit to Parliament a report of the survey, together with proposals for any alterations or additions to the plan that appear to...be required...” However, there was no evidence which suggested that this statutory requirement has been adhered to by the line Ministry.**

Response

A National Physical Development Plan (NPDP) was passed in Parliament in 1984. Among other things, it facilitated a generalised land use policy for all of Trinidad and Tobago, and identified broad national land use designations for uses such as Recreation, Agriculture, the Environment, Transportation, and Human Settlement. It identified cities, towns, urban cores and rural centres according to a hierarchy of settlements, which identified the minimum levels of services and amenities required; based on existing residential populations as well as spheres of influence and growth potential.

Lower level Regional and Local Area Land Use Plans were subsequently developed over the years. Within the last 34 years attempts have been made to update the National Physical Development Plan consistent with the legal provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act, Part II, section 6, sub-section (1).

A National Spatial Development Strategy (NSDS) was developed in 2013, as a renewed vision to guide the use of land in Trinidad and Tobago for the next 20 years. It was aimed at providing a national land use planning framework that is more strategic in nature. It built on the 1984 NPDP. Necessary stakeholder consultations were held, surveys were undertaken, and a final report prepared.

It should be noted however, that until the 2013 National Spatial Development Strategy is approved by Parliament, the 1984 National Physical Development Plan remains in force as the statutorily adopted national planning framework.

3.2.22

- A. We recommend that subsequent to the approval of the revised Draft Master Plan, 2015 that the CDA develop a revised Model Layout plan which should guide the configuration and intensity of further physical and infra structural development activities in the region.**

Response

The decision to revise the Draft Master Plan, 2015 lies with the Government and such a plan will require approval of Parliament. If this is done a revised Model Layout plan will form part of the revised Draft Master Plan and the CDA will be guided by same. Note that a review of the 1974 development Plan is being undertaken at present with consideration of input from the Master Plan of 2015.

- B. With respect to the assessment of requests for approval to undertake activities that are currently being considered by the CDA, we recommend that in the Ministerial Response to this report, line Ministry provide the Parliament with confirmation of:**
- i. The status of the assessments;**
 - ii. The criteria used to assess these requests for approval;**
 - iii. The rationale for approving or rejecting the requests which were already assessed.**

Response

Requests to undertake activities via leases and licenses are currently forwarded for review and consideration by the office of the General Manager and then to the Legal and Business Development Committee of the Board, previously, the Legal and Leasing Committee and thereafter the Board.

For the period September 2015 to April 2017 the following proposals were taken forward for consideration. The status of each request is included therein.

COMPANY	DECISION	RATIONALE
Power Boats Mutual Facilities Limited	Approved the granting of a 30 year lease	The Lease between Power Boats Mutual Facilities Limited and the CDA expired in 2001 and this Tenant remained in occupation as a month to month tenant. There was therefore a need to consider the formal regularization of this tenancy arrangement. Negotiations were ongoing prior to 2015 and the tenant made substantial payments as per the negotiated lease. An up to date valuation

COMPANY	DECISION	RATIONALE
		would afford the CDA an increased revenue generation for the property.
Western Ship & Rig Company Limited	Approved the granting of a licence to occupy	The lease between Western Ship & Rig Company Limited and the CDA expired in 2014 and tenant remained in occupation as a month to month tenant. There was therefore a need to consider the formal regularization of the tenancy arrangement but only on a short term basis as the tenant is in occupation of a platform on lands that were the subject of negotiations for a long term lease between CDA and the University of Trinidad and Tobago.
Trinidad Distillers	Approved the granting of a 30 year lease	To ensure that the CDA maximizes on current market value, the surrendering of the existing lease which expires in 2021 and the granting of a fresh lease at market rent was decided.
Eric Miller & Company Limited	Approved the granting of a 30 year lease	The lease between Eric Miller & Company Limited and the CDA expires in 2018 and there is therefore a need to consider the regularization of the lease.
Caribbean Ropeworks	Approved the granting of a 30 year lease	The lease between Caribbean Ropeworks and the CDA expired in 2008 and the tenant remained in occupation as month to month tenant. There was therefore a need to consider the formal regularization of the tenancy arrangement. An up to date valuation would afford the CDA an increased revenue generation for the property.
Caribbean Glassworks Limited	Approved the granting of a 30 year lease	The lease between Caribbean Glassworks Limited and the CDA expired in 1990 and the tenant remained in occupation as a month to month tenant. There was therefore a need to consider the formal regularization of this tenancy arrangement. An up to date valuation

COMPANY	DECISION	RATIONALE
		would afford the CDA an increased revenue generation for the property.
Glen Tucker Trust Limited	Approved the granting of a 30 year lease	The lease between Glen Tucker Trust Limited and the CDA expired in 2016 and tenant remained in occupation as a month to month tenant. There was therefore a need to consider the formal regularization of this tenancy arrangement. An up to date valuation would afford the CDA an increased revenue generation for the property.
Richfield Limited	Approved the granting of a 30 year lease	Richfield executed two leases with the CDA which expired in 2003 and 2004 respectively. The tenant remained in occupation as a month to month tenant. There was therefore a need to consider the formal regularization of this tenancy arrangement. An up to date valuation would afford the CDA an increased revenue generation for the property.
Jocum Holdings Limited	Approved the granting of a 30 year lease	This lease expired in 2015 and the tenant remained in occupation as a month to month tenant. There was therefore a need to consider the formal regularization of this tenancy arrangement. An up to date valuation would afford the CDA an increased revenue generation of the property.
Calypso Marine Services Limited	Approved the granting of a 30 year lease	The tenant had been operating on a month to month basis for a number of years. There was therefore a need to consider the formal regularization of this tenancy arrangement. An up to date valuation would afford the CDA an increased revenue generation of the property.
Trinidad Salt Company Limited	Approved the granting of a 30 year lease with an option to renew	The granting of this lease arose out of a settlement of an outstanding court matter.

COMPANY	DECISION	RATIONALE
Island Property Owners Association	Approved the granting of a 30 year lease	The lease between Island Property Owners Association and the CDA expired in 2002 and tenant remained in occupation as a month to month tenant. There was therefore a need to consider the formal regularization of the tenancy arrangement. An up to date valuation would afford the CDA an increased revenue generation of the property.
Trinidad and Tobago Hotel and Tourism Institute	Approved the granting of a 10 year lease	The lease between Trinidad and Tobago Hotel and Tourism Institute and the CDA expired in 2006 and the tenant remained in occupation as a month to month tenant. There was therefore a need to consider the formal regularization of the tenancy arrangement. An up to date valuation would afford the CDA an increased revenue generation of the property.
OHIPP Limited	Approved the granting of a 1 year licence	The Licence between OHIPP Limited and the CDA expired in 2016. This renewed licence permitted an increase in revenue generation for the CDA.
Paddles Limited	Approved the granting of a 30 year lease	This lease arose out of a settlement of an ongoing court matter.
Roshini Ramcharan	Approved the granting of a 6 months licence of the concessionaire at the Chaguaramas Golf Course. Approved an extension of the licence for a further 6 months	There was a need to facilitate patrons of the concessionaire at the Chaguaramas Golf Course.
Denzil Matthews	Approved the granting of a 3 month licence.	This licence permitted an increase in revenue generation for the CDA.
Chaguaramas Golf Club	Approved the granting of a 3 year licence.	The lease between the Chaguaramas Golf Club and the CDA expired in 2012 and the tenant remained in occupation as a month to month tenant and maintained a strong presence within the Chaguaramas

COMPANY	DECISION	RATIONALE
		Golf Course actively engaging in numerous golfing tournaments. There was therefore a need to consider the formal regularization of this arrangement.
Mainline Trading Limited	Approved the granting of a 5 year lease	Granting of the lease permitted increased revenue generation for the CDA and use of a jetty for the berthing and launching of the CDA's boats at no cost.
Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission	Approved the granting of a 2 year licence	The purpose of the licence was to facilitate the conduct of a wind resource assessment study to decipher the feasibility of integrating renewable sources of energy, in an effort to reduce natural gas consumption, which is of national benefit on both an economic and environmental basis. Granting of the licence also permits increased revenue generation for the CDA.
Trinidad and Tobago Police Service	Approved the granting of a 30 year lease.	The use of this parcel of land is for the development of a specialist training facility for the TTPS to enhance training of its police officers to combat the dynamic phenomenon of crime in Trinidad and Tobago.

Previously, as at May 2017 there were approximately forty-one (41) requests with an interest to do business in the peninsula. Each application was reviewed by the then Business Development Manager to ensure that all the relevant documents and supporting information were submitted as per the application form. Recommendations were made to the Business Development Committee which was a sub-committee of the Board based on the compliance with all documents, availability of space and need for the proposed services in the peninsula. Many of the requests were food concessionaires. There was limited space available at the time. **A copy of the list of forty-one (41) requests is attached as Appendix I.**

- C. ***We recommend that in its Ministerial Response, the Ministry of Planning and Development provide the Parliament with a definitive position on the legal status of the operations of the Pier 1 Facility vis-it-vis the Lease Agreement between the operators of the facility and the CDA and the Land Use stipulations set out in the 1974 Plan. This should be accompanied by a copy of any investigative reports which was submitted on this matter by the EMA, IMA and the Maritime Services.***

Response

1. By deed dated 13th April 1994 the CDA granted to Sun Island Cruises Limited a lease for Thirty (30) years from April 1, 1994 to March 30, 2024 for property situated on the Western Main Road in Chaguaramas comprising One Point Seven Two Three (1.1723) Hectares.

The permitted use:-

- i To establish a cruise ship facility to be situated at Pier 1 in Carenage Bay, Chaguaramas for embarkation of passengers and cargo and which will cater extensively for social gatherings, conferences, excursions, day, night and sunset cruises and a wide range of water sports which will include sailing, windsurfing, canoeing, diving/snorkelling, paddle boating, fishing (where possible) and swimming;
 - ii To establish a mariner facility for servicing pleasure crafts and ships; and
 - iii To establish for the better enjoyment of the above facilities: a bar, a restaurant, sports facilities, a clubhouse, a jetty and car park.
3. . This area under the Model is *“to be developed as a Commercial Centre*
- 1. *Hotel Sites*
 - 2. *Convention Centre*
 - 3. *Hotel Training School*
 - 4. *Handicraft manufacture and shopping*
 - 5. *General and in bond shopping*
 - 6. *Light clean industries related to tourist development (Tourist Landing Site)*
 - 7. *Social and Recreational Facilities*
 - 8. *Bathing facilities”*

Pier 1’s current activities include a Marina facility, Conference Centre, Storage of Boats, Servicing/Repairs of Cruise Boats and Ships and Water Sports.

Clause 3.8.4 of the 1974 Plan further states as follows: *“Additionally, the area is in close proximity to the piers in Carenage Bay which are used occasionally for berthing commercial boats and which it is anticipated will eventually be developed to provide berthing and landing facilities for passenger ship.”*

3. By letter dated 7th February 2014 the then Chairman of the EMA wrote Pier I informing that no Certificate of Environmental Clearance was required for the remedial and repair works that were being conducted at the premises. **A copy of the said letter is attached as Appendix II.**
4. Letters dated 13th October 2015 were sent to the Environmental Management Authority (EMA) and the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) outlining the Authority’s environmental

concern with respect to the berthing and servicing of three (3) large vessels on the eastern side of Pier 1 at Williams Bay, Chaguaramas.

5. By letter dated 23rd October 2015 the CDA was informed by the IMA that a team from the IMA conducted a visit to the area to conduct a sea grass mapping exercise. **A copy of the letter is attached as Appendix III.**
6. The CDA is currently awaiting advice from Counsel on this matter.

D. Given the significant ecological and economic potential/value ascribed to the North-West peninsula, the development plan for this region (and other regions) should be carefully and strategically integrated with the national development policy.

Response

The Development Plan 1974 which is the statutory Plan for the Chaguaramas peninsula categorically states at 2.1.2 that *“in the exploitation of these assets the meaning Chaguaramas has come to have for the people and Government of Trinidad and Tobago must be an over riding consideration.”* Further, it states at 2.1.4 *“As a consequence, the Chaguaramas Peninsula, as one report puts it, is more than a geographic entity. It is a kind of Declaration of Independence. It is a philosophy which pervades the whole plan and it is in this spirit that the potential for development in the area is assessed and the proposals made.”* The Plan states (2.3.6) also that because of the meaning of the lands to the people of the country, *“the people expect to share fully in and benefit directly in one form or another from the development of the areas which have reverted to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.”* It goes further however (2.3.7) to state that though this is a constraint to economic development, *“the economic aspects cannot be lost sight of if the standards of development and services which more and more citizens of the country are demanding are to be provided and properly maintained.”*

There are hundreds of acres of arable lands and magnificent flora and fauna throughout the peninsula including inland freshwater systems, coastal and marine ecosystems. The Development Plan 1974 has identified these areas. Any development plan must therefore consider all these factors.

As the CDA and the Ministry of Planning and Development review the development plans (Development Plan 1974 and Draft Master Plan 2015) they must be mindful of Vision 2030, which is the Government’s National Development Strategy (NDS). The NDS presents new Thematic Areas for the Government to focus its development efforts from 2016 to the year 2030. Given the significant ecological and economic/value ascribed to the area, Theme V of the NDS is of notable importance since it list ‘Placing the Environment at the Centre of Social and Economic Development’ as an area of development to be focused on.

Further, through the collaborative process involving Ministries and Departments, the Vision 2030 national development goals were formulated for each Thematic Area. These goals are also aligned

to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG) and as such are built upon the three pillars of sustainable development, namely, the economic, social and environmental spheres. One such medium term goal is to be achieved in 1–10 years: 2016-2025 is that ‘Biodiversity and ecosystem services are to be incorporated into all areas of national development.’ Further, in the NDS, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has aligned its National Development Goals with those of the UNSDGs to ‘Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.’

In the NDS under Theme V ‘Placing the Environment at the Centre of Social and Economic Development,’ the point is made that ‘as Trinidad and Tobago continues on a sustainable development path with the population continuing to grow, there will be increasing demands placed on our limited environmental resources. As such, our natural heritage must be protected and wisely used.

It will be ensured that as a country, we do our best to effectively control waste by reducing, reusing and recycling our materials, managing chemical, electronic and hazardous waste; **engaging in sustainable land use planning; reducing pollution, including land-based sources of pollutants; protecting our biodiversity; conserving our marine and freshwater resources;** building resilience to climate change; becoming energy smart; **encouraging eco-tourism;** and promoting corporate environmental responsibility, greener industries and green cities. We will create a culture that engenders an attitude of environmental consciousness and esteems conservation and preservation of our national assets, be they man made or natural.

Therefore, in reviewing the development plans for the Chaguaramas area, these aspects of the NDS must be considered.

- E. Given that a proper emergency and evacuation plan is critical and long overdue, we recommend that the CDA seek to urgently engage stakeholder within two months of the presentation of this report to the Parliament with a view to formulating and testing an appropriate emergency response plan and an evacuation plan for the North-West Peninsula.**

Response

The protocol for emergency response and evacuation based on ODPM guidance requires the Regional Corporations to take the lead in cases of tier 1 localise emergencies. The DMRC has developed a comprehensive Emergency Plan for the Peninsula which has been approved. This plan is amended every five years. The revised version is to be available in May 2018. There is also an active emergency stakeholder group and they meet regularly to discuss matters at hand.

The CDA has conducted emergency simulations albeit limited to the Carenage bay area for earthquakes and tsunamis.

Recommendations by the CDA:

- Develop our own emergency response plan, that is consistent with the DMRC's plan
- Reconvene the CDA tenants group
- Do simulation drills in conjunction with the ODPM and DMRC

3.3.67

- A. *Given the number of operational challenges confronting this organization, it is strongly recommended that its line Ministry significantly increase its oversight of its operations and play an active role in assisting the organization to rationalize its operations and to formulate strategies to assist in its realignment. It was also clear that greater innovation and creativity must be incorporated into the organization's operations moving forward.***

Response

The root cause of the CDA's problems is the overwhelming debt that was met in September 2015.

The lack of funds to conduct proper maintenance and to develop and market its products and services is preventing the CDA from recovering at a faster pace. The new organizational structure that was approved has sought to align CDA's manpower with the needs and objectives of the organization. The intention is that by placing the right persons in the right positions the CDA would improve its operations.

Regarding the recommendation that the Ministry increase its oversight of the CDA, Section 15 of the CDA Act states:

"15. (1) In the performance of its functions and exercise of its powers the Authority shall act in accordance with any special or general directions of the Minister but save as herein provided shall be subject to the control of no other person or authority.

(2) In the formulation of policy the Minister shall be assisted by a policy advisory committee appointed for the purpose by the President from other members of Cabinet and appropriate public officers."

In accordance with the legislation, the Ministry has been working with the CDA to improve its operations. In order to address Accounting issues, which ultimately impact the financial integrity of the CDA, the Ministry established a working team between the Ministry's Accounting and Internal Audit Units and the CDA Accounting Unit to set up more robust accounting practices in accordance with the Exchequer and Audit Act Chapter 69:01. In addition to this, a senior Public Officer of the Ministry has been placed on the Board of the CDA to ensure that Government regulations and guidelines are adhered to in the execution of the Authority's mandate.

- B. We recommend that the CDA take decisive action on leases for which it has received legal advice. It is further recommended that the CDA exercise its right to invoke the termination clause in its leases. Additionally, where it is determined that land which is currently occupied by a tenant is justifiably required for public purpose, compulsory acquisition should be initiated within the prescribed legal parameters.***

Response

The CDA has been taking action on leases for which it has received legal advice.

There are certain stipulations in the leases that warrant termination as well as a process to be followed that may lead to such termination. The CDA has been treating with each tenant on a case by case basis as per the terms of each lease.

The CDA is not the body responsible for determining whether land occupied by a tenant is required for public purposes nor can it compulsorily acquire property in this regard. However there is a provision in the CDA Act which provides for lands vested in the CDA to be re-vested in the State. Section 16 (3) of the CDA Act provides that:

“The President may by Order divest the Authority of any land vested in the Authority by virtue of a Vesting Order made under subsection (1) and thereupon the land to which the Order relates shall re-vest in the State subject to any rights or interests accruing to third parties from any disposition or other dealing in the land by the Authority.”

This issue of determination of lands for compulsory acquisition falls within the ambit of the President of Trinidad and Tobago and the Commissioner of State Lands in accordance with Land Acquisition Act, Chapter 58:01.

- C. We recommend that consideration be given to temporarily suspending the granting of leases and the processing of applications for leases, until the CDA has the benefit of the necessary legal guidance to inform its future negotiations with potential investors.***

Response

Legal advice was in fact received from External Counsel in November 2017 advising that:

1. The CDA is bound to act in accordance with the 1974 Development Plan.
2. Certain leases granted between 2010 and 2015 were found to be in contravention of the 1974 Development Plan and therefore plainly illegal and unenforceable.

As such until a new Development Plan is approved by Parliament, all leases being granted by the CDA are to be in compliance with the 1974 Development Plan.

- D. We recommend that should the seabed in the Chaguaramas area be vested in the CDA by the CoS, the EMA and IMA should provide technical guidance to the CDA to ensure that sufficient environment protection measures are implemented to counteract the potential impact of an expansion in commercial activities on the seabed.***

Response

The CDA agrees with this recommendation.

- E. We recommend that there be a critical review of the CDA Act Chapter 35:02 with a view to updating it provision to be more aligned to prevailing realities.***

Response

The CDA Act is currently being reviewed with consideration for updating it. For now it remains the legislation that governs the CDA.

- F. We recommend that the CDA work assiduously with building its relations with tourism stakeholders including the Ministry of Tourism, National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago and the T&TTGA with a view to forging an alliance for the purpose of rejuvenating and sustaining tourism activities in the North- west peninsula.***

Response

The CDA has already commenced same and has held meetings with the National Trust, the Ministry of Tourism and will soon be holding meetings with the T&TTGA as well as the Tourism Trinidad Limited Company (TTL).

The aim of the meeting with the TTL is to attain deeper market penetration regionally and internationally in bringing to Chaguaramas' borders, more foreign tourists and, by extension, more foreign exchange. It is also the CDA's aim that in partnering with TTL we will also be able to receive assistance in the marketing of our sites as well as gain ideas for further product development. The CDA has already met with about twenty five (25) other key stakeholders who visit and operate in the peninsula. These discussions are ongoing on partnerships to increase foot traffic in the peninsula. This includes some of our tenants who operate tourist based businesses in the peninsula.

- G. We recommend that the CDA undertake a review of its organizational structure given the findings of the manpower audit and establish a new organizational structure that is consistent with the recommendations of the manpower audit and the strategic goals of the Authority.***

Response

The Board at a Special Meeting held on Thursday, March 9, 2017 agreed via Resolution to conduct a Manpower Audit at the CDA. The objective of the Manpower Audit was to provide possible solutions/recommendations to further reduce CDA's operational cost as well as propose a cost effective structure that will be in alignment with the CDA's core functions. Eastman and Associates Ltd were contracted in April 2017 to conduct a Manpower Audit. The relevant unions, the Public Service Association (PSA), National Union of Government and Federated Workers (NUGFW) and Estate Police Association (EPA) were all informed of the CDA's intention to conduct a Manpower Audit. A report on the outcome and recommendations of the Manpower Audit was submitted on June 14, 2017 to the Board. A new organizational structure was proposed which was in greater alignment to the core functions of CDA and its strategic objectives.

After further consideration of the Eastman's report, the Board resolved to proceed with the implementation of the report in phases with Eastman and Associates Ltd. A copy of the report submitted by Eastman and Associates Ltd and the amended organizational structure were submitted to the Ministry of Planning and Development for the Minister and the Permanent Secretary's attention.

Eastman and Associates Ltd have commenced the first Phase of the Implementation of the recommendations of the Manpower Audit. The Public Service Association was informed of the CDA's intention to commence with the implementation of the manpower audit and a meeting was scheduled for 16th October 2017 for discussions.

H. We recommend that the CDA forward a proposal to the PS, MoPD for the consideration of public private partnerships to assist the CDA in the development of the north-west peninsula.

Response

The CDA previously requested such permission via letter dated June 30, 2017. Currently the CDA has been working with other Government Agencies as well as private stakeholders to enhance its brand, improve maintenance and develop and market its products and services. The development of the National Park is key to the CDA's success. Assistance is being sought through an application to the Green Fund Unit of the Ministry of Planning and Development for funding to aid the organization in promoting its sites as Eco-tourism Destinations. The application is near completion and seeks to develop, educate and promote the sites in the Chaguaramas Peninsula as ideal Eco-tourism Destinations.

An 'Adopt a Mile' campaign was drafted in February 2018 to address deficiencies in maintenance within the peninsula which arose out of the Standing Committee of the Maritime Sector and the development of the Yachting Policy. Same is to be presented to the Board for approval before it can be submitted to the line Ministry and the Standing Committee of the Maritime Sector.

- I. We strongly recommend that the CDA's line Ministry carefully and objectively consider whether the CDA is currently fulfilling its core mandate. An assessment of the efficacy of the CDA's involvement in promoting tourism in the north-western peninsula should be conducted.***

Response

The Chaguaramas Development Authority Act Chap 35:02 was enacted ‘to provide for the establishment and operation of the Authority for the development of the North-West Peninsula in the interest of the People of Trinidad and Tobago.’

Further, Section 14 of the CDA Act states as follows:-

14. (1) *Subject to the provisions of this Act, the principal function of the Authority shall be to undertake, or secure the undertaking of, the laying out and development of the North-West Peninsula in accordance with any development plan referred to in section 16 and any development order issued in relation thereto; and the Authority shall ensure that any such laying out and development is carried out in conformity with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act.*
- (2) *The Authority shall have power –*
- (a) in addition to the acquisition of land and other property by virtue of a Vesting Order under section 16, to acquire by purchase, transfer, donation, exchange, demise, bequest, grant, gift, conveyance or howsoever otherwise, any real or personal property or any estate or interest therein;*
 - (b) to accept surrenders, assignments or reconveyances and to enter into contracts;*
 - (c) subject to any restraint, reservation, restriction or condition it may impose, to sell, exchange, demise, mortgage or otherwise dispose of and deal with all property that may for the time being be vested in or have been acquired by it.*
- (3) *Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing provisions of this section the Authority may, in the North-West Peninsula -*
- (a) lay out, construct and maintain roads, construct and maintain buildings, and carry out such other building and engineering operations as may be necessary or desirable;*
 - (b) provide and maintain car parks, piers, public parks or gardens and other public amenities;*
 - (c) carry on any business or other activity (whether alone or jointly with any other person or authority) that is conducive to the development thereof, and in particular the Authority may enter into such arrangements incidental to the foregoing as are considered necessary or expedient for the discharge of its functions.*

The Development Plan 1974 identifies certain areas to be used for national park development, tourist, resort and recreational development including hiking trails and picnic areas.

In keeping with the objective of the CDA Act, the CDA's Strategic Implementation Plan for 2016-2019/20 has as its mission 'To conserve and develop the North West peninsula for the benefit of all.' In the said Plan some of the CDA's key strategic objectives are:-

- i. Improvement of Park Management;
- ii. Broaden range of services and products; and
- iii. Enhance quality of Customer Service

Under the new organizational structure a National Park and Customer Service Manager has been appointed at the CDA and efforts have commenced to meet and forge partnerships with key stakeholders including the Ministry of Tourism to promote the north-west peninsula as a prime Eco-tourism Destination site.

The Ministry of Planning and Development always provides support through the office of the Permanent Secretary to the CDA. Her office has facilitated meeting requests with the Green Fund Unit, the Ministry of Tourism and National Trust of Trinidad and Tobago. In 2017 the Ministry of Tourism entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the CDA and assisted with the improvement of certain key tourist sites in the peninsula and the refurbishment of CDA's boat, "CDA 2" which will be utilised to conduct tours and off shore island maintenance.

J. It would be useful for the CDA to re-evaluate the feasibility studies and concept documents associated with the Board Walk Project to determine what may be stymieing its success. The CDA must also conduct comparative research of the business models used by other countries in relation to boardwalks and similar facilities with a view to determining how best to optimize this facility.

Response

The concept of the Chaguaramas Boardwalk is a good one. However, there are inherent defects at both Phase I and Phase II of the project which hinder full usage at times. Further, lack of sufficient resources has resulted in the inability to properly maintain the Boardwalk itself as well as the washroom facilities. With the electrical upgrades almost complete at the Vending Plaza consideration will be given to what is the best use of the huts at that location. There is likely to be a mixture of foods, snacks, beach accessories and arts/crafts for visitors. Proposals are to be presented to the new Board. The CDA has researched the operation and management of Boardwalks across the globe paying particular interest to the types of activities that are hosted on them.

In fact, the said research propelled the hosting of the Spices...the Curry Festival on the Chaguaramas Boardwalk in August 2017. The event was well attended and brought hundreds of visitors from across the country to partake in savoury curry dishes and delicacies. Another Food Festival is planned for August 2018.

Packages are also now offered for the rental of gazebos on the Boardwalk and this has increased the usage of the gazebos on weekends and public holidays by groups of friends and families. Reasonable rates are also offered for birthday parties and weddings.

For the Carnival season 2018, the Chaguaramas Boardwalk was the venue for a private party called 'Farmhouse on the Sea.' The promoter was pleased with the response from the patrons and has informed that he wishes to have the same party at that location in Carnival 2019. Another event promoter having seen the success of 'Farmhouse on the Sea' has submitted a proposal to host a similar event on the Chaguaramas Boardwalk in June 2018.

On Valentines' Day 2018 there was also a romantic Dinner on the Chaguaramas Boardwalk by Pallet by Marisa. An aqua park is also planned to bring fun and adventure for the entire family on May 30th and 31st 2018 at the Williams Bay beach and increase foot traffic on the Chaguaramas Boardwalk.

On June 17th 2018 a series of events are planned on the Chaguaramas Boardwalk and other locations in the peninsula after Yoga on the Boardwalk which is hosted by the International Yoga Committee and the CDA. A crowd of 1,000 persons is expected.

With the opening of the Kids Play Park and Mini golf attractions, the CDA has commenced planning for the influx of persons to the peninsula and providing activities on the Chaguaramas Boardwalk for the visitors.

K. Urgent action should be taken to rectify the telecommunication challenges affecting the CDA. In the interim, the CDA should continue to strategically utilize email as well as suitable forms of social media to maintain robust connectivity with the public.

Response

The telecommunications system is a workable one at the moment with a PBX system that incorporates a roving call system to alleviate unanswered calls.

There is also a voice mail system and call waiting. The use of cellular phones by certain key personnel has also assisted in ensuring that the CDA makes itself more accessible to the public during and after working hours including weekends to book tours and hikes.

CDA has and continues to utilize email, even having set up 'hotmail' addresses for each department in light of the 'chagdev.com' domain being unable to receive external emails.

Other suitable forms of social media including Facebook, Instagram and the CDA's Website are also used to maintain connectivity with the public.

REQUESTS FOR APPROVAL TO EXECUTE PROJECT ON THE NW PENINSULA

	Name	Date of Application Received	Date of Application	Business Interest
	Kenny Ramdath	March 24, 2015	March 24, 2015	Vendor Booth - the sale of items such as punches, fruits, fruit punches and fruit salads.
2	Theodore Sutherland	March 24, 2015	March 24, 2015	Vendor Booth - sale of items such as chows, fruit salads, and homemade sweets.
3	Sandwich It Is	March 26, 2015		Mobile Vending Unit- Grilled Foods (Breakfasts & Lunches)
4	Gliders Fun Tours / Michael Hernandez	April 10 2015		Use of Segways for Tours & Trails
5	K's Delight	May 18, 2015		Vendor Booth - Coffee Deli House
6	Rene Darwent	May 21 2015		Lotto Booth
7	Excite Us Entertainment Services	June 5, 2015	June 5, 2015	A proposal for the provision of several recreational and food activities on Phase 2A of the Boardwalk. These include 1. A Mini carnival Booth 2. A Photo Booth 3. A hotdog Cart 4. An outdoor movie screen and 5. Special events
8	Sweet Vibes			Vendor Booth - Smoothie / Punch / Health Juices
9	Magella Moreau	June 26, 2015	March 29, 2015	Office / studio space in Maqueripe, for the eco-arts organisation Red Earth, organisers of the Red Earth Festival and other environmental-arts based activities.
10	Kay Constantine Hamilton	December15 2014		Residential property in Copper Hole / Turtle Bay, Monos or any other location.
11	Landscape Designs			Pending request for a 30 yr. lease based on change of permitted use to an eco-lodge
12	Richfield Ltd. (#1 and #2)			Request for regularisation of both properties
13	NIPDEC			Tenant occupies Platforms 12,13 &14 in Granwood and they are requesting a new lease agreement.
14	Adrian Robinson	July 10, 2015	July 8, 2015	Vending Booth - East Indian Cuisine
15	Sweet Water Marina	Aug 18, 2015	Aug 18, 2015	Tenant is interested in building a Parking Lot
16	Island Property Association (IPOA)	Sept 11, 2015		Operation of a marina service
17	Harmony Farms Limited	Sept 11, 2015	July 31, 2015	Farming- preferably tilapia, shrimp and crayfish.
18	Eric and Maureen Miller		July 15, 2015	Renovations on property (Existing Business Tenant at Monos Island)
19	Andrew Graham	Sept 23, 2015		Weekend pass to sell cotton candy on the Boardwalk
20	Urban Laser Tag Ltd	Sept 28,2015		Go Kart Rental
21	Alwaha Gyros	Oct 14, 2015	Oct 13, 2015	Vending Booth- Arabic Foods, Fresh juices and drinks
22	Eugenio Donato Lafle	Oct 15, 2015		Weekend pass to sell snow cone on Boardwalk
23	Carl and Son Sandiford	Apr 10, 2004		Vending Booth - Grilled Foods

	Name	Date of Application Received	Date of Application	Business Interest
24	Sunshine Hearts	Oct 23, 2015		Establishment of a medium scale commercial Green-Water Recirculating Aquaculture
25	Loca Wear Calypso Beat International	Dec 3, 2015	Dec 1, 2015	Vendor Booth - Space to sell local and international: foods, T-shirts, Caps
26	ChagTerms (Trinidad Limited)/ Crews Inn	09-Dec-15	Dec 9, 2015	Extension of a car park
27	GMCTT Ltd	March 14, 2016	11-Mar-16	Tourism / Beach Sport Recreational Rental Activity
28	Ricardo Sanchez/ Agri-Aquaculture Farm Ltd.	April 14, 2016		Seafood and Agriculture Business
29	Rodney Rodriguez	April 13, 2016	April 11, 2016	Food shack and Cocktail Bar
30	Sabrina Umbrano	April 21, 2016	April 21, 2016	Cottages at Macqueripe
31	FA Theatres	August 25, 2016	August 25, 2016	To operate an eco-friendly outgoing movie experience
32	Gears Up Adventure Limited	August 17, 2016	Undated	Rental of snorkeling and diving gear
33	Browne's Designs	October 3, 2016	October 3, 2016	Commercial- Structural Fabrication and Welding Services mainly construction
34	Lisa Communications Limited	October 26, 2016	October 11, 2016	Telecommunications Services (Provider)
35	Communications & Investments Technology Holdings Inc Ltd	October 27, 2016	October 27, 2016	To set up a Hybrid Truss Building- a combination of steel and fabric.
36	Kerwin Quashie/ Danny's Inflatable Water Park	March 14, 2017 & March 28, 2017	March 10, 2017	Applicant is interested in 20,000 sq.ft water surface area with a 10 x10 sq.ft. Land spacing for admission tent on Williams Bay Beach Front Chaguaramas area (Boardwalk)
37	Professional Beehive Extractors	March 24, 2017	February 5, 2017	Applicant is interested in erecting an apiary in Tucker Valley. Client is interested in a flat land space of 60 feetx 60feet
38	Northwest Maritime Limited -c/o Coral Cove Marina Hotel	April 28, 2017	April 28, 2017	Applicant is interested in conducting international recognized certification courses in all aspects of marine operations both onshore and offshore.
39	Splash Beach	May 3, 2017	April 23, 2017	Applicant is interested in conducting beach courses located on waters of Williams Bay Beach
40	Pearl & Dean		April 24, 2017	2 month Advertising proposal for Samsung's launch of their new handset - S8
41	Beach House		January 19, 2016	Five year lease for a parcel of land in Grandwood
41	Fluid Technology Limited	August 30 the 2016	August 23, 2016	Drilling Fluid Facility with sea frontage and warehouse facility

February 07, 2014

Mr. Howard Chin Lee
Managing Director
Pier 1
William's Bay
CHAGUARAMAS



Dear Sir

Re: Remedial and repair activities at the Pier 1 Facility

We refer to your letter dated February 04, 2014 regarding the subject at caption.

We note that you have advised us that you are engaging in certain remedial and repair activities to your facility (Pier 1) to mitigate the effect of the continual coastal erosion that has been caused by the wave action on the waterfront area of your compound.

In the circumstances, a Certificate of Environmental Clearance is not required given the nature of this project.

Yours sincerely,

// ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY



INSTITUTE OF MARINE AFFAIRS

October 23, 2015

Ms. Vernlynne Luccs
Senior Compliance Officer
Chaguaramas Development Authority
Airway Road
CHAGUARAMAS

Dear Ms. Luccs

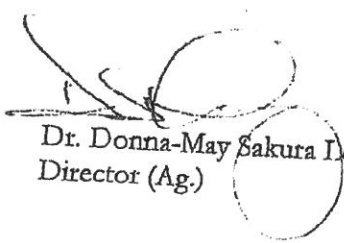
Re: Environmental Concern at Pier 1

Reference is made to your correspondence dated 13th October, 2015 requesting input from the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) regarding the berthing of vessels at Williams Bay, Chaguaramas.

On Thursday 22nd October 2015, a team from the IMA conducted a visit to the area in order to conduct a seagrass mapping exercise. The IMA's comments, observations and recommendations are attached.

The IMA stands ready to assist as requested by the Chaguaramas Development Authority (CDA), in ensuring the sustainable use of the resources of the northwest peninsula. Should you require any additional information on the above-stated matter, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at 634 4291-4 extension 2531 or email imadirector@ima.gov.tt

Yours sincerely



Dr. Donna-May Sakura Lemessy
Director (Ag.)



HILLTOP LANE, CHAGUARAMAS
P.O. BOX 3160, CARENAGE POST OFFICE, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, W.I.
TEL: (868) 634-4291/4; FAX: (868) 634-4433;
E-MAIL: director@ima.gov.tt
A Statutory body established by Act of Parliament, No. 15 of 1976

INSTITUTE OF MARINE AFFAIRS

Environmental Concern at Pier 1

The IMA submits the following for your consideration:

Although there are some remnants of seagrasses in William's Bay, they are on the eastern side of the berthing area, in the proximity of the location of what was formerly the Kayak Centre. Seagrasses are no longer present on the western end of the bay or near the jetties. On Thursday 22nd October 2015, staff of the IMA conducted a seagrass mapping exercise in the area of concern, and reported that while fouling organisms were observed on the hulls of the boats, which is not unusual considering the normal usage of the vessels, there was no evidence of effluent being discharged from the vessels, nor were there any visible signs of oil, or oil sheen in the surrounding waters. An immediate concern however, is the preparedness of the area if there is an oil spill or discharge of other effluents from these vessels. Should a spill or effluent discharge occur, this can have adverse effects: The area is a very sensitive one due to the number of persons who frequent it on a daily basis, and there may be immediate human health risks, with attendant negative publicity as a result of the now popular boardwalk development.

Thus, these vessels, if allowed to berth, should have an in-house capability to manage the clean-up of spills and/or other effluents. From a historical perspective, the preparedness of the Chaguaramas area, by way of availability of booms and trained persons etc., has always been a major concern. There have been very inadequate clean up responses in the past, when the coastline has been impacted by oil spills.

The area is apparently being used as a lay-up service centre. Lay-ups services are generally required when vessels are taken out of regular service (usually because of a downturn in the shipping industry). Under such circumstances, they require minimal routine maintenance to preserve their seaworthiness.

On the economic side, lay-up services can bring additional revenues to the local economy, particularly via maintenance of ship hulls (because of the build-up of fouling organisms); the use of this area for such however, could possibly realise the presence of additional smaller vessels occasionally visiting the area in the future, adding to an already crowded scene, which is not aesthetically pleasing. As it presently stands, the mooring of these vessels does negatively impact the aesthetics of the area, especially its use as a tourist and recreational venue.

The regular use of this area is for recreational and tourism purposes, due to the ecosystems services offered. The mooring of these vessels may have changed the land-use of this maritime space, and if the present situation persists, there is a potential for multiuser conflicts, should the lay-up service become a regular feature.

The CDA will have to determine if the berthing arrangements are compatible with the present leasing arrangements for the use of the Pier 1 area, and if in fact, an unauthorized change in land use has taken place. If the latter is true, the CDA will have to decide what is the appropriate action, if any.

It would be instructive for the CDA to consider what would be the ongoing impacts, if other companies were to be granted similar permissions (we are assuming that permission was sought and granted). This situation has the potential to have cross linkages with another, which can also be a cause for concern; that of the abandonment of ships along the coastline of the northwest peninsula.

With respect to the statutory approvals necessary for berthing activity, this does not fall within the remit of the IMA. We would like to advise that the authorised agency for such is the Maritime Services Division, and queries should be relayed to them for their attention.

The IMA would recommend that this situation be considered, not as a single occurrence, but within the context of the plans and policy directions for the coastline of the northwest peninsula. The Institute stands ready to assist when requested by the Chaguaramas Development Authority (CDA), towards ensuring a sustainable use of the resources of the northwest peninsula.

Should you require additional information or assistance regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact the office of the Director of the IMA at imadirector@ima.gov.tt.

Submitted by:

Dr. Donna-May Sakura Lemessy
Director
Institute of Marine Affairs