



FIFTEENTH REPORT OF THE

THE COMMITTEE ON

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
AND **APPROPRIATIONS**

THIRD SESSION OF THE 11TH PARLIAMENT

INQUIRY

Examination of the expenditure and internal controls of the
Ministry of Tourism



Public Administration and Appropriations Committee

The Public Administration and Appropriations Committee (PAAC) is established by Standing Order 102 and 92 of the House of Representatives and the Senate respectively. The Committee is mandated to consider and report to Parliament on:

- (a) *the budgetary expenditure of Government agencies to ensure that expenditure is embarked upon in accordance with parliamentary approval;*
- (b) *the budgetary expenditure of Government agencies as it occurs and keeps Parliament informed of how the budget allocation is being implemented; and*
- (c) *the administration of Government agencies to determine hindrances to their efficiency and to make recommendations to the Government for improvement of public administration.*

Current membership

Mrs. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George	Chairman
Dr. Lackram Bodoë	Vice-Chairman
Ms. Nicole Olivierre	Member
Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy	Member
Mr. Clarence Rambharat	Member
Mr. Daniel Dookie	Member
Mr. Wade Mark	Member
Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Ancil Antoine	Member
Ms. Amrita Deonarine	Member
Mr. Garvin Simonette	Member

Committee Staff

The current staff members serving the Committee are:

Ms. Keiba Jacob	Secretary to the Committee
Ms. Sheranne Samuel	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Rachel Nunes	Graduate Research Assistant
Ms. Ashaki Alexis	Graduate Research Assistant
Ms. Anesha James	Administrative Assistant

Publication

An electronic copy of this report can be found on the Parliament website using the following link:

http://www.ttparliament.org/committee_business.php?mid=19&id=232&pid=28

Contact Information

All correspondence should be addressed to:

The Secretary
Public Administration and Appropriations Committee
Office of the Parliament
Levels G-9, Tower D
The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre
1A Wrightson Road, Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Tel: (868) 624-7275 Ext 2372, 2373; 2409 Fax: (868) 625-4672
Email: paac@ttparliament.org

Date Laid in HOR: January 18, 2019

Date Laid in Senate: January 21, 2019

Table of Contents

Public Administration and Appropriations Committee	2
Members of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1. INTRODUCTION	6
THE COMMITTEE	6
METHODOLOGY.....	8
2. ISSUES, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	10
CONCLUSION.....	17
APPENDIX I.....	19
Questions to Ministry	23
Questions submitted to Ministry of Tourism	24
APPENDIX II.....	36
The Inquiry Process.....	36
APPENDIX III	39
Minutes of Meetings	39
Appendix IV	48
Verbatim.....	48

Members of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee



Mrs. Bridgid Mary Annisette-
George
Chairman



Dr. Lackram Bodoë
Vice-Chairman



Mr. Wade Mark
Member



Mr. Clarence Rambharat
Member



Mrs. Ayanna
Webster-Roy
Member



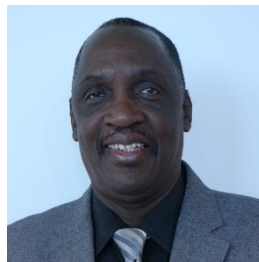
Mr. Garvin Simonette
Member



Ms. Amrita Deonarine
Member



Mr. Daniel Dookie
Member



Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Ancil Antoine
Member



Ms. Nicole Olivierre
Member

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report of the PAAC for the Eleventh Parliament contains the details of the examination of the Ministry of Tourism.

The objective of the Inquiry was to examine the following areas of administration and expenditure for the Financial Year 2018:

- Accountability and Transparency;
- Auditor General's Report 2017;
- Follow-up – Ministerial Response to the First Report on Ministries and Departments;
- Follow-up - Ministerial Response to the Third Report on Inventory Control;
- Follow –up – Ministerial Response to the Fourth Report on Internal Audit;
- Sub-Head 02 - Goods and Services;
- Sub-Head 04 – Current Transfers and Subsidies;
- Sub-Head 09 Development Programme Consolidated Fund; and
- Statement of Expenditure for the period November 2017 – April 2018.

The Committee, in undertaking this examination employed two (2) mechanisms:

- Written Submissions; and
- Public Hearings.

The Committee made a call for written submissions to stakeholders and thereafter focused on a review and analysis of the written submissions submitted. Subsequently, the Committee conducted a Public Hearing with stakeholders. The approach adopted by the Committee took into account issues identified from responses received. The Committee has extended recommendations related to the issues identified. Observations and recommendations are presented in chapter 2.

1. INTRODUCTION

THE COMMITTEE

The PAAC of the Eleventh Republican Parliament was established by the revised Standing Orders to:

- examine current public expenditure, thereby capturing the full budget cycle by providing Parliamentary oversight of the implementation of the budget; and
- conduct a real time examination of the expenditure of Ministries and Departments.

In the 11th Parliament the Members of the Committee were appointed by resolutions of the House of Representatives and the Senate at sittings held on Friday November 13, 2015 and Tuesday November 17, 2015 respectively.

Membership

1. In the 11th Parliament the Members of the Committee were appointed by resolutions of the House of Representatives and the Senate at sittings held on Friday November 13, 2015 and Tuesday November 17, 2015 respectively.
2. By resolution of the House of Representatives on November 24, 2017, Brigadier General (Ret.) Ancil Antoine was appointed as a Member of the Committee in lieu of Mr. Maxie Cuffie.
3. By resolution of the Senate on November 3, 2017, Ms. Jennifer Raffoul was appointed as a Member of the Committee in lieu of Dr. Dhanayshar Mahabir.
4. By resolution of the Senate on November 28, 2017 Mr. Ronald Huggins was appointed as a Member of the Committee in lieu of Ms. Allyson Baksh.
5. By resolution of the Senate on November 27, 2018, Mr. Garvin Simonette was appointed as a Member on the Committee in lieu of Mr. Ronald Huggins.
6. By resolution of the Senate on November 27, 2018, Ms. Amrita Deonarine was appointed as a Member of the Committee in lieu of Ms. Jennifer Raffoul.

Chairman & Vice-Chairman

By virtue of S.O. 109(6) and 99(6) of the House of Representatives and the Senate respectively, the Chairman of the Committee is the Speaker. At its First Meeting held on January 27 2016, Dr. Lackram Bodoë was elected as the Vice-Chairman.

Quorum

Additionally, in order to exercise the powers granted to it by the House, the Committee was required by the Standing Orders to have a quorum. A quorum of three (3) Members, inclusive of the Chairman or Vice-Chairman, with representatives from both Houses, was agreed to by the Committee at its First Meeting.

The objective of the Committee's inquiry was to determine whether there was accountability, transparency and value for money in the use of public funds by the Ministry of Tourism (MoT).

METHODOLOGY

Determination of the Committee's Work Programme

At an in-camera meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday December 28, 2017, the Committee agreed to conduct an inquiry into the Ministry of Tourism.

Review of Documents

The Committee deliberated on the following documents, namely:

- i. Budget Documents;
- ii. Auditor General's Report 2017;
- iii. MoT's Ministerial Response to the First Report;
- iv. MoT's Ministerial Response to the Third Report on Inventory Control;
- v. MoT's Ministerial response to the Fourth Report on Internal Audit; and
- vi. MoT's Statements of Expenditure as at October 2017.

The Inquiry Process

The Inquiry Process outlines steps to be taken by the Committee when conducting an inquiry into an entity or issue. The following steps outline the Inquiry process followed by the PAAC for its examination of the internal controls and expenditure of the Ministry of Tourism:

- i. Identification of entity to be examined: Ministry of Tourism;
- ii. Preparation of Inquiry Proposal for the Ministry of Tourism. The Inquiry Proposal outlines:
 - Description
 - Rationale/Objective of Inquiry; and
 - Proposed Questions.
- iii. Consideration and approval of Inquiry Proposal by the Committee;
- iv. Request for written response was sent to the Ministry of Tourism on May 3, 2018. Responses were received on May 21, 2018.
- v. Preparation of an Issues Paper by the Secretariat for the Committee's consideration, based on written responses received from the Ministry. The Issues Paper identified and summarised matters of concern in the responses provided by the Ministry of Tourism;

- vi. Based on the responses received and the issues identified, the Committee agreed to have a Public Hearing. The relevant witnesses were invited to attend and provide evidence on June 13, 2018.
- vii. Following the Public Hearing, a request for further details was sent to the Ministry on June 18, 2018. The additional information was received on August 09, 2018.

2. ISSUES, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUES

Accountability and Transparency

1. Internal Audit

i. Reports

The Committee questioned the Ministry on the submission of quarterly internal audit reports to the Accounting Officer. The Ministry informed the Committee that the last quarterly report was completed in January 2018 for the period ending December 31, 2017. The second quarterly report for the period January to March was outstanding as of June 2018. The Report was in the process of being completed.

The Ministry indicated that the findings of the last internal audit conducted in January 2018, revealed that some procedures were not in compliance with the Financial Instructions 1965 and Travelling Allowances Act. However, the Committee was informed that corrective action was taken as a result of the findings.

Recommendations:

- ***The Permanent Secretary should adopt more proactive strategies to ensure that the relevant personnel are held accountable for the untimely submission of reports.***
- ***The Ministry of Tourism should submit a report on the corrective action(s) taken as a result of the findings of all internal audit reports in 2018 by March 31, 2019.***
- ***The Permanent Secretary should include a deadline for the submission of quarterly internal audit reports in the performance standards of the Internal Auditor.***

ii. Staffing

When questioned about staffing issues within the Internal Audit Unit, the Ministry informed the Committee that there was a Restructuring Note before the Public

Management Consulting Division (PMCD). This note was for the restructuring of all positions in the Ministry. The Committee was informed that the Ministry was engaged in constant follow-up with PMCD. The last follow-up was conducted on Friday June 11, 2018.

In relation to the Internal Audit Unit, the Committee learnt an Auditing Assistant was requested to complete that Unit's complement. At the time of the hearing the Ministry was conducting a Pension and Leave exercise to which the staff of the Unit was re-assigned. Officials further explained that if an additional position were created the Unit will have sufficient resources to function adequately.

Recommendations:

- ***The Permanent Secretary should utilize an interim mechanism to hire an Auditing Assistant. A status report on the staffing of the Internal Audit Unit should be submitted to Parliament by March 31, 2019.***
- ***The PMCD should review and prioritize the approval of the Restructuring Note submitted by the Ministry of Tourism. A status of the Restructuring Note should be submitted to Parliament by March 31, 2019.***

iii. Official Overseas Travel

The Ministry attended nine (9) overseas trips for fiscal 2017-2018 ranging in cost from \$17,477.00 to \$207,950.00. **See Appendix I for further details.** The Committee questioned the benefits of attending overseas seminars and conferences and the mechanism for measuring the benefits. Officials stated that officers who attended seminars and conferences were required to produce reports, identifying inter alia the objectives and the benefits of attendance. These reports were used to assess the benefits and effectiveness of attendance. The Committee sought information on the selection process for the identification of conferences and seminars for attendance. Officials stated that events were selected based on the following criteria:

- Trinidad and Tobago's membership in international and regional Tourism Bodies, for which the destination is required to be represented at Ministerial and other technical meetings annually; and

- Implementation of identified tourism strategies and technologies towards improving arrivals to the destination.

Recommendations:

- *The Ministry of Tourism should develop a mechanism to ensure that the conferences and seminars selected for attendance will result in measurable gains for the Trinidad and Tobago tourism industry. This mechanism should be implemented by March 31, 2019 and a report submitted to Parliament.*
- *The Ministry of Tourism should conduct a cost benefit analysis for all overseas travel planned for 2019 and submit a report to Parliament by March 31, 2019.*

iv. Auditor General's Report (AGR) 2017

The Auditor General's Report (AGR) 2017, reported that the Ministry had very little or no integration in the use of IT to facilitate efficient service delivery. The AGR stated that the Ministry was utilising different Applications to perform similar functions for Accounting, Library and Inventory when compared to the wider public service. The Auditor General's analysis revealed that the lack of integration of an IT system is likely to result in¹:

- Sub-optimal use of data, software and hardware, maintenance and support;
- Inappropriate use of finances - wastage of money when resources are available at another Department;
- Loss of the benefits of economies of scale;
- Non-standardization of policies for IT control at Ministries and Departments;
- Risk of human error when data is inputted manually to another system;
- Difficult and time-consuming comparisons, correlations or analysis of data, as data may be scattered across various systems, and
- Duplication of processes as well as overlapping databases.

¹Auditor General Report 2017; accessed on July 19, 2018:
<http://138.128.179.50/sites/default/files/Auditor%20Generals%20Report%20on%20the%20Public%20Accounts%202017.pdf>

In a written response to the Committee, the Ministry indicated that it was utilising the Government's Payroll System and Integrated Human Resource Information System (IHRIS) for the inputting of salary information and the printing of cheques respectively. This service was provided by the Ministry of Finance at no cost. With regard to Inventory, the Ministry utilised the Asset Management Software. This response appeared to contradict the AGR.

Recommendation:

- ***The Ministry of Tourism should clarify statements made in the Auditor General's Report 2017 and indicate when the Ministry started utilizing the technologies outlined. An update should be provided by March 31, 2019***

Marketing the destination

1. "Go Trinbago Destination" App

The Committee sought details on the status and function of the "Go Trinbago Destination" App. The Ministry informed the Committee that the App was owned by both Trinidad and Tobago and included a feature for information on both islands. The "Go Trinbago App" was developed by the Tourism Development Company (TDC) before it was dissolved in fiscal 2016. The TDC at the time incurred all costs for the App. The "Go Trinbago" App can be utilised by tourists (foreign or local) who visit Trinidad and Tobago to provide information on myriad services and resources while visiting the islands. Information for example on hotels, tours and tour operators, transport operators, directions to sites and attractions and restaurants in Trinidad and Tobago is available. The App, once downloaded, can operate without Wi-Fi. The Ministry further explained that upon arrival at the airports in Trinidad or Tobago tourists received an alert directing them to download the App.

The "Go Trinbago App" was launched by the Ministry in February 2017. When questioned about the number of downloads, the Ministry stated that as at June 1, 2018, the total number of downloads were 10,769 spread across tourists from 123 countries.

Observation:

- *The Committee notes the use of the “Go Trinbago Destination” App by the Ministry of Tourism to advertise the product offerings of Trinidad and Tobago.*

1. Tourist Arrivals

The Committee learnt that the Ministry expected to increase:

- Air arrivals to 500,000 by 2020;
- Cruise ship arrivals by 100,000 by 2020; and
- Visitor revenues by 25%.

During the public hearing, the Committee requested information on the number of arrivals for fiscal 2016 and 2017. Officials from the Ministry informed the Committee of the following:

Year	Air Arrivals
2016	408,782
2017	394,650

The 2017 figure represented a 3.46 % decline in air arrivals.

Fiscal	Cruise ship Arrivals
2016/2017	48,878
2017/2018	126,392

With regard to cruise arrivals, in fiscal 2017-2018 the country received 126,392 passengers which represented an increase in arrivals by 158%. Officials explained that the increase was due to additional cruise calls because of hurricanes in neighbouring countries. The Ministry received an additional 24 cruise calls in the 2017-2018 cruise season.

Observation:

- *The Committee notes that air arrivals fell in 2017 by approximately 4% and although Cruise ship arrivals increased by almost 300% this may not be a sustainable gain.*

Recommendation:

- *The Ministry of Tourism should implement effective marketing tools to increase and sustain the levels of arrivals for both air and cruise ship. Taking into account value for money considerations the Ministry should submit a report on the tools to be implemented by March 31, 2019.*
- *The Ministry of Tourism must identify the strategies it has employed/intends to employ to realise its target of 500,000 air arrivals and 100,000 cruise ship arrivals by 2020.*

2. Tourism Trinidad Destination Management Company Limited

Officials from the Ministry of Tourism updated the Committee on the status of the Tourism Trinidad Destination Management Company Limited. At the time of the hearing, the Company was not in operation, however, the Board was appointed. The Board is required to report to the Minister or the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism. Officials indicated that Cabinet agreed to the appointment of interim management for the Company for a six month period to allow the Board to execute and complete a recruitment exercise and to operationalise the Company.

Subsequent information received from the Ministry indicated that the Strategic Plan was not yet drafted as it would be the responsibility of the Executive of the Company to do so. The Ministry stated that the Board of Directors of the Company had commenced the executive recruitment process for top management positions. The Ministry indicated that advertisements were placed in the daily newspapers to fill these positions.

Observation:

- *The Committee notes the progress Ministry made in the operationalisation of the Company.*

Recommendations:

- *The Ministry of Tourism should make recruitment of the required employees a priority and submit a report to the Parliament on the progress made by March 31, 2019.*
- *The Strategic Plan of the Company should be drafted by March 31, 2019 and a copy submitted to Parliament by April 30, 2019.*

CONCLUSION

During the Third Session of the Eleventh Parliament, the PAAC conducted an examination into the Ministry of Tourism with particular reference to the Accountability and Transparency, Recurrent Expenditure, Development Programme – Consolidated Fund, Infrastructure Development Fund, and recommendations from the PAAC's Third Report on Inventory Control, Fourth Report on Internal Audit, and Monthly Expenditure Report for the period October – December 2017. During the course of the examination which consisted of written submissions and a Public Hearing, the Committee followed up on a number of issues from the responses received from the Ministry. Issues arising from the submission of quarterly reports, overseas travel, the Auditor General Report 2017 and the operationalisation of the Tourism Trinidad Destination Management Company Limited were discussed.

The Committee is of the view that the adoption of its proposed recommendations will lead to greater accountability, transparency and value for money in the product offered by the Ministry of Tourism and entities under its purview. The Committee intends to monitor the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations proposed in this Report.

This Committee respectfully submits this Report for the consideration of the Parliament.

Sgd.
Bridgid Mary Annisette-George
Chairman

Sgd.
Dr. Lackram Bodoë
Vice-Chairman

Sgd.
Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy
Member

Sgd.
Ms. Nicole Olivierre
Member

Sgd.
Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Ancil Antoine
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Wade Mark
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Daniel Dookie
Member

Sgd.
Ms. Amrita Deonarine
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Clarence Rambharat
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Garvin Simonette
Member

APPENDIX I

Overseas Travel for fiscal 2017-2018

Date	Meeting and Destination	Cost	Purpose
October 10-13, 2017	Caribbean Tourism Organization's Business Meetings and State of the Industry Conference, in Grenada.	\$56,220.95	The event allows Caribbean tourism practitioners, policy makers and strategic partners from the public and private sectors, and travel professionals, gather to discuss issues, identify solutions and courses of action to keep the region competitive and therefore benefit its tourism industry. Speakers of international and regional acclaim provide best case practices and winning strategies on a wide range of topics critical to the growth of Caribbean tourism, all with a view toward the development of a sustainable tourism industry.
October 23-27, 2017	Florida Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) Cruise Conference and Tradeshow, Merida, Mexico	\$114,926.00	Participation at the FCCA Cruise Conference and Tradeshow provided the Ministry with the opportunity to continue discussions with Cruise Line Executives to encourage increased cruise calls to the destination and further the development of the cruise sector in Trinidad and Tobago.
November 6-8, 2017	World Travel Market (WTM) – London, United Kingdom	\$142,804.00	Attendance at WTM allowed for opportunities to promote Trinidad and Tobago to the “world”; learn from industry leaders, discuss trends, issues and innovations in the travel industry, network and conduct business.
January 26-28, 2018	New York Times Travel Show	\$17,477.00	The New York Times Travel Show attracts over 30,000 attendees representing 170 destinations and travel interest such as travel agents, airlines, hoteliers and travel

			consultants. The show allows the best opportunity for region to highlight new developments in what is a critical market vis-à-vis visitor arrivals.
January 30 – February 1, 2018	Caribbean Travel Marketplace, San Juan, Puerto Rico	\$57,911.00	Caribbean Travel Marketplace affords tourism suppliers the opportunity to meet face-to-face with wholesalers from around the world selling Caribbean vacation travel over the course of two days of business meetings.
February 13-15, 2018	Routes Americas Quito, Ecuador	\$77,890.00	Routes Americas is the largest commercial aviation event for the Americas. The event provides an opportunity to meet with senior decision makers from the region's airlines, airports and destinations to discuss new market opportunities and the evolution of existing services. It also connects senior decision makers and offers extensive networking opportunities to enable high value relationships with some of the most influential aviation professionals from across the region. Senior decision makers attend Routes Americas to develop new routes to, from and within the Americas, explore new market opportunities, examine existing air services within the region and devise strategies to maintain and improve them.
March 5-8, 2018	Seatrade Cruise Global Conference and Tradeshow, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida	\$57,520.58	The Seatrade Global Cruise Conference and Tradeshow has been the leading international Cruise Conference and Trade Show serving the cruise industry for the past

			thirty years. The event brings together a range of cruise stakeholders including cruise industry executives, operators, buyers and suppliers. The event is also a forum to source new products and services, including the addition of new destinations and ports of call.
March 7-11, 2018	International Tourism Bourse (ITB) Trade Show and Convention, Berlin Germany	\$207,950.00	Attendance at ITB allowed Trinidad and Tobago to stay abreast of the latest development in the travel industry, gain insight and awareness of the market trends and challenges interface with key travel and tourism personnel, tour operators, airlines and other special interest operators serving Trinidad and Tobago.
March 21-22, 2018	XXIV Inter-American Congress of Ministers and High-Level Authorities of Tourism, Georgetown, Guyana	\$31,300.00	Attendance at the Congress provided an important platform for the exchange of experiences and practices, mechanisms to support technical studies, strengthen communication between government agencies and the private sector, considerations for technical cooperation proposals, and support to member states in their efforts to develop the tourism sector.

Appendix II

Questions to Ministry

Questions submitted to Ministry of Tourism

Accountability

Questions:

1. In relation to allocations to the Ministry, how does the Accounting Officer (AO) ensure there is an appropriate framework in place to provide him/her with the required accountability to Parliament?
2. What is the process used by the Accounting Officer to measure outcomes, evaluate performance and demonstrate value for money?
3. How does the Accounting Officer test whether projects and programmes are feasible and provide value for money at the start and throughout their life?
4. How does the Accounting Officer determine whether the framework for accountability, transparency and value for money at the Ministry is working?
5. Are there systems in place to measure whether this framework is reliable and efficient?
6. What is process for dealing with failure or underperformance in programmes and projects?
7. How does the Accounting Officer provide meaningful oversight of state enterprises, statutory bodies and other agencies receiving funding from the Ministry?
8. How does the Accounting Officer ensure accountability and value for money, transparency in satellite centres and Divisions of the Ministry?
9. Is there a framework governing conflict of interest? Describe the framework.
10. What measures are used to address conflicts of interest once identified?
11. What strategies are being employed to ensure there is efficiency and efficacy in expenditure of the allocation to the Ministry?
12. Given the current economic climate, has any consideration been given to the employment of measures to eliminate waste and unnecessary expenditure and to increase revenue collection?

Issues Arising from Recurrent Expenditure Allocation

Sub-Head: Goods and Services - \$55,864,500

001 General Administration

Sub-Item 01 - Travelling and Subsistence

Questions:

1. What are the reasons for the increase in allocation to this sub-item?
2. Provide a detailed list of the positions/posts which receive travelling allowances?
3. What measures have been put in place to ensure that the Ministry carries out regular reviews and checks in order to assess and manage these funds?
4. What good practices exist, regarding the financing of this sub item?
5. What challenges exist, regarding the financing of this sub item?
6. How often are Internal Audit reports produced to ensure transparency and accountability with regard to this sub-item?

Sub-item 05 - Telephones

Questions:

1. Does the Ministry intend to implement any cost saving measures? If yes, what are the cost saving measures to be implemented?
2. What measures are in place to reduce the expenditure on telephones both cellular phones and land lines?
3. Does the Ministry have a policy/ guidelines governing the allocation and use of telephones and mobile devices? If yes, what is the policy and how is it enforced? If no, why not?
4. What is the Ministry policy for the use of mobile devices on official overseas travel?
5. Does the Ministry have a policy on the allocation and use of cellular phones?
6. What categories of employees receive cellular phones?
7. What steps are implemented to prevent abuse in the allocation and use of telephones and mobile devices?

Sub-item 08 - Rent/Lease – Office Accommodation and Storage

Questions:

1. What are the reasons for the increase in allocation for this sub-item?
2. How many properties are leased or rented and what is the monthly cost of each of these properties?

3. How many storage spaces are rented/leased and what is the monthly cost of each of these?
4. Does the Ministry intend to rent/lease any new office accommodation?
5. Does the Ministry intend to rent/lease any new storage spaces?
6. Has any comparison been made between renting/leasing and purchasing to determine the best option to achieve value for money?

Sub-item12 - Materials and Supplies

Questions:

1. The allocation for Material and Supplies for the year **2018** is **\$100,000.00**, which is an increase of approximately **\$80,000.00** of the allocation from the fiscal year **2017**. What changes can be anticipated for this sub-item in fiscal 2018?
2. What materials and supplies are intended to be purchased for fiscal 2018?
3. What measures are in place to ensure accountability and transparency when purchasing materials and supplies?
4. What systems are in place to eliminate the occurrence of fraud and theft of materials and supplies?

Sub-item15- Repairs and Maintenance – Equipment

Questions:

1. What changes can be anticipated for this sub-item in fiscal 2018?
2. State the equipment intended to be purchased by the Ministry in fiscal 2018?

Sub-Item 16 - Contract Employment

Questions:

1. What is the total number of persons employed on contract at the Ministry?
2. What contract positions are expected to be created for the 2017/2018 fiscal year?
3. State the positions of persons on contract employment?
4. What are the positions of the persons hired?
5. How many new persons were hired on contract for the fiscal year 2017?
6. How many additional persons were hired or are expected to be hired in fiscal 2018?
7. How is the performance of the persons hired on contract measured?
8. How does the Ministry ensure value for money with contract employment?
9. Have any attempts been made to update the public service establishment, to reduce the contract employment at the Ministry?

Sub-Item 22 - Short Term Employment

Questions:

1. What type of work is done by short-term employees?
2. Is short-term employment done on a contract basis as well?
3. 'Short- term employment should not exceed six (6) months'. Have any of these persons been employed in excess of (6) months on a consistent basis?
4. How does the Ministry measure the performance of these persons?
5. What are the tangible benefits of this type of employment to the Ministry?
6. What are the direct benefits to citizens that can be identified from the employment of these persons?

Sub-Item: 27 - Official Overseas Travel²

Questions:

1. How will this allocation be utilised in fiscal 2018? Provide a detailed breakdown.
2. How will this increase in allocation impact the Ministry?
3. How often are individuals sent on overseas travel? Please provide a detailed list of the proposed Travel Schedule for fiscal year 2018?
4. What is the approval process for persons requiring overseas travel?
5. Provide a list of persons and their positions for whom funds have been granted for overseas travel in fiscal 2017-2018?
6. What is the purpose of the various planned overseas trips and how do these trips add value to the Ministry?
7. How are persons selected for overseas travel?
8. How are events selected? (in terms of attendance)
9. Are there policies regarding this sub-item? If yes, please provide details.
10. What is the plan to monitor this sub-item to ensure transparency, accountability and value for money?
11. What is the role of the Internal Audit in monitoring the expenditure from this sub-item?
12. Is the delegation required to submit a report upon their return?

²Draft Estimates of Recurrent Expenditure 2018; pg. 09; <http://www.finance.gov.tt/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Numbered-Draft-Estimates-Recurrent-2017.pdf>

Sub-item 34 – University Graduate Recruitment Programme

Questions:

1. How is this programme being administered under the Ministry?
2. What is the criteria for recruitment?
3. How does it contribute to the labour force taking in consideration provision for Personnel Expenditure, Contract Employment, Short Term Employment and On-The-Job Training Programme?
4. How many persons are expected to be employed under this programme in fiscal 2017-2018?

Sub-Item 43- Security Services

Questions:

1. How are the security service providers contracted?
2. Please provide a list of all contract agreements with each security service provider, the period of each agreement and the total expenditure incurred by the Ministry.
3. Explain the process used to approve services for payment.
4. Does the Ministry evaluate and benchmark its service provider(s) performance against other providers in areas such as transaction cost and practices and procedures? If yes, provide an example.

Sub-item 62 - Promotions, Publicity and Printing

Questions:

1. What are the expected benefits of these outreach initiatives?
2. What projects or promotions are paid for using this sub-item?
3. What types of promotion and publicity are expected to be conducted?
4. What tangible benefits will this expenditure have on the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago?

03 Minor Equipment Purchases

Sub-item 03 – Furniture and Furnishings

1. What Furniture and Furnishings are expected to be purchased for fiscal 2018?
2. Has the Ministry purchased or commissioned any art work in fiscal 2018?

Sub-item 04 - Other Minor Equipment

Questions:

1. What equipment are expected to be purchased for fiscal year 2018?

2. What equipment was purchased for the period November to April 2018?
3. How does the Department plan to oversee and account for the use of these funds under this sub-item?
4. Are Internal Audit reports produced to ensure there is evidence of transparency and accountability?
5. What measures are in place to guarantee value for money, accountability and transparency under these sub-items?
6. Are other devices (iPads, tablets, laptops etc.) distributed to staff?
 - i. If yes, provide a detailed list of the items and the categories of workers the items are distributed to.
 - ii. State the costs of the all devices distributed to staff.
7. What steps are implemented to prevent abuse in the allocation and use of telephones and mobile devices?

Sub-Head 04 Current Transfers and Subsidies

011 Transfer to State Enterprises

New Sub-item - 04 Tourism Trinidad Destination Management Company Limited - \$16,000,000

Questions:

1. What is the status of this company?
2. What is the mission of this company?
3. What is the estimated annual operating costs?
4. What are the benefits of this company to Trinidad's Tourism industry?
5. What oversight mechanisms are in place to ensure that there is value for money, accountability and transparency for this company?
6. How will the Accounting Officer ensure the company is compliant with the State Enterprise Performance Monitoring System?
7. Does the Accounting Officer receive monthly expenditure statements?
8. Would the company be allowed to retain unspent balances at the end of the financial year?
9. What are the key performance indicators for the company?
10. How is this company different to the Tourism Agency Trinidad?
11. Does the Company have a Strategic Plan?
12. How will the key performance indicators be measured?

13. Does the Accounting Officer receive minutes from the Board?
14. What specific steps are being taken to ensure that the Annual Audited Financial statements are completed within four months of the financial year?
15. How does the Accounting Officer oversee or monitor the expenditure of this Company?
16. What mechanisms are in place for the Accounting Officer to prevent, detect or investigate fraud at the company?

09 Development Programme Consolidated Fund

004 Economic Structure

11 Other Economic Services

D. Tourism

- **029 Consultancy for the Development of a Strategic Tourism Incentive Plan - \$500,000**
- **030 Development of the National Tourism Policy (2018) - \$900,000**
- **031 Caribbean Small Tourism Enterprises Project (STEP) - \$1,000,000**
- **032 Tourism Agency – Trinidad - \$10,000,000**

Questions:

1. What oversight mechanisms are in place to ensure that there is value for money, accountability and transparency for these project?
2. Provide the following details for the new projects in the 2018 financial year:
 - i. Project Description;
 - ii. The project start date;
 - iii. Total estimated cost of the project;
 - iv. Total cost of the project to date;
 - v. Project expected completion date.
3. State the benefits of these projects Trinidad's Tourism Industry.
4. What is the Ministry's role in preventing, detecting and investigating fraud within these projects?
5. What systems are in place to ensure there is proper usage of funds for these projects?

Ministerial Response: First Report of the PAAC on the Examination into the Current Expenditure of Ministries and Departments

The Committee noted the Ministry of Tourism was in collaboration with the private sector, tour operators and owners of accommodation sites to strengthen the promotion of sites and local hotels in both Trinidad and Tobago.

Recommendations: Ministry of Tourism –

- **Develops the infrastructure of existing local sites.**
- **Ensures safety of all local sites in accordance with best practice.**
- **Ensures routine maintenance and upgrade of local sites.**
- **Ensures local hotels and guest houses meet international standards.**

Questions:

1. In light of the dissolution of the Tourism Development Company Limited (TDC), given the above recommendations made, who will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of these recommendations?
2. What has been implemented to ensure the maintenance of the following facilities which were under the purview of TDC:
 - Maracas Beach Facility;
 - Las Cuevas Beach Facility;
 - Manzanilla Beach Resort Facility;
 - Vessigny Beach Facility; and
 - the La Brea Pitch Lake Visitor Facility.

The Committee noted:

- The Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Industry Certification (TTTIC) programme was a national certification programme designed to ensure that tourism operators and service providers in Trinidad and Tobago's tourism sector conformed to prescribed standards of service in their operations.
- These standards were developed through the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS). The National Standards and Certification Body, as well as through extensive stakeholder input.
- The Ministry of Tourism developed this programme to ensure that all tour operators were certified.
- The certification was not mandatory, and the Ministry was working towards making the programme mandatory.
- Recommendations: The Ministry of Tourism –

- Ensures that Certification of Tour Operators and Service Providers become mandatory throughout Trinidad and Tobago by December 2016.
- Conducts frequent and rigorous checks to ensure all tour operators and service providers are certified.
- Ensures certification is renewable at specific intervals to be determined based on best practice.

Questions:

1. What has the Ministry done to eliminate the challenges encountered which prevents the effectiveness of the TTTIC programme?
2. What progress has been made with Tour Operators and partaking in the programme?
3. Has any legislation been developed which mandates compliance with TTTIC?
4. Has an Authority been established to oversee the licensing and regulation process?

Development Programme – Consolidated Fund

003 Economic Infrastructure

032- Tourism Agency – Trinidad

5. Is this Agency a replacement for the proposed Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Regulatory and Licensing Authority (TTRLA)? If not, what is the status of the establishment of TTRLA?
6. Is this agency expected to execute any duties of the TTRLA?

Conducts frequent and rigorous checks to ensure all tour operators and service providers are certified.

Questions:

7. When was the last audits conducted by the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS)? What were the findings?
8. What criteria that must be met to obtain certification for a property from the TTBS?

III. Product Development

The Ministry of Tourism informed the Committee of the need to refresh and revitalise the Caribbean Product in view of the competition beyond the region. The Ministry highlighted the need to collaborate with all the other Ministries, related organisations

and Regional Corporations to develop and strengthen the product to become more suitably internationally.

Recommendations: The Ministry of Tourism –

- **Develops a clear Vision for Tourism and also develop and operationalises a Strategic Plan for the Sector.**
- **Establishes a team/group to focus on researching new ways in which the country can revitalise its Tourism Industry.**
- **Finds new innovations that would create a greater appeal to tourists.**
- **Partners with other Ministries and agencies including the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts and the Tourism Development Company (TDC) to re-develop the Tourism Industry which would allow the local industry to achieve international standards.**

Questions:

1. Has the Strategic Plans been finalised and Approved by Cabinet? If yes, when? If no, what are the reasons for the delays?
2. Provide in detail, improvements made resorting from the development of the Tourism Standing Committee.
3. What are the derived benefits from the establishment of the Tourism Stakeholders Forum?

Partners with other Ministries and agencies including the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts and the Tourism Development Company (TDC) to re-develop the Tourism Industry which would allow the local industry to achieve international standards.

4. In light of the collaborative approaches with other Ministries and agencies, what progress has been made in re-developing the local tourism industry?

Ministerial Response: Fourth Report of the PAAC on the System of Internal Audit

Recommendation:

- **The Ministry should liaise with the Personnel Department and the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications to determine if the terms and conditions of the Auditing Assistant should be amended or whether the services of an Auditor H should be procured and assigned to the Ministry's Internal Audit Unit.**

Questions:

1. What is the status of the Classification Questionnaire submitted to the Personnel Department?
2. What has been the outcomes since the discussions held with the Public Management Consultancy Division of the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications?
 - i. Have the proposals been approved?
 - ii. Is the organisational structure been approved?
3. What progress has been made with the proposal for the following:
 - i. Make permanent and pensionable: one temporary position of Auditing Assistant (Rg.30C) Item No. 10 Temporary Staff
 - ii. Create one (1) additional position of permanent and pensionable position of Auditing Assistant (Rg. 30C.)

Ministerial Response: Third Report of the PAAC on the System of Inventory Control

Recommendation related to Tagging of the Ministry's Inventory:

- **The Ministry should liaise with the Service Commissions Department and the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications to determine the most effective method to fill the vacancies throughout the Ministry.**

Since the submission by the Ministry of Tourism on December 12th 2016, a review of the Ministry's Organizational Structure has commenced. It is proposed that a position of Stores Clerk/Inventory Clerk be established and a suitable candidate recruited.

Questions:

1. Has the position of Stores Clerk and/ Inventory Clerk been established?
2. What was the criteria used to recruit a candidate?

3. Has a candidate been chosen?
 - i. If yes, what benefits has this provided with regard to the functioning of day to day activities?
 - ii. If no, why not?

APPENDIX III

The Inquiry Process

The Inquiry Process

The Inquiry Process outlines steps to be taken by the Committee when conducting an inquiry into an entity or issue. The following steps outlines the Inquiry process followed by the PAAC:

- viii. Identification of entity to be examined;
- ix. Preparation of Inquiry Proposal for the selected entity. The Inquiry Proposal outlines:
 - Description
 - Background;
 - Overview of Expenditure
 - Rationale/Objective of Inquiry; and
 - Proposed Questions.
- x. Consideration and approval of Inquiry Proposals by the Committee and when approved, questions are forwarded to the entity for written responses;
- xi. Issue of requests for written comment from the public are made via Parliament's website, social media accounts, newspaper and advertisements;
- xii. Preparation of an Issues Paper by the Secretariat for the Committee's consideration, based on written responses received from the entities. The Issues Paper identifies and summarises any matters of concern in the responses provided by the entity or received from stakeholders and the general public;
- xiii. Review of the responses provided and the Issues Paper by the Committee;
- xiv. Conduct of a site visit to obtain a first-hand perspective of the implementation of a project (optional);
- xv. Determination of the need for a Public Hearing based on the analysis of written submissions and the site visit (if required). If there is need for a public hearing, the relevant witnesses will be invited to attend and provide evidence. There is usually no need to examine the entity in public if:
 - xvi. the Committee believes the issues have little public interest; or
 - xvii. the Committee believes that the written responses provided are sufficient and no further explanation is necessary.
- xviii. Issue of written request to the entity for further details should the Committee require any additional information after the public hearing.

- xix. Report Committee's findings and recommendations to Parliament upon conclusion of the inquiry.

APPENDIX IV

Minutes of Meetings

**THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE –
THIRD SESSION, ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT**

**MINUTES OF THE THIRTY-SEVENTH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY JUNE
13, 2018 AT 1:28 P.M.**

**IN THE ARNOLD THOMASOS (EAST) MEETING ROOM, LEVEL 6 AND THE J.
HAMILTON MAURICE ROOM, MEZZANINE FLOOR, TOWER D, OFFICE OF THE
PARLIAMENT,
INTERNATIONAL WATERFRONT CENTRE,
1A WRIGHTSON ROAD, PORT OF SPAIN.**

Present were:

Mrs. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George	-	Chairman
Dr. Lackram Bodoë	-	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Clarence Rambharat	-	Member
Brig. Gen (Ret.) Ancil Antoine	-	Member
Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy	-	Member
Ms. Keiba Jacob	-	Secretary
Ms. Sheranne Samuel	-	Assistant Secretary
Mr. Brian Lucio	-	Graduate Research Assistant
Ms. Rachel Nunes	-	Graduate Research Assistant

Absent were:

Mr. Ronald Huggins	-	Member (Excused)
Ms. Nicole Olivierre	-	Member (Excused)
Mr. Daniel Dookie	-	Member (Excused)
Ms. Jennifer Raffoul	-	Member (Excused)
Mr. Wade Mark	-	Member (Excused)

**EXAMINATION OF THE EXPENDITURE AND INTERNAL CONTROLS OF THE
MINISTRY OF TOURISM**

- 6.1 The Chairman called the public meeting to order at 2:51 p.m., in the J. Hamilton Maurice Meeting Room.
- 6.2 The following officials joined the meeting:

MINISTRY OF TOURISM

Mrs. Satie Jamraj- Marimuthu	-	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mrs. Simone Medina (Ag.)	-	Director, Research and Planning

Mr. Edward Lee Tang	-	Tourism Coordinator
Mr. Terrance Bhagwatsingh	-	Senior Business Analyst (Ag.)
Ms. Candice Hicks	-	Senior Legal Officer
Mr. Roger Bourne	-	Project Manager
Mrs. Sandra Kalloo	-	Administrative Officer IV (Ag.)
Mrs. Elizabeth Dhalai	-	Senior Human Resource Officer
Mr. Kamal Baal	-	Accountant II
Mrs. Seeta Bunting	-	Auditor I

- 6.3 The Chairman welcomed the officials.
- 6.4 The Chairman outlined the mandate of the Committee and the purpose of the hearing. Introductions were then exchanged.
- 6.5 The following issues arose from the examination of the expenditure and internal controls of the Ministry of Tourism.

General Issues

1. The restructuring of the Ministry;
2. The status of the Strategic Plan;
3. The sum of the allocation received for the Sandals Project;
4. The involvement of the Ministry in the Sandals Project;
5. The reliance on the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS) to set Tourism standards;
6. The findings of the audit conducted by the TTBS;
7. The role of the Ministry in the absence of the Tourism Development Company;
8. Details on the Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Industry Certification (TTTIC) programme;
9. The mechanisms used to measure the training provided to industry service providers;
10. The international best practices used to protect tourists against errors by tour operators;
11. Details on the Exit Survey given to visitors on departure;
12. Details on the marketing of Trinidad and Tobago by the Ministry;
13. Status of the Trevlon Hall court case.

Accountability and Transparency

1. The last Internal Audit conducted;
2. The submission and findings of Internal Audit Reports;
3. The reasons for the delay in the submission of the second quarter audit reports;
4. Staffing issues in the Internal Audit Unit;
5. The effectiveness of the Internal Audit;
6. Staffing in the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit;
7. The challenges faced within the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit;
8. Details on the monthly Heads of Divisions meetings;
9. The last periodic review conducted;

10. The type of bills requiring approval by the Permanent Secretary; and
11. The steps taken by the Ministry when predetermined targets are not met.

Recurrent Expenditure

1. The number of visitors for fiscal 2017-2018;
2. The timeline for the completion of vendor booths at Maracas Beach;
3. The status of the Poui Festival;
4. The sum spent on promotions by the Ministry to date;
5. The status on the 'Stay to Get Away Initiative' and its benefits to the tourism industry;
6. The system in place to measure the impact of the 'Stay to get away' campaign;
7. Details on the Go Trinbago App;
8. How the Go Trinbago App is made available to tourists and locals;
9. The ways in which the Go Trinbago App has benefitted the tourism industry;
10. The entity that runs the Go Trinbago App;
11. The level of usage in terms of downloads of the Go Trinbago App thus far;
12. Details on the promotions for the Blanchisseuse and Tobago Jazz Festival;
13. The expected outcomes from Overseas Travel for fiscal 2018;
14. The existence of a Sponsorship Policy at the Ministry; and
15. Discussions with the new entity to develop a sponsorship policy.

Minor Equipment

1. The existence of a policy for the return of cellphones;
2. The policies and procedures in place for cost analyses; and
3. The measures in place in the event of theft, loss or damage.

Current Transfers and Subsidies

Tourism Trinidad Destination Management Company Limited

1. Timeframe for the operationalisation of the company;
2. The status of the Strategic Plan;
3. The date the Interim Management was appointed by the Cabinet;
4. The relationship between the company and the Ministry despite the lack of structure;
5. The steps taken to avoid duplication of the Tourism Development Company; and
6. Measures in place to monitor the company.

Development Programme

1. Details on the consultancy for the development of a Strategic Tourism Incentive Plan;
2. The status of the other facilities currently under works; and
3. The status of the Road Map for Tourism submitted to Cabinet.

Follow-up on the First Report on Internal Controls

1. The status of the repair works conducted on the following facilities:
 - Maracas Beach Family
 - Las Cuevas Beach Facility
 - Vessigny Beach Facility
 - Manzanilla Beach Facility
 - La Brea Pitch Lake Visitor Facility.

Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Regulatory Authority

1. The status of the creation of the Authority;
2. The status of enforcing standards for tour guides, bed and breakfasts, local hotels and guest houses;
3. The ways in which the Ministry intends to enforce standards in the absence of the Authority; and
4. The status of the Authority's Strategic Plan.

Follow-up on the Third Report on Inventory Control

1. Details on the Asset Management Software utilised by the Ministry;
2. The types of labels used for tagging; and
3. The measures in place to safeguard assets in the absence of a Stores/Inventory Clerk.

Follow-up on the Fourth Report on Internal Audit

1. Details on the internal audits conducted on Inventory; and
2. The status on the Draft Note on restructuring of the Ministry submitted to Cabinet.

Auditor General Report 2017

1. The IT systems and applications used by the Ministry.

6.6 The Chairman thanked officials for attending and they were excused.

[Please see the verbatim notes for the detailed oral submission of the witnesses]

SUSPENSION

7.1 At 5:05 p.m., the Chairman suspended the public meeting to resume *in camera* for a post-hearing discussion with Members only.

RESUMPTION

8.1 At 5:07 p.m. the Chairman resumed the meeting *in camera*.

ADJOURNMENT

9.1 The Chairman indicated that the Committee's next meeting would be held on **Wednesday July 4, 2018 at 1:30 p.m.** when the Committee will continue its inquiry into the Public Sector Investment Programme.

9.2 There being no other business, the Chairman thanked Members for their attendance and the meeting was adjourned.

9.3 The adjournment was taken at 5:29 p.m.

We certify that these Minutes are true and correct.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY

June 13, 2018

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUESTED

Questions to Ministry of Tourism

Provide in writing:

1. The findings of the last internal audit conducted in January 2018.
2. The I.T software and systems used by the Ministry.
3. The date for the opening of the Maracas Facility Project.
4. The findings of the Baseline Survey conducted.
5. A breakdown of the monies spent on promotions for the Tourism Trinidad Destination Management Company Limited.
6. The disbursements of funds allocated to the Tourism Trinidad Destination Management Company Limited over the last three (3) years.
7. The timeframe for the Outreach Initiatives going to tender.
8. The usage in terms of downloads of the Go Trinbago App by visitors as at June 1, 2018.
9. A list of the entities currently provided with training by the Ministry.
10. The status of the Ministry's revised Strategic Plan.

Accountability and Transparency

1. Is there a limit that requires approval for e.g. all bills over \$5,000 must be approved by the Permanent Secretary?
2. When was the last PSIP meeting/discussion held?
3. Has there been instances where the Ministry sought approval for a project and did not receive a release from the Ministry of Finance?
4. How does the Accounting Officer ensure proper procurement processes are followed?
5. Provide a recent copy of the summary sheet done by the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit.

Recurrent Expenditure

Sub-Item 01 - Travelling and Subsistence

1. How many trips were made to Tobago?
2. What was the size of the contingent for each trip?
3. What were the designations of the persons involved in each trip?
4. What was the total cost inclusive of accommodation for each trip?
5. How long was the Ministry's stay in Tobago on each occasion?

Sub-item 05 – Telephones

1. What criteria is used for the purchase of cellular phones e.g. brand, cost etc.?
2. Is there a limit in terms of cost?

Sub-Item 16 - Contract Employment

1. When were the recommendations to update the public service establishment submitted to Cabinet? Has there been any feedback?
2. How does the lack of adequate staff affect the day-to-day functions of the Ministry?
3. Are there persons who are currently neglecting their duties to fill the void of another person's duties? If so, why?
4. Has the Ministry followed up with the PMCD on the restructuring of the Ministry? What feedback was received?

Sub-Item 22 - Short Term Employment

1. Presently, how many short-term employees are employed at the Ministry?

Sub-Item: 27 - Official Overseas Travel

1. How does the Ministry measure/determine the benefits of attending these international events to the Tourism Industry?
2. How many persons made up the Ministry's delegation for each trip listed in the Ministry's response?
3. Provide the costs of each upcoming trip and the number of persons attending.
4. How does the Ministry plan to achieve the intended goals as articulated in your response?
5. Has a rollout plan been developed to achieve these goals? If yes, provide the plan.

Sub-item 62 - Promotions, Publicity and Printing

Sub-Head 03 - Minor Equipment Purchases

1. What is the estimated cost of the two (2) server hard drives expected to be purchased?
2. What type of machine will the server hard drives be purchased for?

Sub-Head 04 - Current Transfers and Subsidies

04 Tourism Trinidad Destination Management Company Limited

1. What progress has been made in the recruitment and operations section of the company?
2. How has this appointment benefitted the development of the company?
3. What progress has been made in the development of the Strategic Plan?
4. Can the Ministry give a timeframe for the completion of the Strategic Plan?

Follow-up to the Ministerial Response to the Fourth Report of the PAAC

1. What is the status of the Draft Note to Cabinet?
2. Has the Ministry conducted any follow-up regarding the delays in the receipt of comments and approvals from the PMCD?

Issues Arising from Auditor General Report 2017

1. What application is used for Accounting at the Ministry?
 - i. What is the cost to the Ministry in using this application?
 - ii. Why is the Ministry not utilising the application that other Ministries and Departments use?
 - iii. Has the application utilised by the Ministry proven to be more efficient than applications used by other Ministries and Departments

2. What application is used at the Ministry for Inventory?
3. Why was expenditure not separately classified by the Ministry?

Appendix V

Verbatim

VERBATIM NOTES OF THE THIRTY-SEVENTH MEETING OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, HELD IN THE ARNOLD THOMASOS (EAST), (IN CAMERA), AND THE J. HAMILTON MAURICE ROOM, MEZZANINE FLOOR, (IN PUBLIC), OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENT, TOWER D, THE PORT OF SPAIN INTERNATIONAL WATERFRONT CENTRE, #1A WRIGHTSON ROAD, PORT OF SPAIN, ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13, 2018, AT 2.50 P.M.

PRESENT

Mrs. Bridgid Annisette-George	Chairman
Dr. Lackram Bodoë	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Clarence Rambharat	Member
Brig. Gen. Ancil Antoine	Member
Ms. Keiba Jacob	Secretary
Mr. Brian Lucio	Graduate Research Assistant
Ms. Rachel Nunes	Graduate Research Assistant

ABSENT

Mr. Ronald Huggins	Member
Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy	Member
Ms. Jennifer Raffoul	Member
Mr. Daniel Dookie	Member
Mr. Wade Mark	Member
Ms. Nicole Olivierre	Member

OFFICIALS FROM THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM

Mrs. Satie Jamraj- Marimuthu	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mrs. Simone Medina	Director, Research and Planning (Ag.)
Mr. Edward Lee Tang	Tourism Coordinator
Mr. Terrance Bhagwatsingh	Senior Business Analyst (Ag.)

Ms. Candice Hicks	Senior Legal Officer
Mr. Roger Bourne	Project Manager
Mrs. Sandra Kalloo	Administrative Officer IV (Ag.)
Mrs. Elizabeth Dhalai	Senior Human Resource Officer
Mr. Kamal Baal	Accountant II
Mrs. Seeta Bunting	Auditor I

Madam Chairman: Good afternoon, everyone, and I welcome the officials from the Ministry of Tourism, members of the media, and the public to this meeting of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee. The Committee on Public Administration and Appropriations has a mandate to consider and report to the House on:

- (a) the budgetary expenditure of government agencies to ensure that expenditure is embarked upon in accordance with parliamentary approval;
- (b) the budgetary expenditure of government agencies as it occurs, and keeps Parliament informed of how the budget allocation is being implemented; and
- (c) the administration of government agencies to determine hindrances to their efficiency and to make recommendations to the Government for improvement of public administration.

The purpose of this twenty-fourth public meeting of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee for the Eleventh Parliament is to examine the expenditure and internal controls of the Ministry of Tourism as it pertains to the following: accountability and transparency, follow-up to the first report on the expenditure of Ministries and Departments, follow-up to the third report on inventory control, follow-up to the fourth report on internal audit; Sub-Head 02, Goods and Services, Sub-Head 03, Minor Equipment Purchases, Sub-Head 04, Current Transfers and Subsidies, Sub-Head 09, Development Programme Consolidated Fund, and the monthly expenditure report for the period November 2017 to April 2018.

The Committee is desirous of hearing from the Ministry of Tourism to discover any challenges being faced. The Committee hopes that the meeting will be fruitful and shall provide workable solutions to improve the expenditure and internal controls of the Ministry. This meeting is being held in public and it is being broadcast live on the Parliament's channel 11, Radio 105.5 FM, and the Parliament's YouTube channel, ParView. Viewers and listeners can send their comments related to today's enquiry via email, parl101@tpparliament.org,

facebook.com/ttparliament, twitter@ttparliament.

I now invite the representatives of the Ministry of Tourism to introduce themselves, and thereafter the members of the Committee will introduce themselves. Madam Deputy PS.

[Introductions made]

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, and might I ask the Committee from my extreme right to introduce themselves.

[Introductions made]

Madam Chairman: We are ably assisted today by our Secretary, Ms. Keiba Jacob, our Assistant Secretary, Ms. Sheranne Samuel, and we also have present our Graduate Research Assistants, Ms. Nunes and Mr. Lucio. Therefore, can I ask Madam Deputy PS to kick off the conversation by inviting her to make some brief opening remarks? Thank you.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon, Madam Chair, and members of the esteemed Committee. The Ministry of Tourism is in a transitory stage as the Permanent Secretary proceeded on pre-retirement leave and the newly appointed Permanent Secretary will assume duties on June 18, 2018. I am therefore charged with the responsibility to lead the Ministry's team in the capacity as acting Deputy Permanent Secretary. The Ministry of Tourism is mandated to position Trinidad and Tobago as a premier tourism destination. The Ministry is also responsible for overseeing and fostering the sustainable development and promotion of the tourism sector through policy direction.

The Committee would have been appraised in the written responses on the increase in responsibilities by the Ministry following the announcement of the dissolution of the TDC in March 2017. These additional responsibilities would have included operations of the cruise and airport tourism information offices, development and upgrade of tourism sites and attractions, management of various sites vested under the TDC which are now vested under the Ministry. These would include Maracas, Las Cuevas, Manzanilla, Vessigny beach facility, and the La Brea Pitch Lake visitor centre. The Ministry would also have taken over responsibilities for promotion and marketing, and stakeholder management.

Madam Chair, the Permanent Secretary has always stressed the need for accountability and proper procedures and processes, and this would be reflected in there being no adverse reports against the Ministry in the last Auditor General's report. The executive team at the Ministry stands ready to provide the Committee with any additional information and is committed to carrying out the mandate of the Ministry for the benefit of the country and the

citizenry. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Madam Deputy PS. In light of the fact that you said the stress on accountability, and the lack of any, or the absence of any adverse report, I really wanted to begin the conversation with, you know, issues of accountability. And we have noted in your submissions that you have referred to the various systems and mechanisms that you have employed in terms of ensuring that there is a proper system of accountability, and you have indicated that your internal audit unit submits quarterly reports to the accounting officers, so do your divisional heads, and I would like to know when last was any internal audit report submitted.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Okay. The Auditor would answer the question.

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Mrs. Bunting: Madam Chair, the last audit report was on December. We did one for January for the last quarter, so January one was sent in.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So you did one dated January 2018, for the period ending December?

Mrs. Bunting: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And might I ask if there were any adverse findings in that report for the quarter ended December 2017, and if they were, what were those?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: She can continue the response, Madam Chair?

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Okay. The Auditor does not have the last report, so can we provide that in a written response to you?

Madam Chairman: All right. I would ask that, and we would send you a date by which we want additional information. But might I ask then, Deputy PS, and to the Auditor, if you could recall any significant recommendation coming out of that last audit report?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: As the report would have been sent to the Permanent Secretary, I would not have had sight of the report. So I would be able to look at the report once I get a copy. So once we get that I will provide you with the response in writing.

Madam Chairman: Yes. And might I ask then, when is the report for the second quarter, fiscal 2018, going to be available?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Well, it would be at the end of June. Well, the quarter, the next quarter.

Madam Chairman: The next quarter? So what happens between January and June, would a

quarter not have gone then?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yeah, I will find out. I would let her answer for that quarter, okay.

Mrs. Bunting: Yes, Madam Chair, we are in the process of completing that report right now.

Madam Chairman: So that is with respect to the quarter, January to March?

Mrs. Bunting: January to March, yes.

Madam Chairman: All right. And, therefore, it means that the third quarter report is also almost due? All right. So what I would ask the Deputy PS, what therefore accounts for the, one, whether you consider the second quarter report late at this time, and what really accounts for that, if it is late, for that delay having regard to the fact that you have seen this as one of your important tools for ensuring accountability?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Okay, So I will seek to get that information on why it would be late and also provide that information for you.

Madam Chairman: All right, but, you know, we would have come here, and having regard to the submission, while I know you may not—you would have been then acting as—

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: No, May 13th.

Madam Chairman: May 13th is when you began?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yeah. We had an assigned Deputy PS who also proceeded on early retirement.

Madam Chairman: All right. But, so would I be correct to say that between May 13th and now you would have had an opportunity to see this submission?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yeah. But I was not privy to the—well, I did not receive a submission.

Madam Chairman: So you had not seen the submission of your entity before now?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: For the internal audit report to the PS?

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: No, it would have gone to the Permanent Secretary, so I did not.

Madam Chairman: All right. But what I am asking is, in terms of the submission of the Ministry of Tourism, you would have had sight of this after May 13th?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Which submission, Chair?

Madam Chairman: In fact, in your opening statement you referred to the submissions that the Ministry of Tourism would have made to this Committee? Yes?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, yes, I would have been—

Madam Chairman: Okay. So this is the submission I am speaking of.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yeah. Okay.

Madam Chairman: What date then you would have this submission, made by your Ministry, would have become available to you?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: It would have been about two weeks ago, Chair.

Madam Chairman: About two weeks ago. All right. Because, you see, the questions that are going to come from the Committee are going to be based on the submission and falling out of the submission. So that my concern, having regard to the questions and the responses thus far, is that if you are not familiar with the submissions then we may not get very far into this process.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yeah. No, we would have gone through the written responses, ones that we submitted, but we are familiar with all the other areas. Yes, we are familiar with the written responses. So that information will be provided and can be provided by members.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So it means that your team that you brought here covers the areas which would have been in this submission?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Yes. And, therefore, I would think even though you are not familiar that your internal audit representative here would be familiar with her submission and be in a position to answer questions coming out of that submission. Am I not correct?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, Chair.

Madam Chairman: And that will speak for every member of the team that you have brought here?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Okay. All right. So that, you know, again I underscore my concerns, having regard to the questions asked thus far and the answers given. I mean, your team must be in a position to say why the report is late for the second quarter, even if you do not know, or you have not asked. Why is the report late—of the second submission? So maybe you could have your Internal Auditor answer.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: So you want us to provide the response on why it is late?

Madam Chairman: Yes, please.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Okay. So the Internal Auditor would provide the response.

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Mrs. Bunting: The second quarter—the first quarter is January, February, March, as for the first quarter; the second quarter, we have not finished that one as yet. That would finish in June.

Madam Chairman: The fiscal year runs—so we are talking about the second quarter of the fiscal year, not the calendar year.

Mrs. Bunting: Okay, I apologize. I am still in the process of coagulating all these things.

Madam Chairman: All right. So let me ask this, were there particular challenges with second quarter that make your report late?

Mrs. Bunting: Yes, we have a bit of challenges right now.

Madam Chairman: Excuse me, maybe you need to speak up in the mike. Yes, Mrs. Bunting, would there have been special challenges to make this report late?

Mrs. Bunting: Well right now we are in the process of doing the files for pension and leave, and we have quite a lot coming in so we were more focusing on that, because we have a deadline that the Minister of Finance had put out that we have in June. So we were more focusing on the P&L, pension and leave files.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Chair, can I add, at present the division only comprises two persons, and part of the Ministry would be that we are working on restructuring a number of units and actually creating some units, and the audit unit is one where we would need additional staff.

Madam Chairman: So, one, I am understanding that it is the deadline and the deficiency in staffing that would have accounted for this. So might I ask, is it usual for this report—which you as PS, is important control for accountability—is it usual for the report to be late?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: I would have her answer, but the quarterly reports, from my knowledge, would have been submitted—most of them would be submitted on time.

Madam Chairman: And what is on time?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: At the end of the quarter. And, Chair, just to indicate that, in addition to the quarterly reports, the Ministry would have monthly meetings, so any issues that would arise would be addressed at those meetings also. So it is not that the Ministry waits for the quarterly reports. If there are any issues we address it at monthly heads of division meeting.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So let me ask a number of questions. Firstly, the quarterly reports usually comes how long after the end of the quarter?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: I would ask the Internal Auditor to indicate that response.

Mrs. Bunting: Probably about a month after.

Madam Chairman: It usually comes a month after?

Mrs. Bunting: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Okay. As far as the monthly reports, Madam Deputy PS, the monthly

meetings that you refer to, would you say that the issues that the internal audit treats with are synonymous with the issues that you would see real time in your monthly reports?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Similar issues, Chair?

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: No, because if there are issues, the issues are addressed, and one of the issues I know would have been addressed would be inventory control. So the Ministry would have put systems in place for inventory control and for some of the other areas that would have been highlighted in the previous reports. So all of those would have been addressed by the Ministry and in the different areas.

Madam Chairman: All right. So let me ask you something. If you are saying that your monthly reports or your monthly meetings deal with issues as and when they arrive, then in terms of your internal audit function, what is its importance then in terms of ensuring accountability?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The internal audit would monitor and make sure that everything is done in line with the financial regulations. So any issue would be highlighted, as I indicated, and those would be addressed as necessary.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So it means that the issues you are addressing would be after the fact based on the internal audit report?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, once they are highlighted in the previous reports.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So that your monthly meetings would really be treating with correcting matters which were highlighted in a previous report so that your monthly meetings are really—there is really a lag time, okay? And, therefore, that is why I am saying, with all due respect to you, I am not sure that the monthly meetings make up for the omission or the lack of timeliness of the internal audit report, because I got the impression that is what you were telling me.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Okay. Okay, Chair, so we recognize that and what the Ministry would do is that we will seek to ensure that the reports are prepared on time, and if there are any concerns the concerns will be brought even before the quarterly reports are submitted to the Ministry, and to the—well to the PS.

Madam Chairman: All right. Now, based on something else you said, I think I need a little clarification in terms of—I got the impression that your internal audit unit, from your perspective, is not adequately staffed, am I correct?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: That issue would have been highlighted in a previous report also.

Madam Chairman: And in this presentation you spoke about restructuring and getting more staff, am I correct that one of the proposals was for an Auditor II but it was found that it was not necessary?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The proposal would be for two auditing—we have one Auditor and then the assistant; the proposal would be for an increase in one of the positions of assistant.

3.15 p.m.

Madam Chairman: Is that the proposal or is that what was approved?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: It is before that, the restructuring note, is before the PMCD and we are awaiting their feedback on that note.

Madam Chairman: Okay, and again, I might be mistaken, but was there another note that was before PMCD?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The note that would have been sent, that includes restructuring of the Ministry, so all the positions are there for the various units.

Madam Chairman: Right. Did that include an Auditor II?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Can I defer to HR on if there was any request for an Auditor II?

Madam Chairman: It is just to ensure that we are speaking about the same thing.

Mrs. Dhalai: Good day, Chair. I am Elizabeth Dhalai, Senior HR Officer. I wish to refer to a memo dated October 19, 2017; it was addressed to the Clerk of the House, Parliament from PS Ministry of Tourism, where the question was asked about an internal Auditor II, Auditor II staffing of the internal audit unit of the Ministry of Tourism. In our response to the question asked in the memo, a recommendation was made:

The Ministry would liaise with the Personnel Department and the Ministry of Public Administration and Communication to determine if the terms and conditions of the Auditing Assistant should be amended, or whether the services of an Auditor II should be procured and assigned to the Ministry's internal audit.

Our response on behalf of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism:

A comparative research was done with other government agencies, Ministries and Departments of similar size as the Ministry of Tourism where our Ministry would be classed as a "C", in the category C, where it was found that one auditor serviced the respective organizations.

Hence a request for an Auditor II for the Ministry of Tourism was not proposed in a reorganization review of the internal audit; however, we proposed in our restructuring note to

add or create an additional position of an Auditing Assistant. We have currently right now, one temporary Auditing Assistant and one Auditor I. We have asked for an additional Auditing Assistant and both positions to be placed on the permanent and pensionable staff establishment. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: This is the restructuring of which we speak, yes?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: And Madam Deputy PS, if you can assist me again, what is the status of this?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The restructuring note has been forwarded to the PMCD for their comments and the Ministry has not received the comments as yet. Once the comments are received, the Ministry would review the note if required and submit for the approval of Cabinet.

Madam Chairman: All right. So let me just ask. The pension and leave exercise which interfered with the normal work of the internal audit unit, is that completed?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: That is ongoing, Chair. The pension and leave aspect is ongoing because they are working on a—if persons are retiring within the next five years, they are working on that continuously.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And is that, therefore, likely to continue to impact on the internal audit function?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: If we get the additional position there will be the additional resources.

Madam Chairman: And when last did you follow up on PMCD working on this particular request?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Chair, we are actually in constant contact. PMCD would have requested a soft copy of the note, and the soft copy would have been forwarded to PMCD.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So that—you still have not told me when last, you told me constantly.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Friday. Monday, Monday, sorry, Chair.

Madam Chairman: As recently as—

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Monday this week.

Madam Chairman: Monday this week. All right, and therefore, you would accept therefore in the absence of that, your internal audit function will not be as effective or as efficient as you think it should be?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, and we will address all the concerns and we will take the recommendations on board. We will address the concerns if there are any challenges and seek to get those challenges sorted.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So what challenges then therefore—

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The timeline.

Madam Chairman: The timeline?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: It was indicated that the timeline for the submission of the quarterly reports.

Madam Chairman: All right. So you are going to take that into account, so that in terms of June, for the quarter ending June, what sort of timeline you are going to insist upon for the submission of the report to you?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: For submission, the latest would be two weeks into July.

Madam Chairman: Two weeks into July?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Now let me ask again, in terms of your submission, you indicated to us that in terms, again, I am talking now for the statutory bodies, state agencies and other state enterprises under your remit. In terms of accountability and transparency you have indicated that you hold meetings with heads and implementation agencies. When last have those meetings been held?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Okay, Chair, the TTL, Trinidad Tourism Destination Management Company, it is Tourism Trinidad Limited, that board has only been appoint company not yet operational, so the areas you would note would be what would have existed under the TDC. So the procedures would be similar for the new entity.

Madam Chairman: So that, we no longer have the TDC?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: No.

Madam Chairman: Do you have any meetings with the board or do you get end reports from the entity?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The Board Reports would go to the Ministers, and the PS would have access to those board reports.

Madam Chairman: Now, there is an allocation I think of \$500,000?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: We have allocation under recurrent marketing and PSIP for the new entity.

Madam Chairman: Right.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Do you want the figures?

Madam Chairman: Yes, and I would like to know if there have been any drawdowns on those

allocations for the fiscal year?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The opening of the account for the entity would have only taken place this week, and a release would have been submitted to the entity for—I should just go back a little bit, because what is happening is that the company is in the process of being operationalized, so there were interim arrangements set for the entity, and those would be in the positions of a CEO, a CFO, the Chief Financial Officer and a Legal Manager Corporate Secretary and the bank account would be there, but there has been no drawdown to date.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Might I ask how much was this release?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: \$2.9 million.

Madam Chairman: \$2.9 million was released to the entity?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes.

Madam Chairman: How does that line up with the \$500,000 which was the allocation for fiscal 2018?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: No, Chair, the allocation under recurrent is \$16 million; PSIP would have been \$10 million allocated; and marketing, which is 62, 62 is \$19 million and that \$19 million is shared by the entity and the Ministry; so I am not sure about the \$500,000.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So the \$2.9 million then, thank you for the correction and the clarification. The \$2.9 million would have been coming under what? So it is not under recurrent, it is under—

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: It will be under recurrent.

Madam Chairman: Okay, and it is under what head?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The current transfers and subsidies.

Madam Chairman: Yes. So it is not under PSIP?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: No.

Madam Chairman: Okay. All right. So, in terms of, also what I wanted to find out is that in your submission, again, you spoke about bills must be approved by the Permanent Secretary, and I wanted to find out in terms of bills that come to the Permanent Secretary to be approved, what is the nature of these bills, and if there are ceilings or if all bills come to you or if it must be bills above a certain limit, and what that is?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The authority, the Administrative Officer IV, would have a ceiling, the Deputy PS would have a ceiling and then above that the PS would have to sign off on all bills. But before any project is done the approval of the PS is sought for projects and an estimate would

be submitted, so you would have to be in line with what would be approved by the PS even before you expend.

Madam Chairman: So, could you just give me an idea of these ceilings that you all operate under?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The PS would be one million—

Madam Chairman: Sorry. So in the absence of the PS what happens between the Deputy PS and the PS?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The Administrative Officer IV has authority.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So Administrative Officer IV has a greater authority than the Deputy PS.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: No. The Administrative Officer IV is 50 and then the deputy it is 100 and anything above that is PS.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, I am asking of in the absence of you having a PS now, what happens with respect to bills which are above your limit?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Okay. No. The Office of the Prime Minister would have indicated—the Ministry cannot be without an accounting officer—so the Office of the Prime Minister would have indicated that I would be appointed as accounting officer for the period that I am acting.

Madam Chairman: Okay. In terms of approving bills over the limit of a Deputy PS, you are person authorized to do that.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, Chair.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. Now, it also placed reliance on your monitor and evaluation unit, can I ask you about the staffing of the unit?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: At present the unit has two approved positions, one monitoring and evaluation coordinator, and there is an assistant coordinator, and I should say an M&E officer in the unit. And those persons are on contract, and those would have been approved by Cabinet. In addition, we have four short-term officers at present in that unit.

Madam Chairman: Now in terms of your submission you said that there are templates and mechanisms identified in the framework created by M&E unit which is used to record activity and financial and output data, and these are a reliable source of feedback on progress, implementation rates and needs for intervention as require by your Ministry. Do you find these templates and mechanisms to be effective?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, Madam Chair. The M&E unit would have developed a number of templates; we also, each head, would have to do work plan for their units, and those work plans

are monitored and they have to submit status reports every month.

So every month the heads would send their status and then it is compiled and we would discuss with the Permanent Secretary and with heads on an individual basis or at the heads of meeting if there are any challenges and, of course, the Ministry would have its monthly meetings and, in addition, all the templates prepared by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning and Development those are also updated and monitored.

Madam Chairman: So in terms of the monthly status reports in terms of the various units, could you say when was the last monthly status report that you all have obtained by units?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Each unit would have had to submit for May. So May would have been the last one—all heads would have submitted the information to the M&E coordinator.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And I like the words you said “would have had”. Has that, in fact, taken place with respect to each unit?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes.

Madam Chairman: And have any challenges been identified in respect of any of those reports? And if, yes, what steps have been taken to deal with those challenges?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The only challenge for a number would have been short-term employee, and the restructuring, because this would have been the challenge relating to staff in the various units, and M&E is also on a short-term basis at present.

Madam Chairman: So that only challenge that you have is staff related—

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes.

Madam Chairman:—in terms and conditions and filling of vacancies, would that be correct?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes. And that hopefully will be with the restructuring once that note gets approved.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Now, in terms your whole system, again, of monitoring for accountability, transparency, value for money, you have spoken about all these various meetings adhering to guidelines provided by the Central Tenders Board, Ministry of Finance and so on. In terms of your projects and your evaluation and assessment monthly of projects and so on, what happens is a project does not meet the targets that you have identified in these monthly meetings? What action is taken?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Okay. So what the Ministry would do is at the meeting the status report would be presented, any challenge would be identified, the Ministry would look for if the project is on track, and there would be corrective measures recommended at the meetings,

and then officers in charge of the various projects would take those corrective measures.

Madam Chairman: So could you then given us any examples of any particular project that has not recently met targets and how that has been dealt with?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Madam Chair, I am going to say it because I know that everybody would be aware of the Maracas project, but in this case the project would not have been under the direct control of the Ministry at the time, so that will be one of the projects, but we would be in constant contact with the manager, project manager, we also have liaison officers, and we would also be in contact with the Ministry and the agency that was executing the project, we would put all the concerns in writing at each stage.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, I am happy that you spoke about the Maracas project, and I have noted you said it was under the Ministry initially, but I expect that since TDC no longer exists, it has been under the Ministry; would that be correct?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The site is vested with the Maracas restoration project was under the Ministry of Works and Transport and NIDCO and PURE, they were the project managers for the project.

Madam Chairman: Right. And what would be your function now that the site is vested under you?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Well the site is vested, but it would be the completion of the project; that has come under the Ministry which would be the car park and the washroom facility and also the vendors' booths. Now that the project is with the Ministry, we will now have to seek to allocate vending spaces to the vendors who are in the temporary structures.

Madam Chairman: The aspects that are under the Ministry with Maracas, okay?—what sort of targets, based on these monthly meetings and your monitoring, what sort of targets have been set, let us say for June 2018, and where are you in terms of fulfilling and meeting those targets?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Okay. The allocation process we are looking at the next two weeks to complete the allocation process for the vendors' booths, and the washroom facilities, we are in an arrangement with NIPDEC, and NIPDEC is managing the car park and will also manage the washroom facilities.

Madam Chairman: Deputy PS, in terms of Maracas which is supposed to be this premier location for a fantastic experience for locals and foreigners, when is this facility going to be brought up to mark and all of this restructuring work be completed?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Okay. Well, Chair, once the vendors' booths are located, there are a

number of structures on the beach that additional works will have to be done on those structures. So, I can defer to the project manager to indicate what other works are to be done at the sites.

Mr. Bourne: Good day, Madam Chair. To answer your question, we would more or less be guided by the Ministry of Works and Transport in terms of the timeline in completion of the remedial work to be done to the remaining of the vending booths at Maracas. As for package three of that project which contains the sewer treatment plant, they have told us that is supposed to be done by the end of August.

Madam Chairman: So that, has there been any sort of site visits by you all to ensure that these promised deadlines are going to be achieved?

Mr. Bourne: Yes, Madam Chair, and we are also in constant contact with NIDCO asking for updates of the timelines as well.

Madam Chairman: And you are satisfied that as far as the waste treatment that the August date is a reliable and achievable date?

Mr. Bourne: Yes, Madam Chair, given what they have told us. Yes.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And as far as the vendors' booths and so on, the timeline—give me an estimated timeline in terms of that being completed.

Mr. Bourne: Well, the remaining vending booths that they have to complete, they have not yet put forward a timeline for the completion of those?

Madam Chairman: Would the preparation and completion of the facility be hinged upon those booths being completed?

Mr. Bourne: Repeat that question, please?

Madam Chairman: The facility, it being available to the public for the complete customer satisfaction experience.

Mr. Bourne: Okay. Yes, it would be hinged on the completion of those.

Madam Chairman: It will be hinged on those?

Mr. Bourne: Yes.

Madam Chairman: So that after all this time we do not actually have a complete timeline for the opening of the facility to the standard that is expected?

Mr. Bourne: The facility has been opening in stages. We have seen the car park opened, and that is in full function. Within the next two weeks we would be completing the allocation process for the vendors, so in a short time users of beach would be able to use the facilities of the vendors there, as well as the washroom facilities. The construction of the remaining booths will be one of

the last aspects of the project that, you know, we can then say, we have a perfect beach for users to experience.

Madam Chairman: If I would say, by September 2018 we would have a beach facility in the state and condition which you all envisage, would that be reasonable?

Mr. Bourne: While I would like to say that, Madam Chair, I would be guided by NIDCO or Ministry of Works and Transport as to timeline; I would not want to set their timeline for them, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So that could I then ask, Madam Deputy PS, that the Committee be provided with a response, based on your enquiry of NIDCO?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, Chair, we will provide that response.

Madam Chairman: All right. Dr. Bodoë.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Deputy PS, if I can draw your attention to the item of recurrent expenditure and the Sub-Head Official Overseas Travel, sub-item 27. As part of your submission and as part of the goals identified by the Ministry would be to increase air arrivals to 500,000 by 2020, increase cruise arrivals by 100,000 by 2020, and increase visitor revenues by 25 per cent. Are you in a position to provide any figures as to what the current numbers might be perhaps for the last two years or so?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, member. I will just pass you on to the Director, Research and Planning and she will provide the figures.

Mrs. Medina: Okay. So in calendar year 2016, the air arrivals were 408,782; those were the air arrivals.

Dr. Bodoë: What figure?

Mrs. Medina: 408,782 persons visited Trinidad and Tobago in 2016, and in 2017, the air arrival figures were 394,650. This would have represented a 3.46 per cent decline.

Dr. Bodoë: Sure. And the cruise arrivals?

Mrs. Medina: Cruise. Okay. So, we normally look at the cruise figures by cruise season, and the cruise season normally runs from November of one year to April of the following year. So in 2016/2017 season cruise arrivals to Trinidad and Tobago were 48,878, while in 2017/2018 we received 126,392 passengers which represented an overall increase to the destination of 158 per cent; so cruise is booming in Trinidad currently. This would have been largely due to the fact that there were the hurricanes in the neighbouring Caribbean islands, and we received additional cruise calls, so we received 24 additional cruise calls in the last cruise season.

Dr. Bodoë: Okay. And with regard to the visitors' revenue, do you have those figures?

Mrs. Medina: I think it was, I do not want to say it, maybe we can provide that in writing.

Dr. Bodoë: I think, yeah, that would be fine.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Member, the period—you would want for the three years?

Dr. Bodoë: I am sorry.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: For the three years you would want?

Dr. Bodoë: Yeah. So that we can compare, you have something on which you can base your goal.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: And just to indicate that we do have arrivals for this fiscal, if you also require that information.

Dr. Bodoë: Right. So when you speak about the air arrivals, you are relating that to the tourism industry. How do you go about that, what data do you collect specifically to relate that to the tourism industry?—or is that—

Mrs. Medina: The Ministry recently conducted a baseline survey which sought to collect data on visitor expenditure and business data. The Trinidad report is currently complete, and the Tobago report, well the Tobago—is ongoing in Tobago, they are collecting the business data in Tobago, so we would be able to provide the findings of the baseline survey to you in writing if you require it.

Dr. Bodoë: Sure, that would be fine. I just want to refer to one trip and I believe you have it the appendix and that is CTO's State of the Industry Conference, and I note that it would have been October 10th to 13th, 2017.

Mrs. Medina: Yes.

Dr. Bodoë: And I see part of the team was a Junior Tourism Minister. Can you shed some light on the role of that Junior Tourism Minister? How the person is appointed? Sorry, how the person is selected?

Mrs. Medina: Okay. So the Junior Minister Tourism Competition was a recent—well this initiative was conducted by the Ministry over the last two years, and it normally takes place during, well we have a local leg of the competition where invite participants from secondary schools throughout Trinidad and Tobago. There is a, we have a final which is held and we select a Junior Minister of Tourism. The Junior Minister of Tourism is then represented at the SOTIC conference, the State of the Industry Conference. There is a regional Junior Minister of Tourism Competition which takes place and well it is participated by—every country sends a representative, a Junior Minister. Well we selected one student this year and she participated in

the competition, I believe she came third.

Dr. Bodoë: Well Ms. Telesford would have been selected in the early part of the school year? Is that when she would have been selected?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes. The competition is normally held around April.

Dr. Bodoë: Okay. And then she remains in that position for a—

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: A year.

Dr. Bodoë: A year from April.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes.

Dr. Bodoë: So what would her role be in terms of promoting tourism? I am just trying to understand how she fits into the picture of promoting tourism.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The Junior Tourism Minister, it will be for a year, and the person also represents the Ministry at various events, and for the engagement of youth in tourism. In addition, the previous Junior Minister of Tourism, they had started the creation of tourism youth clubs in schools.

Dr. Bodoë: All right. I am told that the current person would have developed a project, I believe, it would have been the Pouï Festival, can you shed some light as to what is the status of that project?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Member, there was a parliamentary question in respect of the Pouï Festival, and there was an RFP that would have been developed, and the RFP would have been sent out, but the Pouï Festival as it was initially conceptualized was changed and would not be implemented by Ministry. The Ministry would have had discussion with the school where the person, the Junior Minister is from, and the school was going to carry out the project in a different form.

3.45 p.m.

Dr. Bodoë: So you are saying that the school is taking the responsibility for carrying out this project or a similar project?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: It would have been scaled down, no longer the Pouï Festival as originally conceptualized.

Dr. Bodoë: And this is now going to be the responsibility of the school?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes. That would have been indicated.

Dr. Bodoë: I just wanted to look at the item with regard to promotions, publicity and printing, with an allocation of \$19 million for the financial year. Can you tell us Deputy PS how much of

this allocation has been spent to date?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Member, I have the accountant with me here. So I will pass you on to the accountant.

Dr. Bodoë: Sure.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: But the promotion, publicity and printing, that is the vote—I will just indicate that that vote is the one that is shared by the Ministry and the entity. So once the entity becomes operational a portion of that money would have to be given to the entity.

Dr. Bodoë: I am sorry, what entity?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Tourism Trinidad. So, the Tourism Destination Marketing Company. So a portion of that is normally for destination marketing by the Tourism Trinidad Limited.

Dr. Bodoë: Sure. So you cannot give us a figure as to how much has been spent to date?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes. We do have the figures.

Mr. Baal: The actual figures spent as at 30.04.2018 is \$3,089,049.

Dr. Bodoë: That seems to be a small amount of the allocation. Would there have been any particular reasons for that small amount spent in relation to the allocation?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: What the Ministry has been doing since the closure of TDC, the Ministry would have taken over some responsibility for both domestic marketing campaign. So the Ministry would have had the “Stay to Get Away” campaign and when we attend different events that amount would come out from that vote also. So the small would be, because of the operationalization, a lot of that money would go towards the destination marketing.

Dr. Bodoë: PS, as you mention the “Stay to Get Away” initiative, can you explain a little bit more about this and how this will benefit the industry? How it is intended to benefit the industry?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The “Stay to Get Away” campaign is a local—what we have is that for the vacation period you want to promote domestic tourism. So the campaign would target persons who want stay at various hotels and also tours in Trinidad and Tobago. So you encourage them both between Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr. Bodoë: Sure. And that has been happening for how long now?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The “Stay to Get Away” campaign was actually under the TDC, but the Ministry would have held it last year.

Dr. Bodoë: Do you have any system in place to measure the impact of this campaign?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes. The campaign—we have an officer who is at the Ministry, so we can provide you with the report from the last “Stay to Get Away” campaign.

Dr. Bodoë: I noticed you also have something called the “Go Trinbago” app. Can you tell us a bit more about that?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The “Go Trinbago” app is utilized when persons come to the destination. It provides information on everything you would actually require while you are in Trinidad and Tobago. We have hotels, you would have tours, you have transport operators, restaurants and once you download the app you actually do not need Wi-Fi, once you are in the country and it would also give you direction to sites and attractions.

Dr. Bodoë: So these are for tourists, for visitors to the country.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Tourists and locals also.

Dr. Bodoë: And how was this information made available to the tourists and the locals?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: It is on the app store and your Google Play Store. So persons were encouraged and when the Ministry participated in any event, the app, you would normally promote the app to persons both abroad and locally and it is also utilized during the cruise season.

Dr. Bodoë: Is there something when you arrive in the airport or the cruise terminal that gives you a big hint or tells you—

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, the intention was that when you arrive you would get like a notice on your phone. So that was the intention.

Dr. Bodoë: So that happens as you enter the airport?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: I can confirm that for you. And the airport would have, you know, to download the app at the airport.

Madam Chairman: PS, just let me ask one question based on a response given to Dr. Bodoë. We were given for the promotions, publicity and printing vote the figures up to the 30th of April, 2018. Would we have figures for May 2018 because we are mid-way in June?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, we would have for May.

Madam Chairman: And could we be provided with that figure?

Mr. Baal: Yes, those figures will be provided to you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Do we have it with us now?

Mr. Baal: No.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, Chair.

Madam Chairman: You have it.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The figures up to the end of May, \$3,368,846.

Madam Chairman: So that is \$3 million?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: \$3,368,846.

Madam Chairman: So, can I, seeing that is really a shared vote with the entity, is the entity likely to become operationalized before the end of this fiscal?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, Chair, that is the intention.

Madam Chairman: That is the intention. So that in terms of, say projections for this vote, because as member Bodoie pointed out the drawdowns seem to be small.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, Chair. But there are a number of initiatives that once the entity is operationalized they would need to though. One would be the destination website and there would be a number of initiatives, marketing initiatives that would be undertaken by Tourism Trinidad Limited.

Madam Chairman: Do you have any idea of the costing of these various initiatives?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: We have estimates, but I would not want to, you know, because we would have to go out—the entity of course would have to go out to tender. But we would have similar estimates.

Madam Chairman: Let me ask. Do you have any idea of time frame with respect to when the company would be going out to tender with any of these initiatives?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: I would not be able to answer that, but we can seek to speak to the chairman of the board and provide responses to you.

Madam Chairman: All right. Now, that is the entity that has only since hired two employees?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Its interim arrangements have been made for the three persons and then the board would have to conduct the recruitment process.

Madam Chairman: So that these going out to tender for these various initiatives, would that precede the employment of people with the interim arrangements or it is after the board has recruited staff?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: I can speak to the relevant person and then provide that response because they would have to give us that response, the board.

Madam Chairman: But, in the absence of a full structure, what is the relationship between this entity and the Ministry?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The Ministry would have oversight for the entity and as we indicated earlier where we had the systems in place for monitoring the entity and the meetings also, all those procedures would be what we would utilize for the new entity. And the entity would have to submit estimates to the Ministry to say what activities they will be conducting and the

Ministry will then use that to request releases for the entity.

Madam Chairman: And that is the reason why I asked about the relationship because I understood that you had oversight, but when it came to drilling down into questions with respect to operationalizing and when that—I did not get the impression that the Ministry was yet in a position to give us any sort of specifics, yet, one says, before the end of this fiscal year.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: No, no, no. The entity has to submit to the Ministry and the Ministry goes to the Ministry of Finance for the request for releases—

Madam Chairman: And that is in terms of releases, but even in terms of operationalizing its business. I do not get an impression that the Ministry can really give us any responses with respect to time frame, save and except their general response which I think I have heard before fiscal—

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: That would be correct.

Madam Chairman: That would be correct? So that, again, I wonder how close is the monitoring, the oversight function being done by the Ministry?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: No, but the board actually meets at the Ministry's offices at present. So the Ministry is aware of what is happening and all the approvals will have to come from the Cabinet.

Madam Chairman: All right, let me ask you, with the interim measures is there any representative of the Ministry on the board?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: No.

Madam Chairman: Okay, thank you. Member Rambharat.

Mr. Rambharat: Thank you very much. How are you avoiding duplication between the Ministry and the new company?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The Ministry and the company would have different responsibilities.

Mr. Rambharat: So when I saw—I saw something on travel, report on overseas travel where, take for example the CTO meeting, the Cruise Association conference and so on. In 2015 to 2018, the Ministry people attended those events. What happens now that you have this company, because 2015, you had TDC. Is it that TDC sends representatives and the Ministry sends representatives, or how are you going to streamline things?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: At those events you have different activities. Just to give an example. So if you have Caribbean Week, you would have a ministerial meeting and then you would have a trade aspect. So with respect to participation you would have the meetings and then you would

have the trade aspect. So the entity would normally set up the booth and man the booth at these events.

In respect of cruises, because it would be promotion and destination branding. At the event if you have joint meetings, a cruise has always, and air, would always be a joint with the Ministry and the TDC and any other body to attend these events. So if you go in an airlift you would have the airport and if you go into a cruise event you would have the port.

Mr. Rambharat: I am just trying to be very clear. So I think the Chairman asked the question before, exactly what is the role of the Ministry and what is the role of the company?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The company would be mandated to promote the destination, product development. The Ministry would set the policy direction and the Ministry would also have a role in seeking investment in the destination and the company, of course, would do the international marketing and branding and destination promotion.

Mr. Rambharat: I think the Chairman asked this question, but just to be sure, how are you monitoring this company in terms of the role of the Ministry and the role of the company and what the company is supposed to be doing?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Similar to what would have existed under the TDC, the entity would be required to submit monthly reports to the Ministry for all expenditure, recurrent, PSIP and marketing. Those reports when they come they are reviewed by the Ministry and, of course, the submission by the company we would know what activities they are doing. So you would have the monthly meetings with the entity and with all the management. We had joint meetings with the Ministry and—so everybody shared what they were doing and also to ensure that there are no duplications with what the Ministry was and the entity.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: You say a board of directors was appointed in August 2017 for the Trinidad Destination Management Company. Was that interim management company board appointed?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Interim board? The board is the board of directors for Tourism Trinidad.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: So it is not interim?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: No.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: It says that no money was expended in fiscal 2018 to date.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: This would have been sent up to April, so the information that we were presented with, the opening of the bank account, that would be the only release to date which would have come after the response was sent.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: So how much money has been expended to date?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Not expended, but released, 2.9.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: \$2.9 million?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Are you okay? You have any as yet?

Brig. Gen. Antoine: No, no, not as yet.

Madam Chairman: All right, Madam deputy PS—you finished?

Brig. Gen. Antoine: No, not as yet.

Madam Chairman: Okay. All right.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: Under “minor equipment purchases”, we have two different—“Item 4, other minor equipment” and “Item 5, telephones”. But cell phones are being bought under both areas. Could you explain? The cost of cell phones is being accounted under both, “other minor equipment Item 4” and other “telephones Item 5”.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Okay, I will just have the AOIV clarify.

Mrs. Kalloo: Telephones are purchased, cellular telephones are purchased under “other minor equipment”. If it was placed under “telephones” it was an error. We do apologize.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: Okay, so that will be corrected then?

Mrs. Kalloo: It will be.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: Do you have a policy for the return of cell phones when a user contract is ended?

Mrs. Kalloo: We have a user policy in the Ministry for the phone to be returned.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: So the phone is returned?

Mrs. Kalloo: Or purchased.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: So the person could have the—

Mrs. Kalloo: The option is available to purchase or return.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: And what measures do you have in place for lost, damaged cell phones? Right now my cell phone is damaged because it fell. What policy you have in place in terms of that?

Mrs. Kalloo: Unfortunately right now the Ministry has so little money under phones. So if you lose your phone you would not be able to have a phone replaced. It will have to be at the owner’s expense.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: And if it is damaged?

Mrs. Kalloo: Similarly.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you, Madam Chair. Deputy PS, if I can just take you to the Development Programme, Consolidated Fund and there are a couple of projects there. The one that I am interested in is the consultancy for the development of a strategic tourism incentive plan which would be very appropriate in the light of wanting to use tourism as a diversification measure for the economy. But yet I see that the project start date is the first quarter of fiscal 2019 and the project has not commenced to date. Can you shed some light on that, whether any effort is being made to bring this project forward as opposed to—

4.05 p.m.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Member, what would have happened is that the Ministry would have gone out for RFPs for the project and the bids that came in would have been over the PS's limit for consultancy. So the Ministry now has to approach the CTB, so that is why the timeline would have been revised.

Mr. Paray: So do you have any idea as to where we are in the process?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: We are in the process of approaching the CTB and we were mindful of the deadline dates for submission of requests to the CTB.

Mr. Paray: Just one other question. In terms of the other projects, in terms of development now, in the public domain there has been quite a bit said about this Sandals project in Tobago and its contribution to tourism. Has there been any allocation at all with regard to the Ministry of Tourism for this project?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: No, none.

Mr. Paray: And can you indicate as to why that may not be?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: I would not be able to say, member.

Mr. Paray: All right. Can you, PS, tell us whether the Ministry of Tourism has any involvement at all in this project, going forward?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Not at this time.

Madam Chairman: Member Rambharat? Okay. Well, I will go ahead. Let me ask this, Madam PS. I am looking under "Rent and Lease of Office Accommodation and Storage", and the impression I got was that these facilities that have been rented, it is only because of the role you all have had to assume since the TDC has ceased to exist.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The Ministry did have one warehouse at Trade Zone. So we did have that, and the others would have been because of it.

Madam Chairman: Those are new.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes.

Madam Chairman: So did the TDC operate offices and storage space at Piarco and cruise ships before?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, Chair, they did.

Madam Chairman: All right. So that these always existed, it is just that this has become a line item under your vote?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes. We have to now cover the cost for the continued operations of the two office spaces.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So that I would be correct in saying that once the new entity begins to function, this becomes a line item under them?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, that would be the intention.

Madam Chairman: Okay, thank you. I want to talk a bit about the regulation and the licensing of the various stakeholders, the tour guides, the hotels, guest houses, et cetera and the role of the Trinidad and Tobago Regulatory Authority. Okay? If you could start off by telling us where has this reached? This project of creating this Authority, where has it reached to date?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Okay, Chair, I will pass you on to the legal officer and she would provide you with some background and the status.

Ms. Hicks: Good afternoon. The status currently is that the legislative diagnostic report would have been completed. A Bill would have been completed and right now we are in the process of considering. There were several stakeholder consultations and we have also sent out the requisite documents to the various Ministries and agencies and we are in the process right now of receiving, considering and consolidating those recommendations.

Madam Chairman: So let me ask, then, in terms of the current status, in terms of enforcing standards, say, for tour guides, am I correct in saying all of this is really voluntary?

Ms. Hicks: In terms of—you want to relegate it to tour guides? You wanted that specific example?

Madam Chairman: I was going to ask it for each. I was going to ask it for tour guides; I was going to ask it for guest houses, hotels.

Ms. Hicks: Okay. There are mechanisms currently. So there is not tourism-specific regulation. There is an umbrella—there is a plethora of legislation that governs the requisite subdivisions of the tourism operators. That would be Accommodation. They have to apply for their fire

clearance, Town and Country, and so forth. So those things are already legislative and in place. Tour guides, for example, have to go for their magistrate's licence to operate. So there is a degree of regulation already—health and safety, and so forth.

Madam Chairman: And I think you hit the nail on the head. Those regulations are not—

Ms. Hicks: Tourism specific.

Madam Chairman:—specific to the experience that—all right? So that there is fire safety even if you had a clubhouse.

Ms. Hicks: Right.

Madam Chairman: So that in terms of bringing it to a standard for the tourism product, how is that achieved in the absence of this regulatory authority?

Ms. Hicks: Just to clarify, Madam Chair, the focus of the project is to establish the Authority. The intent is that those nuances—in other words, elevating the tourism sector would more than likely be a regulatory process of the Tourism Authority when they come on board, because it is not a simple process. They will have to scan the sector. It is a lot of work that will have to go into regulations and we were focused on establishing the Authority to do so.

Madam Chairman: So in terms now, and the absence of having the regulatory authority—because this is something that is a discussion for some time—how does one ensure a certain standardization of the various products, sites, accommodation, tours, and so, that you are offering destination Trinidad to, whether it is a local or foreign consumer?

Ms. Hicks: I may have to solicit the assistance of the team in that regard, but what I can give is that we do, on a continuous basis, engage the tour operators in training. There are several programmes: STAR, STEP. So maybe I could pass you on to the tourism advisor to give a little more clarification. There is a wide range of training mechanisms and there are also site visits that take place that, in sum total, bring some measure of elevated standard.

Madam Chairman: It is really therefore voluntary—"I don't have to."

Ms. Hicks: Yeah, through suasion and showing the business efficacy of elevating your standards.

Madam Chairman: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Lee Tang: Good afternoon, everyone. So in terms of what you are asking, we are looking at a standard and the adherence of standards. Now, we rely on the Bureau of Standards to set tourism standards. We work with them in conjunction and in collaboration with the stakeholders. So if you are looking at the tour guides, there is a standard for tour guides, and the tour guides were part of the development of that standard.

There was a programme called the TTIC Programme that was implemented by the Tourism Development Company and it was voluntary, as you rightly said. What they did, the operator had to go to an audit with the TTBS and once you look at the standards and you were able to meet the minimum requirements of that standard, you were certified. There was regular monitoring of these tour guides. So there were spot checks and ad hoc meetings with them. So if you are a tour guide and you were certified, in order to ensure that you keep that certification, they would accompany the tour group and see and listen to what they are saying, because there are certain things that are in place there in that standard that they must meet. Once you have achieved it, you would have gotten a certification and it was renewable every year.

Madam Chairman: So this audit that the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards conduct, you would have said that the last audit was done in 2017. Am I correct?

Mr. Lee Tang: That is what is recorded.

Madam Chairman: That was the audit.

Mr. Lee Tang: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Now, in terms of the findings of the audit, and where, say, tour operators were found deficient and recommendations were made, is there any follow-up by the Ministry of Tourism to ensure that the various operators have come up to the level of compliance in areas where they were found deficient?

Mr. Lee Tang: That was part of the system. So if you were deficient in any particular area so that non-compliance had to be treated, you would have to write to the Bureau and advise how you are going to deal with that non-compliance. If you are unable to do so, they used to work with them to see how best they can achieve it. It is voluntary and we understand that sometimes the tour operators, the tour guides—the operators in the industry themselves, they are hard-pressed to conduct certain things. So they work with them to ensure that they can comply with the requirement of the standard.

Madam Chairman: All right. So this is really being done and driven by the Bureau of Standards and not by the Ministry of Tourism?

Mr. Lee Tang: They have the technical expertise and they are able to ensure that the person is audited, because that is where the expertise lies, with the bureau. So they can tell you whether they have met the standard and the requirement and at what level they have met that, and then they can also provide you with any of the issues and how to treat with it. So, yes.

Madam Chairman: And, therefore, what is the role of the Ministry of Tourism in that?

Mr. Lee Tang: The TDC would have been involved with that aspect of the project. The Ministry—we would receive the reports from the TDC indicating how many persons were certified and what were some of the challenges, and then we will work with the TDC to ensure that the operators actually were able to meet and treat with the non-compliance.

Madam Chairman: So I understood you to say, Mr. Lee Tang, the TDC? So in the absence of the TDC—because you are saying the Ministry worked with the TDC in the absence. What is the role of the Ministry?

Mr. Lee Tang: The role at this present time would be in terms of treating with deficiencies, incapacity. So whether it pops up that this person did not have the adequate training, did not have the specific codes of conduct and so forth, we will have to assist in that regard.

Madam Chairman: Might I ask how many entities that you all are assisting in such a way, currently?

Mr. Lee Tang: I do not have that at present. I am going to defer it to our legal person.

Ms. Hicks: Madam Chair, I am advised that that is under the purview of our stakeholder's unit. They actually serve as the direct conduit with all of the stakeholders. They actually, on a daily basis, take the concerns, be it what level of training they require; what they need to elevate their game, and assistance in business planning, and so forth. So our stakeholder's unit—probably we will have to ask your indulgence to revert in writing to you on that.

Madam Chairman: Mrs. Medina, you wanted to add something?

Mrs. Medina: Our stakeholder unit is also responsible for a project called the Caribbean Small Tourism Enterprises Project, or STEP, which seeks to assist small tourism operators to enhance their competitiveness, profitability and sustainability. Under this project in this fiscal year they have conducted a one-day symposium entitled Digital Transformation Within the Tourism Sector. They have also conducted training for tourism entrepreneurs in terms of association management, getting non-traditional tourism stakeholders under an association; capacity-building sessions for customs and immigration officers, as well as training for the St. Christopher's Taxi Cab Co-operative Society Limited. So the Ministry continues to train our stakeholders and address any concerns.

Madam Chairman: And, therefore, what mechanisms do you use to assess the level or the efficacy of your training? How do you assess whether your programmes have the reach and result in the sort of standards that you wish to be evident in the industry?

Mrs. Medina: One area might be where we get feedback from tourists or visitors, and they would

let us know, I mean—because they would—an exit survey, through exit service. Because the visitors would have face-to-face contact with the tourism operators, be it taxi, accommodation. So we would get areas such as, I guess, customer service and their ability to meet the needs of the visitor.

Madam Chairman: Might I ask—because that is interesting—how often do you all do these exit surveys? Is it an ongoing thing that happens at every port every day?

Mrs. Medina: The CSO conducts a survey of departing visitors and the Ministry has recently been meeting with the CSO and we are supposed to be obtaining some of this data so that we can address some of these concerns and we can also seek to improve our tourism product and our tourism offerings, and build them into our programmes.

Madam Chairman: But you do not have any role in designing the exit survey.

Mrs. Medina: Yes. The Ministry and the TDC were involved in developing the questionnaire.

Madam Chairman: For CSO?

Mrs. Medina: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Minister Rambharat.

Mr. Rambharat: Yes. Under which sub-item do you capture Sponsorships?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Promotions. It would be marketing support. So 62.

Mr. Rambharat: Okay. I have a question on this sub-item 62. As far as you know, what is the latest with the Trevlon Hall matter? Are you familiar with the Trevlon Hall matter?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Legal could respond to that.

Ms. Hicks: It is under the charge of the Ministry of the Attorney General and they have other matters, and with all other Ministries we liaise on a current basis. I could perhaps provide that in writing, but all requested information has been provided to the AG's office in relation to all our matters. So there is nothing outstanding, but I can provide an update in writing to you.

Mr. Rambharat: So you are not aware that the court delivered a decision in April 2018?

Ms. Hicks: No. We requested an update in writing from the Ministry but we did not receive a response on the status of the matters.

Mr. Rambharat: Well, I wanted to ask you, in light of Justice Rahim's 25-page judgment in the Trevlon Hall matter, what changes has the Ministry or the new entity made in relation to sponsorship and promotions or expenditure under sub-item 62? Because at paragraph 87 and 88 of the judgment, Justice Rahim makes some serious statements in relation to the TDC, and I felt that maybe the Ministry would have been aware of it by now.

Ms. Hicks: No.

Mr. Rambharat: I would recommend that you get hold of that decision and read it in relation to the oversight of sub-item 62 and the oversight of the new state entity, which is why I asked the question early on about the relationship and how the oversight takes place.

Ms. Hicks: Noted, member.

Madam Chairman: Member Antoine?

Brig. Gen. Antoine: I want to return to Current Transfers and Subsidies. You have a new sub-item 04, Tourism Trinidad Destination Management Company, \$16 million, and that is recurrent. You have a development programme, \$10 million and Promotions, Publicity, Printing, \$19 million. And you state in your response to the question about the agency:

Tourism Trinidad Destination Management Company was established in recognition, the fact that the THA has responsibility for tourism in Tobago. The two destinations are selling different visitor experiences which require different product offerings coupled with different marketing approaches.

But we have “Go Trinbago Destination” app. Who owns it? THA or the—

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The “Go Trinidad and Tobago”, it is destination. Both Trinidad and Tobago, there are actually two areas on the app. You would have “Trinidad” and then you would have “Tobago”. So all the attractions, all the hotels—so it is both Trinidad and Tobago on the app.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: So it is joint.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: Any cost? How is any cost reference shared?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: No, the app would have been developed under the TDC at the time, so the TDC would have covered that cost.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: Okay. And the way forward, obviously we will be attending quite a number of activities that require overseas travel. How do we intend to approach it? Would we be sending two separate teams for THA and for Trinidad Tourism Ministry?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: In some cases, yes. The THA would send a representative also, the division of tourism and transportation. So in some cases, yes.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: Again, how would we market it? We market it as a joint destination or separate destinations?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: According to the Cabinet decision, it is two separate companies and

it is different products. So you would have the Trinidad product; you would have the Tobago product; and you would have the Trinidad and Tobago product. So there was a task force appointed and the task force was working out the arrangements for joint events, when both Trinidad and Tobago are participating.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: But we have not finalized that as yet.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: I cannot say, member.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: All right. Looking forward again, we now have, for instance, a Tobago Jazz festival, but we also have Blanchicheusse Jazz Festival. Would we now see the promotion of, say Blanchicheusse as the Trinidad Jazz Festival? How do you plan to go forward?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Some of the festivals would be privately run. So the festivals are run by Trinidad and then Tobago would have theirs also.

And in a lot of the cases, different communities would be promoting community events and the Ministry would try and support in marketing these events.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: And does the Tourism Ministry plan to market Trinidad in Tobago as a destination for Tobagonians and vice versa?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, member, because we do have domestic tourism and the domestic promotion, similar to what we would have mentioned earlier, the Stay to Get Away campaign. And then Tobago actually has in a road show in Trinidad where they promote Tobago to Trinidadians.

Madam Chairman: Madam Deputy PS, earlier you spoke about the app that you have that once somebody hits Piarco they can download this app for free. Do you have any figures to show the usage of this app?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: I do not have it, but we do have, what we would call the “hits”. So we do have that information which we can provide to you.

Right now we have the countries, but I will have to indicate the number of downloads for you.

Madam Chairman: The number of countries in terms of—

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: It is 125 countries. It has been downloaded by approximately 125 countries, but the number, I will have to give you the figures itself with how many persons actually use the app.

Madam Chairman: Yes, but let me ask something. What I understood it is, that you would have, of course, used that to, sort of, guide visitors who are here. Would you have any data to show the

download in terms of people arrivals to see how effective the reach of the app?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, but we may have to provide that in writing because we cannot locate it at this present time. But we will be able to provide you with that.

Madam Chairman: Okay, thank you. And in terms of gathering figures with respect to visitors, do you all segregate your figures in terms of international, local and regional visitors, and also in terms of new visitors and returning visitors?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Okay. The arrival figures are received from immigration. So we would have all countries. So you would have your source markets and every destination that someone comes from, we would have that information. We would not have if it is a new visitor. We would not have that. That would have to be captured in a survey. If that is the case, the exit survey, you could always include that as an exit survey question if this is your first visit to the destination.

Madam Chairman: Let me ask that, in terms of your participation in, say the conferences like, I think, Sea Trade and Routes of America, Caribbean Travel Market and so on, how do you relate your attendance to those various conferences? I think it is 11 you all selected this year. How do you relate that or convert that into, one, whether you are on track with your product and, two, generating tourist flows?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Okay. Some of the meetings, of course, would be required, because Trinidad and Tobago are members of a number of the international organizations. Just to give an example, Routes Americas. In respect of Routes Americas there was approval for us to bid for the hosting of Routes Americas in 2020. So that would translate into over 700 visitors to Trinidad and Tobago if we win the bid. And that would be all airlines' representatives and destinations would be coming to Trinidad to do business relating to airlines and all agreements relating to airlines. And in similar cases you are promoting the destination at each event to encourage visitors to visit the country. So the same aspect with the trade show aspect, FCC and all of those, you would be promoting the destination, two persons at all events.

Madam Chairman: So is the promotion, let us say Sea Trade, what format does that promotion take?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: I will pass you on to the Director, Research and Planning who would normally attend that one, because we have different persons responsible for cruise and air, so she can indicate that to you.

Mrs. Medina: The question was—can you repeat the question, please?

Madam Chairman: In terms of, I was asking, based on what the Deputy PS says, she says

attendance of the Ministry to these various conferences promotes the destination. In terms of Route Americas I understood her to say that if you won the bid, 778 people—and I take these now to be business people. This is a business meeting. In terms of Sea Trade, for example, what format would promotion of Trinidad and Tobago take?

Mrs. Medina: At the cruise meetings, normally we have—it would take several formats. So we have the cruise conference, where you learn about best practice. There are areas such as how to improve your product, tours, port facilities. There would also be a trade show where the public or where buyers and suppliers interact for tourism services or cruise tourism services. Another aspect is where we would have one-on-one meetings with the cruise line executives and these meetings are really critical because these are the people who plan the itineraries. These are the people who choose the destinations, basically, and once we develop relationships with these persons we are able then—our country becomes part of their itinerary and the cruise line visits our destination.

Sometimes we—well, as the former TDC, they would have had marketing incentives with the cruise lines, so on board there would be marketing and promotion of the destination through videos and that kind of thing. As we have seen, cruise has been increasing over the years and—well, I mean, we hope that it will continue and it is part of the critical need to go to some of these meetings.

Madam Chairman: So that I would expect that, let us say the example you have given with, say, attracting cruise lines, this is not an initiative alone by the Ministry.

Mrs. Medina: No, no, no. In the past we would have, as mentioned previously by our DPS, we would have had participation—the former TDC as the marketing agency, so we would have had a booth and they would be responsible for any collateral material, interaction with the public, because the booth would have been part of the trade show as well. So, destinations have booths, as well as suppliers of tourism services. Did I answer the question?

4.35 p.m.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So let me ask you something: Could you tie to show us any recent line that has come here to visit, say, a promotion at a trade show or—

Mrs. Medina: So I think for the last, let us just say maybe max five years, we have had increased calls from the MSC line. The MSC line is a European line and they have sent various cruise ships to Trinidad and Tobago. So the last one that came would have been the *MSC Fantasia* and that cruise ship I think it holds about 4,000 passengers plus crew, and that line actually—the line—I

think they board in Martinique and the persons who come to Trinidad, they actually come to shop. So you would see them going downtown. They say they go to Francis Fashions. They go to all the downtown stores. So that would increase our visitor spending there. We create employment because on a cruise ship day we have the tour operators, because there are the pre-booked tours which happen. We have the transport, we have—so it is like the multiplier effect where it trickles down to the man on the street.

Madam Chairman: But no, what I was really asking is whether you can tie any line now coming here to say your attendance to any particular—

Mrs. Medina: Yes, because as I said this line would have started about five years ago I believe and itineraries are planned two years in advance. So we would have gone then and we would be reaping the benefits now because they are planned two years in advance. So if we went five years ago, from the third year we would start seeing.

Madam Speaker: So that, they started five years ago and you are tying that to your attendance to a particular sea trade, or cruise, or something like that.

Mrs. Medina: Yes.

Madam Speaker: All right. Member Bodoe.

Dr. Bodoe: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to take us back to the auditor, the TTPS, and perhaps Mr. Lee Tang and Ms. Hicks could come in here. One of the issues in terms of a tourist experience is, of course, the hotel, and in my own experience if I travel and I go to a bad hotel I just decide not to go back to that hotel. But if I engage in an activity, for example, parasailing or jet-skiing or zip lining, I may not have another chance if it goes wrong. So I am a little bit concerned that we are still are not at a stage where we have gone from voluntary to mandatory. Can you tell us what is the international best practice in terms of how we protect tourists when they embark on these activities? Because that will be something very important. A tourist would want to have the assurance in terms of safety in terms these activities.

Ms. Hicks: Specifically jet-skiing, for example?

Dr. Bodoe: Well I am just using that as an example, but I mean we have zip lining, for example, in Trinidad.

Ms. Hicks: And there was the incident in Tobago.

Dr. Bodoe: Yeah.

Ms. Hicks: Yes. What I am aware of is that Tobago has implemented a policy. We have that in our possession. I am not sure whether they have implemented—sorry, there is draft jet-

ski usage policy, and a draft—the name escapes me right now. There is a draft policy that also gives a more holistic look at beach safety. In terms of us and jet-skis, I cannot say specifically—from the report that would have been tabbed as one of the areas. The legislative report, that would have been tabbed as one of the areas that is unregulated as per the sector that posed a potential danger for tourists. So in the absence of—I would have to say what measures are in place. The Maritime Services Division has charge of certain matters in and in tandem with the coast guard. I may be misquoting certain things, but the Maritime Services Division has some responsibilities in that regard. But as I remember the report would have spoken to that being, for the most part, an unregulated area; segment.

Dr. Bodoë: Sure. I understand, but what I am saying is that—

Ms. Hicks: What measures are in place?

Dr. Bodoë: No, but is the Ministry or has the Ministry been trying to develop a holistic approach to this thing and perhaps take it to the Office of the Attorney General? Are we doing that?

Ms. Hicks: Yes. As a result of the consultations, that was brought to the fore. So that is a part. That element does form a part of the report as current. That is an area of concern and what you are asking and the immediate measure, interim measure, I guess what we were looking at was the roll out of the TTRLA to implement those things going forward.

Dr. Bodoë: But you understand my point? It is not to impact in the short term—

Ms. Hicks: Yes, it presents an immediate risk.

Dr. Bodoë:—in terms of tourist accessing—

Dr. Bodoë: The other question I have is, do you envisage Airbnb, for example, and entities like Uber, having a role in tourism—perhaps, Deputy PS you may want to answer this—in Trinidad and Tobago; and if so, how do you plan to engage these entities going forward?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Member, well Uber would have pulled out from Trinidad and Tobago and also with Airbnb. The Ministry—well the standards we would have would be for what would be under TTTIC and TTBS. With the unregulated, the Ministry has no control over those persons who are booking with entities.

Dr. Bodoë: But as part of the tourism thrust, do you feel that Ministry has a role to try to engage with these providers, these operators?

Ms. Hicks: For example, member—sorry. For example with regard to the fact that we are taking over full responsibility for the Maracas site, we are currently in the process of drafting codes of conduct that would speak to matters such as safety, vending on the beach and so forth. All those

matters are currently stuff that we considering. They are in the nascent stages I would say. But especially given the handover of the Maracas beach, we are contemplating of all those health and safety issues on that scale.

Dr. Bodoë: I hear you. One more question. I just want to go back to this Go Trinbago. Sometimes you travel to a foreign place and you may miss a billboard or you might miss a sign in the airport. But what you do not miss is that message coming to your phone that is inviting you to download a free app. Is that how it operates when you enter Trinidad? Do we have an arrangement, for example, with bmobile or the local provider to immediately give you an alert that this app is available and you should download it? In other words, does the app just hit you when you arrive?

Mrs. Jamraj-Mahimuthu: Okay. As I indicated earlier, it would have been promoted at each event, but that was the intention that when persons enter the country that they would get an alert to download the app. And just to indicate, that we receive the figures with respect to the number of users and it is 10,833 persons.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you. But are you saying that you received the alert, or you said it was the intention?

Mrs. Jamraj-Mahimuthu: We will double-check.

Dr. Bodoë: So what happens now when somebody is arriving this evening? What happens?

Mrs. Jamraj-Mahimuthu: I can find out from the relevant person who manages the app and provide that information if the alert is received at this present time. But that was the intention.

Dr. Bodoë: I will be grateful. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Okay. PS, again I just really wanted to look at the official overseas travel, sub-item 27, and with respect to the question when we asked are there policies regarding this sub-item and the response really focused on the role of destination marketing; and in terms of—the Ministry of Tourism had identified key goals towards its strategic goal of achieving socio-economic transformation and a number of the goals have been identified: increased air arrivals to 500,000 by 2020; increased cruise arrivals by 100,000 by 2020; increased visitor revenues by 25 per cent. I do not know if that is annually or by 2020; expansion of niche based tourism including meetings, incentives, conference, et cetera. Okay? Clearly that cannot be achieved by just pure destination marketing. So could you, therefore, shed some light with respect to, one, what are the factors that you all intend to employ and within your control to ensure these targets are met; whether these targets are intended to be met incrementally per annum and; therefore, if yes, what you would have expected to be your target by say end of calendar 2017; and whether your

measurement of your—where you are showing that you are in line to achieve your ultimate goal by 2020.

Mrs. Jamraj-Mahimuthu: So, all these goals would be included in the Ministry of Tourism's strategic plan. So the goals would have been developed I should say, as a sector in some cases because the Ministry knows that it would not be able to do this on its own. So at the time when we developed, it would have been with the TDC also. So the Ministry would have had its targets to meet and the entity would have had their target to meet, and then we would have had created the linkages with all the other sectors. For example, the regional corporation and any of the entities that would be required to actually achieve the goals. The intention would be for all policy and the plan where we would have targets for each particular year and we would be reviewing the targets at the particular time and making sure that we revise if necessary.

Madam Chairman: So where are we at?

Mrs. Jamraj-Mahimuthu: The Ministry continues to do the work. The strategic plan has not been approved as yet. The strat plan would have been sent to the Cabinet. Cabinet did ask us to include the linkages—more linkages—to the other sectors and we are to resubmit that to Cabinet.

Madam Chairman: Okay, and when is it likely you are going to submit this strat plan?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: By next week. Within two weeks.

Madam Chairman: Within two weeks?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, the revised strat plan.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Is that related to the strat plan for the Tourism Trinidad Destination Management Company Limited?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: No. The entity will have to develop their own strategic plan.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So the strategic plan you are referring to would be the Ministry's strategic plan?

Mrs. Jamraj-Mahimuthu: Yes, Chair.

Madam Chairman: My understanding was that that was done in collaboration with TDC?

Mrs. Jamraj-Mahimuthu: At the time, but it was revised since then.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So that is revised only with a responsibility for the Ministry of Tourism?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, with the necessary linkages to other Ministries.

Madam Chairman: So you say that you anticipate that by next two weeks?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Within two weeks.

Madam Chairman: Okay, and therefore I would ask you to give us a status at the end of next two weeks with respect to that strat plan in terms of if you have resubmitted it in terms of Cabinet.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: We will, Chair.

Madam Chairman: Now as far as the Tourism Trinidad Destination Management Company Limited, what is happening with that strategic plan?

Mrs. Jamraj-Mahimuthu: The company will have to develop the strat plan. So we can seek to get that information and provide to you if they have a timeline.

Madam Chairman: You have oversight over this entity too? Yes? Currently you have oversight over this and you have no idea as yet where they have reached with the strat plan time frame for its completion?

Mrs. Jamraj-Mahimuthu: Once it is operationalized and they get the CEO on board, we can get that information and provide it, once the company is operationalized with the interim management.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So could you get back to use to find out where they have reached in terms of operationalizing their company and in terms of beginning to work on these?

Mrs. Jamraj-Mahimuthu: We can.

Madam Chairman: All right. So I just want to ask you in terms of some matters that we would have seen in the press. One has to do with the Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute with respect to an article in last year's newspaper concerning GATE students and non-payment for GATE students. This is an article August 29, 2017, Camille Hunte article.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: TTHTI does not fall under the Ministry of Tourism.

Madam Chairman: It falls under who?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Under Education.

Madam Chairman: Under Education? So this does not relate to you?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: No.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And then might I ask also with respect to this search for a new tourism plan, this master plan, and the National Tourism Policy which is supposed to be revised in an effort to give global competitiveness of Trinidad and Tobago, what is the status with respect to that?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Chair, I will pass you on just for you to get some background

information from the tourism coordinator.

Madam Chairman: Okay, thanks.

Mr. Lee Tang: Chair, you asked for the status on it? I just wanted to get clear on your question?

Madam Chairman: Really one is to find out what is the status of it, if the revision has been completed and if not, why and when?

Mr. Lee Tang: Good. In terms of that we did an RFP, it was disseminated. I think we got about 10 proposals coming in. So that part, the RFP was done. We had reached a stage where we were able to have qualified bidders. So that is at the point we are right now. When we looked at what was submitted in terms of price, we realized it was way past the PS's limit. So we are at this point in time reviewing that RFP and seeing how we can advance it forward. More than likely it may have to go through the CTP.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. And you have any idea of time frame with respect to reviewing the RFP?

Mr. Lee Tang: It is currently being reviewed right now.

Madam Chairman: Yeah, but time frame for completion of your exercise.

Mr. Lee Tang: That would take place before the end of the next quarter, before the end of the fiscal.

Madam Chairman: Before the end of this fiscal?

Mr. Lee Tang: Yes.

Madam Chairman: And therefore we will ask if you could report to us by end of fiscal, say October 1st, what is the status of your review exercise with respect to this?

Mr. Lee Tang: Will do.

Mr. Rambharat: I just [*Inaudible*] on the projects. I am not sure if we got an update on the other facilities, Las Cuevas, La Brea, Manzanilla and Vessigny. I saw that there were some dates. PS, could we get an update on Las Cuevas, La Brea, Manzanilla and Vessigny, those projects?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Member, on the works that are being done?

Mr. Rambharat: Yes.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Okay. So I will pass you on to the project manager.

Mr. Bourne: Currently, for this ending last fiscal, we identified some enhancements and beautification works at each of the sites, and we have a plan going forward to continuously upgrade these sites to more of an international standard. Right now at Vessigny we have completed the concessionaire building, the rehabilitation of the concessionaire building, and in

short order you would see RFPs going out to house a concessionaire to come in there and start operating in that facility. Likewise at the Manzanilla beach facility as well as the La Brea Pitch Lake centre. And that is how we continue to upgrade those sites and we are going forward

Mr. Rambharat: Just to be clear, the note we have for Manzanilla is that refurbishment works commenced on April 19, 2018. So this is completed?

Mr. Bourne: Sorry, Sir, say that again.

Mr. Rambharat: We have a note before us that for Manzanilla the refurbishment works commenced on April 19, 2018. So is that work completed?

Mr. Bourne: Yes, that work I believed was referenced to the concessionaire building at the Manzanilla beach facility. We also have some further works at Manzanilla. We have drainage issues to deal with and plus some other aesthetics, landscaping and so forth.

Mr. Rambharat: So when would the further works begin?

Mr. Bourne: Those would begin shortly. We intend to try and get those works completed before the end of the fiscal.

Mr. Rambharat: Right. And on the La Brea Pitch Lake facility we have refurbishment works and the concessionaire began April 24, 2018. Where are we with that now?

Mr. Bourne: That has also been completed, member.

Mr. Rambharat: Right. And then there is another note on La Brea that discussions would be held with the CEO of Lake Asphalt regarding the expansion of the car park at the Pitch Lake facility.

Mr. Bourne: That conversation we are still to have with the CEO in terms of expanding the car park given the visitor ship we have at that facility.

Mr. Rambharat: Right. And on La Cuevas we have in March 2018 the existing concessionaire was given notice to vacate, a draft RFP for construction of a pedestrian walkway, installation of surveillance cameras and solar-powered lights will be completed by May 2018—that is the RFP—so what is status of that?

Mr. Bourne: The RFP has been completed. We are doing the last touch-ups on the estimates for those works, and may be within the next two weeks those RFPs would go out for the tendering process to begin.

Madam Chairman: I just want to ask the PS, and this is coming now from the Auditor General's Report of 2017 referring to IT and ICT, and particularly with respect to the expenditure figures for the Ministry of Tourism over the five-year period. And, it comes in a comment that the

Ministry was using different application to perform similar functions for accounting, library and inventory. And, implications were that expenditure not being separately classified may result in the lack of readily available accurate information in appropriate planning, budgeting and resource allocation decisions; IT expenditure such as consultatory and training cost being excluded from total IT cost and inefficient use of limited financial resources. And therefore, I wanted to ask: If it is that you were using a different application for accounting what is that application?—whether your decision to use a different system was based may be on cost savings or something peculiar to your Ministry?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Chair, I will have to seek to get the information from IT with respect to the software and the systems used, and we can provide some clarification on that.

Madam Chairman: In writing?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: In writing.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Chair, and through you, just to respond to member Bodoë with respect to the alerts, the senior promotions officer has indicated that at particular times alerts were sent especially at Carnival, and then they are encouraging and sending SMS messages to persons to download the app. So alerts are received.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you. I was just wondering when you arrived at the airport as a visitor.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes.

Dr. Bodoë: That is what you are saying?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes. The senior promotions officer has confirmed that persons were receiving alerts and also they were encouraging and sending out SMS messages to download the app.

Dr. Bodoë: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: And by way of follow-up, Madam Deputy PS, I just wanted to find out in terms of your inventory control mechanisms. In our earlier enquiry I realized that you all did not have a stores clerk, an inventory clerk, and I think the submission was that that was part of your restructuring, and I am to enquire where has that reached in terms of employing an inventory clerk or a stores clerk, and if there is none up to date in the absence of that what measures have been put in place to safeguard your assets?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Okay. I will defer it to the HR manager so she can give you an update. Thank you.

Mrs. Dhalai: Madam Chair, on the Note to Cabinet, for the restructuring of the Ministry of Tourism, there is a proposal for a Stores Clerk II, and we choose to ensure that it is an established position not a contract position because we are taking costing into consideration of salaries under contract. In terms of the targeting or inventory control of equipment and stuff like that at the Ministry, the AO IV is responsible for inventory control and should you need further information, through the Chair, I would have to ask the AO IV to explain the system in place respectively for the inventory control.

Madam Chairman: Mrs. Kalloo?

Mrs. Kalloo: Yes, it is me. Inventory, we have invested into an asset management software. Using that software, we are able to label and scan items into a database. Now, the asset management software is user-friendly and the Clerk II, is who on the schedule, is able to conduct this. So we have inventory—our inventory is updated, we have audit checks to our inventory and everything is there.

Madam Chairman: So your labelling, are they removable labels? Are they electronic labels? How is the labelling done?

Mrs. Kalloo: The label is done manually. It is manual labels that we purchased; we stick it onto and we scan it into the database. Now with this software we can also take pictures. So we have like pictures of the items. So all that is there onto the inventory system.

Madam Chairman: And can I ask Internal Audit, your audit, does it also do audits of the inventory?

Mrs. Bunting: Yes, we do.

Madam Chairman: And when last have you done that?

Mrs. Bunting: We did one last month.

Madam Chairman: Last month?

Mrs. Bunting: Yes.

Madam Chairman: And are there any issues?

Mrs. Bunting: No. Things were on-stream. We visited a couple sites and they are on-stream.

Madam Chairman: You visited sites—

Mrs. Bunting: Yes.

Madam Chairman:—and you have also checked the database? Have you checked it against actual items?

Mrs. Bunting: Yes, we do.

Madam Chairman: Yes?

Mrs. Bunting: Yes.

Madam Chairman: And there are no issues?

Mrs. Bunting: No.

Madam Chairman: And the last question I want to ask the Deputy PS: In an earlier enquiry we had heard about this road map for the tourism sector which was before Cabinet; what is the status on that?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Chair, I will have to pass you on to the Tourism Advisor. The road map would have been developed by the Standing Committee for the sustainable development for the Trinidad. So the committee would have developed the road map and it would have been submitted. A presentation was supposed to have been made by the Chairman to Cabinet. The Chairman has subsequently resigned.

Madam Chairman: So to date there has no approval of it or not?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: No approval because that presentation was to be made.

Mr. Rambharat: PS, just going back to that question I had asked about that court matter, do you have a sponsorship policy for the Ministry?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes, there was a sponsorship policy under the TDC, and the Ministry would have adopted a similar policy in the Ministry.

Mr. Rambharat: And have you had any discussions with the new entity about having a sponsorship policy?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: The entity will have to develop its own sponsorship policy now. We cannot have that discussion

Mr. Rambharat: Would you as Deputy PS direct that they have a sponsorship policy?

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Any other questions, members?

5.05 p.m.

Madam Chairman: I would like at this stage to bring the enquiry to a close. There are a number of questions that we will send to you, Madam Deputy PS, in writing, and also some of the undertakings. The Secretariat would liaise with you as a reminder of what they are, and in terms of the deadlines for the submission. I want to, on behalf of the Committee, thank you and your team for coming and participating in this discussion.

I want to thank the members of the media who have remained here with us and also the

members of the listening public. I wish you all a safe journey home and I now suspend this part of the meeting. Pleasant evening.

Mrs. Jamraj-Marimuthu: Thanks, Chair. Chair, I know we are probably off, but just on behalf of the team, we just want to say thank you also.

5.06 p.m.: *Meeting adjourned.*