PAAC

PARLIAMENT

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

SIXTEENTH REPORT OF THE

THE COMMITTEE ON

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND APPROPRIATIONS

THIRD SESSION OF THE 11TH PARLIAMENT

INQUIRY Examination into the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme

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 Bodoe	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
Mr. Brian Lucio	Graduate Research Assistant
Ms. Rachel Nunes	Graduate Research Assistant
Ms. Anesha James	Administrative Support

Publication

An electronic copy of this report can be found on the Parliament website using the following link:
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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 25, 2019 **Date Laid in Senate: January 29, 2019**

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Members of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee

Mrs. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George
Chairman

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report of the PAAC for the Eleventh Parliament contains the details of the examination of the stakeholders on **the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme**.

The (PAAC) agreed to examine the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme to determine:

a. To determine the level of implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme;
b. To determine the challenges and successes with the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme; and
c. To determine whether there are recommendations to improve the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme.

The Committee employed two (3) mechanisms: a private hearing, a review of written submissions and a Public Hearing. The Committee focused on a review and analysis of the written submissions submitted by all stakeholders. Subsequently, the Committee conducted a Public Hearing with the following stakeholders:

- ✓ The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Planning and Development;
- ✓ The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health;
- ✓ The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry;
- ✓ The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works and Transport;
- ✓ The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs; and
- ✓ The Commissioner of Police, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

The approach adopted by the Committee took into account issues identified throughout the examination and time constraints.

The Committee extended recommendations related to the issues identified, the Observations and Recommendations are presented in Chapter 3.

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.

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 Senate On November 3, 2017, Ms. Jennifer Raffoul was appointed as a Member of the Committee in lieu of Mr. Dhanayshar Mahabir.
3. 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.
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. Mr. Ronald Huggins ceased to be a Senator with effect from September 27, 2018.
6. By resolution of the Senate on November 27, 2018, Mr. Garvin Simonette was appointed as a Member of the Committee in lieu of Mr. Ronald Huggins.
7. 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 and 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 Bodoe was elected as the Vice-Chairman.

Quorum

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.

2. METHODOLOGY

Determination of the Committee's Work Programme

At an in-camera meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday December 28, 2017, it was agreed that the Committee would engage in an inquiry with stakeholders on the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme.

Review of Documents

The Committee determined the examination would begin by having a private hearing with officials from the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning and Development in an effort to gain an appreciation of the issues affecting the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP).

Thereafter, The Committee issued requests for written responses from Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning and Development to questions posed by the Committee. Questions were sent on May 22, 2018 and written responses were requested to be submitted by June 06, 2018.

The Inquiry Process

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

Identification of entity to be examined;

i. Preparation of Inquiry Proposal for the selected enquiry. The Inquiry Proposal outlines:
   - Description
   - Background;
   - Overview of Expenditure
   - Rationale/Objective of Inquiry; and
   - Proposed Questions.

ii. Consideration and approval of the Inquiry Proposal by the Committee and upon approval, questions were forwarded to the entity for written responses;

iii. Requests for Written Response were sent to stakeholders on March 22, 2018. Responses were received from the following stakeholders:
   - The Ministry of Finance – received on June 06, 2018; and
   - The Ministry of Planning and Development– received on June 14, 2018.

iv. 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;

v. Review of the responses received and the Issues Paper by the Committee;

vi. Determination of the need for a Public Hearing based on the analysis of written submissions and feedback from the public. There is usually no need to examine the entity in public if:

   - the Committee believes the issues have little public interest; or
   - the Committee believes that the written responses provided are sufficient and no further explanation is necessary.

vii. The Public Hearing was held on **Wednesday July 11, 2018** where the Committee conducted a panel examination with the following stakeholders:

   - the Ministry of Planning And Development;
   - the Ministry of Health;
   - the Ministry of Trade And Industry;
   - the Ministry of Works And Transport;
   - the Ministry of Sport And Youth Affairs; and
   - the Trinidad And Tobago Police Service.

viii. Letters requesting additional information from stakeholders indicated at vii were issued on July 27, 2018 with a deadline of August 10, 2018.

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

x. Receive Ministerial Responses. Review responses.

xi. Engage in Follow-up.

3. ISSUES, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

UNIT 1: PERVASIVE ISSUES

ISSUES

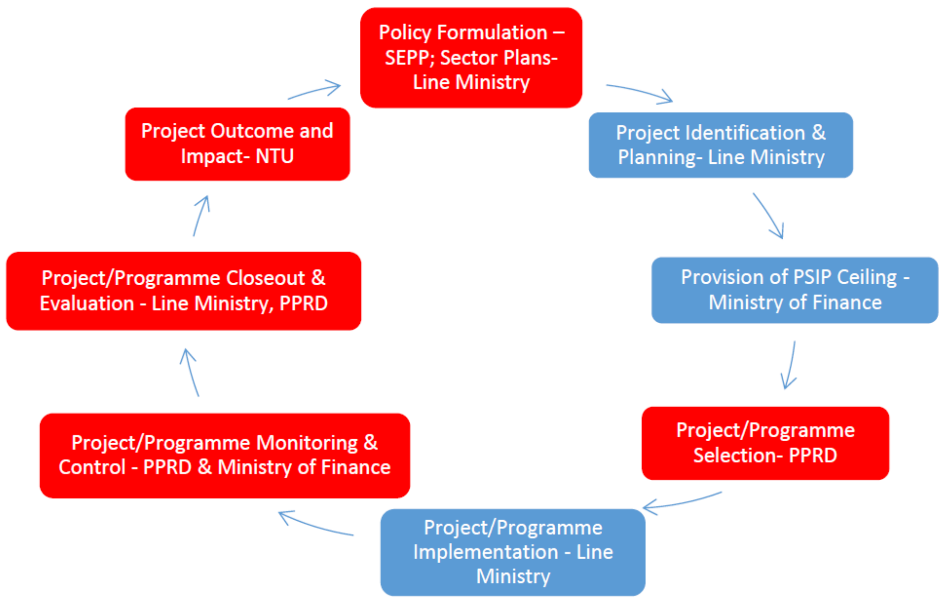
1. **The Public Sector Investment Programmes[1] (PSIP) Policy Cycle**

   Written evidence submitted by the Ministry of Planning and Development indicated that the PSIP policy cycle usually followed the undermentioned eight (8) steps.

   i. Formulation of policy by line Ministry;
   ii. Project identification and planning by Line Ministry;
   iii. Thereafter, the Ministry of Finance would provide a PSIP ceiling;
   iv. The line Ministry would then receive advice from the Project Planning and Reconstruction Division (PPRD) of the Ministry of Planning and Development on selecting programmes/projects for the fiscal year;
   v. The Line Ministry would then commence the implementation of its PSIP;
   vi. The PPRD along with the Ministry of Finance would monitor the implementation of the line Ministry's PSIP;
   vii. The implemented programmes/projects were then evaluated by the line Ministry along with the PPRD; and
   viii. The project outcome and impact were assessed by the National Transformation Unit.

[1] The PSIP is Government's medium term strategic investment tool for the development of the country. It is a budgeting and strategic planning tool employed by the Government, to translate its priorities and plans into tangible projects and programmes. The PSIP is the capital component of the National Budget and is separate from the Recurrent Budget.

FIGURE 1 - PSIP POLICY CYCLE[2]



2. Utilization Rate[3]

According to page 7 of the 2019 Public Sector Investment Programme[4], fiscal year 2018 yielded expenditure of $3,530.2 million (allocation of $5.162 billion) at a utilization rate of 68.4%. This represented consecutive improvements when compared to previous years' utilization rates of 66 % in fiscal 2017 and 61.1% in fiscal 2016, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance (MoF) revealed to the Committee that a utilization of less than 75% means that Ministries and Departments are underperforming which is unhealthy for the economy. The Committee also noted that at the time of its meeting the Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD), the Ministry projected a utilization rate of 80% by the end of the fiscal year, however, as was previously stated, the actual utilization rate was 68.4%, a shortfall of 11.6%.

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[2] Figure 1 was adapted from the Ministry of Planning and Development's submission.

[3] The percentage of the allocation used for the entire PSIP. Utilization Rate = PSIP expenditure/PSIP allocation*100

[4] 2019 Public Sector Investment Programme, https://www.finance.gov.tt/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/PSIP-Trinidad-and-Tobago.pdf

3. Planning of PSIP Projects

I. Non-Adherence to the Call Circular

Written and oral evidence submitted by the Ministry of Planning and Development indicated that Ministries and Departments often failed to comply with the guidelines outlined in Appendix XX of the Ministry of Finance Call Circular[5]. Furthermore, a number of project profiles submitted to the Ministry of Planning and Development did not include Gantt Charts, Log Frames, Work Breakdown Structures, Cost and Quality Baselines, Risk Analysis and Mitigation Strategies among other documents. Also, despite requests from the Ministry of Planning and Development for supporting documentation (for e.g. outstanding commitments and debt), many Ministries were not compliant.

The Committee learnt that in an effort to address the problem of poorly planned projects, the PPRD developed the Project Screening Brief (PSB) as the first step in streamlining the process of approving projects. The PSB consisted of the majority of the elements in Appendix XX of the Call Circular and presented them in a logical "step by step" structured format. It also included a quality plan and a procurement plan and emphasised the use of economic and financial analyses and encouraged the move to "shovel ready" projects[6].

Once Ministries completed and submitted the PSB for each project, it would make the process of managing and monitoring their projects easier and improve the chances of successful project implementation.

Observations:

- ***Ministries and Departments either partially complied with the project screening brief or did not comply at all.***
- ***Risk analyses were not conducted throughout the fiscal year on ongoing projects across Ministries and Departments. A risk analysis could ensure that the risks associated with continuing projects could be identified so that***

[5] Page 49, Ministry of Finance Call Circular,Ministry of Finance website, accessed on November, 08, 2018, https://www.finance.gov.tt/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Call-Circular-2019.pdf

[6] "Shovel-ready" or "ready to go" project – a project in which all planning is complete, all approvals are secured and work could start immediately once funding is in place. In such a project, all the preliminary work such as meeting all the environmental requirements, public outreach and possibly the design work is already completed.

informed decisions (stopping project, repurposing the project, re-scoping etc.) will be made to the minimize loss, delays and further wastage of resources.

- *Inter-ministerial communication was lacking amongst the Ministries, especially between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning and Development.*
- *There was a need to develop the competencies in project management throughout the Public Service.*

Recommendations:

- ***The Ministry of Planning and Development should submit a progress report to the Parliament on the compliance of all Ministries and Departments to the Ministry's Project Screening Brief by February 28, 2019.***
  - ***In an effort to evaluate the effectiveness of the Project Screening Brief, this report must determine if there is a relationship between compliant/non-compliant Ministries and Departments and their subsequent submission of properly planned projects to the Ministry of Planning and Development.***

- ***The Ministry of Planning and Development should recommend to the Board of Permanent Secretaries, that Ministries and Departments must adopt the Risk Management Model at Appendix F in the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual for PSIP projects.***
  - ***Subsequent to the Ministry of Planning and Development's recommendation, a Circular should be issued to all Ministries and Departments formally indicating same.***
  - ***The Ministry of Planning and Development should submit a status report to the Parliament on the progress made in ensuring that there is compliance by Ministries and Departments by February 28, 2019.***

4. Role of Accounting Officers

Written and oral evidence submitted by the Ministry of Planning and Development and the Ministry of Finance highlighted the role of Accounting Officers in the implementation of the PSIP. The Committee learnt that Accounting Officers were responsible for the management of the PSIP. Specifically, in terms of the PSIP, the Permanent Secretaries were required to provide strategic direction and project prioritisation based on national priorities as enunciated in the national development plan and other policy documents and statements. In discharging this function the Accounting Officer must make timely decisions, debottleneck problems, procure resources, manage the allocation of their funds and ensure that the necessary structure is in place for the successful implementation of their PSIP projects.

Given the concerns expressed by the Ministry of Planning and Development and the Ministry of Finance in relation to the pervasive predicament of poor planning and implementation of the PSIP, the Committee and stakeholders deduced that there was a need for stronger Project Management Units/Project Implementation Units to oversee the implementation of projects and programmes. This need was evident in the submission of Monthly Status Reports to the Ministry of Planning and Development by Ministries and Department which lacked important information with respect to contract particulars on the different work packages within a project.

The Ministry of Planning and Development advised the Committee that the PPRD was in the process of conducting an assessment on the capacity of Ministries and Departments with the aim of developing a mechanism to assist Ministries and Departments.

Recommendations:

- ***The Ministry of Planning and Development should submit to the Parliament, the findings and recommendations of its assessment on the capacity of the Public Service in relation to the PSIP by February 15, 2019. This submission should also include the timelines for the implementation of the recommendations arising from the assessment.***
- ***The Ministry of Planning and Development should partner with the Ministry of Public Administration to ensure that all relevant Accounting***

Officers and staff assigned to Project Management Units/Project Implementation Units across the Public Service are trained in a combination of the following:

  - ***Basic, Intermediate and Advanced level in capital investment project preparation (Log Frame Approach);***
  - ***project appraisal (Cost Benefit Analysis and Cost Effective Analysis); and***
  - ***project selection (Multi Criterion Analysis).***

- ***The Ministry of Public Administration should submit a status update to the Parliament of the progress made in training Accounting Officers and staff assigned to Project Management Units/Project Implementation Units across the Public Service by March 15, 2019.***

5. Role of the Ministry of Planning and Development

The Committee learnt that the Ministry of Planning and Development was responsible for the overall management of the PSIP as it approved, monitored and evaluated projects/programmes in the PSIP. It also assisted Ministries and Departments in terms of the strategic fit of projects with the national policy as well as in the debottlenecking of problems and the management of allocations. The Ministry discharged this responsibility through the Socio-Economic and Policy Planning Division (SEPPD), Project Planning and Reconstruction Division (PPRD) and the National Transformation Unit (NTU). These three (3) divisions and their functions are crucial to the PSIP as follows:

- ✓ The SEPP provides the strategic framework and national policies that guide the strategic direction of projects/programmes.
- ✓ The PPRD prepares and monitors the PSIP to ensure alignment to the strategic development objectives of the government, continued development of the economy, efficiency in the use of resources and transparency in financial management.
- ✓ The NTU evaluates the impacts of projects and programmes in terms of benefits accrued, best practices learnt and strengths and weaknesses in project design.

The Committee noted that the PPRD did not possess the adequate man power to adequately carry out its core functions. There were over forty-three (43) vacancies and nine hundred and ninety-two (992) projects on the 2017/2018 PSIP which were supervised by fifteen (15) officers. This meant that one officer would be responsible for monitoring sixty-six (66) projects which could be described as unhealthy and a glaring handicap. This handicap was evident during the Committee's public examination of stakeholders where the Ministry of Planning and Development was in possession of outdated information on a number of occasions.

Observations:

- ***The unit was hindered in carrying out some of its functions due to understaffing.***
- ***The total size of the 2019 PSIP was $5.2 billion. The understaffing of the PPRD meant that each of the 15 officers was responsible for $346,666,667.***
- ***Best practice dictates that each Project Officer be responsible for approximately $100 million worth in PSIP projects.***
- ***If the Ministry is able to fill the 43 vacancies, each officer would be responsible for $89,655,172.***

Recommendations:

- ***The Ministry of Planning and Development should devise a plan of action for the proper discharge of its functions and the enhancement of its performance by February 28, 2019. This plan must include a strategy for addressing the staffing and other resource challenges***

6. Untimely Releases of Funds

The Committee noted that written and oral evidence from a number of stakeholders highlighted the untimely releases of funds by the Ministry of Finance as a significant limitation in the implementation of the PSIP. Written evidence submitted by the Ministry of Planning and Development suggested that commitments arising from activities completed or ongoing from prior fiscal years are given priority in terms of the allocation of funds for the PSIP. The logic is that if legitimate outstanding commitments are not addressed they can have an adverse impact on the implementation of ongoing as well as new projects and programmes.

The Ministry further submitted that in the first quarter of Fiscal 2018, owing to the financial situation, Ministries and Departments did not receive releases in a timely manner and this contributed to the delays in the payment to contractors and suppliers. It has also contributed to the suspension of work on projects, claims accumulating because of delayed payments and cost increases as a result of Extension of Time Claims etc., and a surge in litigations.

The Ministry of Finance hypothesized that if 70% of the PSIP were achieved, then, of the 30 not achieved, 15% would account for unavailability of funding. This makes the untimely releases of funds a significant hindrance to the successful implementation of the PSIP.

The Committee noted that the untimely release of funds had the following impact on the Ministries that appeared before the Committee:

1. Ministry of Health was unable to complete some projects including refurbishment works at the Princess. Elizabeth Home for Handicapped Children **(See Unit 2: Individual Assessment)**
2. Ministry of Works and Transport indicated that the untimely release of funds was as a hindrance to implementing its PSIP.

The Committee noted the Ministry of Planning and Development's suggestion that the funding issue can be resolved by the development of a medium term funding horizon. The Ministry advocated that the PSIP is a medium term strategic investment tool and therefore, has multi-year horizons. However, the current PSIP had a one-year orientation as determined by the national budget. Once approval and expenditure is committed to a project, it must be continued except in instances where an assessment indicates that savings can be realised by stopping implementation. It was suggested that a Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF)[7] was key for the portfolio of PSIP projects.

To address the problem of continually funding new projects without addressing the level of debt and commitments on ongoing projects, the Ministry of Planning and Development proposed that the total debt with the breakdown of the details for each particular project should be provided by all Ministries and Departments.

Recommendations:

- ***The Ministry of Planning and Development should partner with the Ministry of Finance to develop a Medium Term Expenditure Framework for PSIP projects to be implemented for fiscal year 2019/2020. The Ministry should report progress by March 31, 2019.***
- ***The Ministry of Finance should mandate Ministries and Departments to report on the total debt accumulated (along with the breakdown) on each ongoing project in its annual Call Circular on the Draft Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Ministries and Departments including the Income and Expenditure of Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies and of the Tobago House Of Assembly commencing from fiscal 2019/2020 onward.***
- ***The Ministry of Finance should devise a solution for the untimely release of funds and submit a status report on this solution to the Parliament by March 31, 2019.***

UNIT 2: INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT

[7] The MTEF is annual, rolling three year-expenditure planning. It sets out the medium-term expenditure priorities and hard budget constraints against which sector plans can be developed and refined. MTEF also contains outcome criteria for the purpose of performance monitoring. MTEF together with the annual Budget Framework Paper provides the basis for annual budget planning. World Bank's Public Expenditure Management Handbook (1998) http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/pe/handbook/pem98.pdf

7. Ministry of Health

The Ministry had twenty-three (23) Cabinet approved PSIP projects for fiscal 2018 and projected an implementation rate of 90% for fiscal 2017/2018. However, additional evidence indicated that the Ministry expected to complete only 6 of its 23 PSIP projects by the end of the fiscal year which was a projected implementation rate of 26%.

I. Capacity and Training

The Committee learnt that the Ministry's Project Management Unit was comprised of four project managers, a health care architect and a project engineer. Additional evidence submitted by the Ministry indicated that there was a need to expand capacity through the filling of the vacant position of Project Manager and the hiring of both a Biomedical Engineering Consultant and a Hospital Commissioning Consultant to support the management of major hospital projects, with particular emphasis on the startup of their operations.

Additionally, the Ministry was working with the Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) to aid in addressing their project management capacity. The Committee also learnt that training was conducted on an annual basis for persons involved in the planning and implementation of the Ministry's PSIP.

Recommendations:

- ***The Ministry of Health should submit to the Parliament by March 31, 2019, a status report on the filling of the following vacancies:***
    - ***Project Manager;***
    - ***Biomedical Engineering Consultant; and***
    - ***Hospital Commissioning Consultant.***
- ***The Ministry of Public Administration should submit a status update to the Parliament of the progress made in addressing the project management capacity of the Regional Health Authorities by March 31, 2019.***

II. Untimely Release of Funds

The Ministry identified the release of funds from the Ministry of Finance as a hindrance to implementing its PSIP.

The Ministry was running behind in implementing the Princess Elizabeth Refurbishment Works due to the untimely release of funds from the Ministry of Finance. However, the Ministry of Health would subsequently acquire the relevant funding to allow for the mobilization of the contractor to commence the project which was expected to be completed by November 30, 2018.

Recommendation:

- ***The Ministry of Health should submit a status report to the Parliament on the Princess Elizabeth Refurbishment Works by February 15, 2019.***

8. Ministry of Trade and Industry

The Ministry had sixteen (16) Cabinet approved PSIP projects for fiscal 2018. Written and oral evidence submitted by the Ministry indicated that none of its PSIP projects for fiscal 2018 would be implemented by the close of the fiscal year due to all projects being three to five year projects at varying stages.

I. Capacity and Training

The Committee learnt that the Ministry's Project Management Unit comprised of six (6) persons. Additionally, comprehensive training in Project Management was provided to all technical staff of the MTI in 2015 and was provided periodically thereafter. Additionally, training was provided by the Project Management Unit at the beginning of each Fiscal Year to all persons (including persons from the state agencies) involved in the planning and implementation of the Ministry's PSIP projects.

II. Compliance with PSB

Oral evidence submitted by the Ministry of Trade and Industry indicated that the Ministry was not in compliance with the Ministry of Planning and Development's Project Screening Brief and was in the process of discussions on implementing the brief.

Recommendation:

- ***The Ministry of Planning and Development should submit the steps being taken to achieve compliance with the PSB in this fiscal to ensure that compliance is sustainable.***
- ***The Ministry of Trade and Industry should submit a status report on the completion of the PSB for each project for fiscal 2018/2019 by March 31, 2019.***

III. Update on the Development of the Music Industry

The Committee learnt that the Ministry conducted a pilot project, the Live Music District and was in the process of evaluating the project.

IV. Update on the Development of the Fashion Industry

Oral evidence submitted by the Ministry of Trade and Industry indicated that the Value Chain Investment Programme (VCIP) came to an end in the first quarter of 2018 (January to March). This VCIP was aimed at providing designers strategic assistance to improve their business performance at varied stages of development.[8] The Committee noted that all four participants were exporting in different quantities regionally and two (2) were exporting internationally to Spain and the United States of America.

9. Ministry of Works and Transport

The Ministry had ninety-one (91) Cabinet approved PSIP projects for fiscal 2018. It was anticipated that the Ministry would be able to complete only 11 of its 91 PSIP projects by the end of the fiscal year which was a projected implementation rate of 12%.

I. Untimely Release of Funds

The Ministry identified the release of funds from the Ministry of Finance as a hindrance to implementing its PSIP. However, the Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT) indicated that in instances in which adequate funds were not allocated by the Ministry of Finance, the MoWT usually restructured its PSIP accordingly.

[8] CreativeTT website, accessed on November 13, 2018, http://www.fashiontt.co.tt/fashion-tt/value-chain-investment-programme-

II. <u>Capacity and Training</u>

The Committee learnt that the Ministry had several Project Management Units with a number of qualified personnel:

a. Coastal Protection Unit – Seven (7) qualified persons;

b. Port of Spain East-West Corridor Transportation project, PMU – Three (3) qualified persons;

c. Programme for the Upgrade Roads Efficiency (PURE), Project Implementation Unit- Fifty-four (54) qualified persons; and

d. Central Planning Unit – Nine (9) qualified persons.

Furthermore, additional evidence submitted by the MoWT highlighted the capacity of the State Enterprises under its purview.

The National Infrastructure Development Company Limited (NIDCO),

- Engineering and Programme Management Department (EPM) – Twenty-one (21) qualified persons; and
- Programme Support Unit (PSU) – Two (2) qualified persons.

Vehicle Maintenance Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago (VMCOTT)

- The evidence indicated that the Organizational Structure of VMCOTT did not provide for a Project Management Unit. As such, all projects were monitored and evaluated by the Facilities Superintendent who reported to the Operations Manager of VMCOTT.

Point Lisas Port Development Corporation Limited (PLIPECO)

- PLIPDECO – Four (4) qualified persons.

Oral evidence submitted by the MoWT indicated that the Ministry had been liaising with the Service Commissions Department in an effort to acquire the necessary manpower for the effective and efficient implementation of the Ministry's PSIP. Additionally, training was provided by the Project Management Unit at the beginning of each Fiscal Year to all persons (including persons from the state agencies) involved in the planning and implementation of the Ministry's PSIP projects.

The Committee noted that the Ministry was also awaiting Cabinet approval for the establishment of the Bridges, Landslips and Traffic Management Project Management Unit (BLT PIU).

Recommendations:

- ***The Ministry of Works and Transport should submit a status update to the Parliament of the progress made in acquiring the necessary manpower in relation to the implementation of the Ministry's PSIP by February 15, 2019.***
- ***The Ministry of Works and Transport should submit a status update to the Parliament on the establishment and staffing of the Bridges, Landslips and Traffic Management Project Management Unit (BLT PIU) by February 15, 2019.***
- ***The Ministry of Works and Transport should cause a Needs Assessment to be conducted to determine whether a Project Management Unit should be established at VMCOTT and submit a status update of same to the Parliament by March 31, 2019.***

III. <u>Diego Martin River Improvement Works</u>

The Ministry submitted that the Diego Martin River Improvement Works fell under the Ministry's national programme for the upgrade of drainage channels. However, $33 million was allocated to the national programme and the Ministry's first order of business was to settle arrears from fiscal year 2017/2018. As a result, approximately $22 million was allocated towards settling the arrears.

Observations:

- ***The Ministry of Works and Transport, despite adhering to the Ministry of Finance's Call Circular and implementing the Ministry of Planning and Development's Project Screening Brief, still had an unhealthy implementation rate.***
- ***The quantum of PSIP projects under the Ministry of Works and Transport was a significant contributor to poor implementation rate. Due to the***

voluminous PSIP, the Ministry found itself constantly covering arrears from previous financial years which stymied implementation for the current fiscal year.

- ***To add insult to injury, the Ministry would embark upon new projects to add to its already voluminous PSIP which exacerbated the Ministry's dilemma.***
- ***The Ministry of Planning and Development was of the view that a Medium Term Expenditure Framework[9] would assist all Ministries and Departments to plan based on priority and ability to execute and therefore be more efficient in the utilization of your funds.***

10. Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs

The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs (MSYA) had twenty (20) Cabinet approved PSIP projects for fiscal 2018 and intended to complete 12 of its 20 PSIP projects by the end of the fiscal year which was a projected implementation rate of 60%.

I. Capacity and Training

The Committee learnt that the Ministry's Project Management Unit comprised of five (5) qualified persons. However, the Committee noted that when the Ministry was asked "about the frequency of training to which its staff involved in the planning and implementation of the Ministry's PSIP?" the MSYA outlined numerous training sessions from 2011 to 2018 to which only one official (Assistant Project Coordinator) attended. Oral evidence submitted by the Assistant Project Coordinator indicated that due to the understaffing of the Projects Unit, the Ministry was experiencing some difficulties in implementing some of its projects.

Furthermore, additional evidence submitted by the MSYA indicated that the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago's (SPORTT) Projects Unit consisted of four persons, two (2) of whom held qualification(s) in project management.

Recommendation:

[9] Recommendation on page 18

- ***The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs should submit a status update to the Committee of the progress made in acquiring the necessary manpower in relation to the implementation of the Ministry's PSIP by February 28, 2019.***

II. Compliance with PSB

Oral evidence submitted by the MSYA indicated that the Ministry held discussions with the Ministry of Planning and Development in relation to implementing and adhering to the Project Screening Brief. The MSYA indicated that it planned to establish a project review committee that would use the Project Screening Brief as one of its tools to assist the Ministry in better planning its PSIP.

Recommendation:

- ***The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs should submit a status report to the Committee on the establishment of the project review committee by February 15, 2019.***

III. Mayaro Sport Facility

The Committee learnt that the Mayaro Sport Facility was closed to the public prior to mid-October 2017 due to the removal of staff by the Contractor for Janitorial and Landscaping services. Consequently, the facility and its surroundings could not be cleaned, which posed a health and safety threat. However, the facility was re-opened in mid-October, 2017 with use being made to tto the public with the provision that they undertake to clean the areas they wish to occupy before, during and after their event.

IV. Refurbishment Works to Community Swimming Pools

The Committee noted that the Ministry was in the process of addressing issues at the Cocoyea Community Swimming Pool. The pool pump for the Wading Pool stopped operating and to repair the pump, three (3) quotations were sought and obtained. The Contractor with the lowest priced quote was recommended to be awarded the contract to repair the pump.

Additionally, invitation to tender to repair and fix the sand filter at the Diego Martin Community Swimming Pool was issued. Two (2) quotations were received and there were no further expectations of responses. The Contractor with the lowest priced quote was selected and the works began at the Diego Martin Community Swimming Pool.

Recommendation:

- ***The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs should submit a status report to the Committee on the refurbishment works at the Cocoyea and Diego Martin Community Swimming Pools by February 15, 2018.***
- ***The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs should generate a maintenance schedule showing estimated costs and sources of funds to meet such costs for all Community Swimming Pools by February 15, 2019.***

V. National Youth Policy

Written and oral evidence submitted by the MSYA indicated that the Ministry was in the process of implementing its National Youth Policy. The Committee noted that the National Youth Awards which is part of the National Youth Policy was held on September 09, 2018. Additionally, the Ministry projected that it would have completed its National Youth Organizations registration project by the end of the first quarter of fiscal 2018/2019. The project was aimed at facilitating the development of a database of registered youth organizations in Trinidad and Tobago which will also serve as an interactive database where youth organizations can identify organizations that were involved in similar activities so that they can in the partner in the development of each other.

Recommendation:

- ***The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs should submit a status report to the Committee on the National Youth Organizations registration project by February 15, 2018.***

11. Trinidad and Tobago Police Service

I. Wellness Fitness Centre at Riverside Plaza

The Committee learnt that the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) was in the process of establishing and outfitting the wellness fitness centre on the 6th Floor, Riverside Plaza. It was estimated that the Wellness Fitness Centre would have been completed by fiscal 2018/2019 and opened to all members of the TTPS.

II. Accommodation for Police Youth Club

The Committee noted that several Police Youth Clubs sought assistance for accommodation from Government Ministries. The Acting Commissioner of Police indicated that where possible, the TTPS assists the youth clubs with accommodation by gaining approval to use state-owned buildings as the needs of all one hundred and twenty-two (122) clubs exceeds the capacity of the TTPS' resources. However, the TTPS indicated that in addition to seeking assistance for the use of state-owned property, under the new Police Station Construction Programme, stations were outfitted with some community facilities so where possible, the stations lent some support to Police Youth Club activities.

III. Capacity and Training

Oral and written evidence submitted by the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service suggested that training/certification in the area of project management was not necessary. As eight out of the nine officers who made up the Project Implementation Unit, were employed at the Unit for between 4 -9 years. In addition all nine held numerous qualifications in project management. The TTPS however advised that there were two vacancies in the Unit, a Program Manager and a Civil Engineering Technician. The Committee noted that filling the aforementioned vacancies would add greater capacity to the TTPS' Project Implementation Unit.

Recommendation:

- ***The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service should fill the two vacancies within the Project Implementation Unit by March 31, 2019.***

IV. Expansion of the Valencia Police Station

The Committee noted there was a Police Post in Valencia which was a sub-unit of the Sangre Grande Police Station but the increase in crime led to the determination that a station was needed. Oral evidence submitted by the TTPS indicated that there were some issues in implementing the project. The TTPS was experiencing difficulty in acquiring the requisite land for the project and was in discussions with the Ministry of Works and Transport which owned buildings on a parcel of land which was considered adequate.

Recommendation:

- ***The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service should submit a status report to the Committee on the expansion of the Valencia Police Station by February 15, 2019.***

V. Restoration Work to the Moriah Police Station

Oral evidence submitted by the TTPS specified that a consultant was hired to advise the TTPS on the best course of action for the Moriah Police Station due to the condition and age of the building. The consultant recommended that Moriah would best be served with the construction of a new police station. However, being mindful of the availability of funds and the prioritization of projects, the TTPS opted to implement refurbishment works at the station which was completed.

Observation:

- ***The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service was compliant with the Ministry of Planning and Development's Project Screening Brief.***
- ***The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service carefully planned and monitored its PSIP projects but was hampered in their execution by untimely releases or unavailability of funds from the Ministry of Finance.***

4. CONCLUSION

During the Third Session of the Eleventh Parliament, the PAAC conducted an inquiry into the Implementation of the Public Service Investment Programme.

During the course of the inquiry, the Committee discovered that the Ministry of Planning and Development was experiencing difficulty in carrying out its duty to monitor the planning and implementation of the PSIP. There were over forty-three (43) vacancies and nine hundred and ninety-two (992) projects on the 2017/2018 PSIP which were supervised by fifteen (15) officers at the Ministry of Planning and Development.

Additionally, the untimely releases or unavailability of funds was another potentially crippling hindrance but in an effort to advance projects some Ministries have the scope of works to meet the funds given.The Committee's biggest concern is the poor planning and implementation of projects which was a consequence of the lack of the requisite manpower and skillset in the Public Service.

The Committee is of the view that the adoption of its proposed recommendations will lead to an improved implementation of the nation's Public Service Investment Programme. Furthermore, 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.

Mrs. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George
Chairman

Dr. Lackram Bodoe
Vice-Chairman

Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy
Member

Ms. Nicole Olivierre
Member

Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Ancil Antoine
Member

Mr. Wade Mark
Member

Mr. Daniel Dookie
Member

Mr. Garvin Simonette
Member

Mr. Clarence Rambharat
Member

Ms. Amrita Deonarine
Member

APPENDIX I

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:

xii. Identification of entity to be examined;

xiii. Preparation of Inquiry Proposal for the selected entity. The Inquiry Proposal outlines:

- Description
- Background;
- Overview of Expenditure
- Rationale/Objective of Inquiry; and
- Proposed Questions.

xiv. Consideration and approval of Inquiry Proposals by the Committee and when approved, questions are forwarded to the entity for written responses;

xv. Issue of requests for written comment from the public are made via Parliament's website, social media accounts, newspaper and advertisements;

xvi. 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;

xvii. Review of the responses provided and the Issues Paper by the Committee;

xviii. Conduct of a site visit to obtain a first-hand perspective of the implementation of a project (optional);

xix. 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:

xx. the Committee believes the issues have little public interest; or

xxi. the Committee believes that the written responses provided are sufficient and no further explanation is necessary.

xxii. Issue of written request to the entity for further details should the Committee require any additional information after the public hearing.

xxiii. Report Committee’s findings and recommendations to Parliament upon conclusion of the inquiry.

APPENDIX II

Minutes of Meetings

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

MINUTES OF THE THIRTY-SIXTH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY MAY 16, 2018 AT 1:51 P.M.
IN THE A.N.R ROBINSON (WEST) MEETING ROOM, LEVEL 9 TOWER D, OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENT,
INTERNATIONAL WATERFRONT CENTRE,
1A WRIGHTSON ROAD, PORT OF SPAIN.

Present were:

Mrs. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George	-	Chairman
Mr. Clarence Rambharat	-	Member
Brig. Gen (Ret.) Ancil Antoine	-	Member

Ms. Candice Skerrette	-	Procedural Clerk
Mr. Brian Lucio	-	Graduate Research Assistant
Ms. Rachel Nunes	-	Graduate Research Assistant

Absent were:

Dr. Lackram Bodoe	-	Vice-Chairman (Excused)
Mr. Ronald Huggins	-	Member (Excused)
Ms. Nicole Olivierre	-	Member (Excused)
Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy	-	Member (Excused)
Mr. Daniel Dookie	-	Member (Excused)
Ms. Jennifer Raffoul	-	Member (Excused)
Mr. Wade Mark	-	Member (Excused)

EXAMINATION OF THE RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR INVESTMENT PROGRAMME (PSIP)

5.1 The Chairman called the *in camera* meeting to order at 2:33 p.m., in the A.N.R Robinson (West) Meeting Room.

5.2 The following officials joined the meeting:

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Mr. Vishnu Dhanpaul	-	Permanent Secretary
Ms. Cherry Ann Le Gendre	-	Director of Budgets

MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Joanne Deoraj	-	Permanent Secretary
Ms. Marie Hinds	-	Deputy Permanent Secretary
Ms. Jacqueline Weekes-Penco	-	Director, Planning Unit
Ms. Terry-Ann Atkins Huggins	-	Director, Project Planning and Reconstruction Division
Mr. Armand Jackson	-	Assistant Director, Project Planning & Reconstruction Division
Ms. Reshma Maharaj	-	Project Monitoring Officer
Mr. Andre Innis	-	Project Analyst II, Project Planning & Reconstruction Division
Ms. Meera Ramesar	-	Director, Socio-Economic Policy Planning Division (SEPP)

5.3 The Chairman welcomed the officials.

5.4 The Chairman outlined the mandate of the Committee and the purpose of the hearing. Introductions were then exchanged.

5.5 The following issues arose from the examination into the Implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP).

Ministry of Finance

1. The current implementation rate of the PSIP for fiscal 2017-2018;
2. The role of the Ministry in overseeing the implementation of the PSIP;
3. The role of the Ministry in the implementation of the PSIP other than disbursing funds;
4. The role of the Accounting Officer in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the PSIP;
5. The challenges associated with the implementation of the PSIP;
6. The recommendations to assist in the implementation of the PSIP;
7. The lack of understanding by Ministries of the requirements for the PSIP implementation;
8. Suggestions to address the lack of experienced Project Managers within the Public Service;
9. The mechanisms used to access project financing;
10. The effects of the Mid-Year Review variations and supplementations on the IDF;
11. The concerns of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) regarding the low implementation of the PSIP;
12. Reports and assessments conducted by the IMF and other rating agencies;
13. Existing mechanisms to monitor the unused funds allocated for the PSIPs;
14. The intended goal of the PSIP in the country's economy; and

15. The failure of the Ministries and Departments to report on expenditure under the Infrastructure Development Fund (IDF).

Ministry of Planning and Development

1. The role of the Accounting Officer in ensuring that the PSIP is implemented;
2. The role of the Accounting Officer in determining whether projects and programmes are feasible and provide value for money;
3. The role of the Ministry in overseeing the implementation of the PSIP by Ministries and Departments;
4. The role of the Accounting Officer in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the PSIP;
5. The challenges associated with the implementation of the PSIP;
6. The recommendations made by the Ministry to assist in the implementation of the PSIP;
7. Details on Call Circular Appendix 19 which govern Ministries and Departments on project development and design;
8. The preparedness of Ministries to conceptualise and implement projects;
9. The shared responsibility between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning and Development;
10. Challenges faced with the implementation of the PSIP due to the lack of Project Managers within Ministries;
11. The ways in which thematic areas assist in determining the PSIP that should be prioritised;
12. The sum expended for the repairs of Roads and Bridges to date;
13. The role of the Project Planning and Reconstruction Division (PPRD);
14. The mechanisms in place to monitor the PPRD;
15. The challenges encountered by PPRD to effectively monitor the expenditure of Ministries after funds have been released;
16. The lack of staff at the PPRD;
17. The development of manuals to guide the operations of the various offices of the PPRD;
18. The approach that will be undertaken to re-engineer the implementation system of the PSIP;
19. Suggested Ministries the Committee should prioritise during its examination; and
20. Details of the expected outcomes with the adoption of the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) Project.

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

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

<u>SUSPENSION</u>

6.1 At 4:26 p.m., the Chairman suspended the meeting with stakeholders to resume *in camera* for a post-hearing discussion *w*ith Members only.

RESUMPTION

7.1 At 4:30 p.m. the Chairman resumed the meeting *in camera*.

POST-HEARING DISCUSSION

8.1 The Chairman sought Members' views on the hearing with stakeholders.

8.2 The Committee agreed that the following Ministries and Departments should be examined:
- Ministry of Trade and Industry;
- Ministry of Health;
- Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs;
- Ministry of Works and Transport; and
- Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

8.3 The Committee agreed that the areas of focus in the Inquiry Proposals should include capacity-building, the PSIP Implementation Unit and Staffing;

8.4 The Committee agreed that additional questions should be sent to the stakeholders. [**Please see Appendix 1**]

ADJOURNMENT

9.1 The Chairman indicated that the Committee's next meeting would be held on **Wednesday June 13, 2018 at 1:30 p.m.** when the Committee would commence its inquiry into internal controls and expenditure of the Ministry of Tourism.

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 4:56 p.m.

We certify that these Minutes are true and correct.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY

May 16, 2018

APPENDIX 1

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUESTED

Ministry of Finance

1. From the Ministry's perspective, what are some of the issues associated with the implementation of the PSIP?
2. What are the PSIP programmes/projects that would not be receiving funding in fiscal 2018?

Provide the following in writing:

1. The Ministry's recommendations to assist in the implementation of the PSIP; and
2. A list of the PSIP projects that were affected by the IDF variation of $796,297,635 in the 2018 Mid-year Review.

Ministry of Planning and Development

1. The Ministry's recommendations to improve the implementation of the PSIP;
2. A breakdown for each Ministry on the roads and bridges that funds were expended;
3. The last three (3) Monthly Status Reports submitted to Cabinet by the PPRD;
4. The PSIP implementation schedules for the following Ministries and Departments:
    - Ministry of Trade and Industry;
    - Ministry of Health;
    - Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs;
    - Ministry of Works and Transport; and
    - Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

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

MINUTES OF THE THIRTY-EIGHTH MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY JULY 11, 2018 AT 1:47 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
Mr. Clarence Rambharat	-	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:

Dr. Lackram Bodoe	-	Vice-Chairman (Excused)
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)
Brig. Gen (Ret.) Ancil Antoine	-	Member

EXAMINATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR INVESTMENT PROGRAMME OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

6.1 The Chairman called the public meeting to order at 2:34 p.m., in the J. Hamilton Maurice Meeting Room.

6.2 The following officials joined the meeting:

MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (MPD)

Mrs. Joanne Deoraj	-	Permanent Secretary

Mrs. Terry Ann Atkins-Huggins	-	Director, Project Planning & Reconstruction Division
Mr. Armand Jackson	-	Assistant Director, Project Planning & Reconstruction Division
Ms. Kavita Nanhu	-	Project Analyst I
Mr. Mark Joseph	-	Project Monitoring Officer
Mr. Kevin Brooks	-	Project Monitoring Officer
Mr. Kyron Lopez	-	Project Monitoring Officer

MINISTRY OF HEALTH (MOH)

Mr. Asif Ali	-	Permanent Secretary
Mr. Beesham Seetaram	-	Programme Administrator External Patient Programme (EPP)
Mr. Ronald Koylass	-	Programme Manager, Project Management Unit
Mr. Lawrence Jaisingh	-	Director, Health Policy, Research and Planning
Ms. Michelle Adams	-	Project Coordinator, Project Implementation Unit
Ms. Geeta Maharaj	-	Director, Finance and Accounts (Ag.)

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 Ministry of Health.

The Implementation of the Ministry of Health's Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP)

1. The role of the Permanent Secretary in the implementation of the MoH's PSIP;
2. The composition of the Ministry's Project Management Unit;
3. The Ministry's compliance with the Ministry of Finance's Call Circulars;
4. Whether the Ministry's current twenty-three (23) PSIP projects, are in compliance with the planning requirements of the Ministry of Finance's Call Circular;
5. The need for the MoH to improve its risk management for PSIP projects;

6. The steps being taken by the Ministry to improve its risk management;
7. The Ministry's compliance with the reporting requirements of the Ministry of Planning and Development;
8. The challenges faced by the MoH in implementing its PSIP;
9. The implementation of the Ministry's Project Board and its expected composition;
10. The progress made with refurbishment works at the Princess Elizabeth Home for Handicapped Children;
11. The efforts being made to mitigate risk in refurbishment works at the Princess Elizabeth Home for Handicapped Children;
12. The steps being taken by the Permanent Secretary to reduce the duplication of effort among the Regional Health Authorities;
13. The status of the proposed new facility at Valsayn for the Chemistry, Food and Drugs Division;
14. The projects which will not be completed in fiscal year 2018 as was intended; and
15. The change in design scope for the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) Headquarters.

The Ministry of Planning and Development on the MoH's PSIP implementation

1. The challenges faced by the MoH with capacity building and the untimely release of funds from the Ministry of Finance in relation to refurbishment works at the Princess Elizabeth Home for Handicapped Children;

6.6 The Chairman thanked officials of the Ministry of Health for attending and they were excused.

6.7 The meeting was suspended at 3:33 p.m.

<u>EXAMINATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR INVESTMENT PROGRAMME OF THE MINISTRY OF TRADE</u>

7.1 The Chairman resumed the public meeting at 3:37 p.m.

7.2 The following officials joined the meeting:

MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY (MTI)

Mr. Norris Herbert	-	Permanent Secretary
Ms. Frances Seignoret	-	Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mr. Randall Karim	-	Director, Policy and Strategy
Ms. Sandra Peter-Sarabjit	-	Senior Project Analyst
Mr. Derrick Jaggernauth	-	Research Officer
Ms. Gaynelle Abraham Braithwaite	-	Programme Manager

7.3 The Chairman welcomed officials of Ministry of Trade and introductions were exchanged.

7.4 The following issues arose from the examination of the Ministry of Trade.

The Implementation of the Ministry's PSIP

1. The challenges faced by the MTI in utlising its PSIP budget allocation;
2. The objectives of the Ministry's sixteen (16) Cabinet approved PSIP projects;
3. The reasons for the expected non-completion of any of the MTI's sixteen (16) Cabinet approved PSIP projects in fiscal year 2018;
4. The status of the yachting initiative;
5. The Ministry's non-compliance with the MPD's Project Screening Brief;
6. The Ministry's projection that it is expected to utilise approximately 76% of its Development Programme allocation;
7. The steps being taken by the Ministry to improve its risk management;
8. The Ministry's hosting of a Live Music District under the Development of the Music Industry project;
9. The projects being rolled out under the Development of the Fashion Industry project;
10. The projects carded for implementation under the Development of the Film Industry project; and
11. The status and rationale for the Single Electronic Window (SEW) project.

The Ministry of Planning and Development on the MTI's PSIP implementation

1. The Ministry of Trade and Industry's challenges with adhering to the Project Screening Brief and the untimely release of funds from the Ministry of Finance.

7.5 The Chairman thanked officials of the Ministry of Trade for attending and they were excused.

7.6 The meeting was suspended at 4:27 p.m.

EXAMINATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR INVESTMENT PROGRAMME OF THE MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT

8.1 The Chairman resumed the public meeting at 4:31 p.m.

8.2 The following officials joined the meeting:

MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT (MOWT)

Ms. Sonia Francis-Yearwood	-	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mr. Navin Ramsingh	-	Director of Highways, Highways Division
Ms. Paula Webber	-	Director of Drainage, Drainage Division
Mr. Latiff Mohammed	-	Director of Construction, Construction Division
Ms. Lisa Balkaran	-	Chief Planning Officer, Central Planning Unit
Mr. Hayden Phillip	-	Programme Director, Programme for Upgrading Roads Efficiency (PURE)
Ms. Candice Gray-Bernard	-	Programme Director, Coastal Protection Unit
Mr. Adande Piggott	-	Traffic Engineer, Traffic Management Branch
Ms. Esther Farmer	-	President, National Infrastructure Development Company Limited (NIDCO)

8.3 The Chairman welcomed officials of Ministry of Works and Transport and introductions were exchanged.

8.4 The following issues arose from the examination of the Ministry of Works and Transport.

The Implementation of the Ministry's PSIP

1. The challenges faced by the MoWT in its PSIP implementation;
2. The Ministry's need to change its approach given the challenges faced with its PSIP implementation;
3. The reasons for the following projects not receiving funding for fiscal year 2018:
   i. Development of a National Transportation Plan;
   ii. Establishment of a Vessel Traffic Management Information System;
   iii. Programme of Safety and Security;
   iv. Upgrading and Modernisation of Navigational Aids; and
   v. Acquisition of Two Multi-Purpose Vessels.
4. The progress made in implementing the Development of a National Transportation Plan despite the non-allocation of funds;
5. The need for capacity strengthening at the MoWT;
6. The status of the Coastal Protection Projects;
7. The expected completion of the Matelot Shoreline Stabilisation Works, Phase 2, by the end of 2019;
8. The status of the Ministry's acquisition of one hundred (100) new buses;
9. The Ministry's review of the Flood Alleviation project;
10. The MoWT's utilisation of the PURE to assist in alleviating flooding in Port of Spain;
11. The status of the Diego Martin River Improvement Works.

The Ministry of Planning and Development on the MoWT's PSIP implementation

1. The MoWT's challenges with prioritising projects and the untimely release of funds from the Ministry of Finance; and
2. The need for a Medium-Term Implementation Plan for the Ministry.

8.5 The Chairman thanked officials of the Ministry of Ministry of Works and Transport for attending and they were excused.

8.6 The meeting was suspended at 5:12 p.m.

<u>EXAMINATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR INVESTMENT PROGRAMME OF THE MINISTRY OF SPORT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS</u>

9.1 The Chairman resumed the public meeting at 5:17 p.m.

9.2 The following officials joined the meeting:

MINISTRY OF SPORT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS (MSYA)

Ms. Nicolette Duke	-	Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Ms. Denise Arneaud	-	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mrs. Marcia London-Mckellar	-	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mr. Earland Kent	-	Director, Division of Youth Affairs
Mrs. Leah Malchan-Douglas	-	Accounting Executive I (Ag.)
Ms. Dianne Rampadarath	-	Senior Planning Officer (Ag.)
Mr. Lyndon Burton	-	Assistant Programme Coordinator (Ag.)
Mr. Patrice Charles	-	Director, Physical Education and Sport Division
Mr. Jason Williams	-	Chief Executive Officer (Ag.), Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago (SPORTT)
Ms. Annesha Colley	-	Head of Projects (SPORTT)
Ms. Tennille Clarke	-	Project Administrator – Budgets and Finance Reporting (SPORTT)
Mr. Francisco Reyes	-	Project Manager, Consultant (SPORTT)

9.3 The Chairman welcomed officials of Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and introductions were exchanged.

9.4 The following issues arose from the examination of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs.

The Implementation of the Ministry's PSIP

1. The projects expected to be completed in fiscal 2018;
2. The MSYA's compliance with the Ministry of Finance's Call Circulars;
3. The status of the Ministry's Refurbishment of Youth Training Facilities project;
4. The refurbishment works needed at the Mayaro Indoor Arena;
5. The status of the following projects under the Upgrading of Swimming Pools:
    i. Cocoyea – installation of pavilion seats, security lighting;

ii. Diego Martin – installation of pool pumps, refurbishment of pool filtration system, bleachers;
iii. Couva – refurbishing of wading pool basin;
iv. La Horquetta – upgrading of perimeter fence, pool filtration system; and
v. Siparia – general upgrades.

6. The need for the MSYA to implement a Maintenance Schedule for its facilities;
7. The status of the implementation of the of the National Youth Policy;
8. The steps taken to ensure that sporting facilities are disability friendly; and
9. The status of the refurbishment of the Youth Development and Apprenticeship Centres.

The Ministry of Planning and Development on the MSYA's PSIP implementation

1. The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs' challenges with prioritising projects;
2. The need to improve capacity building;
3. The occurrences of legacy projects; and
4. The need for a maintenance schedule for sporting facilities.

9.5 The Chairman thanked officials of the Ministry of Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs for attending and they were excused.

9.6 The meeting was suspended at 6:20 p.m.

<u>EXAMINATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR INVESTMENT PROGRAMME OF THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO POLICE SERVICE</u>

9.1 The Chairman resumed the public meeting at 6:25 p.m.

9.2 The following officials joined the meeting:

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO POLICE SERVICE (TTPS)

Mr. Stephen Williams	-	Commissioner of Police (Ag.)
Mr. Deodat Dulalchan	-	Deputy Commissioner of Police - Operations (Ag.)
Mrs. Erla Christopher	-	Deputy Commissioner of Police - Administration (Ag.)
Mr. Trevor Boissiere	-	Head – Internal Audit
Mr. Felix Pearson	-	Head – Planning, Research & Project Implementation
Mrs. Mara Rosalina Harte	-	Head – Finance & Accounts
Mr. Someet Ramroop	-	Head – Administration
Mr. Miklos Badaloo	-	Head – Information Technology

9.3 The Chairman welcomed officials of the TTPS and introductions were exchanged.

9.4 The following issues arose from the examination of the TTPS.

The Implementation of the TTPS' PSIP

1. The status of electrical works associated with the firearm pulveriser machine under the Improvement Works to Police Stations project;
2. The status of the gym facilities on the Sixth Floor of the Riverside Plaza project;
3. The TTPS's policy in relation to accommodation for Police Youth Clubs;
4. The efforts being made to source accommodation for the Police Youth Clubs;
5. The relationship between Police Youth Clubs and Youth Sporting Facilities;
6. The status of the Development of a Computer System for the Police Service project;
7. The issues associated with the expansion of the Valencia Police Station; and
8. The status of the TTPS disposal of its derelict vehicles.

The Ministry of Planning and Development on the TTPS' PSIP implementation

1. The TTPS' untimely submission of updates to MPD; and
2. The lack of Cabinet approval for some projects.

9.5 The Chairman thanked officials of the TTPS for attending and they were excused.

9.6 The Chairman also thanked officials of the Ministry of Planning and Development for assisting the Committee during its examination of the various Ministries and Department. They were also excused.

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

SUSPENSION

10.1 At 6:55 p.m., the Chairman suspended the public meeting to resume *in camera* for a post-hearing discussion *w*ith Members only.

RESUMPTION

11.1 At 6:59 p.m. the Chairman resumed the meeting *in camera*.

POST-HEARING DISCUSSION

12.1 The Chairman sought Members' views on the hearing with stakeholders.

12.2 The Committee agreed that additional questions should be sent to the Ministries and Departments that appeared. [**Please see Appendix 1**]

ADJOURNMENT

14.1 The Chairman indicated that the Committee's next meeting would be held on **Wednesday September 05, 2018 at 1:30 p.m.** when the Committee.

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

14.3 The adjournment was taken at 7:13 p.m.

We certify that these Minutes are true and correct.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY

July 11, 2018

APPENDIX 1

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUESTED

Questions to Ministry of Health

1. What percentage of the Ministry's Public Sector Investment Proporamme (PSIP) is expected to be completed in fiscal year 2017/2018?

2. How much of the Ministry's PSIP allocation has been released by the Ministry of Finance and spent by the Ministry of Health to date?

3. For each of the Ministry's twenty-three (23) Cabinet approved PSIP projects, please submit:
    a. the status of its implementation to date;
    b. the percentage of works done;
    c. the allocation spent to date per project;
    d. an indication of whether it will be completed in fiscal year 2017/2018;
    e. the status of the project's risk assessment; and
    f. the steps being taken to mitigate risk.

4. Please submit a copy of the Ministry's most recent monthly report submitted to the Ministry of Planning and Development.

5. What was the Ministry's original request from the Ministry of Finance for the Medical Equipment Upgrade project?
    a. What is the variance between the request and the allocation?

6. Does the Ministry have adequate capacity to implement its PSIP?

7. Provide a breakdown of the Ministry's Project Management Unit; for each post, indicate the individual's qualification(s) in project management.

8. How often is training conducted for persons involved in the planning and implementation of the Ministry's PSIP?

Questions to Ministry of Trade and Industry

1. What percentage of the Ministry's Public Sector Investment Proporamme (PSIP) is expected to be completed in fiscal year 2017/2018?

2. How much of the Ministry's PSIP allocation has been released by the Ministry of Finance and spent by the Ministry of Trade and Industry to date?

3. For each of the Ministry's sixteen (16) Cabinet approved PSIP projects, please submit:
    a. the status of its implementation to date;
    b. the percentage of works done;
    c. the allocation spent to date;
    d. an indication of whether it will be completed in fiscal year 2017/2018;
    e. the status of the project's risk assessment; and
    f. the steps being taken to mitigate risk.

4. Please submit a copy of the Ministry's most recent monthly report submitted to the Ministry of Planning and Development.

5. Provide a breakdown of the Ministry's Project Management Unit; for each post, indicate the individual's qualification(s) in project management.

6. How often is training conducted for persons involved in the planning and implementation of the Ministry's PSIP?

7. At the public hearing, it was stated that the some participants of the 2018 cohort under the Development of the Fashion Industry project began exporting their products.
    a. Has the Ministry set any targets for the exportation of the aforementioned products? If yes, provide the targets.

Questions to Ministry of Works and Transport

1. What percentage of the Ministry's Public Sector Investment Proporamme (PSIP) is expected to be completed in fiscal year 2017/2018?

2. How much of the Ministry's PSIP allocation has been released by the Ministry of Finance and spent by the Ministry of Works and Transport to date?

3. For each of the Ministry's eighty one (81) Cabinet approved PSIP projects, please submit:
    a. the status of its implementation to date;
    b. the percentage of works done;
    c. the allocation spent to date per project;
    d. an indication of whether it will be completed in fiscal year 2017/2018;
    e. the status of the project's risk assessment; and

    f. the steps being taken to mitigate risk.

4. Please submit a copy of the Ministry's most recent monthly report submitted to the Ministry of Planning and Development.

5. Provide a breakdown of the Ministry's Project Management Unit; for each post, indicate the individual's qualification(s) in project management.
    a. In addition, please submit the aforementioned information for the following:
        i. National Infrastructure Development Company;
        ii. Vehicle Maintenance Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago; and
        iii. Point Lisas Port Development Corporation.

6. How often is training conducted for persons involved in the planning and implementation of the Ministry's PSIP?

7. In relation to the Purchase of one hundred (100) New Buses project:
    a. How many buses will be assigned to Tobago?
    b. What is the expected timeline for the assignment?

Questions to Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs

1. What percentage of the Ministry's Public Sector Investment Proporamme (PSIP) is expected to be completed in fiscal year 2017/2018?

2. How much of the Ministry's PSIP allocation has been released by the Ministry of Finance and spent by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs to date?

3. For each of the Ministry's twenty (20) Cabinet approved PSIP projects, please submit:
    a. the status of its implementation to date;
    b. the percentage of works done;
    c. the allocation spent to date;
    d. an indication of whether it will be completed in fiscal year 2017/2018;
    e. the status of the project's risk assessment; and
    f. the steps being taken to mitigate risk.

4. Please submit a copy of the Ministry's most recent monthly report submitted to the Ministry of Planning and Development.

5. Provide a breakdown of the Ministry's Project Management Unit; for each post, indicate the individual's qualification(s) in project management.

    a. In addition, please submit the aforementioned information for the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago.

6. How often is training conducted for persons involved in the planning and implementation of the Ministry's PSIP?

7. Provide an update of the procurement of services in relation to the:
    a. Cocoyea Community Swimming Pool; and
    b. Diego Martin Swimming Pool.

8. Provide the following details for the Dwight Yorke Stadium and the Hasley Crawford Stadiums:
    a. Original allocation;
    b. Releases as at July 27, 2018;
    c. Allocation spent as at July 27, 2018;
    d. Percentage of works completed; and
    e. Expected completion date.

9. At the public hearing, it was stated that the Ministry expected to complete sixty (60) to (65) percent of the implementation of the National Youth Policy. However, the Committee noted that this was contingent upon the release of funds.
    a. How much funds will the Ministry require in order to implement (60) to (65) percent of the National Youth Policy?

10. Provide feedback on complaints regarding the Mayaro Sport Facility and the steps taken by the Ministry to address said complaints.

Questions to Trinidad and Tobago Police Service

1. What percentage of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) Public Sector Investment Proporamme (PSIP) is expected to be completed in fiscal year 2017/2018? Kindly include percentage of works done and allocation spent to date per project.

2. How much of the TTPS' PSIP allocation has been released by the Ministry of Finance and spent by the TTPS to date?

3. For each of the Department's thirty-five (35) Cabinet approved PSIP projects, please submit:
    a. the status of its implementation to date;
    b. an indication of whether it will be completed in fiscal year 2017/2018;
    c. the status of the project's risk assessment; and

d. the steps being taken to mitigate risk.

Kindly include percentage of works done and allocation spent to date per project.

4. Please submit a copy of the TTPS' most recent monthly report submitted to the Ministry of Planning and Development.

5. Provide a breakdown of the TTPS' Project Management Unit; for each post, indicate the individual's qualification(s) in project management.

6. How often is training conducted for persons involved in the planning and implementation of the TTPS' PSIP?

Appendix III

Verbatim

VERBATIM NOTES OF THE THIRTY-SIXTH MEETING OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, HELD IN THE A.N.R ROBINSON (WEST), (IN CAMERA), OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENT, TOWER D, THE PORT OF SPAIN INTERNATIONAL WATERFRONT CENTRE, #1A WRIGHTSON ROAD, PORT OF SPAIN, ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2018, AT 2.33 P.M.

PRESENT

Mrs. Bridgid Annisette-George	Chairman
Mr. Clarence Rambharat	Member
Brig. Gen. Ancil Antoine	Member
Ms. Candice Skerrette	Assistant Secretary
Mr. Brian Lucio	Graduate Research Officer
Ms. Rachel Nunes	Graduate Research Officer

ABSENT

Dr. Lackram Bodoe	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Daniel Dookie	Member
Mr. Wade Mark	Member
Mr. Ronald Huggins	Member
Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy	Member
Ms. Jennifer Raffoul	Member
Ms. Nicole Olivierre	Member

MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Joanne Deoraj	Permanent Secretary
Ms. Marie Hinds	Deputy Permanent Secretary
Ms. Jacqueline Weekes-Penco	Director, Planning Unit
Ms. Terry-Ann Atkins Huggins	Director, Project Planning & Reconstruction Division
Mr. Armand Jackson	Asst. Director, Project Planning & Reconstruction Division
Ms. Reshma Maharaj	Project Monitoring Officer
Mr. Andre Innis	Project Analyst II, Project Planning & Reconstruction Division
Ms. Meera Ramesar	Director, Socio-Economic Policy Planning Division (SEPP)

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Mr. Vishnu Dhanpaul	Permanent Secretary
Ms. Cherry Ann Le Gendre	Director of Budgets

Madam Chairman: Good afternoon everyone, and I welcome the representatives of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning and Development to this meeting, the first in camera meeting of the PAAC for the Third Session of the Eleventh Parliament.

As you know, the Committee of the 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 in camera meeting of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee for the Eleventh Parliament is to commence an enquiry into the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme.

The Committee is desirous of hearing from you, the stakeholders, to discover any challenges being faced by Ministries regarding the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme. The Committee, of course, hopes this meeting will be fruitful, it will provide insight and workable solutions for the improvement of the implementation of the PSIP.

I now will invite the stakeholders to introduce themselves and then after the members of the Committee will introduce themselves. So, maybe we could start with the PS in the Ministry of Finance.

[*Introductions made*]

Madam Chairman: And I am Bridgid Annisette-George, Chairman, and today we are assisted by Ms. Candice Skerrette, who is our Acting Secretary. We have Ms. Rachael Nunes, our Graduate Assistant and Mr. Brian Lucio, who is also our Graduate Research Assistant. Again, thank you all for coming.

The last time I think this group of stakeholders was gathered here with us would have been almost two and a half years ago, when we started looking at the budget cycle but, from another end, and this was the actual preparation of the budget when you all would have sort of put us in context. And, therefore, we want to continue the conversation, particularly, looking at what I think you all identified as a sort of the third phase of the budget cycle, which would be the execution, the implementation.

I think I would like to start off the conversation by looking back a bit. I would have seen in the PSIP 2018 programme that about 66—I think it was 66.5 per cent of the allocation was utilized. Is that good or is that bad? I do not know who to answer that. Director of Budgets, you?

2.40 p.m.

Mr. Dhanpaul: Just quickly, Madam Chair, that is not good at all. A PSIP of anything less than 90/95 per cent is considered a bad performance. A 100 per cent would be perfect. As you know the PSIP is really to generate investment activity and employment, and employment in the economy, and if you are running less than 75 per cent that means you are under performing on the PSIP, which is not a good thing for the economy.

Madam Chairman: Right. And that is just on the expenditure side, how does that reflect in terms of actual deliverables?

Ms. Deoraj: Thank you, Madam Chair. Well, looking at the deliverables each of the projects would have a number of outputs, and when we look at that in terms of tangible, we look at whether we are executing not only in terms of expenditure but whether we are actually delivering on the number of variables that we are supposed to. We do not have that data in terms of how many jobs are created, but we have been trying to put that certainly because we have about seven variables that we would like to examine under the PSIP, which includes the number of jobs created, the contractual arrangements that have been paid, whether new investments have been identified. So from a point of view of—in 2017 it was 70 per cent, and that was one of the lower years—

Madam Chairman: It was how much?

Ms. Deoraj: Seventy per cent utilization. And that was one of the lowest years; 2016 was 62.8 per cent, but prior to that we were achieving over 93 per cent utilization of the resources under the PSIP, which was quite good in terms of—and we were actually in some years 100 per cent utilization, which means that we used all the allocation under the—

Madam Chairman: Yeah, but, roughly, all right, or generally, in terms of utilization of the allocation—and you have seven Heads—how does that match up with the tangibles, similar, close to, less than, better than, generally? Let us say if we looked at last year when you had 70 per cent, would you say in terms of deliverables you would have reached close to 70 per cent?

Ms. Deoraj: No, Madam Chair. No.

Madam Chairman: More or less?

Ms. Deoraj: Perhaps less. We would have expended money but not achieved all the deliverables, as we would have liked.

Madam Chairman: I want to ask then, what is the role of the Accounting Officer in ensuring that the PSIP is implemented?

Ms. Deoraj: There are a number of roles of the Accounting Officer, of course, from the point of view of ensuring that we use the funds efficiently, whether we have contracts properly—well, let us start from the point of view of developing the project. The project has to be properly well developed so the Accounting Officer knows what needs to be delivered under the project. Sometimes we award contracts and some of the moneys are expended, but the deliverable is not yet ready. So we award a contract to build a school, but in the course of one year the school is not yet delivered, but the contract is in execution. But the way the budget works, it is a one-year budget, so we have to know that in one year that we have at least awarded the contract. So the Accounting Officer would be required to ensure that the contract is well developed and in the proper project management phase of execution. So there are a number of things that the Accounting Officer would do in terms of ensuring the efficiency of the budget and the effectiveness in terms of achieving the deliverables. And ensuring that, of course, the project management units are monitoring the execution of the projects to ensure that they are effectively delivered. Sometimes we do not always get the results that we want in terms of all the things that we want delivered in a particular fiscal year, but because of the nature of the contracts and the way the PSIP also is executed, even though it is a one-year we normally try to look at things within a three-year cycle. So sometimes we have things rolling over into the next fiscal year. I do not know if I answered your question.

Madam Chairman: I just want to ask one more question just for me to clear my mind. I think I heard that sometimes the project is not—and these might be my words—properly conceived, and this is why again I am asking the PS of the Ministry of Planning and Development, I do recall in reading again this document where it was said that the composition of the PSIP is guided by, one, reducing the number of—and you listed a number of things—and your legacy projects, et cetera, et cetera, okay. But, secondly, assessing project readiness for implementation, budget proposals, Cabinet approvals, feasibility studies, statutory and other required approvals. Okay. So that to me as the reader I get the impression that by the time something is included in the PSIP and approved it should be, not just only a feasible project, but what I would call, the preliminaries, have been done for it to qualify. So that it creates a little confusion when I hear that the project may not have been properly conceived or you are now going to look for a consultant, they are now going—I do not understand the links or the—I do not want to say, the mismatch, I am hearing that word too much.

Ms. Deoraj: Well, we are guided by the Call Circular, and Call Circular, appendix 19, is very clear as to how a project should be developed and designed. However, the process of selecting the projects, we at the Ministry of Planning and Development, we would meet all the Ministries, submit all the projects, all their project ideas every fiscal year, and that is how we ended up with, just over two years ago, about 1,700 projects. We have brought them down to just about 1,000 projects under the Public Sector Investment Programme, trying to remove some of those things that have been challenging us over the years, the legacy projects, the projects that have contracts that are rolling over. What we have done, what we have been trying to work with our Ministries, is to really get them to be able to submit a project that meets the criteria under the Call Circular. All the variables in terms of Cabinet approvals, and so, and to follow the appendix 19. In 2018 Call Circular we have now added on what we call a project screening brief to help Ministries to go through a process of first screening, looking at all the variables as it relates to Vision 2030, and, of course, the project profile, and how it links to the variables under the Call Circular. And then there is a second screening of the feasibility before the Ministries even consider taking it to Cabinet. We have been working with the Ministries, I think, particularly over the last two years to help them to develop projects that are much better than what we have been seeing. It is taking us a little time because change, you know, is challenging to persons, but we at the Ministry of Planning and Development are working very hard to reject the projects that are not ready and to promote the ones that are ready. And this is what we are hoping that will be very much executed certainly for budget 2019 that we are now in the process of working towards.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So would I be incorrect in concluding that part of the problem is that projects may have been included which did not meet the requirements of the Call Circular?

Ms. Deoraj: Certainly. A lot of projects came. We have projects that were just ideas that were submitted and the Cabinet would have approved, because it is a good idea that may resolve a particular policy problem. And the Ministry in their eagerness would have submitted, we would like to do a particular type of project, and they would get Cabinet approval to proceed with the project, but they never developed the project profile, and that will be done after Cabinet gave them the approval to proceed with the project. When we see that the Ministry has Cabinet approval for, and let us take an example of a school, so we are going to build a school in a particular community and Cabinet says, yes, go ahead and proceed to build that school for a population of 200 students of secondary school age. So the Ministry of Education has the approval to build in this particular school, and when they are coming to negotiate with us they will say, we have Cabinet approval to build in this particular community. We would ask, where is the project profile, what is the size of the school, the labs, how many population, and so. And that project is now, after Cabinet has approved it, will now become designs and design-build, whether they are going to do different models. But because there is a Cabinet decision and the Ministry is giving us the hope that they are going to come with all the details, during the course of the fiscal year we will allocate some funds to it, and that is why sometimes we have poorly developed projects because they do not have all the information, but they have the commitment of the Cabinet that we are going to do a particular project. What we are trying to do is to have the Ministries—yes, even if you get Cabinet approval, before we allocate that funding to you we get a proper developed project, and we would like to go a step further and ask the Ministries, really do not take a project idea to Cabinet to get funding, go with a proper project so that we can then—and our Ministry is supporting them to be able to help develop that project.

Madam Chairman: Can I ask one last thing, though?

Ms. Deoraj: Sure.

Madam Chairman: Could you then in that situation; so they come, they have Cabinet approval, they have nothing else that fits, is there a role for the Ministry of Planning and Development to say, okay, there is an allocation with conditionalities, is that done?

Ms. Deoraj: Well, what we have in the past, but not in the recent past, in the past we had what we call a three-year PSIP. So that same scenario, so we have an allocation but we are not ready, so we would put it in year two of a three-year cycle, because it would give the Ministry enough time to develop their projects, and so. In the last two years we have been really staying with a one-year budget and we are trying our best to reintroduce that and let Ministries know that if you come with a project idea there may be other things that you need to do with the pre-feasibility study, the feasibility study, and we will budget those small amounts so that in year two or year three when your project is properly conceptualized and developed we can finance it in the following years, and that is really what the Ministry of Planning and Development intends to do. So that we have a better grasp of what the budget should look like and some of the more tangible deliverable things in the budget, and we can account for that and report on that more effectively.

Madam Chairman: Member Antoine.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: Good afternoon and welcome. I see we have a large team from this Project Planning and Reconstruction Division. Could you explain what the role of this division is in terms of the PSIP?

Ms. Deoraj: I will just give a very brief and I will hand over to the Director. So the Project Planning and Reconstruction Division is the department of the Ministry of Planning and Development that sees and oversees the capital investment component of the budget. So when the budget is passed there is a particular part of the budget that is only for the capital investment. For fiscal 2018 we had just over $5 billion allocated for the capital investment. So the team at the Ministry of Planning and Development that works in the Project Planning and Reconstruction Division, they are the screening body of all PSIPs, Public Sector Investment projects, submitted by the different Ministries and agencies to Government. They would go through the project submission. They would have meetings with all the Ministries and agencies and make recommendations as to which projects should be allocated funding in any particular fiscal year, or, as we say, in years to come, in a three-year budget cycle. These group of persons would then, once the budget is approved and the Ministry has the different projects funded will be monitoring the execution of the projects on a continuous basis. So Terry-Ann, Ms. Huggins, will be able give more details.

Ms. Huggins: Good afternoon. So in addition to making the recommendations for the allocation, as PS mentioned, and also the monitoring of the projects throughout the year and throughout the life of the project, we are also responsible for providing the technical guidance to the line Ministries and Departments in terms of how they would rollout their projects. We would monitor in terms of, maybe we get monthly status report from the Ministries. We also conduct site visits, so we have that kind of ongoing engagement. We are also responsible for submitting certain reports on a regular basis for the information of Cabinet. We have recently started doing monthly status reports for Cabinet, but in addition to that we do the first quarter report and we also do a mid-term report. The PPRD is also responsible for doing some measure of evaluation of the projects. Projects that may have come to an end so we are supposed to go back in, take a look at those projects to determine what lessons we may have learnt from that implementation, et cetera.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: A follow-up to the previous conversation, if you perceive that a project is a good idea but not a good project to implement, do you have any role in bring this to the attention of the Ministries that, look, a good idea you may already have Cabinet approval but it is not feasible in proceeding with this project? Do you have a role, any kind of role along that line?

Ms. Huggins: Yes, we do. We have that level of engagement with the Ministries. So if a project comes before us that we feel perhaps needs some more elaboration we will work closely with them. But as PS was explaining, sometimes once they come with the Cabinet approval it gets into the PSIP, but our intention through the development of the project screening brief is to take things back a bit for us to do all the preliminary work before they even approach Cabinet for the approval.

Madam Chairman: Would I be correct in saying that your division works as a sort of monitoring and evaluation division within the Ministry of Planning and Development?

Ms. Huggins: No. The Ministry of Planning and Development has a separate monitoring and evaluation division, but in terms of project management cycle there is that component that also looks at evaluation, but we will be more looking at the output. I mean, we having made an investment of X amount of money into a project, so we will be looking at how that money was spent, et cetera. Whereas the E&E Division of the Ministry we perhaps be looking at what the impact of implementing that project.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So you look more like for value for money, and you do at the end of it a sort of auditor function?

Ms. Huggins: Value for money, yes. Sure.

Madam Chairman: And, therefore, if it is that, throughout the cycle, your findings are that there is no value for money then what functions, roles, steps do you take, or are taken, whether it is by you or some other division of your Ministry?

Ms. Deoraj: Well, we have not really been taking that value for money in terms of stopping a Ministry. We may highlight to the Cabinet, which is what we are doing now, the rate of execution of the project. So, if on a monthly basis, we are seeing that there is a problem in the execution of the projects, we would bring it to the attention through our Minister and the Cabinet as to what the rate of implementation has been, and some of the Ministries that we are seeing that are having challenges in terms of their implementation. We may highlight what some of those implementation challenges may be because we would have had consultations with the Ministries. Sometimes it is in fact the special purpose companies, they are waiting on some of them for contracts, sometimes it is funding, resources are limited, sometimes the projects are not well developed, so we would alert the Cabinet as to some of the challenges. But as to whether, and I think which is also where we are going in terms of when we talk about value for money it is really about standards, and building a standard's framework where we can say, this school or this particular project is being delivered in accordance with international standards.

For example, an infrastructural project that has engineering standards and we would want to ensure that those engineering standards are adhered to. We are trying to build that capacity, and as we move forward in looking at the reorganizing a bit of the Project Planning and Reconstruction Division, we are seeing the need for certain types of specialists to work with the division which includes—we now have one engineer but we certainly need some more engineering capacity—business analysts, some quantity surveyors. And so different types of skills because a lot of the projects are infrastructural projects, and that type of competency where we can say—our business analysts doing that level of analysis saying we are not getting value for money or there is good adherence to standards, and, therefore, this building will have the age that is expected, or the infrastructure will be able to be maintained in a climate environment or challenges to the environment.

So, those are some of the things that we are trying to build into the projects now, and to be able to also have. But seeing value for money that we are not yet doing that at the level that we would like to. And as Ms. Terry-Ann has indicated, Ms. Atkins-Huggins, is that the project planning role that PPRD presently does is really as it relates to output, whether we are spending the money and we are getting the deliverables.

The National Transformation Unit, which is other arm of the Ministry, looks at all these variables tied together as whether we are achieving the development impact that we are looking for in terms of—and, of course, tied to the Vision 2030, which is now the policy framework. So in budget 2018, we, through our Minister, had three publications, the PSIP, the Vision 2030, and the National Performance Framework. So those three documents are really a package of resources that would tell us how we are doing in terms of development from the policy to the budgeting and to the monitoring and evaluation.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: Could you indulge me, how long has this division been in existence in the Ministry of Planning and Development?

Ms. Deoraj: Over 27 years. It was formed under the National Planning Commission. It was always the Project Planning and Reconstruction Division when were the Ministry of Planning and Reconstruction in those days, and the department has generally been between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning. But we have been with the Ministry of Planning for some number of years now because of the linkages to development planning.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: I cannot separate myself because I am a Member of Parliament, and in my constituency, D'Abadie/O'Meara, I have a number of abandoned projects from the LifeSport era that were critical to the people of D'Abadie/O'Meara. Is there any unit within the Ministry of Planning and Development to revisit these projects, because they were projects that were started and money was spent on it? In a certain instance all the money was exhausted but the projects are not completed, and all I am doing in the last few years is just cutting the grass and keeping away the vermin from the projects, but I cannot get it back into the PSIP. Right. So, is there any part of the Ministry of Planning and Development or Finance that looks at these projects that were started and not completed?

Ms. Deoraj: Well, I do not think it would be financed, but certainly from who would be the owners of the project, and I think that is where we would have to start. In this case it would have been the Ministry of Sport under the LifeSport project from what you are describing.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: The other particular area that is between the Ministry of Sport and the Borough of Arima and none wants to take up the project because they do not have the money to complete the projects.

Ms. Deoraj: Well, in an instance like that it would mean someone deciding that they will take it and come back to the Ministry of Planning and Development. So, if the Ministry of Sport decides that it is—because there are different aspects of it—if it is a facility building then the Ministry of Sport will take it, however, it is a grounds, depending, it may be the Borough Corporation. So, let us say it is a building and the Ministry of Sport decides that they will take it, and through your office you again asked the Minister of Sport if they will be willing to bring it back, we would look at it and look at where the state of implementation and see who will take the ownership of the project and we will help them to see it to execution. But, of course, money has to be allocated to it, but it has to come through us. We will not go out and search for the project. We may ask for accountability as we would say, well, you know, we had—and I think this is where the auditors perhaps of the LifeSport would come in, but if we had five or six properties we would ask, who funded it, who is going to complete it, because it is really assets that are now in waste, because they would have been assets that would have been invested in. But we will not take responsibility, it really has to come from the line Ministry.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Member Rambharat.

Mr. Rambharat: Good afternoon. It is a good time to ask the first question I wanted to ask. How is the responsibility for the PSIP divided between planning and finance?

Mr. Dhanpaul: Maybe I can start on the finance side. Minister, after we do all the assumptions behind the budget, after we place oil price and gas price and production, we determine, we target a budget deficit. Usually we try to keep the PSIP close to the level of the deficit. In other words, you can, it is easy to explain to international agencies that if your deficit is close to your PSIP it means that your deficit financing is to project investment. All right. In other words, if your PSIP is $1 billion but your deficit is $5 billion it is hard to justify the $5 billion, but if your deficit is $5 billion and your PSIP is close to $5 billion you could only suggest that your deficit is to drive economic growth. So we literally target the deficit and it works well. Remember we have to match this against the credited agencies, we have match it against the IMF doing their Article IV consultations, and we literally give them an envelope to work with and say, this is the level of the PSIP, and it is usually around close to four to five per cent of GDP, and that is how we determine it.

Ms. Deoraj: So, Minister, we get the allocation and we are responsible for that allocation being spread and shared across the Ministries and agencies. We try our best to tie that to the variables that we have outlined in the Call Circular as well as new projects that will us ideas, would ensure that there is employment creation, competitiveness, revenue generation variables. So all that really happens is that we do all the management and the Ministry of Finance helps us with releases. So at the beginning of the fiscal year the Ministries are supposed to give us a project implementation schedule, which is also one of the appendices in the Call Circular. And we also have a budget implementation, so we know drawdowns, how much is expected in each month. This is required by Finance and this is required by, in terms of budget implementation. We try our best to match the implementation with the budget requests.

So the relationship with the Ministry of Finance is more for ensuring that they will finance when we say that things are in a very good state of readiness. Ministries will ask for releases and we will say, yes, this Ministry is ready to provide the releases if the contracts are well, or if a Ministry has a request to move money from one project into another, PPRD will also give that decision, and we will send that non-objection to the Ministry of Finance. So from the point view of they provide us with the money and we try to execute, and there is a lot of relationship in terms of giving us updates on what are the releases and the situation as it relates to that.

Mr. Dhanpaul: There is one other point here in that although it may be budgeted for, if you do not have the cash flow obviously you do not have the funding. So, that is a major caveat.

Mr. Rambharat: The next question is, how prepared are the Ministries in conceptualizing and executing PSIP projects?

Ms. Deoraj: I will ask Terry-Ann to add to that because they work directly with the Ministries.

But if we had to grade the Ministries in terms of project conceptualizing I would say they are about five to six on a scale of one to 10. And I say that from the point of view is that there are several things that are stronger. There are talents that are stronger. So I think a lot of good conceptualizing, there are good ideas; there is a lot of talent as it relates to writing a proper project. But project implementation, the second phase, the part that we are challenged by, and the Minister of Planning and Development and the Ministry of Finance, we have been looking at trying to build capacity in the public sector. We just recently concluded about 30 persons funded under the Caribbean Development Bank, of course, a training in project management, meeting again the Call Circular and those variables. We also have some training that is being proposed under the IFMIS project, and the procurement project as well because that is also one of the areas that is very weak. One of the problems is that Ministries tend to want to break up their projects so that they can get quick access of funds, but when we pull it together it exceeds the PS's authority. They may not have Cabinet approval, so there are some challenges there. So we are looking at all the skills that an individual and a project unit should have and ensure that persons are well trained in that.

3.10 p.m.

One of the problems is that Ministries tend to want to break up their projects so that they can get quick access to funds, but when we pull it together it exceeds the PS's authority; they may not have Cabinet approval. So there are some challenges there. We are looking at all the skills that an individual in a project unit should have and ensure that persons are well trained in that.

Ms. Atkins Huggins: Thank you. In addition to what PS said, right now what we are doing is trying to do an assessment of the capacity as it exists across the public sector. So we have been soliciting responses from Ministries and departments in terms of their capacity and their employees' level of training in the area of project management. So that then we can now develop an appropriate programme to be able to assist with implementation.

Mr. Rambharat: Which brings me to number three. How prepared are Ministers to be ultimately responsible for projects? [*Pause*] Thank God it is not a public meeting.

Mr. Dhanpaul: If I may, I think it is up to—

Mr. Rambharat: Well, you are best positioned.

Mr. Dhanpaul: I think it is up to the Permanent Secretary to get the Minister prepared. A lot of Ministers would come into office obviously not knowing what the PSIP is about. The onus is on the Permanent Secretary to brief the Minister properly on how you go about it.

Mr. Rambharat: Which leads me to the fourth question. How prepared are PSs for oversight, particularly in the conceptualization stage?

Mr. Dhanpaul: Not very prepared. One of the problems we are facing as PSs—well one of the problems we are facing as a country that a lot of our PSs are now coming out from the HR stream, and they are not technical PSs. They did not move up the ranks within the technical stream, and you find that the people who are exposed at the technical stream would be better prepared to handle the PSIP. When you have more than 75 per cent of the PSs throughout the public service as HR PSs, you know you are going to be up against it.

So you have many cases where the Minister might be new, not understanding the PSIP; the

PS is from the HR stream, not understanding the PSIP at all because they had never been exposed, not their fault, and that is where you have major issues developing.

Mr. Rambharat: And it is really a fundamental problem in conceptualizing, taking it through the process, implementing it and ultimately measuring, because it is not just implementing the project. The project in the context of what you are trying to achieve over the long-term is the performance of this thing you build or this thing you bought.

So, is there a plan to train?

Mr. Dhanpaul: Train the trainers?

Mr. Rambharat: Who takes responsibility for saying, for example, to the Prime Minister, that Ministers must have a minimum level of training? We went through some exposure to how the budget cycle works. Ministers should have a minimum level of training. Permanent Secretaries should have a minimum level of training before assuming the role. And that is a question: Is there any Ministry with a trained project management person operating at the level of the Director position, like in the Executive level?

Ms. Deoraj: Yes. In the Ministry of Planning and Development our Director right now she is project management. We have project management. All our officers there—

Mr. Rambharat: I meant in the Ministries, across Ministries. Are there Ministries where at the director level you have trained project managers?

Ms. Deoraj: Yes, there would be persons who would have had what we call PMD training. Yes we do have directors. We have directors within the Ministry of Planning and Development who are PMP trained and qualified and continue to maintain that position, and yes, in the wider public service as well. I think the readiness assessment that Terry-Ann is talking about as to what the capacity is that exists out there.

A few years ago when we were doing Vision 2020, we had done a readiness assessment, and we had identified a number of gaps then with respect to training. We were working on training in the three areas of project management, project conceptualization, which is really policy, the project management and the monitoring and evaluation. This will also give us some updated information because, of course, the public service is constantly evolving and people are coming in and out of positions. So yes, we do have persons with project management.

Just to add with respect to what is happening with the Permanent Secretaries and others, within that same CDB training I was referencing, it may not be sufficient but it certainly was an orientation, a one day only for Permanent Secretaries on project management and project cycles. We have also had the recent appointed Deputy Permanent Secretaries who have been going through a training programme under the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications, and one of the components of the course was that on from policy to budgeting to results. So we have been working with the Deputy Permanent Secretaries. So recognizing that there is an absence, there is always that effort to ensure that persons are trained, but maybe not as we would like and as sufficiently as we would like.

Madam Chairman: Madam PS, when I hear you I think there is hope. A lot of the things that you have said I understand are new things. I want to ask this: You spoke of the sort of project screening and all of these things which have been put into for budget 2018. What is the implementation rate of budget 2018?

Ms. Deoraj: As of April 2018 we have had a 33 per cent implementation rate so far, and this is really the percentage of the allocation that has either been expended or committed to the end of April.

Madam Chairman: So you said 33 per cent?

Ms. Deoraj: Thirty-three per cent.

Madam Chairman: So if I just use a flat pro rata, which may not be correct but that is all I have, it means that at the end of the fiscal year it would be about 66 per cent, or let us put it, the same 70 per cent?

Ms. Deoraj: No; we did a projection for 2018, and we have actually indicated that we are trying to reach an expenditure of $4 billion, which would be may be just about 80 per cent of the budget. Why we can say that is because we looked at the implementation schedules of the Ministries, and again it comes back—if at the beginning of the fiscal year they are still waiting for contracts to be signed and we are pushing them to execute, and they sign, say, by April, they have six months again to try to accelerate expenditure. So we look at the implementation schedule and forecast as how—so we are looking at really at a $4 billion expenditure, and the allocation for fiscal 2018 was $5.1 billion. So we are really hoping that we would have a little better expenditure rate this year.

Madam Chairman: I want to ask if you will share that implementation schedule with us, so that we can understand what you are saying. So that in terms of the 80 per cent, which would an improvement and would be coming closer to what you thought were better figures that would have preceded 2017 and 2016, what would you have ascribed that to principally?

Ms. Deoraj: Terry-Ann may be able to speak a little bit more, but I think at the Ministry of Planning and Development, the Project Planning Division, I would say that they have been working very aggressively with the Ministries to help remove bottlenecks that they may be experiencing. So sometimes if it is a contract, to help them with the contract. If it is acquisition of land or to tell them, well okay, you are not going to see the acquisition this year, so use the funds for another project which you are in a better state of readiness. So there has been a much more proactive approach from the project monitoring officers at the Project Planning and Reconstruction Division. I think that is what we have been working. Going out more in the field, working with the Ministries, going on site visits and collaborating with the Ministries to ensure that there will be a better execution.

The fact that we are also reporting to the Cabinet, because sometimes that also helps, because Ministers—no one wants to say that their Ministry is not performing, because some of the Ministries are not doing well, and some are doing exceptionally well. And when we see that, when you get that in a report it is not a nice form of accountability. So I think from a point of being proactive, I think that, but Terry-Ann is certainly—and the team may want to—

Madam Chairman: So I would understand then that there is an important role for the Ministry of Planning and Development in actually driving the implementation?

Ms. Deoraj: Certainly.

Madam Chairman: And would have said that that may have been one of the deficiencies that caused us to be where we are at?

Ms. Deoraj: No. I think sometimes, you know, it is also reception. It is reception from the point of view of when we are driving and we are encouraging other persons, whether they want to hear what we are saying. So we might be saying we have to improve execution, we do not think these projects are ready, but the persons who we are telling this too may not want to hear what we are saying, and therefore insist on having certain things.

Madam Chairman: Let me ask then: How do you institutionalize that? Because what I am hearing is discretionary.

Ms. Deoraj: Sometimes.

Madam Chairman: And it is a question like we like to operate in this country: "we like yuh, so we listen; we doh like yuh, we doh listen".

Ms. Deoraj: That is right.

Madam Chairman: How then do we institutionalize this, whether it is the regulatory process? How do we?

Ms. Deoraj: Well so far we have done it only from the point of view—

Madam Chairman: Moral suasion.

Ms. Deoraj:—well, the Call Circular. If we use the Call Circular as a much more punitive tool, then we could say to the Ministries, because you have not adhered to the Call Circular you will not get the funding. But we have not been punitive. I do not think we have ever really given the Call Circular the power of the Call Circular, not to give them what they require, so it has not—but in other jurisdictions certainly this has been regulated by law in terms of how the budget is done and how the cycles are expected, and of course accountability.

So there are different methodologies, but right now in Trinidad we really do—well maybe moral suasion, but certainly in terms of working with the Ministries, because we have an instrument here which is a guiding circular of instruction that persons must adhere to.

Madam Chairman: So I come back to the question, you are saying "we"; I first asked you about the Ministry and you said no. Who is the "we"? What I am saying is we have a tool that we are not using effectively. That tool has always been there, so who is the "we"? You see, because we all need to know which "we" it is, if we want to be better.

Ms. Deoraj: I would say "we", and PS Dhanpaul may disagree, but we as PS's as well, this is our tool and we have to be held accountable. Certainly this Committee—one of the ways to hold us accountable is to ask us how well we have been adhering to this tool. So we as Permanent Secretaries and the public sector, because this is what I think when I say "we", there are different levels—we being the Ministry of Planning and Development, making sure the parts of the Call Circular that applies to us that we ensure that persons adhere to it, which is all the Ministries and agencies, and in terms of accountability as Permanent Secretaries.

Madam Chairman: PS Dhanpaul, in accordance with the principle of fairness I will also allow you to answer that.

Mr. Dhanpaul: A few years ago, Chairman, if I remember correctly, there were dedicated PSIP implementation units in every Ministry. The units were functioning so well—and at that time we were close 100 per cent implementation rates— that the people who were in those unit were promoted out. They were so good that they were promoted out, and it is a problem we are going to have also with procurement units. I am seeing it already. I think it is something we may need to go back to, to revert because if you are speaking one language at the Ministry of Planning and Development, and the people at the other Ministries do not understand the language that the Ministry of Planning and Development is speaking, you will not get that anyway.

These units at that time they had employed a lot project management specialists, and I have no idea what transpired since the last decade, but these unit I do not think they exist any longer. But I think that is something that the Ministry of Planning and Development, and maybe this Committee could assist in helping to get back those units functional.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: I want to drill down a little bit because PS Dhanpaul will know, because we were both in the Ministry of Public Utilities, that there was a Project Management Unit at the Ministry of Public Utilities. But it did not have a seamless transaction with the utilities, like WASA, T&TEC, as the case may be. Do we have an adequate amount of project managers, PMPs, both at the Ministries and follow on into some of the utilities. Because you see, some of the schematic areas is improving productivity through quality infrastructure, transportation. So you are looking at drainage, electricity, roads, bridges; and then when you into putting people first, we are looking in terms of Ministry of Education and so forth. Do we have enough project managers at the various levels so that we can have a seamless transaction, both at the Ministries and at the other areas?

Ms. Deoraj: A straight answer to that is no. I do not believe that we have sufficient, and hopefully the data that we are going to collect as to what exists right now from the different Ministries will be able to tell us where the absence of the numbers are and what type of skills.

The challenge with what PS Dhanpaul was speaking about is that when we would have had—in the public service if you look at the establishment of the public service, these expertise do not exist in the establishment. So they would have been contract employees in the public service, and as you would be aware to get a contract employee there is a process. You have to do an org structure; you have to do job descriptions, et cetera; you have to go to the PMCD; PMCD gives you comments, would tell you yes, and of course they have a number of things like process maps, et cetera, that you have to meet for them to create any new positions.

When PMCD tells a Ministry, yes, you can go to Cabinet now, we have agreed that you could create these positions. These positions are only there for a period of three years in most instances, therefore if you are not paying attention sometimes three years come upon you and contracts come to an end, and you have to go back and start the process all over, and make a justification why we are keeping these individuals. Of course the persons are very talented and marketable, and in the absence of the job they would go from agency to agency. So that is why we have lost a lot of talent over the years, and they look for more lucrative employment. The salary scale in the public service is also not the most attractive, so we do not have persons wanting to stay as we would like.

Mr. Dhanpaul: Madam Chair, if I may just to add to what Brig. Gen. Antoine was saying. Let us use WASA for an example. After all these years and billions of dollars spent on the PSIP at WASA, and all these heavily paid people at WASA, there is still a gap between people at WASA understanding what the PSIP is about, which is incredible to me, and I saw it real time at the Ministry of Public Utilities. It just makes me wonder. WASA receives about close to $200 million a year at the PSIP. It could be a little less, but still, there is this lack of understanding how the PSIP functions. What is interesting about WASA, they get money from both the Consolidated Fund and borrowed funds from the IDB; it is a combination. The IDF also, it is a triple threat, yes, and still they seem to miss the point, so that is just a small example there, of a statutory authority not understanding what the Central Government is trying to do.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: A follow-up. This is a situation presently at Public Utilities, where we have a project manager who came across from the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries on a contract at the Ministry of Public Utilities, but the contract has now come to an end. Although this person has all this expertise, this person is now being told to return back to the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, with all their expertise, and leave a void in—so how do we fix it? How do you fix this situation?

Ms. Deoraj: The reason why we have only one policy guideline, which is the public officers who go off, which I think in this case, the officer would have to go on the leave of grounds of public policy. We only have a maximum of five years that you can access. It is really supposed to be three years, but sometimes there is some flexibility if you go back to Cabinet and they allow you two more years. So that is one of the things I need to perhaps look at, the policy.

Also looking at—going for the argument that if a project is ongoing or near completion, some sort of flexibility from the point of Service Commission and the Cabinet and PMCD to allow this person, but it really needs—again, it is moral suasion in this case. We have no guideline at this point in time or policy that would allow us to keep that person into the process.

Mr. Rambharat: I am happy that PS Dhanpaul raised the issue of the procurement function because, as you know, in a Ministry like Agriculture and perhaps other Ministries, there is always—okay, so the public service recognizes the planning function, and historically the planning function would have been the lead function in working on the projects in terms of supporting the conceptualization, implementation and other things.

Some Ministries have an engineering function. Our Ministry has an engineering function, and they believe, and sometimes depending on who the PS or the Minister is, they may be more involved in the project—but at all levels. So they design, they execute, they monitor, they do everything. You have Legal playing a role that could be facilitative or could keep you back, because you may not have lawyers or you may not have lawyers who have ever seen a construction contract or an implementation schedule or scope of works or something like that.

You have chief technical officers. Depending on the Ministry, they may have a particular training. You may have some Ministries with CTOs who are trained in project management, and there are those who are trained in something else. Now, we are bringing this procurement function which will add another level to the haziness, because Procurement obviously, they are brand new and they would want to be in charge, and there is no guarantee that they would have the skill sets to take the lead on particular roles. So that is something in dealing with the Ministries who appear before us, we will have to bring out. I am happy that you flagged this procurement issue, function, because it troubles me that we are going to have these turf issues in all the Ministries and we will create some problems.

I wanted to say that in the energy sector the one thing that worked well, from my experience, is what I will call “best in class”. So in the energy companies there is a high level of competition because there are rewards for high performance, particularly in project, in ideas, in project design, conceptualization, implementation, implementation within budget. At the end of the year, there was also a presentation of the best of the best. I wondered whether that is not something that we should be advocating that we introduce in the public service, because you are talking here about a $5 billion spend. It is not a small spend, and it is something that we are all affected by, and I will give you some simple examples. I suppose maybe in everybody’s PSIP now there is a project to implement electronic document management system.

Who is the best? Who has had the best experience? Who has done it? Who has met the target in terms of conversion of documents to electronic format; they have managed the project well, they have hit their target within a defined period? I know it is not our Ministry, because we may get there, in the best in class.

So when the next Ministry comes along, or somebody seeing the work that Legal Affairs did for example, in the EDMS for the deeds, and wanting to put a project like that on the PSIP, has a resource that is best in class, and best in class for defined reasons. It will help us too in developing the contract documents, they would have identified possible providers of the services.

Every Ministry has—maybe half the Ministries for the last fiscal year has gone through a website redesign. Ours took a long time to even get the short list, but if we knew who had done it and who were the best in class, and best meaning on the roll-out the final product met what it set out to do. There was functionality, it was easy to use. I do not know if anybody is transacting electronic business on a Ministry’s website as yet. Those kinds of things. I just felt that—I was listening—when we did our EDMS, I came to the Parliament. When we did our website I came to the Parliament for technical advice, and I just wondered whether in our report, or in your report to somebody, you do not say that this is a way of doing it. Let us highlight who are the ones doing these things very well and let us use them as the leaders in best practice.

Ms. Deoraj: Thank you. Yes, I think that certainly is good advice. We do best practice modelling, so a lot of times somebody would come with an idea, and we would point them in the direction of another Ministry or another agency. We have looked at some of the issues ourselves, because even like in the Ministry of Local Government, and they are not here to defend, but we would have all the regional corporations coming with, say like a computerization project or a security project and each of them would be now coming with a proposal to the PSIP.

We have spoken to the Ministry of Local Government to say, since you have to do this in all 14 regional corporations, instead of having 14 projects with the challenges of procurement and the challenges of competition and project management, the Ministry of Local Government should come with one project that will then be rolled out and executed for all. So there is standardization across the different corporations. There is quality management, there is also—you will also have gone through a process of procurement, you would have gone through a process of getting the best companies, you would also certainly be more efficient in terms of utilization of resources. We are hoping that we would see some of those kinds of—all whole of Government-type projects. Because there are certain things we all need, EMSs. We all need computerization.

So instead of us going with 33 projects of the same, leadership has to come from like the Ministry of Public Administration saying that if we have to get our public sector agencies to this standard, this is what has to come across the board and this is—certainly it should be a major project to move the public sector from where it is now to where you want it to be and certainly some of these things could be managed differently because we compete against each other. That is also perhaps why, as Brigadier is saying, when we have people competing a project in your Ministry and you are drawing from that same skill. So you are moving people across the board, so they are competing against each other rather than working to the execution of one agenda for the whole of the public service. We will certainly take your advice, in terms of best practice.

3.40 p.m.

Mr. Rambharat: Well, just to complete that story, I thought it was great that the person was coming back with all that skill—

Ms. Deoraj: Of course.

Mr. Rambharat:—except that when the person comes back to agriculture, they come back into an AO I position.

Ms. Deoraj: Exactly.

Mr. Rambharat: And nothing I could do or say could get that person into a position where I thought as Minister the skills would be perfectly used, the person is still there. The person is still there because I have said to them, do not send that person here because they will lose and we will lose, and it is just, again, it is something in the public service. It is just the public service the way it works.

Madam Chairman: Okay. I want to ask the Ministry of Finance if, one, apart from the disbursements of funds, if there is any other role for the Ministry of Finance in the implementation of the PSIP?—one.

Secondly, I want to hear from the Ministry of Finance what they see as challenges, and if they have any recommendations? And I will also ask that—some of the questions we have asked the Ministry of Planning and Development already but, you know, I want to hear it from the finance perspective.

Mr. Dhanpaul: Well, the first challenge obviously, Madam Chair, would be to get the funding for the PSIP. We will like to maintain a PSIP level of between 5 and 7 per cent of GDP if possible, and that may not be possible every year, but when we do fiscal forecasting of the national budget, we try to maintain over in the outer years as close to possible, as I said, for about 4 per cent of GDP which is considered to be adequate. And to do that though, if you are running a deficit, obviously you have to finance the budget, and that creates a problem for us also. There is a financing side to it, we do not want to increase the level of borrowing because obviously you are adding to the national debt. And there is another side where we also have to take into consideration that we have to generate economic growth, so you cannot have a 1 per cent of GDP/PSIP that makes no sense, if you want to generate 3 per cent growth. Right? That is how we have to look at it; and those are some of the assumptions that we use.

From the Ministry's point of view though from our project side, the Ministry itself, our implementation, we were of the view that we were implementing revenue-generating projects. Like, for instance, our projects are, the property tax; the revenue authority; the gaming commission; and the office of the procurement regulator, essentially—well, apart from the Procurement Regulator which you can see as a revenue generator anyway, avoiding mismanagement. They are all revenue-generating projects, they are not hard projects like a building or something like that, but the return on investment, those projects are exceedingly high. The PSIP for the revenue authority this year is $10 million, I think, the property tax, $15 million, the gaming commission, $10 million.

Now, when fully implemented, I just want to show you how $10 billion could generate a billion. When fully implemented, the property tax would generate a billion dollars. When fully implemented the revenue authority could generate 5 to 6 per cent of GDP increase in revenue which is about $7 billion; that is what I am talking about. So, I think priority should be given to projects like these. They might be soft projects, but they are almost immediate revenue-generating projects, and that is how we see it from the Ministry of Finance's view.

And I have not mention even the—I just want to mention the gambling commission. When it gets out of Parliament and the legislation in proclaimed, I am assuming that when we go into the full law of the gaming commission, again, significant amount of revenue from that because we have an almost $15 billion industry that is unregulated. So those are some of the points that I want make as far as the Ministry's PSIP is concerned, and our entire PSIP is only $87 million, and that PSIP, that $87 million could generate $10 billion.

Madam Chairman: In terms of any role other than disbursing the funds in the implementation.

Mr. Dhanpaul: The Director of Budgets has the main role.

Ms. Le Gendre: Well, in terms of the work of the Budgets Division at the stage of the budget preparation, of course the Minister of Finance Call Circular is the document that we will prepare to issue to all Ministries and Departments, so that is one role there is collaborating with the Ministry of Planning and Development to get the input of one section of their Call Circular that deals with the capital expenditure programme, so that piece in the Call Circular really is largely dependent on the planning or, you know, administrative process in terms of their understanding of how projects should be executed and so forth. So, we rely on them in terms of giving us that input for the Call Circular, and we will work with them closely in terms of coming up with the allocation of funding.

So over the years it has been straddling between Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning and Development who will sort of have that role in terms determining how you share up the ceiling among the Ministries and Departments.

In recent times, it has been the focus of the Ministry of Planning and Development to undergo that exercise and come up with the recommendations project by project, Ministry by Ministry and submit that to us after they get their Cabinet approval, and we will look at that and make sure that is approved through the appropriation.

So once the funds are approved then we will have a different role now in the budget administration part of the cycle which will be then to ensure certain things are met before the funds are released or drawn down.

So you will have releases under the Consolidated Fund and you have issue of warrants under the Infrastructure Development Fund which is a withdrawal of funding—that is the mechanism for the withdrawal of funding under the IDF by the issue of warrants. Okay? So we have two mechanisms for Ministries to access the funding that has been allocated, the DP being broken up between the Consolidated Fund and IDF as you would know. Okay?

So that during the year Ministries and Departments may want to reallocate funding as well, that is the role of the Budget Division to review those requests and make recommendations for approval whether it is through a virement of funds or a transfer of funds which is the Minister of Finance has to approve. All transfers of funds the Minister of Finance has to approve, and the warrants of funds the Minister has to approve. Yes.

So and also the confirmation of availability of funds during that administration process where before they enter into any contract or get into the execution, they may want to confirm that the fund would be made available especially in recent times with the cash flow issues that we have been having, so they would approach the Budget Division for the confirmation of funds for the different projects, and we would collaborate as well with the Ministry of Planning and Development for all these various areas that I just called out, virements, transfers, confirmation of funds, because in confirmation of funds in some cases could span more than one year, and we have to get the Ministry of Planning and Development's view about providing this additional funding in future periods, so they have to also agree or, you know, have no objection to these requests. Okay?

So, and also during the budget administration phase, we will be looking at the, well collecting data on the expenditure, the actual expenditure that is being incurred by Ministries and Departments which we will also share the with the Ministry of Planning and Development for them to do their analysis. We collaborate very closely throughout the year with the Ministry of Planning and Development in different aspects of the project implementation execution. We do site visits, we go out sometimes with the Ministry of Planning and Development to visit various projects to see the stages of completion, to confirm what they are saying to us in different documents or submissions. Okay. So that helps our understanding of whether funding is required at that particular time or why funding is not being requested for certain projects.

Madam Chairman: So is it a case of funding being requested, but not being provided?

Ms. Le Gendre: Yes. That occurs for various reasons, but remember I told you the beginning of the process is Ministry of Planning and Development looking at all the requests from the Ministries and Departments and determining how they would share up the ceiling that is given to them.

Madam Chairman: Right.

Ms. Le Gendre: So they would take a sort of very responsible approach to how they would share it up or prioritize, you know, according to the funding available. So things may come up during the year in which they can get Cabinet approval for which then we are now, Ministry of Finance, Budget Division will now have to come up with some recommendation to how we can fund that new priority or, you know, accordingly.

Madam Chairman: All right. Okay. Let me just ask with respect to the mid-year review, would finance be in a position to say to us what projects which were approved, but would not be funded through the IDF with this almost $800 million going to recurrent?

Mr. Dhanpaul: I will let the Director of Budgets explain how we arrived at the $800 million, but, Madam Chair, it is not an ideal situation where you do not want money, obviously from IDF, being used for recurrent expenditure. The IDF is to generate economic activity, and that is something, you know, spending money on recurrent from—we try to avoid shifting money from capital to recurrent, that is a cardinal rule at the Ministry of Finance, but in certain cases like this where obviously the IDF is not being utilized fully, you have this room to do this, and this how Budget Division will operate on that.

Ms. Le Gendre: Well, in terms of the mid-year review because in recent times, I think, the last two years or so we were having some cash flow issues, there is a sort of prioritization of how the revenue flows will be channelled to expenditure. Based on our analysis in the Ministry of Finance, other areas under recurrent expenditure were given more priority than the Development Programme at this point in time, but we will be looking at certain areas like under the Infrastructure Development Fund there were some projects that we will have to continue, you know, making sure that they have adequate funding.

But our overall review at this point in time based on the same sort of expenditure percentage that you had just asked for, that kind of information analysis, we do not see the full level of the funding that was provided through the estimates being needed to be transferred to the IDF because it is a transfer from the Consolidated Fund to IDF that we provide ever year under the Ministry of Finance to fund the work of the IDF.

So when we say we have savings because we are seeing, at this point in time, that the rate is a little low and even if we go to the 80 per cent or 70-something per cent, the $2.6 billion or however the amount that provided in the estimates, will not be fully transferred, so that is how we came up with that sort of estimate.

Now in doing the detail to see which projects may suffer, we did a sort of a broad analysis because of the debate in Parliament and so, but it still could be reprioritized because it is really based on where Government focus lies, so it could change, but the overall target is where we will constrain it because we did a transfer. So you cannot go—sorry, we did a variation, so you cannot go beyond in transfers, at this point in time, we have already moved to the funding, once that Bill is approved, we have moved it, so we are constraint now, you know, to that level. But in terms of which projects, at this point in time, it could change, I have to say. We could give you a list of which projects will be affected, but that could change based on Minister as we go through the weeks.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So let me ask, one, yes, I would like to get the list of projects. But what I am understanding is that, if the list of projects change, would that within Ministries or across Ministries?

Ms. Le Gendre: It could be across Ministries because it is a list of Ministries with certain projects that we could identify now that may be affected by the reduction of the $800 million.

Madam Chairman: And I just want to ask something, in that the budget has been premised on these, what you call them?—I want to say platforms; themes, that is the word I want; themes. Yeah. And in terms of when they say the monthly and quarterly reviews and statements are done, is any assessment done with respect to how does that impact on a theme? One.

And secondly, with respect now—and this second part, I guess, is to the Director of Budgets: Is a similar sort of analysis done when one does the mid-year review and you reallocate the funds, how that impacts on the theme. Because my understanding is, all this theme is working towards your overall development strategy and your agenda 2020 and the Vision 2030 and the sustainable development goals. Is any kind of analysis like that done?

Mr. Dhanpaul: Very much so, Madam Chair. I would say fortunately or unfortunately, every quarter we are faced with either a visit from the credit rating agencies, the IMF the World Bank or some other agency trying to work out what we are doing in the economy.

We have to report on a quarterly basis to the IMF, on an annual basis to the article for consultations, so that is how we keep within, as you suggest, the theme of the national budget. We have to report on an annual basis to Standard & Poor's, we have to report on an annual basis to Moody's, and also we just included Fitch Rating agency as part of the process.

So it is an ongoing process for us at the Ministry of Finance, on a quarterly, monthly basis even at annual review, the mid-year review where the Minister does almost like a state of the union speech where it gives the background to what is going on, gives a comprehensive—that sets out in a comprehensive way all the details on the economy. And in many years previously we used to have supplemental, only supplemental, not variations, we just used to just have supplemental mid-year reviews where we would increase the budget. But because of the fact that we do not have the revenue to do that, now most of it, like this year was $800 million variation and $200 million supplementation, it has become necessary for us also to explain this properly to the rating agencies.

And I just want let you know, Madam Chair, that when we do this on, I mean, for this month alone we have had three rating agencies here and the IMF. And just to let you that they are very concerned about the implementation rate of the PSIP. It is one of the reasons why we were downgraded in the first place by Moody's two years ago, because we could not convince them that we were generating the economic activity to produce the ability to repay debt. Right? Given our debt trajectory we could not convince them that—and the way, as I mentioned earlier, the way you generate economy activity is through your PSIP. But if we keep seeing 66 per cent and 60 per cent, our outlook would not move from, again, back from stable to negative. Right? That is how we do it. It is never a dull moment at the Ministry of Finance.

Madam Chairman: PS—

Mr. Rambharat: I just want to ask this question one time.

Madam Chairman: PS, just wanted to ask—and then I take you, member.

Ms. Deoraj: Well just to add, I think, from a different perspective in terms of our reporting against themes the Vision 2030 as five development priority areas and, of course, the sustainable development goals. The way we have presented our reports to the Parliament which would be the PSIP, the monitoring and evaluation report and, of course, the Vision 2030. Those five themes are used to determine the effectiveness of our development processes or whether we are achieving the development agenda that we have set out for ourselves of a three to five-year period.

So in this report that we had submitted we have a number of indicators that would tell us how we have performed or how we are intending to perform as a country to achieve the five development priorities.

So those themes and, of course, we have tied very closely with the sustainable development goals, our job is to ensure that when we report to the Cabinet and report to the Parliament within a six-month and a one-year period, we will be able to speak about how we have assessed our effectiveness in terms of achieving those development priorities.

So our National Transformation Unit and both the Socio-Economic Policy Planning Division, the PPRD and National Transformation Unit they work together to gather the information and also to report to the Parliament on how well we are doing to achieve some of these indicators of effectiveness. So in terms of reporting that is certainly what is the basis of our report?

Mr. Dhanpaul: If I might just add one final thing, Chair, this is to point out though, that it is very critical that we publish all our reports. The credit rating agencies, we have no problem with them publishing our report. We authorize the publication. We authorize the publication on the article for consultation reports, they are all there, they are all on the Ministry's website, so the transparency is also there as far as this is concerned.

Madam Chairman: Member Rambharat.

Mr. Rambharat: Chair, I just wanted to ask two questions. The first is: The 70 per cent, let us say, the 70 per cent achievement of the PSIP, the gap, is it—how much of it is attributed to unavailability of funding? And how much of it is because of the inability of the Ministries to execute the project.

Mr. Dhanpaul: Well, just in defence of the Ministry of Planning and Development, I would say, if it is a 70 per cent implementation rate, I would say 15 per cent of the other 30 per cent would be from a lack of cash flow.

Mr. Rambharat: Okay. And the second thing is, that I have seen the monthly report in the traditional form across Ministries, but is there also a report against the five themes?

Ms. Deoraj: Well we have just started to do this, so we have not yet submitted it to the Cabinet as yet.

Mr. Rambharat: Okay.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: According to the 2018 PSIP in roads and bridges, now your big-ticketed items, the sum of $419 million was allocated. How much of this money has been utilized so far?

Ms. Deoraj: Well, I can give you an overall allocation based on the Ministry of Works and Transport was given a revised PSIP of $920 million of which so far they have expended 43 per cent of their allocation, what they have—their total allocation expended. They have been given $217 million so far for this fiscal, and they have spent 43 per cent of that. I do not have any details of the roads and bridges, but we tell you, we can provide that subsequently as to which of the roads and bridges. It was $920 million was the revised allocations that is what the budget would have allocated for it. But so far they have released $250 million of which they have spent 43 per cent of that, those releases.
Madam Chairman: Is that just on roads and bridges?
Ms. Deoraj: Well that is Ministry of Works and Transport, but we can break it down and it would be roads, bridges and maybe costal works and so. So, we can break it down and submit it to you.
Madam Chairman: Yes. That is what we would want. Thank you. Any other member? All right. So I would just take member Rambharat.
Mr. Rambharat: Yeah. That is just good example. Right? So we are more than eight months in, and they have spent about $86 million against a $920 million allocation. Now I know part of that would be, okay, and they are holding funds that they have not spent, so why would they have funds that they are not spending? I know in the rush towards the end they would have completed contracts that they will pay out and all of that, but why at this stage they are not utilizing the releases?
Ms. Deoraj: I think finance may—but our experience is that they tell us that they are ready to execute, we would support them. Yes, the contracts have been awarded, we would make the justification, finance would release the money, and then they, in fact, they are not ready not to execute, they are not ready for some of the things, the contract is not completed. So they have the money, and we encourage them, expend the funds that have released, because you are now denying another Ministry who may have been in a better state of readiness. So this is, unfortunately, a scenario—
Mr. Rambharat: But then they could vire—
Ms. Deoraj: Of course they can. If there are other projects within, certainly.
Mr. Rambharat: Where payments are to be made. But why are they not doing that? Or is it just a lag in the reporting?
Ms. Deoraj: I do not really—
Ms. Le Gendre: If I may? That is question I have been asking myself because we have issued a lot of warrants under the IDF, but we are not seeing the expenditure being reported. So why are they not paying the contractors, because when they came for the draw down under the IDF, they had bills to paid. So this is a question that I have been asking and especially the big Ministries and we have not gotten full feedback yet. So it could be a lag in the timing, as you are saying, it could be the processing of the bills taking a certain amount of steps in the Ministry. I am trying to get at it myself because I started to see this problem since last year especially under the IDF.
Madam Chairman: Are there mechanisms existing to monitor that?
Ms. Le Gendre: Well on the part of the Budget Division Ministry of Finance, we would not

necessarily go into that detail, it is the accounting officer which I tried to bring to the attention of certain accounting officers they need to look at what is going on in their Ministry. Why are we not seeing the expenditure? It is about half the amount of releases that we are seeing being expended. So it is really the role of the accounting officer to make sure that those things are processing properly.

Madam Chairman: In the specific Ministries, so that—

Ms. Le Gendre: In the specific Ministries.

Madam Chairman:—so there is no oversight mechanism either in the Ministry of Planning and Development or—

Ms. Le Gendre: The Budget Division does not have that. I am not sure that the Ministry of Planning and Development has that—

Madam Chairman:—the Ministry of Finance?

Ms. Le Gendre: I am not sure if the Ministry of Planning and Development.

Ms. Deoraj: Well, yes, we try to do some of that in the Ministry of Planning and Development when the project officers work with the line Ministries. And if the line Ministries saying, "I do not have releases", but we say, "But you have a release, why are you not using it"? And that same sort of advice. If you have another project that is in a state of readiness, use the funds there and then we would give a non-objection for the transfers and so. So it is really about, yes, the accounting officers being more hands-on or giving more priority attention to this so that they can sit with their project units and ask, you know, "Give me quarterly, a monthly status of expenditure, how are we doing against our targets and so". So the accounting officers do have to do some hands-on work.

Madam Chairman: So, what I am really trying—so there is no mechanism outside of the individual Ministries, the specific Ministries to monitor that?

Ms. Deoraj: No.

Madam Chairman: None. Would you think that would help if such a mechanism was created?

Ms. Deoraj: Well if—

Madam Chairman: Whether within you, within finance, somewhere? Would you think that would help?

Ms. Deoraj: It may help, and perhaps even where if also the PPRD gives an opportunity to work a little more closely with some of the accounting officers—

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Ms. Deoraj:—to say well, you know, there are monthly meetings with their units to execute and what are the challenges.

Madam Chairman: All right. What prohibits that? Do you have capacity for that in terms of numbers? Or is that you do not feel that you have the authority to institute it or you feel they will be pushed back? I just want to know.

Ms. Deoraj: No. I think it is numbers, it is mainly numbers. We have just 14 officers and we have a thousand projects to monitor, we have vacancies of over 43 members of staff, so we are really trying to get more staff, and I think if we got more staff, we would be able to do a lot more.

Mr. Rambharat: But I mean, which is why I asked the question about the thematic areas. Now going back, again, PS Dhanpaul made the case for it. If the rating agencies are judging us on ability to execute projects, then that should be because a downgrade or any negative language impacts the bottom line. So, I think if there was a case to be made that the reason why we want to hit 100, I mean, when you go into the details of what the 100 per cent is, you may find some surprises, but just getting to 100 per cent and utilizing the entire PSIP helps us on the rating side. That is what, I mean, I am understanding that for the first time.

4.10 p.m.

So, that is the first point. There is surely a case to be made, and the report that comes to Cabinet, when you ask about the outside monitoring, well the report is the outside monitoring, but I guess the Prime Minister does not have enough time to really wield the big stick, but that is an important part of the monitoring, except that it comes as a single sheet without the details of really what is happening within some of the key areas.

And then going back to the thematic presentation, putting people first is 33 per cent of your PSIP, and the main components of those are health, housing and education. So, again, if I had to pick three areas to really focus on making sure, from both the achievement of the PSIP, but also the achievement of the thematic areas in the context of the sustainable development goal, I would say, well, drive those three. Forget agriculture, agriculture is, you know, 3 per cent out of a 10 per cent thing. But, I am just saying, speaking as a Cabinet Minister sitting in the Cabinet and understanding that the conversation there is far different from the conversation we are having today, and part of what we are trying to achieve is to be able to produce a report that makes sense to everybody, and we are able to highlight the key areas, because it is not just funding and cash flow. It is not just HR issues in terms of project management capacity, from top to bottom, and we have a responsibility to hit the high notes and say what are the main challenges which is in the remit of the report of the recommendation.

Ms. Deoraj: Madam Chair, if I can just add to that. I think PS Dhanpaul did mention it, about what he thinks are the priority projects, and I think that really is the challenge; 1,000 projects cannot all be priorities. And we have been talking about that in the Ministry of Planning and Development. We could perhaps probably have one PSIP project that will cause the level of transformation that we would like to see happen in the country, and I think that is what needs to—the kind of way we would like to see the PSIP reach; cut down to the projects that are really going to make a difference in the development of the country.

So, yes, we may have the thematic areas, and they are all relevant, but we may have one under that, a hospital. Because a hospital will give us the jobs, it will create the health care, it will create—maybe even if it is a business idea from a point of view of a business investment, or if it is medical tourism. So, it is really about how you develop the project, and knowing that that project is a priority for the country, because we see a number of development deficiencies in which we want to fix through this capital investment. So, identifying those priorities and making sure that we are choosing the right projects that would take us on a development trajectory of economic growth, job creation, competitiveness, human development, and human development from a quality of life, those are some of the variables that we really have to be careful about when we are doing our selection process.

And getting the support of the Cabinet as well, and the Parliament, to say well, listen, we cannot go with a 1,000 projects, because Ministries really want all their projects funded under the PSIP. And say, well, no, we need to get the 10 best projects that would lift Trinidad and Tobago out of the economic situation, social environment, environments in general, to be able to take us where we want to go. And, as PS Dhanpaul, we have been trying to set up that mechanism so that we can identify what those priorities are. Identify the priority projects, because you have to say, what are the priorities of the country? And that is a Cabinet driven process. Cabinet has to tell us. While we want to do 10 things, or 100 things, you know, we really want to focus on this one priority, or two, or three priority areas, and to get there, we need to be able to do a number of things. Different methodologies that we can adopt, but certainly getting the PSIP to be as an effective tool of development, and getting what PS Dhanpaul wants, that is really what we should be really working towards.

Madam Chairman: I just want to ask, PS, and this is more specific to the work we are doing. If you are minded to recommend to us—the Committee—any specific Ministries that you think we should focus on in this enquiry, and not necessarily meaning that all bad, but to get a sort of cross-section of performance?

Ms. Deoraj: Madam Chair, the division did come up with a few Ministries. It is a mix of Ministries. We did not look only at allocation under the PSIP. So, we are suggesting, for example like the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, and perhaps Ministry of Works and Transport. So, that is a mix of hard and soft projects.

It would also give you some of the things that you will probably hear about, some of the issues that we talked about. The issues of procurement may come up, because you will hear from their explanation how things are progressing. You would have heard from us some of the things we also experienced in terms of standards/development, in terms of their own project monitoring. I do not know if Terry Ann would like to add anything further.

Ms. Huggins: Yes, the quality issues in terms of, which is observing the standards, the quality, where we are seeing that they are not applying levels of high quality in terms of the product delivery from their contractors and so. It also depends on what are you trying to get out of the interaction. So, you will get a combination of success there, a combination of challenges that they may be experiencing, and from those four Ministries that we are suggesting, four agencies; there are varying levels of execution that they are experiencing as well as challenges in terms of receiving allocations.

Madam Chairman: Okay, thank you. From the whole interaction I would here, from you in particular, new strategies that you have employed, certainly in this fiscal. In this booklet here, the PSIP 2018, there is a paragraph that talks about the new configuration of our traditional approach, which has been adopted to the PSIP, and it talked about reengineering of the current system, and the modem with respect to how you construct the annual budget and I want to know if the new strategies that you have explained earlier, like the project screening, your reporting system, you are looking at what sort of skill sets exist, if these are the re-engineering that you speak about, and if there is anything else that is being done to re-engineer the traditional system for the annual budget, and the three-year cycle to work in the way that you all say it should work.

Ms. Deoraj: What we have been speaking about, Madam Chair, those would have been essentially what we have been doing. We have had some—while the World Bank was here—Terry-Ann could give you some more explanation on that.

Ms. Huggins: Thank you, Chair. Recently, we had a World Bank Mission, mainly with the Ministry of Finance, but the Ministry of Planning and Development was incorporated in that mission, and we were really exposed to some of the best practices with regard to the whole project management cycle. In particular, the pre-investment arm of the cycle, and that is one of the areas that we would like to be able to put a lot of emphasis on, in terms of—as we spoke on earlier—how projects get into the PSIP, the whole process of putting those projects through a rigorous analysis, so that is an arm that we will like to place some emphasis on.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And when you say we will like, can I ask when you see you implementing that? If that is going to be from budget 2019? What are the hindrances or challenges you see to being able to implement what you see as best practice?

Ms. Huggins: Well, we did do a preliminary assessment with the consultant from the World Bank, so we have a fair idea as to where we are positioned, and there is a lot of work that needs to be done. So, I guess it will all depend. We are now in the process of doing a project document to send forward for our Permanent Secretary to consider. But as we mentioned earlier, we do have a challenge in terms of our staffing capacity. That definitely will be an area that we will need to beef up. So, we would be looking at it from different angles, getting the numbers, getting the requisite skills, and putting the important structure in place.

Madam Chairman: Madam PS, I know it is anticipatory, but best case?

Ms. Deoraj: When it can be done?

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Ms. Deoraj: I think within the course of fiscal 2019. I think we should be able to hopefully get some—once the project comes to us we will ask for funding under the PSIP, and get some of that. So, we intend, I think, to do some other things this fiscal, which Terry-Ann has not spoken about. Two of the products that we want to see come out of both the interrelationship with the IFMIS project, which is an IAB funded project, is an automation of the processes of the PSIP, so that we can have much more timely reports and interaction with our Ministries. We have already started the discussion with Microsoft through iGov.tt, and through this also, the development of manuals, so that the manuals would guide the desk of the different offices of the EPRD. So, those projects are going to be funded under the—we are hoping to fund it under the PSIP, and we should see some things within the course of this fiscal 2019.

Madam Chairman: I just want to ask the Ministry of Finance, I know you have given some recommendations that you feel will assist in the implementation of the PSIP, and I am just giving another opportunity in the event that there are other things that may have just come to mind, or you failed to mention.

Mr. Dhanpaul: Well, Chairman, if it is okay with you, we could also send something in writing to you. But just to make a plug for the Ministry of Finance though, we are usually the whipping boys, the default excuse when Ministries cannot get funding. But, as the Director of Budgets, she pointed out, and as we all know in the Ministry of Finance, when we disburse the money, and then the PS tells the Minister, when he asks why is this project not completed, because the Ministry of Finance did not fund the project, and the money is already in the Ministry, then that is when we have a problem. And that is a major concern for us right now. Because you cannot be disbursing funds in a cash flow crunch, and then blaming the Ministry of Finance.

Madam Chairman: So, is there a role then for the Ministry of Finance to monitor, oversee, report? I do not know.

Mr. Dhanpaul: Yes, there will always be a role like that for the Ministry of Finance, because when—one thing I have realized is that when the money leaves the Ministry, we do not follow it. In most cases we do not. It is up to whatever line Ministry it is to use the money properly. But that is something we will have to look at the Ministry of Finance definitely in a closer way.

Madam Chairman: But you know I like to ask, how soon? [*Laughter*]

Mr. Dhanpaul: I know, I know. Actually it is something we already started to consider. This midyear review made us very aware of that fact, and you know the old saying, never waste a good crisis. I think this gives us a chance to enhance the monitoring of these Ministries through the Ministry of Finance.

Madam Chairman: Member, you have anything else?

Mr. Rambharat: What helps you there, I mean, the monthly report that comes to Cabinet now shows requests against releases, against utilization, so, if you know what you are looking for, you will see that people who have cash in hand saying, well, I waiting on the Ministry of Finance for funds.

Mr. Dhanpaul: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Member Antoine.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: Are there any PSIP programme/projects that would not be receiving funding in fiscal 2018? Will they say?

Madam Chairman: I think the Director of Budgets said they would provide a listing of those, but she has also indicated that change.

Ms. Le Gendre: Okay. But that was specifically in relation to the variation of appropriation, but it could be that there are other projects that may not receive funding because they are not ready. If that is what you are asking. We would not deliberately hold back funding if funding is needed. But if the Ministry is not ready to implement that to roll out that project, well then it would not receive funding.

Madam Chairman: All right, so that I want to bring this meeting to an end. I want to thank the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Planning and Development, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, Director of Budgets, the Deputy Permanent Secretary, and the Director of the PPRD, and your other officers for such an engaging and enlightening discussion. I believe that we will be continuing the discussion, particularly with the Ministry of Planning and Development, when it comes to our engagement with the Ministries. I am not sure about the Ministry of Finance. But I know certainly for the Ministry of Planning and Development. We will be inviting you all back some time in the month of June when we set the date for the examination of the other Ministries.

So, I want to thank you all a lot for the assistance you have given us, and I want to wish us all well for fiscal 2019, what is the—what the PS said? "You don't waste a good crisis." Okay, so thank you and pleasant evening.

4.28 p.m.: *Meeting adjourned*.

VERBATIM NOTES OF THE THIRTY-FIFTH PUBLIC 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, JULY 11, 2018, AT 2.34 P.M.

PRESENT

Mrs. Bridgid Annisette-George	Chairman
Mr. Clarence Rambharat	Member
Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy	Member
Ms. Keiba Jacob	Secretary
Ms. Sheranne Samuel	Assistant Secretary
Mr. Brian Lucio	Graduate Research Officer

ABSENT

Dr. Lackram Bodoe	Vice-Chairman
Ms. Nicole Olivierre	Member
Mr. Wade Mark	Member
Mr. Daniel Dookie	Member
Mr. Ronald Huggins	Member
Brig. Gen. Ancil Antoine	Member
Ms. Jennifer Raffoul	Member

Madam Chairman: Good afternoon, and I wish to welcome the various Ministries who should join us during the course of this evening's meeting, and the Permanent Secretary and other officials of the Ministry of Planning and Development. Also, welcome to the members of the media and to the general public.

My name is Bridgid Annisette-George, I am the Chairman of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee of the Parliament. 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 expenditures 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 the improvement of public administration.

The purpose of this twenty-fifth public meeting of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee for the Eleventh Parliament, is to continue the Committee's examination of the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme. The following Ministries and Departments will be examined: the Ministry of Health; Ministry of Trade and Industry; Ministry of Works and Transport; Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

The Committee is desirous of hearing from the accounting officers of the five Ministries and Departments to discover any challenges being faced in the implementation of the Public Sector Investment Programme. The Committee hopes that the meeting will be fruitful and will provide workable solutions to assist the Ministries and Departments in the successful implementation of the PSIP.

This meeting is being held in public and is being broadcast live on Parliament's Channel 11, radio 105.5 FM, and the Parliament's YouTube channel, *ParlView*. Viewers and listeners can send their comments related to today's enquiry via email at parl101@ttparliament.org, facebook.com/ttparliament and twitter@ttparliament.

The Ministry of Health is the first Ministry that is invited to join us today, and I welcome the Ministry's representatives. I therefore invite the Ministry to introduce their various officials. I ask the Permanent Secretary to take charge for me, please.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Mr. Asif Ali — Permanent Secretary

Mr. Beesham Seetaram — Programme Administrator External Patient Programme (EPP)

Mr. Ronald Koylass	Programme Manager, Project Management Unit
Mr. Lawrence Jaisingh	Director, Health Policy, Research and Planning
Ms. Michelle Adams	Project Coordinator, Project Implementation Unit
Ms. Jennifer Harvey-Bethel	Director, Finance and Accounts

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. And the PS of the Ministry of Planning and Development who has joined us, may I ask you to introduce yourself and your members of staff, please?

MINISTRY OF Planning and development

Mrs. Joanne Deoraj	Permanent Secretary
Mrs. Terry Ann Atkins-Huggins	Director, Project Planning & Reconstruction Division
Mr. Armand Jackson	Assistant Director, Project Planning & Reconstruction Division
Mr. Mark Joseph	Project Monitoring Officer – Ministry of Works and Transport
Mr. Kevin Brooks	Project Monitoring Officer – Ministry of Health

Madam Chairman: Thank you. And might I ask the members of the Committee to introduce themselves starting from my right.

[*Introductions made*]

Madam Chairman: And as I said before, I am Bridgid Annisette-George, Chairman. Today, we are ably assisted by our Secretary Ms. Keiba Jacob and our Assistant Secretary Ms. Sheranne Samuel; also joining us our Graduate Research Assistant Mr. Brian Lucio.

Mr. PS, I therefore invite you to make a brief opening statement, of course, limited to the PSIP.

Mr. Ali: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon, Madam Chair, again, and members of the Committee and our colleagues at the Ministry of Planning and Development.

The Ministry of Health welcomes this opportunity to review and examine our PSIP for the fiscal year 2018, with a view of critically assessing and improving the process beginning from the planning to procurement and the implementation, as well as effective monitoring and evaluation.

The Ministry considers the PSIP an integral component as it relates to the construction, refurbishment and outfitting of our public health facilities to effect overall improvement of our plant equipment and by extension, operations.

It is expected that today's proceedings will prove to be insightful towards improving the service delivery aspect of the public health care system that directly impacts on quality health care. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. PS. And I guess maybe to start off the discussion and to put it into some context, I would like maybe if you can explain to us what you see as the role of the Permanent Secretary in ensuring that there is a proper planning and implementation of your Ministry's PSIP?

Mr. Ali: Thank you, Chair. The role of the accounting officers in my opinion would be to, as you said initially, ensure that there is integrity to the planning process, that is, that the right projects are implemented by the Ministry or put forward as part of its PSIP proposal. Those projects need to be in alignment with, ideally, the Vision 2030 and by extension the Ministry's strategic plan and its strategic objectives as we proceed. And from there we then have the monitoring and evaluation of those projects to ensure that they are completed ideally within budget and they meet these stated objectives.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So that, in the discharge of your role, could you give us an idea of what you feel that you should functionally do to ensure that these objectives are discharged, and that your spend is in alignment with your budget?

Mr. Ali: So as I said, before I get to the spend and alignment to the budget, I strongly believe that the planning aspect is critical. Towards that end, one of the Ministry of Health's ways is—in the process of implementing—is a project board, and that is a construct within the organization where we would look at project proposals that come forward from the RHAs or within the Ministry, assess their integrity in terms of, the project has the right components, the risk assessment is done, change management elements; all aspects of a project are captured in there.

Having done that, those would then ideally be sent forward for approval by the Ministries of Finance and Planning and Development for funding; that just speaks to the planning. Getting to your question about the implementation, what we have at the Ministry and which is what I rely on as the accounting officer, would be our project management unit. Mr. Koylass is our programme manager for that unit. We have programme managers, project managers in there that would proactively liaise with the RHAs that are key as part of our implementation for the PSIP to ensure that those projects are, as you said, within budget and within time.

We do that, we have regular meetings on a monthly basis, as well as regular reporting with set milestones, and we ensure that there is compliance, and where there is deviation we would work with the RHAs to address those issues as they arise. We also have some SPVs that we do projects for us, UDeCOTT being one of them, we have a similar approach in place from those projects.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. PS. And, you know, I am happy that you really brought us back to the planning stage. And in terms of planning, do you have a project planning unit in your Ministry?

Mr. Ali: That would be our PMU.

Madam Chairman: And how big is that Ministry in terms of personnel?

Mr. Koylass: All right. So, I can respond on that one. I am there as the Programme Manager, we have four project managers. In addition to that, because of the specialized hospital projects that we do, we also have a health care architect on board, and the project engineer. So that is the complement at this time.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. And in terms of the whole planning of the project, I guess, PS, you would be aware of the Ministry of Finance's Call Circular which I did not hear you mention at all. How does that feature into your planning component?—which you say is the almost, I get the impression, that is the foundation from which you ensure that you can begin to have a successful project.

Mr. Ali: So, you are correct, Madam Chair. With our PMU on board now with the staff that is available, we can ensure that projects being put forward, they do comply with the Ministry of Finance's Call Circular in terms of the—not just the templates to be completed, but the logic that is required in terms of developing a project, and ensuring that that project plan is there.

Madam Chairman: So that in respect to the—I see that you have 23 Cabinet approved PSIP projects for fiscal 2018, could you say that they were, in terms of their planning stage, were they compliant with the Ministry of Finance's Call Circular?

Mr. Ali: Madam Chair, if you will allow me to ask Mr. Koylass to answer? I recently assumed at the Ministry two weeks ago, so I have not had a chance to review all those projects with regard to that aspect of it.

Mr. Koylass: Thank you. And, Madam Chair, that is very correct. One of the things that we ensure that is completed for every project would be the logical framework, plus a work breakdown structure which is done for each project. In addition to that, there are specific project profiles for new projects which the Ministry of Planning and Development has requested and those are all complied with. And that would largely form the basis of the content which goes to Cabinet for approval.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So that has complied with for the current 23? You would have had things like risk analysis and mitigation strategies and so, built into your project plan for all 23?

Mr. Koylass: Okay. So at the high level with the logical framework—so we would have the high level risk as the project, it is approved and developed, then the respective implementing agencies would then be required to develop the specific risks associated with the project. But at the high level stage when we are doing the logical framework and the work breakdown structure, we would have what we would term high-level risk, being identified at that point.

Madam Chairman: And all I am trying to understand is if for the current 23 projects, if that has been done? Because, you see, I got the impression from what the PS said, that now that you have a certain complement in your project units, you are now doing that, so I am taking "now" to mean current. I want to know for the 23 that you have on stream, whether those would have complied with the requirements of the Ministry of Finance's Call Circular as far as the planning stage?

Mr. Koylass: As far as the planning stage, yes. For the 23 projects, we would have completed the logical framework and the work breakdown structure for each of those projects. The areas where we are now being more detailed in as specific, is what you referred to with respect to the risk management and contingency planning.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And in terms of the risk management and the contingency plans, as far as those projects, it would be your department that would be responsible for ensuring that for the various agencies?

Mr. Koylass: That is correct. The actual risk management for the projects which are being implemented by the regional health authorities would be done by the respective project units at the RHAs. And it will be submitted to ourselves as required for review, and similarly for the projects which will be handled by the special purpose companies, they would be responsible for that.

Madam Chairman: And have they been?—because "would be" is—have they been? That is what I am trying to get.

Mr. Koylass: Okay. That is an area which I indicated, we have to strengthen in terms of the detailed risk planning. I think the area where we are quite comfortable with, is with respect to establishing the logical framework and the work breakdown structure, so that presents a very clear idea as to what the project entails, and the outcomes. So, yes, the risk area would be an area which definitely needs to be strengthened.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And let me ask, because I am getting a bit confused with respect to—and it will be me, I am getting confused. Because at the one stage I am hearing that the high-level risk would have been catered for in all 23 when you would have done your plan and your logical framework. And then I am getting the impression that you are now at this stage trying to work out risks in more specific details for the actual projects. So, I am not sure if we are at the same stage of the discussion.

Mr. Koylass: The specific risks are now being dealt with. At the logical framework stage, that is where we would just identify the very high-legal risk at that point of time; remember that would be very, very preliminary.

So, as an example, if you have to do a refurbishment project, one of the high-level risks would be ensuring that the space is available for use. Right? So that is the sort of high-level risk that will be done, but as the project gets more into the detail planning and execution, those are the areas where—because remember the risks continuously change and need to be more specific. And that is the area where we are working on at this point in time, and I acknowledge that we have to strengthen that aspect of the risk management.

Madam Chairman: So, I will then ask, in terms of, I have accepted that you have to strengthen.

Mr. Koylass: Yes.

Madam Chairman What steps are being taken to strengthen the risk management? And so, if you can generally tell me that, and then in writing, I will ask you to submit as per project, what the status is as far as risk management and the steps that you are taking?

Mr. Koylass: So that is to be submitted in writing?

Madam Chairman: Yeah. But generally you are saying that you all have to strengthen.

Mr. Koylass: Yes.

Madam Chairman: What are the general steps you are taking for the overall?

Mr. Koylass: Okay. Overall at a general level would be ensuring that the various project units at the regional health authorities recognize the importance of risks, how you go about identifying risks, and also in terms of analysing the risks, so that would be discussions which we have. So for instance, when we meet on a monthly basis, we have those discussions in terms of getting them to start looking at what are some specific risks.

Madam Chairman: So it is more a sensitization.

Mr. Koylass: Sensitization.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So that therefore, if you can give us then in writing, as per project and per agency, what sort of risk analysis has been sent to you.

Mr. Koylass: Okay.

Madam Chairman: Now, what I would like to ask the PS, in terms of your projects, I understand from the perspective of the Ministry of Planning and Development and the role of their PPRD department which is supposed to give you supervisory support and services in the implementation. I guess there is a certain kind of framework in terms of monthly reporting activities accomplished, et cetera. Is that done?

Mr. Ali: Yes it is, Chair, we do comply with the reporting requirements of the Ministry of Planning and Development.

Madam Chairman: All right. So let me ask, in terms of the 23 projects: Could you give us an idea of how up-to-date you are in your monthly reports?

Mr. Koylass: We have, in fact, submitted and completed for those projects under the PSIP as to the end of June of this fiscal. So, we would now be working towards the next project report at the end of July.

Madam Chairman: And the report is compliant with the format as required by the Ministry of Planning and Development?

Mr. Koylass: That is correct.

Madam Chairman: All right. Okay. And the reason that I have asked that is because you all have given us a report or a schedule, let me say that, of your PSIP implementation plan 2017/2018. Okay?

Now, when I look at what the Ministry of Planning and Development requires for their monthly status report, it says it is supposed to have project objectives and planned activities, activities accomplished, explanation of variances, issues, problems and so on, right? There are a certain number of items. I was just wondering if your report complies with that, because from what we have, I do not see that type of information being demonstrated. So that raises the question whether at all you comply with that kind of format.

Mr. Ali: Madam Chair, as far as I am aware, we do submit that sort of information.

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Ali: We have a copy of it here. We can submit to you in writing if you wish.

Madam Chairman: Yes. So that if you can provide us with the latest—

Mr. Ali: Sure, we will do that.

Madam Chairman:—report that you would have done. All right. So therefore, I will just open up the questions to some members of the Committee. I do not know if—member Webster-Roy, would you like to take—?

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to know what are some of the challenges that you are facing in terms of the performance of your PSIP?

Mr. Ali: Sure. Thank you for that question. Let me just say that I want to broadly classify those challenges in maybe three areas. One of those would be—which is not as severe a challenge anymore—the issue of capacity. So as I mentioned, we have addressed, to a large degree, the capacity issue at the level of the Ministry. We have been working with the RHAs to address their project management capacity also, both from a purely human resource level in numbers, but also the competency. So that is a work in progress, and we have been seeing some progress in that regard; that is one of the challenges.

One of the other challenges that we face with regard especially to our equipment projects, would be the issue of foreign exchange, where you have to rely on suppliers to bring in equipment. And a lot of the times the requirement from the foreign suppliers is payment up front. So they have had that challenge with foreign exchange, I think it has improved, but that has been a challenge.

And the third challenge, sort of related, has been the release of funds from the Ministry of Finance to allow us to settle outstanding invoices, and in turn have the projects moving smoothly; and those have been three of our main challenges.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Thanks. And the reason why I asked that, because Madam Chair was going through the whole discussion around, you know, the risk assessment and having your risk assessment done earlier and, you know, to see how you can mitigate risks. So, for example, with foreign exchange, if the risk assessment was—and I know you said capacity is one of the issues. So if that was done properly and you anticipate that risk and then how you are going to treat with it. You mentioned that you have the project board in place. Was the project board at the Ministry?

Mr. Ali: Well, it is not in place yet, member, through the Chair.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Oh, it is not in place.

Mr. Ali: We are in the process of implementing that project board approach.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Okay. What would the board comprise? What kind of skills are you looking to have on that particular board?

Mr. Ali: All right. So, maybe I can let Mr. Koylass just expand a bit on that? Thank you.

Mr. Koylass: All right. So the project board would include the Permanent Secretary as the chair of the board. We also include the Deputy Permanent Secretary with direct responsibility for projects, myself as the project manager. We also have the director of finance to provide finance support on the project. And we co-op the specific—oh, we also have someone from our policy research department for the monitoring and evaluation; so those would be the core members. And for the specific, the Chief Medical Officer which would be the clinical; that is the core group. And then for each particular project, we would then co-opt the particular lead person or the focal person for that project on the board.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: So, I might have heard you incorrectly. When you initially mentioned the project board, you said that their primary role would be to help with the project planning. All right? And one of the areas that would have come up as a weakness is the whole area of risk. So, who among the team of persons you have called out would take that lead in terms of risk assessment and all of that?—in the planning stage.

3.00 p.m.

Mr. Ali: That would be where our project management unit, they would provide that sort of assistance. The project board is really a sort of screening mechanism to—first of all, initially vet the projects and then by extension once the project is approved and has commenced, to monitor the progress. So in terms of the risk assessment you mentioned, that to provide that sort of technical support, that would be our PMU.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So let me ask, the project board is something that is to come on stream, when?

Mr. Ali: Chair, I would like that to begin from the next fiscal.

Madam Chairman: Next fiscal.

Mr. Ali: Yes.

Madam Chairman: And therefore it means that—is there need for any sort of sensitizing/training, anything for the members who will operate on this board?

Mr. Ali: I will let Mr. Koylass speak a bit more about that, but let me just say that we do have a project management manual at the Ministry of Health that we have been sensitizing persons to, and that would obviously provide that sort of technical support in terms of the training that you mentioned. But I will let Mr. Koylass expand a bit more.

Mr. Koylass: Thank you. So, the first thing, Madam Chair, which has been completed, is the terms of reference for the project board, which clearly identifies the role and the responsibilities of the respective members. At the level of the project board itself, each particulars expertise would then be very clear in terms of what would be their required responsibility. In terms of the project leads, what we have insisted on—and this is where our PS referred to our project management guidelines manual—for each project coming to the project board there must be a project charter, which, again, clearly outlines the goals of the project, the objectives of the project, your high level and any specific challenges, change management issues. So, before any project is accepted you must have a project charter completed, and as part of the project manager manual, we have completed a template. So, it is very easy for the various project leads to follow.

Madam Chairman: So, let me ask something, has this concept of the project board, the terms of reference, your project charter, has that been shared with the Ministry of Planning and Development? Has that been shared with them?

Mr. Koylass: I believe at the very early start, because we did in fact, at one point of time, have the project board in place, and if I could recall, yes, Madam Chair, we did share the concept, the terms for the project management guidelines manual and the project board concept with the Ministry of Planning at the time.

Madam Chairman: Okay. The reason why I am asking that is, Mr. PS, I do not know if you are familiar with the implementation by the Ministry of Planning and Development of—I think it is the project screening brief?

Mr. Ali: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Yes? And, you know, I am wondering if this is not a duplication, or if it is not in contradiction to, so that is why I have asked if it has been shared with the Ministry of Planning and Development?

Mr. Ali: Chair, I am not so much answering that question whether it has been shared, but in terms of whether it is in contradiction, I think it complements the project board. As they said, it is a vetting mechanism, and they would definitely use the guidelines from the Ministry of Planning and Development's screening brief in its operations. It will be incorporated within its manual.

Madam Chairman: So it is almost as if you are self-assessing before you send on to be assessed?

Mr. Ali: That is correct. Yes.

Madam Chairman: All right. Okay. What I really would like to do is to just look a bit at some of your projects. I am looking at Princess Elizabeth Home for the Handicapped, and to get some idea, I think your budget allocation was $743,464, and to get some idea of what the objective of this project—or, objective is or objectives are—and to see where you are currently in your completion.

Mr. Ali: Thank you, Chair. So, the Princess Elizabeth Centre, that project, it has been on the books for more than a year. It really speaks to the upgrade of the facility. So, for this fiscal year the specific project that they are undertaking would be the expansion of the first floor of their back building to facilitation relocation of their surgical suite. That is the project. In terms of where we are currently? The centre has submitted an invoice for the mobilization payment to the contractor so that they can in turn facilitate the start of works.

Madam Chairman: All right. So that, if I am looking at the implementation plan that I have, this mobilization sum as of June would have been $297,385. Am I correct?

Mr. Ali: That is correct.

Madam Chairman: And that has been paid and settled?

Mr. Ali: Chair, we only received the releases this week, so—we only received releases this week, so it has not been paid just yet.

Madam Chairman: All right.

Mr. Ali: We recently received those releases.

Madam Chairman: Okay. All right. So, as far as the construction works, have any been done at all?

Mr. Ali: No, they have not started yet. I think they are waiting on the mobilization payment before they can in turn start works.

Madam Chairman: So, I am going back again at the implementation plan, and you know, as I say I may have some difficulty in reading this. If I am looking at June 2018, I am seeing here, mobilization of the contractor, the $297,000-plus, and construction works 25 per cent complete, some 185—let us say $186,000. I do not know if I am reading it correctly. So that if I am looking as of June, you should be 25 per cent complete and by the end of July, you should be 50 per cent complete. Are you on target?

Mr. Koylass: No, we are not, because that was contingent upon receiving the release of funds for the mobilization of the contractor. So, now that we have received the release of funds that could then be payable to the Princess Elizabeth Home—and we can have the contractor on board.

Madam Chairman: All right. So it means that you are behind schedule?

Mr. Koylass: We are behind schedule on that one. Yes.

Madam Chairman: So, no construction works have been done at all?

Mr. Koylass: Not on that project.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Mitigation and risk, how do we deal with that?

Mr. Koylass: First of all, one of the things which we have ensured with the Princess Elizabeth Centre, is the supervision of works. So, they have an engineer on board which is supervising the actual construction works. And, two: we have also assigned one of our project managers to that specific project. Where possible, if any works could be accelerated, obviously we will approach the contractor on that. But at this point of time, Madam Chair, the approach really is very, very close supervision on the project.

Madam Chairman: All right. So that, when do we anticipate that payment would be made for works to begin?

Mr. Ali: Chair, just to clarify, are you talking about the mobilization payment, or when works actually commence?

Madam Chairman: Well, what I understand if I recollect well, is that work has not begun because the mobilization fee has not been paid. But let me ask one question before that: In the releases that you got, did they include the 25 per cent sum to cover 25 per cent of the works, or it is only the mobilization fee?

Mr. Ali: It is my understanding it is just the mobilization payment.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So let me ask, how soon do you expect that the mobilization fee would be paid so that work can commence?

Mrs. Harvey-Bethel: Madam Chair, we applied for the credit today, so most likely by Friday we should be able to receive the credit from Comptroller of Accounts and process the cheque.

Madam Chairman: And, it will be processed. When would it be paid? And I might be misunderstanding.

Mrs. Harvey-Bethel: Processed and paid by Friday.

Madam Chairman: By Friday?

Mrs. Harvey-Bethel: Yes.

Madam Chairman: And therefore, what kind of projection in terms of commencement of work are we looking at, Mr. Project Manager, risk and mitigation?

Mr. Koylass: Once the mobilization payment is made, we would then expect the contractor to start within two weeks of the project to have his full team on board, and that would start off first of all with a kick-off meeting together with the PEH. Now, we have to recall that the contractor is engaged via the Princess Elizabeth Centre. So, our cheque will be payable to the Princess Elizabeth Centre who would then pay directly to the contractor.

Madam Chairman: All right, so what kind of controls do we have, Mr. PS, in terms of public moneys going to the Princess Elizabeth Home, and to ensure that this project—which so far we are running two months behind—is going to be dealt with?

Mr. Ali: Chair, I think Mr. Koylass spoke a bit about the controls in terms of what happens there, where we work closely with the centre and the staff within the centre, the engineer there. With regard to public moneys, that speaks to the contract between the contractor and the centre, and we would obviously have sight of that contract to ensure that it has those elements that are required in a contract: timelines, milestones, payment conditionalities, the obligations, penalties if necessary. That is the legal aspect of it. As Mr. Koylass mentioned, we have assigned a project manager to this project, so they will work closely with the centre.

Madam Chairman: All right.

Mr. Ali: And there will be regular meetings.

Madam Chairman: But your role as PS, as accounting officer, how do you see your role as accounting officer, in safeguarding—apart from the contract, your role in the actual safeguarding of these moneys, it is already late, but we have a time frame—in terms of judging the effectiveness, the efficiency, and timeliness of your project?

Mr. Brooks: I think that is where the reporting framework we in place with the agencies—in this case the Princess Elizabeth Centre—is important, where we get those very specific reports in terms of whether we have met the expected milestones based on the contract, whether the works have been done according to spec and to scope, whether we are within budget and within time, and that is where I rely on my project management unit to give me that sort of assurance and that information.

Madam Chairman: Are site visits programmed as part of this project? I know you say you have a project manager assigned, but I am talking in terms of, at the level of the overall project manager and the supervision by the Ministry.

Mr. Ali: Yes, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: All right. Let me ask some other thing. In terms of the releases for the first 25 per cent, has that been applied for?

Mr. Koylass: No. The way in which it would work, Madam Chair, is that once the works have been completed, certified, a payment certificate generated and an invoice presented at that point of time, we would then apply for the release.

Madam Chairman: And, I am just going to push Mr. Project Manager: What is the realistic completion date of this project?

Mr. Koylass: All right, the original time schedule which was given was 16 weeks to complete the project. So, that is roughly two/two and a half months, in terms of completion.

So, once we do start the project and have the contractor mobilized by the end of July, we will work towards having it completed within that original time period itself.

Madam Chairman: So, 16 weeks will take us to when?

Mr. Koylass: Sixteen weeks is two and a half months, so, August, September, it would take us into November. Sorry, four months, sorry. Four months from July, so that would be November of 2018.

Madam Chairman: November of 2018. All right. Let me just ask for the intervention of the Ministry of Planning and Development with respect to this particular project, and in terms of asking from PPRD's perspective, if there are any known problems or issues which may have resulted in the late release, or which may affect this project once the mobilization fee is paid, going forward, at the pace to complete within the projected time frame.

Ms. Deoraj: Thank you, Madam Chair, I would like to answer the question first in terms of the challenges. We would concur with the Ministry of Health that there have been some challenges in these two areas in particular: the area of capacity building, not only with the Ministry of Health, but maybe from other Ministries as well. Also, the issue of release of funds, even though sometimes the Ministry is ready and things are in place for execution, the challenges with the Ministry of Finance in releasing the funds. So, there is always that risk now at this point in time, that the timely release of funds will deter the implementation fees. But I will ask Mr. Brooks to speak specific to the project on the Lady Hochoy Home.

Mr. Brooks: Madam Chairman, as the PS would have indicated, the major challenge to the project really getting started has been the timely release of funds. In terms of the continued release of funds, that is under the purview of the Ministry of Finance, so we cannot really speak. But that has been the major issue in terms of the start-up of the project.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. Member Rambharat.

Mr. Rambharat: PS, I just wanted to ask two questions. One is, how are you reducing the duplication among the RHAs? Because, there is a tendency for each RHA to begin the procurement process as though another RHA had never done something similar. So, what are you doing to reduce the duplication to make sure that the RHAs know if something was procured by another RHA and they could use what had been prepared?

Mr. Ali: Thanks member. So, we mentioned we have our PMU, and I mentioned the whole issue of the planning. The way we seek to address that, when RHAs submit their proposals for their proposed projects—this would be when we are preparing for our budget, we would look at those projects. And when approved in terms of the national budget, the allocation, we would have a sense of what those projects are. And at the Ministry, we have a helicopter view of whether they have been purchased—another RHA has purchased, for example, ultrasound machines. And we would work with the respective RHA and say, "Listen, there are specs available, this is what we do, let us use those, modify it where necessary for your particular project". If it is infrastructure, for example, they want a refurbish award. We would look at the scope of works, look at what is done, if it existed in another RHA, flag that to that RHA, and that is how we seek to avoid—as you said, and quite correctly so—the duplication of effort. And that also should hopefully speed up the time in terms of getting the project off the ground, in terms of getting us ready to tender.

Mr. Rambharat: The other question deals with Chemistry, Food and Drugs Division. Could you lay out for us what is involved in reaching to the point where the new facility is commissioned?

Mr. Ali: You are speaking to the proposed new facility at Valsayn?

Mr. Rambharat: Valsayn, yes.

Mr. Ali: All right, so that project—can I ask Mr. Koylass to maybe answer that? He has the specifics.

Mr. Koylass: So, UNOPS, United Nations Office for Project Services has been engaged via technical assistance through PAHO/WHO. The project is divided into four phases towards completing the designs of it. We have completed Phase 1, which really is the technical feasibility and conceptual designs for the project itself, and that has been singed off by all stakeholders and the Ministry of Health. We are in the process of obtaining the MoU with respect to the other three phases, 2, 3 and 4, which will take us to the point of completing the detailed designs, the equipment and the tendering of the project. Once the designs are completed, we have the actual budget estimate. We will approach Cabinet for approval of the construction budget, and the engagement of a project management agency.

Mr. Rambharat: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: So, PS, of the 23 projects that you have ongoing, are any actually intended to be completed this fiscal year?

Mr. Koylass: Yes, we do in fact. We expect to complete with respect to the medical equipment projects, we expect to complete all the medical equipment projects. With respect to the projects under hospital refurbishment, there will be four projects which we expect to roll over into the next fiscal year. Under the physical investment project, the largest project there is the linear accelerator project at the St. James National Radiotherapy Centre, which was always intended to be completed in February 2019.

Madam Chairman: And of these—now, you said that the medical equipment projects would all be completed?

Mr. Koylass: Yes.

Madam Chairman: I think in one of them, if I remember well, I have seen that unutilized funding from your Medical Equipment Upgrade Programme—unutilized funding from your design for CAFRA headquarters would be allocated to your Medical Equipment Upgrade Programme, am I correct?

Mr. Koylass: No, you are not. That may have been for 2017—sorry, Madam Chairman, we have not, because the Phase II, III and IV, at this point of time will work out to a total of just over TT $11 million, and we have $12 million allocated for this fiscal.

Madam Chairman: Right. So, there is a footnote saying that, unutilized funding is to be transferred to Medical Equipment Upgrade Programme. So, what I understand is that your CAFRA project will be under budget. Okay? And that your intention is to transfer whatever difference to your Medical Equipment Upgrade Programme, am I correct in understanding what I have read here?

Mr. Koylass: Yes. Based on the note that we have here, that is correct. We do in fact have one regional health authority which has requested additional funding to procure an item of equipment, and any additional allocation would either come from here, or if we have to reallocate, would come from the hospital refurbishment.

Madam Chairman: Okay, so can I ask, why the need for additional funding for the particular regional health authority with respect to the aspect of equipment?

Mr. Ali: Sure. So, Madam Chair, when we have our budget approved at the start of the fiscal, we would then allocate those funds by RHA so they can undertake the equipment purchase. In most cases their request is more than we have been allocated. So, they would have some unmet needs in terms of equipment purchase. Once we identify possibly savings—so to speak—in a particular project, that is where we would then provide that funding to the RHA, so they can in turn purchase that equipment.

Madam Chairman: All right, you will have to go through your whole procurement processes and ensure that all of that is in order.

Mr. Ali: Correct. And that is why when we get those requests from the RHA we look at exactly that. As you said, if you are not going to be able to complete that procurement process in the fiscal, it might not make sense to allocate the funds there because it is not going to be spent. So when they make those requests for additional funding, we also ask them to submit that procurement plan to see whether it will in fact be completed in the fiscal year.

Madam Chairman: So, the plan is to put it under this project, Medical Equipment Upgrade, for which you would have got $45 million? Yes?

Mr. Ali: Yes, that is correct.

Madam Chairman: So, if I am understanding well, you are saying that $45 million that was allocated, was not your request. Is that what I am understanding?

Mr. Ali: That is correct, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Might I ask, and you may not have it, but you could supply, what was the variance between your request and your allocation?

Mr. Ali: Sure. I will be happy to supply in writing, I do not have it here, as you said, but we will submit it in writing.

Madam Chairman: As regards any of the projects that would not be completed in this fiscal year, how many which will not be completed, were intended to be completed?

Mr. Koylass: Madam Chair, there were two projects in particular which we had intended to complete: one in fact was what we first spoke about, was the designs for the CAFRA. That was in fact intended to have been completed in this fiscal year. The second project which was intended to be completed in this fiscal was the renovation of wards 201 and 202 at the Port of Spain General Hospital. That is going to go into fiscal 2018/2019.

Madam Chairman: All right. So, as far the renovation of wards 201 and 202, could you share with the Committee what is the reason why you are not going to meet the estimated completion date according to the original project?

Mr. Koylass: That is a project which includes not only the renovation of wards 201 or 202. It was re-scoped also to include an operating theatre which would add a significant, more functionality to it, so that you would no longer have to be moving patients into another obstetrics theatre. In order to complete the theatre, a specialist design consultant had to be engaged. That procurement process, plus having the designs completed for the operating theatre required a significant period of time. So that that has now been completed, the project has been awarded and the contractor has mobilized on that project.

Madam Chairman: So that the scope of the project had changed? Is that—

Mr. Koylass: Yes, it did change in terms of including the dedicated operating theatre as part of the refurbishment. When we met with the clinicians we realized it would have added significantly more functionality to have the operating theatre included in that component.

Madam Chairman: Was that resubmitted to Ministry of Planning and Development?

Mr. Koylass: The actual specific of including the dedicated operating theatre—well, in the description of the project itself you will see that its renovation of wards 201 and 202 with the inclusion of an operating theatre. So, in terms of our PSIP reporting, that forms the description of the project.

Madam Chairman: And what was approved was wards 201 and 202?

Mr. Koylass: What was approved was the renovation of wards 201 and 202. What was not fully detailed at that point in time was the full scope of the project.

Madam Chairman: And I am asking if the full scope of the project was resubmitted to the Ministry of Planning and Development.

Mr. Koylass: No. The answer to that, we would not have resubmitted the full scope, which is in the description of the project itself.

Madam Chairman: So can I ask the PS of the Ministry of Planning and Development, is that the way it is supposed to be done? I just need for the benefit of the Committee, some guidance with respect to when a particular scope is approved, I would expect that is what comes to the budget and to the Standing Finance Committee of the Parliament et cetera, in, how does that change by a Ministry, to be a different scope, and how does the financing of that then accrue?

Ms. Deoraj: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. No, this would be an unusual situation. It would be very specific scope with the renovations of the wards, but adding what now sounds like almost a hospital theatre, it will be a lot greater cost, and therefore it most likely would have to be resubmitted to the Cabinet for approval—and that cost. It would not be within the budget and the scope of the project, so we would expect that the Ministry of Finance—Ministry of Health, sorry, would return with this project.

Madam Chairman: Mr. PS.

Mr. Ali: Thank you, Madam Chair, and just to clarify one thing. I think Mr. Koylass just did not get a chance to mention it. It is within the original budget. So the scope has changed, I agree, but we are still within the budget that was approved for this project. Well, the expected cost is within the budget.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, we have a project that is 201, 202 and a theatre. We get approval for 201. Let me ask something, in the project that was conceptualized and the cost estimates, et cetera, et cetera, that we would have done as you say, according to what is required for our meeting the Ministry of Finance Call Circular, and for us meeting the reporting of our project objectives and so on, to the Ministry of Planning and Development—okay?

3.30 p.m.

I would have expected, I do not know, you can assist me, that we would have a component for 201, a component for 202 and a component for the theatre, okay. If I understand well, only 201 and 202 were approved. So I would expect the budget that would have been approved would support that. I may be wrong, but that is what I think. So that if it is that the theatre which was not approved is now within the budget of 201 or 202, I therefore need you Mr. PS to really explain that to me.

Mr. Koylass: All right. Can I explain, Madam Chair? The actual submission for 2018 in our estimates was in fact the renovation of wards 201, 202 with the inclusion of an operating theatre. So when we submitted for 2018 that was the project description which we gave. The Ministry receives an allocation, a lump sum allocation, we meet with each particular RHA, and based on the projects we allocate funds for a specific project. And in this case the funds which were allocated through the Ministry to the regional health authority did in fact meet the budget for the operating theatre.

Madam Chairman: So, I get it then that what you are telling me is that operating theatre was approved and therefore if it was approved then that cannot be the reason for the delay. You know, that is what I understand.

Mr. Koylass: Madam Chair, the reason I gave for the delay was because of the fact that the renovation includes the operating theatre. The regional health authority had to engage a specialist consultant to complete the designs for the operating theatre component. So I think that is what I was trying to get through, because of the specialized nature of the theatre there was a separate procurement to engage an engineer to complete designs for the operating theatre.

Madam Chairman: So, maybe I could ask the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Planning and Development to assist the Committee so that we can bring some finality to this issue and move on to something else. Thank you.

Mrs. Deoraj: Thank you, Madam Chair. What we are seeing here from our information is, yes, there was a proposal. So would we be allowed to submit in detail the proposal with respect to this project and we can see how the funding would be allocated for it.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. Might I ask the members if there are any other questions you wish to ask? Okay. So, PS of Ministry of Health there are quite a number of questions we still have to ask but I think we will have to reduce them to writing, because, of course, we have other Ministries to which we have allocated time and we need to be somewhat sensitive.

So I want to thank you for your assistance, you and your team for coming. I wish you all a pleasant evening and a safe journey home. Thank you very much. You are relieved.

[*Ministry of Health Officials depart meeting*]

MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Norris Herbert	Permanent Secretary
Ms. Frances Seignoret	Permanent Secretary Ag.
Mr. Randall Karim	Director, Policy and Strategy
Ms. Sandra Peter-Sarabjit	Senior Project Analyst
Mr. Derrick Jaggernauth	Research Officer
Ms. Gaynelle Abraham Braithwaite	Programme Manager

Madam Chairman: Welcome to the Permanent Secretary and the other representatives of the Ministry of Trade and Industry to our meeting of the PAAC. I therefore invite the Permanent Secretary to introduce himself and the members of the team.

[*Introduction made*]

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. Mr. PS, I therefore invite you to make a brief opening statement regarding PSIP in your Ministry.

Mr. Herbert: Thank you again. Our PSIP, our capital programme is in the vicinity of $68 million. Two components, mainly funded from the Consolidated Fund, which is, in the region of 50.2 and $18 million in terms of the Infrastructure Development Fund. As at June 30th we had spent $10.4 million which is about 15.5 per cent and we project, based on where we are at this point to the end of the year, that we can spend in the vicinity of 76 per cent of our allocation by the end of fiscal year. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. PS. Okay, so that maybe we could start off where you left off, in that you said that as of June 30th you spent $10.4 million, equivalent to 15 per cent of your PSIP. And I would like to ask, what challenges, if any, you may have suffered for the first, I would say the first nine months of the fiscal year to have only spent 15 per cent?

Mr. Herbert: First, contextually we have a number of the payments on the major projects loaded in this quarter. That is one of the issues. So, for instance, we have in the SEW project we have two major payments in the IDF which would be due in August/September and then we have the SEW project again, which is the IDB, it is US $25 million project and lots of the contracts were awarded during the course of the year and we anticipate that there would be an expenditure in this quarter.

So, in the first year the major obstacle we had was one of financing and if we were to examine the releases, like at March this year, the first six months is when we started to get releases. So the first half of the year in terms of financing the activities were stymied and during the course of the year some of the—even in the cases where we had releases, we were limited in terms of what we can pay, in terms of the payment from the instructions from the Treasury Department. So that kind of delayed us a bit and when you do not spend that also impacts on further releases.

So we had a problem in terms of financing. Then we have different types of arrangements. So, for instance, the SEW/IDB Project it is funded through a Central Bank account, whereas the IDF is, you spend and then you get reimbursed and then we have some in house projects. So the challenges vary. So in the case of the SEW Project we had an institutional prohibition because like the transition with the procurement system, there were cases where, like CTB did not have a director of contracts and although we had the project arrangements ready to go there were delays unforeseen that impacted our scheduled. So, like for instance, if CTB does not have a director for a month and we have all the project documents there before them, by the time they do get a director that would have delayed us a month then we would have to do the things that we would have normally done before. So that would delay us even further than that, so that was one of the obstacles.

Other than that, we have recognized that there is a capacity issue which we have to build and we have been working on that over the last two to three years, both at the Ministry level and at the level of the agencies that execute the project. So those are some of the issues that we have had to grapple with so far.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Just before we go any further. You know, Mr. PS, acronyms are so tempting, but for the benefit of the Committee and our listening public, you know, I know S-E-W is sew and I am not sure if I have heard about three SEWs and therefore I would really like you to take the opportunity to explain to us what SEW is, please.

Mr. Herbert: Okay, Chair. I think I used two sets of acronyms. CTB which is Central Tenders Board. I think everyone knows that. That is the central agency that is responsible for—

Madam Chairman: That is why I went to SEW.

Mr. Herbert: And SEW is the Single Electronic Window which is a number of activities which we have on the electronic platform aimed at creating further efficiency in the environment in terms of the ease of doing business, in terms of systems for various administrative activities. Its code name is TTBizLink, but it is a Single Electronic Window. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. Now, Mr. PS, I have seen that you have 16 approved Cabinet projects. As I have heard, I think I have heard about three SEWs if I have that right—

Mr. Herbert: Two.

Madam Chairman: Two. Could you give us an idea of what these 16 projects are and in terms of what their objectives are?

Mr. Herbert: I will start with the infrastructural project, which is the Moruga Park. And essentially that project aims at creating economic space for the conduct of business activities for businesses in Trinidad and Tobago. And it is intended to cover agro-processing activities and light manufacturing. So that essentially is what we set out to do there and I could ask PS Seignoret to further expatiate because she deals with that aspect.

Then there is the two Single Electronic Window Projects which, one of which deals with some 18 consultancies under that arrangement. So, for instance, it deals with customs risk management process which covers not only customs but all the other governmental agencies which impact on decisions at the border when goods come into customs. It addresses the issue of institutional arrangements, because as we seek to improve the environment we have to enhance trade licensing unit and other units. Then there is the business reengineering process which really requires the reengineering of various activities to make processes that much easier. There is the Cloud where we have significant storage under the other SEW project and which we have to migrate to something which is sustainable in the context of Trinidad and Tobago.

Inside there we also have a legislative consultancy to improve the trade and business environment. Much of the legislation that governs our trade and business environment is archaic and we have to improve that to some extent. We have 10 of them and we have exporTT projects which seek to work with a group of businesses, a select group of businesses to try to build capacity, to allow businesses to migrate from one level to another level so that they are more efficient in terms of accessing the export market.

In addition to that, we have, like, in the creative area, we have projects that seek to advance the film sector. That is one. One that seeks to enhance the music sector and we had a Live Music District Pilot Programme and then we have a fashion, which is, a programme which we have with the international consultant and we have our business project which covers all of that for a business strategic plan. Then we have two internal, very small projects, which seek to improve the IT in the Ministry, especially in the TLU, which is our Trade Licensing Unit and we have some minor activities in the yachting and maritime sector where we seek to advance the sector for which there is a ministerial Committee that guides those activities.

Then, in terms of the quality area we have developed a national quality policy and there are a number of projects inside of there. That policy was completed recently, maybe like a month or two ago and there are a number of projects inside there that are to be rolled out. So those are some of the—

Madam Chairman: And therefore, I will ask you to list them for us in writing. What I wanted to find out though is that of these 16 projects, how many are intended to be completed in this fiscal?

Mr. Herbert: None of these projects will be completed in this fiscal. Originally we had two small, the TTCSI project, which is the Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industries, which is a financing project, and the strategy for the business creative sector, they were originally carded—they were small projects and they were intended to be completed this year and they would not be completed. We have not had any releases on those two items for the year, even at this point and they would not be completed. But all the others are for a period of, about three to five years, there are aspects of the projects that would be completed but the projects would generally be completed within three to five years. We revamp all our entire programme last year and we more or less structured it within that time frame.

Madam Chairman: All right, so let me ask, your financing project and the strategy for businesses project, you said those were delayed because up to now you have had no releases. Can I ask, why you have not had any releases? Is it that the project was not conceived properly? Is it that, you know, you have not complied with the Ministry of Finance Call Circular? Is it that you do not have capacity that it cannot get off the ground, that is why?

Mr. Herbert: I think the projects did not receive releases because in the context of the priorities that funds available to the Ministry there were no funds for that. The peculiarity of these two projects are—they are implemented by agencies that did not have resources to even start it, financial resources to even start it even in the absence of funds released. For instance, like in e TecK for instance, if you have a project you would still be able to start it with the anticipation that the relevant releases will be realized, but these two, the TTCSI which is a very small services organization and the creative industries just did not have any resources to start those two projects.

Madam Chairman: So let me ask therefore, in terms of your project with respect to the yachting and maritime sector, is that a new project?

Mr. Herbert: I will ask the PS to—

Ms. Seignoret: Good afternoon, Chair and all. In terms of the project pertaining to the yachting, the yachting plan is really guided by a fairly recently approved Yachting Policy. And that has now been able to be kicked off. So that as of now there has been little expenditure because it was guided in essence by that policy framework. And so one of the major activities that came out of that approved framework was the hosting of a regatta one of the first, or rather in more recent times a more recently staged regatta that was held in May and it was quite well received from the reports that we have got.

And in addition to which, there was also in that Yachting Policy a marketing plan, a desire for stakeholders in the yachting industry to be trained and specifically in the area of customer service. That customer service module did in fact take place within the last six weeks and we are working steadily on a marketing promotional plan and aspects thereof and placements of ads in the pertinent magazines, one, of course, being that Trinidad and Tobago is uniquely situated at the bottom of the chain of islands and therefore out of the hurricane belt. And that ad should also be going into circulation and being part and parcel of the entire thrust to rebuild and re-strengthen the yachting sector in Trinidad and Tobago, because it is seen as one that can generate employment, generate revenue, and most importantly generate foreign currency.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. I really get the impression—so that of your 16, none will be finished in this fiscal? None will be finished in this fiscal at all?

Mr. Herbert: None will be finished in this fiscal.

Madam Chairman: Now, let me ask something. In terms of, I know the Ministry of Planning and Development has created this project, Screening Brief. Have you been complying with that?

Mr. Herbert: We have had some discussions on it recently and we are holding our own discussions on that. But we have been in compliance with the Call Circular in general, the project definition reports and all of that. So it is, I would say, by and large we are in compliance with that but we had some recent discussions on that, as recent as last week.

Madam Chairman: Okay, so that, if I understand is that you really have not instituted this project, Screening Brief?

Mr. Herbert: No, we have not.

Madam Chairman: All right. Now let me also ask something. In terms of, what you have said is that you expect, that you project, by the end of this fiscal you would have expended about 76 per cent of your PSIP, all right. In terms of deliverables on your projects as scoped for the fiscal, what sort of correlation would exist?

Mr. Herbert: All right. There are elements, some of the projects have discreet elements, sub-elements, so some of those would be completed. Like for instance, under the music project we had the Live Music District Pilot which was completed. We also had, in terms of the SEW/IDB Project, the Single Electronic Window/IDB Project, we have about 10 contracts executed, 10 consultancy contracts executed. So we have specific activities, deliverables, amounts of moneys, contacted obligations. So we actually know, once we follow the timeline and it is likely that it would be followed, but there is always the exception that something could be protracted because a deliverable might be delivered to us, the client, and maybe we have to haggle a bit with the consultant about it. So that is always the possibility. But we have worked out, we have put together all the schedules under the contractual arrangements, the 10 contractual arrangements under this project and we have anticipated that we will still spend and do specific things by September 30th.

4.00 p.m.

In terms of the Moruga project, that is being executed by eTecK through UDeCOTT. UDeCOTT is the doer. And in that case the Cabinet has mandated eTecK to utilize a certain amount of funding that they have. So that project has started and there are specific deliverables. They have mobilized already. They have done the designs and the activities for—at the milestone of September it is known what we will achieve. But there is only $13.3 million inside there for this year and that project, which is expected to end in March 2019, is in vicinity of—the project cost is in the vicinity of $79 million. So $13 is here. eTecK is to put in about 30, and the rest will come into next year. So these are two of the big projects. Then we have the IDF Single Electronic Window which is a contractual arrangement for memory storage and that sort of thing, by an IT company. So there are specific things to be done there in this year.

Madam Chairman: I think, Mr. PS, to really give us a good appreciation, I would ask you if you could give us, in writing, as per your 16 projects, your actual budget allocation per project, your releases per project, your spend per project, your percentage rate of whatever completed, per project, and your expected date of completion per project. And that may give us a better—

And what I want to, therefore, ask you now is that in terms of your expected 76 per cent completion at the end of fiscal, and all things being equal—I think that is the phrase, "all things being equal", because I understand you are saying, things might happen. How would you rate that 76 per cent? And this is now just your spend, eh; this is not your output, and this is how I understand it.

Mr. Herbert: Based on our history, we will consider that to be mediocre. We would expect that to be somewhere within at least 80 per cent.

Madam Chairman: You will expect that to be 80 per cent. Okay. So how do you manage risk and mitigation, having regard to how you have evaluated yourself?

Mr. Herbert: Here is where I call on my project director to help out.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Karim, I think you have the spotlight.

Mr. Karim: Yes, and the hardest question as well. As the Permanent Secretary indicated, if one examines the annual appropriation accounts of the Ministry of Trade and Industry under the development programme, we are generally at an 85/90 per cent utilization of what has been allocated to us over the years. This year, as the PS indicated, we have had a number of challenges, both on the financing side and as well as the procurement side. At the beginning of each fiscal year we meet with all of the agencies during the annual budgeting exercise to identify risk—develop our risk matrix.

On a regular basis, every four to six weeks, we meet with the agencies to really, you know, implement the relevant risk mitigation measures. Some of them, admittedly, are out of the control of the ministry when it comes to funding and financing. Others, we have a myriad of institutional arrangements. We work very closely with the Ministry of Planning and Development. We work with all of the relevant stakeholders involved in the execution of our various projects. So we do have a risk management plan we create at the beginning of the fiscal year. We try to implement the risk management plan. But as members would appreciate, very often there are several elements of those—several risks that really are out of the control of the Ministry.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Karim. I want to invite the other members of the Committee to join the conversation, so I would ask member Webster-Roy if she can take over from here.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Thank you, Madam Chair. PS, when you were outlining the projects you noted that you had the three new projects: development of the music industry; development of the film industry and development of the fashion industry. You identified the Live Music District as an activity under the music industry project. In terms of that particular activity, were you able to execute it within budget?—one. Two, were your objectives realized, and what tools you used to verify that you actually achieved the objectives and goals you would have set out under that particular activity in the project?

Mr. Herbert: I will ask PS Seignoret to intervene because that is her area. But just to say that it was well within budget because we have been seeking various counterpart arrangements with business to help us execute. And it was completed, I think, two Sundays ago and the research is still taking place. But I will ask PS Seignoret to—

Ms. Seignoret: Thank you, PS Herbert. I would, in essence, have said the very same thing. The first three months, or just a little over three months of the Live Music District that came to an end successfully, they are within budget. There was also an approach to corporate sponsors which we were not always very successful in seeking, but we do recognize the invaluable support of a couple of those sponsors. The reason for the pilot is that this is the point in time that we are actually going to be, through the Music Company of Trinidad and Tobago, evaluating the last few months, evaluating the number of performances, the venues, the feedback from the audiences, the performers themselves, those who have been a part of the Live Music District, those who signed on, and looking to see what the needs are; how that process can be improved so that the next phase, which hopefully, will start in September or thereabouts, would be tightened in terms of what is expected to be delivered, and emphasizing value for money, and ensuring that those artistes, that wealth of talent that exists and that we see on every occasion that such a performance takes place, that that talent has an avenue to grow and has an avenue to develop.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Okay. So that is one activity that you would have been able to implement within budget and time under the music programme. What are some of the activities, particularly under the film industry and the fashion industry? Because those are areas that a lot of my constituents are very passionate about. So if you could give me some information on that, please.

Ms. Seignoret: Sure. In terms of the fashion industry, there are two projects that are currently being rolled out. One is the Bespoke Training Programme, and that is within the budgetary arrangements. That, too, is not expected to be finalized this year, but by February of 2019.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: That was the timeline for it?

Ms. Seignoret: Yes. It is a one-year project, started on the first Monday in March, if I am not mistaken. The Value Chain Investment Programme just came to an end earlier on this year and the new cohort, the 2018 cohort, that launch took place on Saturday, June 30th. And we see that also as having a lot of potential. If one looks at the 2017 feedback, some of those participants have reported that they have increased their product offering. They are actually, in a couple instances, now exporting outside of Trinidad and Tobago, albeit within the region, but nevertheless, that is exports to St. Lucia, Antigua and Barbados. That has been reported to us. And we see the rollout of that programme again straddles two years. So we think that we will be able to stay within the budget. We have got releases for that particular segment and we are very hopeful that all approvals would be received for us to move forward with that.

In respect of film, the film strategic plan was completed this year. There are six strategic areas. Primarily, among those we are looking at, the Production Expenditure Rebate Programme and a re-engineering of that, putting that in train, and that is being actively looked at; the marketing of Trinidad and Tobago as a significant location in which to film movies, or its commercials, or anything of the sort, and to support that; to have a training programme, a capacity-building programme for persons who are in that sphere of activity. And that is going to be vital, so that persons can be certified in order to support any foreign productions that may come to Trinidad and Tobago.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: In terms of the fashion, you said that you had some participants from the last cohort now exporting. Did you have a target set in terms of the number of participants who would have been able to go into the foreign market? And did you meet that target?

Ms. Seignoret: Unfortunately, I am unable to respond at this point, but I can undertake to get some further details and make that available.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Okay. And in terms of the film now, you mentioned the capacity-building training. That is something that has to come on stream. Would that be in the new fiscal?

Ms. Seignoret: Yes. We are hoping to be moving into a launch of the key areas. I believe the Minister of Trade and Industry, on a previous occasion, may have alluded to the key areas from a short-term perspective and a medium-term perspective. But, certainly, the training aspect is one that is ongoing in different areas, but a focus in the next fiscal.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: So, basically, the various activities you have under the three projects I have mentioned, you are satisfied with the performance of the different activities?

Ms. Seignoret: At this stage they are very encouraging.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Okay. Apart from the releases, what are some of the challenges?

Ms. Seignoret: Perhaps, I think, the resources, from a point of view of human resources as well, to be able to move from one aspect to another. I think that sometimes the capacity and the number of available resources and experienced resources, sometimes those may impact on moving forward a project in a timely fashion.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: And what are you doing to overcome that particular challenge?

Ms. Seignoret: Well, we, on occasion, if necessary, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, will look to support or assist if there is an element that is being rolled out and there is need for additional support.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Okay. Thank you.

Ms. Seignoret: My pleasure.

Madam Chairman: Member Rambharat.

Mr. Rambharat: Yes, PS Herbert, how is the Single Electronic Window project proceeding?

Mr. Herbert: How is it, sorry?

Mr. Rambharat: How is it proceeding? We know it has had a long history. So how is it proceeding?

Mr. Herbert: Before I let the programme manager intervene, I will say that we have started the whole Single Electronic Window concept some time ago, but after some 46, I think, modules, we have structured the next intervention in the context of this project. So this project has been proceeding wonderfully. If you talk to the IDB who is doing the sponsor, or even the Ministry of Planning and Development there with you, you will see that we have reached out to various beneficiaries. So it is not just a trade project, but it is the Customs, it is the Ministry of Planning and Development, it is the Ministry of Finance, it is the Attorney General, you know, various elements that impact on the business environment. That is just conceptually.

In addition, you have, like in terms of project planning and that sort of thing, the IDB will, in our discussions they have told us, look, this is probably the most ambitious of timelines they have had for a project in Trinidad and Tobago for quite a long while. In other words, all the pre-project activities, our timelines were really optimistic and we have, by and large, stuck with them, but the challenge has been in cases where the institutional arrangements of the CTB, and that sort of thing, has kicked in. But by and large, we have been within all our timelines.

When we met with them on the last occasion, they had one issue. They found that civil society was not involved enough. We interpreted that to mean that they were not seeing the formal structures for civil society. So since then, we have had various interventions through the electronic media, like social media, and that sort of thing. We have had outreach activities. We have had a number of sessions. And even that, they are now happy with that. So they are happy and we are happy. Programme manager—if you would allow, Chair?

Ms. Braithwaite: Thank you, Chair. I am very happy to know that the programme has been performing wonderfully and I endorse what the PS has said. And yes, the IDB has, as well, endorsed the project and its performance. The challenge with the project initially was really the procurement process, as the PS would have outlined. The procurement process with the CTB has been lengthy and we found, on average, that for our major procurement the average time is one year. It is a five-year project of which the total sum is US $25 million, which amounts to, I think, TT $169.5 million, of which we have committed to spend in a five-year period. So the initial performance within the first year, to a year-and-a-half of the project, was slow. We have had two disbursements from the

IDB to date. So the total sum at this point is 12 per cent of the $25 million, which is US $2.9 million. And at this stage of the 25 or so procurement processes under the IDB loan, we have eight, or so, signed contracts. And so the total sum at this point is US $7.18 million in terms of commitments.

Consultants are on the ground for: the legislative consultancy, the business process re-engineering consultancy, the integrated risk management consultancy, and interestingly enough, they have been working very closely together, as consultants, sharing information, as well as working with all of our stakeholder agencies, such as Customs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, various ministries and agencies; internally, the Ministry of Trade, our trade directorate, our investment directorate. And so what we are finding is we are unearthing a lot of—even the Treasury division, because we are looking at electronic payments, and we have met with the Minister in the Ministry of Finance to discuss that in detail.

For this project to work we need all of the inputs and buy-in from various stakeholders at all of our stakeholder Ministries, because we are looking, of course, to improve trade and business performance. So there is the financial performance of the project; there is the implementation factor, but then there is also that consultative aspect that I think we have been able to successfully implement.

Mr. Rambharat: For the viewers and the listening audience, could you just, very quickly, say what is the objective of this project?

Mr. Karim: Quite simply, the objective is to improve the international trade performance of Trinidad and Tobago. We are 102 in the world in the Ease-Of-Doing-Business. We have set the goal to be in the top 50 countries to improve our international ranking. All of the projects within the IDB loan are geared at various reforms in various sectors of the economy, specifically in trade and business, to improve our competitiveness, because we believe if we could improve the Ease-Of-Doing-Business, we will be in a much better location for investment activity. We could increase our export performance, et cetera. So all of the consultancies that were identified by the programme manager are geared at reform areas.

We could implement electronic payments, so citizens could go online, pay their taxes; pay their customs duties online; construction permit under the Ministry of Planning and

Development. We have just awarded US $2 million consultancy for the Ministry of Planning and Development to totally revamp the construction-permitting process in Trinidad and Tobago, and that project started three months ago, being spearheaded by the Ministry of Planning and Development.

Risk management, I know in different fora at the Parliament level, you all have been looking at border management, border security. Risk management is aimed at giving the Customs and Excise, and all of our regulatory agencies: Chemistry, Food and Drugs, Agriculture, the various technologies in which to be able to do more sophisticated screening of goods so that you could have an accelerated pace of goods clearance. Then we have, as the PS mentioned, consultancies aimed at overhauling our legal environment for trade, business and investment.

Mr. Rambharat: Will this reduce corruption?

Mr. Karim: We imagine that it should definitely reduce the discretionary powers within a number of our regulatory agencies; introduce a far greater level of transparency. And, admittedly, of course, the level of innovation and, if you want to use the word, corruption, that takes place within our agencies, we expect it to be significantly reduced. A lot of that will depend on the change management procedures that agencies are willing to make and the accountability that the Executive places on the civil service bureaucracy, because a number of the reforms that we have identified, a lot of overhaul needs to take place in terms of accountability and how people are managed.

Mr. Rambharat: One last question. In terms of implementation of the single electronic window, how much delay is on account of the public service not being enthusiastic about the changes?

Mr. Karim: There are some aspects of the project that we have had to work much harder with a number of our stakeholder agencies. There are some Ministries and agencies that have been far more enthusiastic than others. That is a fact. We have our colleagues from the Ministry of Planning and Development. They have been extremely super enthusiastic. In fact, they are one of our best stakeholder ministries. Your Ministry, the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, Minister Rambharat, has been very, very enthusiastic and eager both under the animal health division, plant quarantine services.

So there are different levels of enthusiasm and engagement at the different levels. But, admittedly, you know, there are some areas and some agencies that we would like to see much more initiative, much more interest. But our Ministry continues to work both at the ministerial level, at the level of the Cabinet and at the inter-ministerial level, at the level of Permanent Secretaries and at the technical level, to get the level of implementation we would like to see.

Madam Chairman: All right. Thank you very much. So I just want to ask the Project Planning and Reconstruction Division, in terms of, from your perspective, from what you know otherwise, and what we have heard here, are there any problems that you see that the Ministry of Trade and Industry have caused, or have occurred in their planning and implementation of the PSIP for 2019?

Mrs. Deoraj: Thank you, Chair. Actually, we have looked at the trend in the Ministry of Trade and Industry and would like to endorse that they have always done very well in terms of the utilization rate. This year they were challenged, and having had several meetings with them to help assist with the removal of the bottlenecks, I think they are poised to achieve the target that they have set for themselves, given the execution of a number of contracts that are already listed for completion for this year. So I think that they have been working very well. They are one of the Ministries that we have looked at in terms of a good example of getting very clear projects, very engaged with their agencies, to be able to execute. So I think that they are quite a good example of success.

Madam Chairman: And having said that, are there any recommendations you would want to make to them? Because "well" could always be better.

Mrs. Deoraj: Yes. I think in terms of their work, it is just to continue the execution and to assist, perhaps, with identifying some of the challenges a little bit earlier so that we can work on it together.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And PS, I really thought one of the recommendations would be that they would start utilizing your project screening brief.

Mrs. Deoraj: Yes, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: I mean, unless you do not think that that will assist them—

Mrs. Deoraj: No, no, no—

Madam Chairman:—and then we turn back to you.

Mrs. Deoraj: No. Certainly, when we met with them earlier, as they had indicated, we brought that issue to their attention and they have committed to undertake such.

Madam Chairman: So Mr. PS, unfortunately—because we are having a nice conversation—we are challenged by time and we have to bring the conversation to an end. We have some other questions that we will send to you, in writing. I want to thank you, your Acting Permanent Secretary, your senior project analyst, your research officer, your director, policy and strategy and your programme manager, for coming and having a very engaging conversation with us. You all are excused. We wish you all a safe journey home. Thank you very much.

Mr. Herbert: Thank you very much, on behalf of our Ministry, to you and the members and the Ministry of Planning and Development.

[*Ministry of Trade and Industry Officials depart meeting*]

4.30 p.m.

MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT

Ms. Sonia Francis-Yearwood	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mr. Navin Ramsingh	Director of Highways, Highways Division
Ms. Paula Webber	Director of Drainage, Drainage Division
Mr. Latiff Mohammed	Director of Construction, Construction Division
Ms. Lisa Balkaran	Chief Planning Officer, Central Planning Unit
Mr. Hayden Phillip	Programme Director, Programme for Upgrading Roads Efficiency (PURE)
Ms. Candice Gray-Bernard	Programme Director, Coastal Protection Unit
Mr. Adande Piggott	Traffic Engineer, Traffic Management Branch
Ms. Esther Farmer	President, National Infrastructure Development Company Limited (NIDCO)

Madam Chairman: Good afternoon to the representatives of the Ministry of Works and Transport. I wish to apologize for the little delay you may have had, but I am certain that we might have provided you with some entertainment that we are missing. So I would like to invite the Permanent Secretary to introduce herself and the members of her staff, please.

[*Introductions made*]

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. Oh, there are other members in the back? Sure.

[*Introductions made*]

Madam Chairman: So I think we have everyone now? Okay. So, Madam PS, I will invite you to make a brief opening statement on your PSIP.

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: Thank you, Chair. The strategic goals and objectives of the programmes and projects contained in the PSIP—the Public Sector Investment Programme of the Ministry of Works and Transport—in line and guided with those articulated in the National Development Strategy 2016—2030, specifically under the thematic area of Theme III: Improving Productivity through Quality Infrastructure and Transport, safe and efficient transport and transportation infrastructure. The Ministry in 2017/2018 received an allocation of $820,400,000 for the implementation of 85 projects and programmes. This original allocation was later revised to $911,048,899 and the projects from 85 to 91.

Madam Chairman: So I guess you are completed?

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: Yes, Chair.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Thank you very much. So that you say your projects have now gone to 91?

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Yes? All right. PS, just by way of information, of the 91 how many were intended to be completed this year, and how many will actually be completed this year and we are talking about this fiscal?

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: Chair, most of our projects and programmes are ongoing programmes. We have programmes, for instance under the PURE Unit where we have a number of projects, and in there we would have projects that would have been intended to and will be completed this year. The same will go for under our Coastal Protection Unit. The actual numbers, I can let the directors of those sections if you want, they can give you a brief overview.

Madam Chairman: So maybe in the interest of time, we will ask you to submit that in writing.

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: Not a problem.

Madam Chairman: And I will want to just turn the conversation over to member Rambharat.

Mr. Rambharat: Thank you, Chair. PS, the main purpose of the enquiry is to deal with the challenges faced in implementation and you have a large portfolio of projects. Could you just share with us some of the challenges faced so far in implementation of the PSIP for this fiscal?

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: For this fiscal, we would have certain challenges that really transcend this fiscal. We would submit our request to the Ministry of Finance, and Planning, with a certain request, and based on the national financial situation we would get an allocation. We would then seek to take that allocation and restructure our PSIP based on the allocation. So one of the challenges we would face would be in some areas funding, the issue of funding. So we may have projects where we may get an allocation, but based on how the project is to be implemented it really would not suffice to start it this year. So we would seek to take those funds and see where we can redirect it to somewhere that would be more profitable. So that is one area.

This year, we also had the challenge of previous year commitments. We had quite a substantial amount of commitments from the previous year, and previous year commitments are your first call for your current year. Because of the issue of previous year commitments, we then had a challenge of the willingness and the ability of certain contractors to continue working. So the start-up time, the remobilization in some projects would have been affected. We also had a challenge of legal issues. For similar reasons we do have quite a number of legal matters before us now. Those legal matters were not only because of funding, but we also had some other legal challenges based on stakeholder challenges in certain areas.

One of the areas and the challenges that we have from previous years and continues is the question of the payment process. So the length of time sometimes that it takes to actually go through the payment process does bring a challenge to the contractor continuing the work. I would say those are our main issues. We have minor ones, but—

Mr. Rambharat: Okay, and now that you are preparing your submission for next fiscal, what might you be doing differently based on the experience of this fiscal?

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: Well, in terms of preparing for this fiscal as we would have prepared for last fiscal, we are guided by the Call Circular that is submitted to us by the Ministry of Finance and the input from the Ministry of Planning and Development. The major difference this year and we have already started it, is the issue of how we prepare the project to go forward. Before, in particular, for new projects we had a project profile which has now been developed further into a project screening brief which we are seeking to use as we go forward for next fiscal. We have actually implemented it in two projects that we started midstream this year. We have started to use that already. In going forward as well, we have looked closely at the challenges we are having in terms of the contractor issue, and how ready the environment is for certain types of work, and also how that would affect the way in which we seek to implement certain projects.

Madam Chairman: PS, I have seen that you have about five projects: this is the national transportation plan; the establishment of a vessel traffic management information system; the programme of safety and security, et cetera, which would not have received any funding this year; and I guess they were pulled at the mid-year review. Could you share with us what would have been the cause for those projects being pulled?

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: Could you call the projects again for me?

Madam Chairman: The development of a national transportation plan; the establishment of a vessel traffic management information system; programme of safety and security; upgrading and modernization of navigational aids; and the acquisition of two multipurpose vessels.

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: Okay. I will start from below and come up.

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: In terms of the allocation that was originally given for the acquisition of the vessels as well as for nav aids, the allocation did not allow for a proper start-up of those projects this year. In particular, the vessel traffic management system, that is quite an involved project that requires training, that requires accommodation and requires acquisition of highly specified equipment, and I believed we got, I think it was $1 million. So the view was that that funding would be better allocated to another project. The same went for the navigational aids where we got $500,000, and for nav aids as well that is a phased programme and we had implemented phase one. We were on the verge of implementing phase two, but once again because of the quantum.

In terms of the security programme for the airport, that is part of a larger programme of works for Airports Authority which we are putting to Cabinet. However, at the same time, we speak with our agencies and if we see that based on their funding, their revenue generation capacity, they are actually able to start implementing certain projects, we speak to them to ensure that we have a proper cost sharing in terms of the capital programme, and that one had to be implemented immediately because of certain international requirements, and funding was found internally for certain aspects of that project.

In terms of the national transportation plan as well we are implementing that project based on, first, a policy development statement that we then want to go into providing to the consultant to work on the plan, and we were of the view that we could pull together enough stakeholders in-house and externally to start that process, not to mention the fact that the $2 million that was allocated would not have allowed us to start-up the project. So we reallocated the funding, but we still started the project based on another mechanism.

Madam Chairman: So that at least in terms of the development of the national transportation plan and the programme of safety and security, even though funding was not allocated work has begun.

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: Yes. No, funding was redirected.

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: Work has begun. Even in terms of the nav aids, we do have the specifications ready. And in terms of the vessel traffic management system, we are also doing the necessary preparatory work on that so that when we have everything ready, then next year, according to how the funding is allocated, then we see what rises in importance and then we might be able to deal with it.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Now, member Rambharat had asked you about challenges and I do not recall you talking anything about capacity and, therefore, I wanted to find out if you find that you have within your Ministry adequate capacity to implement your PSIP?

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: Chair, I was listening to you previously and you told someone that there is always better. I think I heard you say that. So that is how I think I want to answer this question. There is always better. We have good people and we have trained officers, but we do lack quantity in certain areas and we are working continuously with our employers, DPA, to bring on board more people. We are seeking to ensure that we encourage staff to get certain types of training on their own and we take advantage of the training that is being provided by the Central Training Unit, as well as recently the IDB did provide quite a bit of training in terms of project management and project cycle planning.

Madam Chairman: And yes, I agree better could always be done, but in terms of the number of certified project managers you have within the Ministry, do you have an idea of how many?

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: Offhand, I do not. I can get that for you. I know right here at the table I have at least three. I have one who is not just a project manager, but a programme manager; I am told one of the only five in the region. So I can get the details for you, but it is an area that we encouraged and it is something that staff, they have been going and doing it on their own and we have also been trying to provide support for staff to go and get accredited.

Mr. Rambharat: Maybe we could talk to one of the five in the region about the coastal projects and how—

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: I see I did not have to tell you.

Mr. Rambharat:—those have gone?

Ms. Gray-Bernard: Good afternoon, again. For this fiscal year, we were allocated funding for approximately 10 projects. Of those 10 projects, we have gotten the following projects of the ground: the South Cocos Bay Shoreline Stabilization Works project; the Cap-de-ville Shoreline Stabilization Works project in terms of it is in its procurement stage; the Matelot - Grande Riviere Stabilization Works project; the Matelot Shoreline Stabilization Works, Phase 2; the San Souci Shoreline Stabilization Works; the Cocos Bay Shoreline Stabilization Works; the Quinam Coastal Protection Works; and finally the shoreline management plan for Manzanilla Beach. So these are projects that we have in different stages of implementation.

We are currently in different stages of completion as well. The first project that we expect to be completed would be the Quinam Coastal Protection Works project, and we expect that to be completed in July/August of this year. All other projects with the exception of the Matelot - Grande Riviere Stabilization Works project is expected to be completed within the next fiscal year, and that was the original plan that these projects will span more than one fiscal year.

Mr. Rambharat: And the Matelot coast line stabilization would—

Ms. Gray-Bernard: Yes.

Mr. Rambharat:—you expect it to finish when?

Ms. Gray-Bernard: The Matelot Shoreline Stabilization Works, Phase 2, which is the—I am assuming you are asking about the construction based project, the capital works?

Mr. Rambharat: Yes.

Ms. Gray-Bernard: That project is 18 months in duration. We are currently—we have just awarded the contract for that project so we expect that project to be completed in 2019, towards the end of 2019.

Mr. Rambharat: That one, is that in the existing fishing facility area?

Ms. Gray-Bernard: That particular project is close to where we have the existing fishing facility in Matelot. So it is actually two areas. So one area would be that area close to the fishing facility where you had that slip, and the second area is further east where we have the undercutting of the road from the sea as well. So it starts from close to the Matelot Fishing Facility where we have that slip.

Mr. Rambharat: Okay. Thank you.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Thank you, Madam Chair. PS, I am seeing here as one of your PSIP projects, purchased of 100 new buses. I wanted to get the status of that particular project and if you are on target?

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: So member, we had 35 of that 100 buses procured in 2014, and in 2017 there was another 35 procured. It is expected that we will have 25—the procurement started in this financial and finalized in the next financial, as well as we would have another five buses in the next financial. So this 100 buses, it is carded to finish in 2019.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Another little selfish question now: How many would be going to Tobago?

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: Member Roy, I cannot say, but I will find out and I will submit it to you in writing.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Another question. Coming into Port of Spain today, driving in, I saw the rain setting up and I started to wonder what will be the situation in terms of flooding, and I am noticing here that one of your projects is the flood alleviation and drainage programme. Could you give me the status of the project and how you are performing?

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: That particular project actually came in as a counterpart to a proposed IDB loan that has not come to fruition. So that project is being reviewed to see exactly how we will be pursuing that aspect of it. However, with the realization of that earlier this year, that is one of the reasons that we sought to ramp up our desiltation programme which we are undertaking at this point in time, and we have also sought to implement other ancillary projects through other programmes. For instance, there is a project that is being pursued via our PURE Unit to seek to address some of the downtown Port of Spain flooding, whereas the desiltation programme is seeking to address the mitigation throughout the country, in east, west, north, south.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Would the gentleman from PURE be able to give me some more information in it?

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: Well, the project that we are dealing with in Port of Spain at this time?

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Yes.

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: Of course.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Thanks.

Mr. Phillip: Good afternoon again, member. What we are actually attempting to do is try to see if we can mitigate against some of the street flooding. So this is like one phase of a larger plan we have. So the first phase is to—at least people traversing Independence Square in the City Gate area that they are able to at least get to transport and out without having waist high water. So most of the water that exits the whole of Port of Spain goes under three culverts at PTSC. Most of them are either blocked because you cannot get to clean them properly, and we also have challenges when you have high tide you have a sort of backflow causing the flooding.

So what we have designed basically is a completely new drain which will take that overflow water from the PTSC compound, along South Quay, we are crossing Broadway, and we are taking this water to the cove at the Lighthouse. There we want to develop a sump. We are restricted by levels and the capacity of the size of the sump, but there we will have a sump and we will introduce a pump so that at least what we are expecting in this first phase is that we will have a plenty faster runoff and we will be able to pump out water because we will be including pumps and gates. So even though the tide is high, from the sump we can pump over the gates into the sea.

So the first phase, what we are expecting to achieve is to at least street flooding around the

City Gate area. We have other plans which is to probably to try and get a sump into the PTSC compound and try to pump east which is really against the flow, but in technology with pumps so we could go to the St. Ann's River, and as we go along we will see how each works. So whilst this national drainage plan is going, we are having these little small projects that we expect to alleviate at least street flooding in Port of Spain.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: What is the projected end date on the first phase?

Mr. Phillip: In the first phase out to tender, the evaluation should be completed by Thursday/Friday. We are hoping to have our award by the following week, and by the following week we should start to work. All works will be done taking into account traffic. So nights, on weekends, so on. We expect maybe in six weeks' time from that date we should have some sort of redress in Port of Spain flooding.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: I thank you.

Madam Chairman: Madam PS, I am looking at your revised implementation schedule which you supplied us and I am looking at, let us say project Diego Martin River Improvement Works. I know we have some plans and no actuals. In fact, it is said that it is to be updated with actual progress. So that I wanted to get an idea and I would give them one by one and, therefore, if you are not in a position to answer then we will get them in writing, in terms actual spend and actual rate of progress. So if we could start with project Diego Martin River Improvement Works.

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: So Chair, I am not in possession of the document that you are using.

Madam Chairman: All right. Just let me see if we could get one passed to you. I should be in about page 5, project: Diego Martin River Improvement Works.

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: Yes, Chair.

Madam Chairman: So I hope you had an opportunity to just get a quick glance?

Ms. Francis-Yearwood: Yes, I took a quick glance. Now, this would be our implementation schedule that we would have submitted at the beginning of the financial year, which would have been in October. From that period to this period, matters would have changed substantially in terms of the actual projects that we would do under the programme.

5.00 p.m.

For instance, this which is one project under 005 which is our national programme for the upgrade of drainage channels, we would have had $33 million allocated to this overall programme and our first call on it would have been our bills from 2017.

Madam Chairman: Could you say what percentage of the $33 million would have gone to the first call?

Mrs. Francis-Yearwood: I am being told approximately two-thirds.

Madam Chairman: So therefore, in terms of your implementation, it would have had to be revised to meet the $11 million?

Mrs. Francis-Yearwood: To meet the $11 million and based on that, we would have then looked at the approved projects under this overall programme which included Malick River, East Dry River, El Dorado, of course, Diego Martin, Arima, Mausica, La Cuesa, La Pastora. As to the ones we have actually—where we have reached with those.

Madam Chairman: Madam PS, what I would ask then, therefore, in the interest of time, would you have submitted to the Ministry of Planning a revised implementation programme based on your, let us say, $11 million and your approved projects?

Mrs. Francis-Yearwood: We would in submitting to the Ministry of Planning our PSIP reports which we are to do on a monthly basis, yes, in there, we would have identified the actual projects that we would have done and what percentage would have been completed.

Madam Chairman: All right. So could I ask then, therefore, if you could submit to us what is your revision in terms of the projects, in terms of the spend to date and in terms of percentage work done.

Mrs. Francis-Yearwood: Definitely.

Madam Chairman: And therefore, I also appreciate that 100 per cent may not be equivalent to 100 per cent for the fiscal.

Mrs. Francis-Yearwood: It would be the plant for that.

Madam Chairman: Yeah, okay. And therefore, if we could get the percentage then weighted according to the actual. Okay?

Mrs. Francis-Yearwood: Yes.

Madam Chairman: So therefore, what I want to ask, if I use this as your experience because I think you initially had outlined that as one of our challenges and if I am not mistaken, that might have been highlighted among your first. You may not have a pecking order but I think it did come like that. If you could tell us what do you estimate is your expected implementation rate of your PSIP for this fiscal?

Mrs. Francis-Yearwood: Okay. At this point in time, as today's date in a financial sense, we have in terms of request for releases and commitments, we are approximately 50 per cent. We expect that if we get the necessary confirmations that we have been asking for, the releases and then the ability to pay, we can go as high as 80 if not higher. We also want to make the slight differentiation—it is a major actually—between the spend and actual work done because there is a lag.

There is a lag between the spend that is recorded and the actual work that has been done because when the work is done—it is undertaken, the contractor submits their billings. If it is through an agency, it goes through their processes and then it comes to the Ministry and it goes through another set of processes where we have to certify and then we go through the financial processes, then it goes for the release of funds. Funds come back. Then it goes through the accounting process before we pay. So there can be a lag, an actual payment for work done for quite a period. So that is why I am just making the slight differentiation between the spend and the work done or output.

Madam Chairman: Because that is the next thing I was going to ask you in terms of not—

Mrs. Francis-Yearwood: I did not mean to rush you, Chair. I apologize.

Madam Chairman: Well maybe you are good at anticipating but that is what I was going to ask in terms of on the one hand, we will get the spend, but it only makes good sense to us if we look at it against what it has produced in terms of your output, percentage of output. So I do not know if there is a variable that is inputted for that time lag that you may be able to use to normalize so that we can get an appreciation of spend vis-à-vis output.

Mrs. Francis-Yearwood: Well, we have done process flows for different areas, like for instance, IDF request, projects under the Infrastructure Development Fund—did not want to use the acronym—and projects under the Consolidated Fund and sometimes the period in time that it takes and sometimes it can go up to three months, so there is that type of differentiation. In the past, what we have tried to do at times is to quantify the billings rather than the spend and that is one type—that is how we do it at times.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So I think I really want to ask a question to the Ministry of

Planning and Development because from what I have understood from the PS, Ministry of Works and Transport, they have complied with the financial Call Circular, they are one of the Ministries that have already implemented your project screening brief, but yet they are still lower than their usual spend rate. So that I wanted to ask you all, if from you all perspective, what are their challenges and what are your recommendations that they could ensure that they meet their 80 per cent target that they think is still likely for this fiscal?

Mrs. Francis-Yearwood: Chair, may I just say one thing? Our target is 100 per cent.

Madam Chairman: And may I say one thing, Madam PS? I support you fully.

Mrs. Deoraj: Thank you, Chair. Yes, Ministry of Works, this year, they have always done very well in terms of their execution but we have had a challenge in terms of the previous years, amount of money that they have and that of course is the first draw. The sum was quite large at the beginning of 2018 and I know they have been working towards trying to reduce that amount and therefore getting the contractors to come back out to work and do some of the work.

So yes, they are one of—and the project screening brief has really been introduced for projects for submission for 2019 and we do hope that the projects will help us get a better scope for 2019. But for the current projects, we know that they are in the process of implementation. The challenge also is the volume and the number of projects that the Ministry of Works have that sometimes it is unrealistic to schedule the number of works with a budget of the volume that they wish to have.

So looking—and the Ministry of Works is one of the Ministries and you have heard it before, the other Ministries speaking about projects not being completed in any particular fiscal year and this is why we have been speaking about a medium-term fiscal framework that would help us plan more for efficiently for our project execution over a three- to five-year period. So you plan based on your ability to execute, of course priority is based on the national priorities and therefore, you are able to be more efficient in the utilization of your funds. So in terms of the scheduling of projects, we would like to be able to see things a little more realistic, not only for Ministry of Works but for all the other Ministries so that there is not a draw on the PSIP and they are not ready for implementation.

Also, identifying the things that are going to make the big difference. So for example, like we know that the alleviation of flooding is a big challenge for us as a country and therefore that project should be very well conceptualized and be able to be executed to get results in a short term. So for us working with the Ministry of Works, we would like to be able to see that kind of relationship strengthened. I do not know if any of the other members.

Madam Chairman: Member Rambharat.

Mr. Rambharat: PS, Planning, just to ask this question: Do you think that the Ministry of Works and Transport is carrying a PSIP portfolio that is too large or do you think it is manageable?

Mrs. Deoraj: I think from the diverse sections of the Ministry, they are very specific in terms of what they have to do from my understanding. So drainage is very specific, the capacity therefore exists. But I think the need for the type of infrastructure works, the volume is so great that it may seem sometimes more challenging for implementation but as a Ministry, I do not think it is unrealistic for an infrastructure Ministry to certainly have the volume that they are having, but perhaps the scheduling of it so that we can get the best results and fast results.

Madam Chairman: Madam PS, would you like to make any closing statements?

Mrs. Francis-Yearwood: Well, just to thank the Committee. It is always good to make sure you go and look at what you do and how you do it. It keeps us—I was going to say on our toes but current and abreast. So we want to thank the Committee for that and we will seek to provide the necessary information that you asked for in speedy time frame.

Madam Chairman: So I want to thank you, Madam PS and your other members of staff for coming and sharing with us. We have some other questions that we will have to send in writing, the constraints of time. So you all are excused and I wish you all a safe journey home. Thank you.

[*Ministry of Works and Transport Officials depart meeting*]

MINISTRY OF SPORT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

Ms. Nicolette Duke	Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Ms. Denise Arneaud	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mrs. Marcia London-Mckellar	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mr. Earland Kent	Director, Division of Youth Affairs
Mrs. Leah Malchan-Douglas	Accounting Executive I (Ag.)
Ms. Dianne Rampadarath	Senior Planning Officer (Ag.)

Mr. Jason Williams	Chief Executive Officer (Ag.)
Ms. Annesha Colley	Head of Projects
Ms. Tennille Clarke	Project Administrator – Budgets and Finance Reporting
Mr. Lyndon Burton	Assistant Programme Co-ordinator
Mr. Patrice Charles	Director, Physical Education and Sport Division
Mr. Francisco Reyes	Project Manager, Consultant

Madam Chairman: Good evening to the representatives of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. Might I ask the Permanent Secretary to introduce herself and her members of staff? Thanks.

Ms. Duke: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon to the members of the Committee as well as the members from the Ministry of Planning and Development. I am Nicolette Duke, Acting Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. I will move to my right.

[*Introductions made*]

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. Madam PS, I am just going to invite you to make a brief opening statement, if you wish, on your PSIP.

Ms. Duke: Thank you, Madam Chair, good afternoon once again. On behalf of the Ministry's team, I would like to thank the Committee for the invitation to this conversation to examine the Ministry's implementation of its Development Programme under the Government of Trinidad and Tobago's Public Sector Investment Programme.

The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs is charged with the responsibility of coordinating and facilitating the delivery of quality services for the development of sport for physical recreation and industry as well as the creation of an enabling environment for promoting positive youth development and empowerment. To this end, the Ministry's portfolio of development programme projects was designed to meet deliverables focused on:

a) the expansion of the sport plant;
b) maintenance and upgrade of existing sport and youth facilities to ensure functionality and consistency with modern facility standards; and
c) research and policy prescriptives to inform decision-making for future action in respect of youth and sport programming.

The suite of projects comprises 10 under the Consolidated Fund and 10 under the Infrastructure Development Fund. The majority of these being multi-fiscal projects. The execution of the projects are undertaken by the Project Management Unit, the Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago, the Division of Youth Affairs and the Division of Physical Education and Sport.

The Ministry has encountered challenges in executing its mandate, primarily related to capacity and funding. Some mitigation measures have been instituted and others are currently being discussed. It is hoped that coming out of today's activity, the Ministry, ably assisted by the recommendations from the Committee, will recognize additional avenues for improving its performance in the implementation of its Development Programme portfolio. I thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Madam PS. Okay, so you have told us that you have 20 projects that have been approved and I also heard you say that some are multi-fiscal year projects. Are there any that are intended to be completed in this fiscal?

Ms. Duke: Yes, Madam Chair, I can identify right away the Laventille community swimming pool and if we would like to go to some details on that, I can have the Sport Company give some details as to the status.

Madam Chairman: Is it within budget?

Ms. Duke: Yes, Ma'am, it is.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And other than the Laventille community swimming pool, any other project is anticipated to be completed within this fiscal year?

Ms. Duke: There are some projects that have been—what could I call them?—legacy projects and those projects have to do mostly with upgrade of facilities under the Ministry's smaller assets. I can have my project manager speak to those that can be—the status of those.

Madam Chairman: Just before we go to the Project Manager, you know I heard you say legacy projects with a certain sort of intonation and then that sort of sent something off in my head to wonder: are legacy projects allowed if it is just maintenance and upgrade?

Ms. Duke: Well, these projects speak to upgrade and refurbishments of youth training centres, community swimming pools, indoor sporting arenas and they have been under the Consolidated Fund. For one reason or the other, from year to year, there are sub projects that roll over under these different macro projects.

Madam Chairman: So Madam PS, in terms of—I know that you are well familiar that the Ministry of Finance issues a Call Circular every year and in terms of your projects, I want to ask: Do you adhere to the Ministry of Finance's Call Circular in terms of the planning of the project and your project proposal?

Ms. Duke: We do adhere to the Ministry of Finance's Call Circular. More recently, because we have had discussions with the Ministry of Planning and Development on our 2019 PSIP, we have come to realize that there are certain things that probably we need to improve upon, especially as relates to those sorts of aspects that are outlined in the project screening brief in terms of the planning of our projects, certain things that we need to take on board. So we do adhere to the Call Circular but we want to improve the way in which we plan and monitor and review.

So one of the things we have discussed right after we had that meeting with Planning is to accelerate our timeline for planning for fiscal years. So that we are not caught at the beginning of the first quarter or somewhere in the middle of the first quarter trying to plan for things like risk mitigation and so on. So we are intent on setting up a project review committee that would use the project screening brief as one of its tool to help us in terms of planning going forward.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And therefore, I would say that I was expecting to hear you say when you admitted that, look, you do use the Call Circular but you know you have some little discrepancies and you are going to employ the project screening brief, that one of the things that you would have said that you recognized that you needed to do is to adhere to the Call Circular when it comes to legacy projects. Because some of the things you have identified, why they have rolled over, you know, seems to suggest to me that that is in breach. Those exact examples are in breach of the Call Circular. So maybe that is one of the things that you may have to look at in terms of the legacy projects. All right but be that as it may, let me just find out if any of my members. Member Webster-Roy.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Thank you, Madam Chair. I am noticing here that you have refurbishment of youth training facilities as a new PSIP project. How many training facilities are there? Are they currently in use and what is the status of the refurbishment work?

Ms. Duke: Member, may I ask my project manager, Mr. Burton?

Mr. Burton: Thank you, member. With respect to the youth training facilities, the Ministry has seven facilities. All are operating at this time. This project came to the Ministry when the Division of Youth Affairs came back to the Ministry of Sport from Gender, Youth and Child Development and significant works were done when the facility was with that Ministry, and it is smaller projects to complete the whole scope that we are undertaking at this time.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: For example?

Mr. Burton: For example, erection of perimeter fences, construction of car parks, air-conditioning rooms—those sorts of things.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Could you give the location of these facilities, please?

Mr. Burton: Okay. We have the Los Bajos Youth Facility, this is in Bennett Village, Los Bajos; the California Youth facility in California; Malick Youth Facility in Malick, Barataria; Laventille Youth Facility; Basilon Youth Facility; the Woodbrook Youth Facility, and St. James Youth Facility.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: You said all of them have operational programmes taking place in these facilities?

Mr. Burton: Yes.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Okay. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member Rambharat.

Mr. Rambharat: Just for now, I will start off with the improvement to indoor sporting arenas. What is happening with Mayaro?

Mr. Burton: Right now at Mayaro, this year, we completed the insulation of the roof and we did some work to upgrade the air-conditioning to the indoor hall. Those works were completed and the facility is operational.

5.30 p.m.

Mr. Rambharat: But are you aware of the current complaints about the condition of the facility?

Mr. Burton: The complaints I am aware of deal more with janitorial issues. But in terms of the installations, they are all operational.

Mr. Rambharat: So how are you addressing the complaints that you have?

Mr. Burton: With regard to the janitorial, that will not be an issue I would have to attend to. That would be the general administration. PS.

Ms. Duke: Member, if probably you could lend some clarity to the issues so we could—

Mr. Rambharat: There has been an ongoing complaint. I believe it is well known in the Ministry about the conditions at the Mayaro Indoor Arena. Your employee talks about janitorial issues but I am sure if you check in the Ministry you would find complaints coming from the users of the facility about the condition of the facility.

Ms. Duke: Member, I will undertake to do that and provide some feedback as to where we are at with whatever complaints that we are able to find.

Mr. Rambharat: Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Okay. I would just like to look at the upgrading of swimming pools. And I have seen—this is your detailed implementation plan. PS, Cocoyea—two projects under Cocoyea: installation of pavilion seats, security lighting; Diego Martin, installation of pool pumps, refurbishment of pool filtration system, bleachers; Couva, refurbishing of wading pool basin; La Horquetta, upgrading of perimeter fence, pool filtration system; and Siparia, general upgrades. Okay? I do not know, this might have been your detailed implementation plan that I am looking at that was submitted to the Ministry. I do not know if this is what was submitted to the Ministry of Planning and Development, and if this is what you are operating with or if this has been revised.

Ms. Duke: I do not have that in front of me but we do have the status.

Madam Chairman: On each of them.

Ms. Duke: Yes.

Madam Chairman: All right. So, can I ask, in terms of Cocoyea, the two projects, status and spend?

Ms. Duke: Chair, I will have my project manager go through these.

Mr. Burton: Thank you. At Cocoyea, the installation of the pavilion seats, that is 100 per cent completed at a cost of $470,018.25.

Madam Chairman: So this is over your budget or this was within your budget?

Mr. Burton: This is within budget.

Madam Chairman: So, might I ask, because you see what we have here does not give us—this is within your budget?

Mr. Burton: Yes.

Madam Chairman: What I have here does not give us, in terms of what was the budget and what was the spend. So that I will have to ask the question. So what was the budget for the installation of the pavilion seats?

Mr. Burton: Okay, I must apologize for that. The estimated cost was $470,018.25 and the actual spend was $454,816.18.

Madam Chairman: All right. So you are under budget?

Mr. Burton: Yes.

Madam Chairman: And has the security lighting been done?

Mr. Burton: No. We engaged the Ministry of Works and Transport, electrical branch, to offer technical assistance to us and they informed us it is possible if we would purchase the lights. All we would have to do is purchase the lights and they would install it for us. Purchasing the bulbs, again that would come from recurrent.

Madam Chairman: So what is the status of this project? Was this project not under your PSIP?

Mr. Burton: Yes, it was.

Madam Chairman: So it has been moved from PSIP to recurrent?

Mr. Burton: Well I would not say it was moved. We are not going forward with it because we have found a more economical solution.

Madam Chairman: Right. Okay. So this more economical way you have found, is it going to be a more effective way, in terms of our timeline for the project?

Mr. Burton: I am not sure I am following you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: All right. I did not get the sense—let me put it another way—from what you said, that other than asking the Ministry of Works and Transport for technical support and they said they can do it, where do we go from here? What stage? I know it is now recurrent. But it is still your project. What stage is it to completion?

Mr. Burton: Actually, at this time that is a low priority project for us. We have some projects that, because of urgency, we have to give them higher priority at this time.

Madam Chairman: This project is the same Cocoyea pool?

Mr. Burton: Yes.

Madam Chairman: It is because the pool is down for over six weeks?

Mr. Burton: No.

Madam Chairman: So the pool is functional then?

Mr. Burton: The pool, to my knowledge, is not functional now.

Madam Chairman: So, I am wrong in saying it is weeks?

Mr. Burton: Well, to my knowledge it was only last week.

Madam Chairman: All right. So the pool is not functional now. Are these related to the high priority projects for the pool that you speak of?

Mr. Burton: No, the issue is one of the pool pumps malfunctioned last week and that is why the pool is not open now.

Madam Chairman: Are there any programmes that were intended in that pool for the vacation/the holiday period?

Mr. Burton: Yes.

Madam Chairman: And I guess that I could almost take it as a given that those programmes will be affected?

Mr. Burton: Well, I am not sure of the commencement date for the programme. But I know they have a challenge. There is some uncertainty as to whether they can go forward with the programme at this time because the pool is down.

Madam Chairman: All right. So let me ask you something, when is the pump going to be operational?

Mr. Burton: Well, we have already approached a contractor. He has assessed the pump and determined what must be done and submitted a quotation to us. Right now, we have to source the funds to engage the contractor to repair the pump. But based on his submission, he said it would take two to three days to repair and reinstall.

Madam Chairman: Is the approach—and might be just a word—to the contractor within the stipulations of your procurement processes?

Mr. Burton: Because of the nature of the work, I know the normal procedure would be to obtain three quotations. But that would mean each contractor taking the pump, doing his own evaluation and then submitting a quotation. This contractor was in fact the contractor who supplied us with the pump. And that is why we approached him to assess the condition.

Madam Chairman: So, again I ask whether that process that you are following is in compliance with our procurement procedures? That was my original question.

Mr. Burton: I suppose the short answer to that would be no. But because of the extenuating circumstances we have approached the—well, we have not made any official position as yet, but we have approached the Permanent Secretary to consider a sole select, based on the circumstances.

Madam Chairman: Madam PS, maybe you could assist because I am not sure that I am understanding the conversation thus far.

Ms. Duke: Right. My understanding is, Chair, that your procurement guidelines dictate that you should have at least three quotations. However, if there are extenuating circumstances and a justification is provided, especially in situations where you have emergency works, these are some things that will allow you to consider these circumstances. And in this case, I believe it warrants that consideration.

Madam Chairman: So, how far are we with the procurement of services consistent with the procurement guidelines to get this pool up and running? Because I believe this comes within "putting people first, nurturing our greatest asset". That is the pillar it comes under, I think.

Ms. Duke: Madam Chair, I can certainly give that information when I get back. I cannot remember off the top of my head this particular file.

Madam Chairman: All right. Okay. Thank you very much, Madam PS. I go on Diego Martin, installation of pool pumps, refurbishment of pool filtration system, bleachers. There are three elements of this project; are they completed?

Mr. Burton: We have completed the installation of the pool pumps. The estimated cost was $155,382.75. The actual expenditure was $147,613.61.

With regard to the filtration system, we have completed the tender document for these works and we are about to commence the tendering phase of the project.

With regard to the upgrades to the bleachers, a consideration was given to that, in that we propose to—the bleachers are located between the two tennis courts on the side and there is a project to upgrade the tennis courts in the 2019 programme, and consideration is given to undertaking the works to the bleachers when we are upgrading the tennis courts.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. So, I want to ask again: Is this pool functional?

Mr. Burton: Again, no. This pool came out of operation within the last three weeks because the filtration system is malfunctioning.

Madam Chairman: All right. So, let me ask something. When we programme the refurbishment of the pool filtration system, was this remedial or was this preventative?

Mr. Burton: Actually, the project was to take out the existing filter and install a new filtration system. The estimation was that the existing filter would have been able to hold out until the end of this calendar year. However, that was not the case.

Madam Chairman: Let me ask another question. Does a malfunctioning filtration system have any impact on the pumps?

Mr. Burton: No. It would have no impact on the pumps.

Madam Chairman: It would have no impact on the pumps. Mr. Burton, based on the two answers you gave me with respect to the filtration system and the bleachers, I am wondering whether this project was properly conceptualized and planned. I could be either wrong or right, so I am asking you.

Mr. Burton: Madam Chair, the planning of the project was based on the allocation we got for 2018, where we had to take out projects—well, I should say the selection of the project—small projects, so that we do not exceed the allocation. And it was through that we identified these three sub-projects like the Diego Martin Community Swimming Pool.

Madam Chairman: Okay, and I understand that. But let us look at the bleachers. To have identified the bleachers—because I guess maybe you had a whole project to upgrade the area. Right, and you had to take out some to meet your budget. But yet what you said to us here is that you identified bleachers and then had to revisit it because, you know, you could not put in tennis courts and bleachers should not come before tennis court. That is what it sound like to me.

Mr. Burton: No, the two tennis courts are existing. The bleachers are in a dilapidated state and it was really to demolish that existing bleacher and erect a new bleacher. And like I said, because we propose to undertake the upgrade to the tennis courts in 2019, we thought we could defer the bleachers to that time. And also too we have some manpower constraints at this time so going forward with the project is a challenge.

Madam Chairman: Okay, let me ask you: When is it the filtration system project is likely to be completed?

Mr. Burton: That should be completed, I would say, by mid-September.

Madam Chairman: So that would be after the end of the school vacation?

Mr. Burton: Yes.

Madam Chairman: And the pool would be down for that entire period?

Mr. Burton: We have a proposal to undertake temporary repairs to the filter which would allow the pool to operate within the next two weeks.

Madam Chairman: The next two weeks?

Mr. Burton: Yes.

Madam Chairman: So that you are telling the people of Diego Martin that in the next two weeks the pool would be functional?

Mr. Burton: Once we could identify the funds to undertake the maintenance works, yes it is possible.

Madam Chairman: Okay, because you see my information is six weeks it is not functioning. When you add two weeks to it, it is a long time. Okay? Madam PS, how do we approach Diego Martin?

Ms. Duke: Madam Chair, we look at the temporary solution that has been suggested and we find funds within our recurrent allocations to treat with having that temporary solution implemented.

Madam Chairman: So that I can expect that in the next two weeks that you would be able to submit to this committee some confirmation that the pool is up and working?

Ms. Duke: Certainly Madam.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: I was just following the conversation about the filtration system and the pumps and all of that and I am wondering if there is a maintenance schedule. And if, when you acquire the equipment and you install them if there is not a life span. So you know okay, coming to end of or coming to the middle of 2018, it would be non-functional, so we should start the process to acquire something new? Just some clarification please.

Mr. Burton: Well, based on the recommendations coming out of this committee last year, we did draft a maintenance plan for all of our facilities—our sporting facilities. We are now in the process of completing the draft for the youth facilities. And one of the challenges with implementing the plan is funding. Maintenance is a recurrent activity.

However, the funding under maintenance is not adequate to implement the plan fully.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: That answer brings me no comfort. If we have a proper maintenance schedule in place and we work it, to me, I may be wrong, but if we really work it, then it would lessen the chance of defects and having to bring in costly technicians for repairs and all of that if you are working the maintenance schedule properly.

Again, in terms of the lifespan, if you know something is, okay realistically going to last a year, would you not plan and start developing your project to say: well, okay this is going to last a year, so by now I should start trying to get my releases or make sure we start viring funds into whatever vote to ensure that we get this particular equipment purchased on time so we would not have—Because I am thinking now school is closed. I am a mother of three and people looking for safe paces to have their children occupied during the holiday period. So I am thinking an entire community would be disenfranchised. They would not have the opportunity to utilize this pool. What is the alternative? Where are you going to send them? How are we going to keep our young people occupied during the July/August holiday period bearing in mind we know the challenges young people are facing in Trinidad and Tobago now?

Mr. Burton: I am not sure I am following your question, member, please.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, Madam PS, I just want us to look at—and again, I do not know if you have this same document. This is Head 68. Is there a project Hasely Crawford Stadium Upgrade of Facilities, Project 121?

Ms. Duke: Madam Chair, while there is an allocation under the Consolidated Fund for that project, Upgrade of Hasely Crawford Stadium, we at the Ministry have not engaged in a project. We do not have the in-house capacity. But I would like, if I am able to have the SporTT comment on upgrades to Hasely Crawford Stadium.

Madam Chairman: All right. Just before I go to that—thank you so much Madam PS—and that is why I ask if you had the document. Because I do not want to sound facetious, but when I look at this document I am seeing under this now, the Dwight Yorke Stadium. So, I am not certain if it is an error, or, you know in Trinidad and Tobago we know what aka is, also known as, so it might be that I am out of touch. So I just wanted to ensure what we are talking about as Head 68, Project 121, whether that is Hasely Crawford Stadium Upgrades of Facilities, or whether that is Dwight Yorke Stadium. And that is just the first thing I really want to find out.

Ms. Duke: Madam Chair, apparently there is some history with this vote. The long and short of it was that 121 was initially a vote that captured Hasely Crawford and other stadia which included Dwight Yorke Stadium. However, we would—if we look at the IDF, we have votes there for upgrade of all stadia as well as a vote for the Dwight Yorke Stadium. So Dwight Yorke Stadium is not included in 121 as it stands now.

Madam Chairman: All right. Okay. So, thank you Madam PS for bringing that level of clarity. So what we are looking at here as 121, the information then is incorrect? I do not know if the Ministry of Planning and Development could help because I do not know if this is a document that you all supplied to the Committee. Okay? And, therefore, if it is, then there is another question for the Ministry of Planning and Development with respect to their role and supervision, and so on. While we are all human and we all err, I think from the very levels of supervision, and so on, this should not be in this position.

Mrs. Deoraj: Chair, if I may allow the Project Officer to handle it.

Mr. Lopez: Good afternoon, Madam Chair. As the PS would have conveyed, there is some level of history with this particular project. It started off as the Hasely Crawford Stadium, with provisions for additional works to some of the other facilities as well. But as stated, there is a particular vote under the IDF for the refurbishment of multipurpose stadia, inclusive of the Hasely Crawford Stadium, Jean Pierre Complex, et cetera. Yes?

Madam Chairman: Mr. Lopez thanks, and I think that is what PS Duke said, but I am not sure what is the correct thing for this. And that is all I am really trying to find out; what we are supposed to be looking at on this particular page.

Mr. Lopez: Hasely Crawford Stadium, Ma'am.

Madam Chairman: All right. So what is the information for Hasely Crawford Stadium that should be supplied to the Committee that we could have a conversation about? Is it then that the information here is really about Hasely Crawford and I could simply ignore the Dwight Yorke Stadium at the top as an error and know that we could have a conversation on these items for Hasely Crawford? Or is it that I need to uplift the whole page, put it under Dwight and then look at a blank page and somebody will assist with the information that we should be looking at? That is basically all I want to know.

Mr. Lopez: It is supposed to be highlighted as the Hasely Crawford Stadium in terms of the work that needs to be done. However, there seems to be a typo here, with regard to the Ministry's submission because I am also seeing Dwight Yorke Stadium as well, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: So all these items here, inspection of structural frame, rust abatement, and so, is Hasely Crawford? That is what I am being told?

Mr. Lopez: To my knowledge, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Madam Permanent Secretary, we could take that as the position?

Ms. Duke: Madam Chair, I am not certain that this refers to Hasely Crawford Stadium. I am not aware of the works we would have identified if we did identify works. And probably I could ask Mr. Burton to assist as to whether we identified works for Hasely Crawford Stadium, or whether the works identified here really ought to have been Dwight Yorke Stadium.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Madam PS.

Mr. Burton: Thank you. Based on the information I have here, it refers to work at the Hasely Crawford Stadium. The items I heard Madam Chair mention, I do not have these items here.

Madam Chairman: So, Madam PS, maybe I would give you an opportunity to investigate this and respond to us in writing what this relates to, and whether it is Hasely Crawford Stadium, whether it is Dwight Yorke Stadium. And, therefore, what I would really like to know is which one it relates to, status, spend to date.

Ms. Duke: Certainly, Madam Chairman. But I think as we go along we would also see that under the IDF we have a vote for Dwight Yorke Stadium, which we are engaging at the moment, subject to a Cabinet approval for works at the Dwight Yorke Stadium.

6.00 p.m.

Mr. Rambharat: That was going to be my question, PS. I was going to ask, how long you have been at the Ministry?

Ms. Duke: October of last year.

Mr. Rambharat: Right, which means that you are familiar with the Cabinet having to consider works at Dwight Yorke Stadium?

Ms. Duke: Yes, I am.

Mr. Rambharat: And you are familiar with the works?

Ms. Duke: I would not be able to itemize everything for you here. I know that at first $5 million was approved, I know that the status to date—some of the hoarding has been done, the roof has been taken off. And quite recently Cabinet would have approved a further $15 million for fiscal 2019, in order to—for the total rehabilitation of works at the Dwight Yorke Stadium.

Mr. Rambharat: Okay. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Madam PS, I just want to ask about some new PSIP projects, the implementation of the National Youth Policy, where has that reached? And what sort of expense to date on that has been incurred?

Ms. Duke: Certainly, Madam Chair. I will ask the Director, Youth Affairs, to address that question.

Madam Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Kent: In terms of the implementation of the National Youth Policy, Madam Chair, we are at the stage where we have proposals prepared, and one approved thus far for implementation on the 12th of August, which is hosting of our National Youth Awards. This will happen on the 12th of August to commemorate International Youth Day.

There are other projects that are considered, we have proposals prepared for submission to PS for approval, which would include our National Youth Organizations registration project which will facilitate the development of a database of registered youth organizations in Trinidad and Tobago, which will also serve as an interactive database where youth organizations can access in terms of identifying organizations that are involved in similar activities, so that they can partner and share best practices and that sort of thing.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. The database—so the registration is just to get the information to populate the database? So that all the hardware and software and so on have been acquired for the database?

Mr. Kent: Well, as it is, our IT unit has created something in terms of the database. But I know there is another Ministry-wide project in terms of the wide area network that will assist also in the storage and access to the data.

Madam Chairman: The registration is just one physical exercise. When would this database be up and running and functional?

Mr. Kent: Well, this particular project well be approximately 65—70 per cent complete this fiscal and part of it will run over into the next—into 2019. So we are hoping by the end of first quarter 2019, this project will be completed in terms of accessing the information, doing the testing of the database and that sort of thing. So we are hoping that it will be ready by the end of first quarter 2019.

Madam Chairman: What sort of spend have you incurred to reach to 65 per cent implementation?

Mr. Kent: Well, the actual spend has not occurred as yet since the proposal is completed and it is on its way to PS for approval. But based on the activities that will take place this fiscal, we estimate that we will be 65—70 per cent complete.

Madam Chairman: With no expenditure from the budget, that is what you are telling me?

Mr. Kent: Yes, we anticipate that we will have expenditure from the budget, because we have to undertake the advertisement.

Madam Chairman: So, if you will submit to us in writing, what sort of expenditure, the percentage of your budget to give you the 65 per cent that you anticipate. Okay?

Madam PS, can I ask you about the refurbishment of the youth training facilities? Where is that?

Ms. Duke: Madam Chair, Mr. Burton will indicate.

Mr. Burton: With respect to the youth training facilities, we have a 9 per cent utilization on the $2.5 million—

Madam Chairman: Excuse me, sorry. You have a—?

Mr. Burton: Nine per cent.

Madam Chairman: Nine per cent?

Mr. Burton: Yes.

Madam Chairman: And that word is "utilization" or "implementation"?

Mr. Burton: Utilization. This spend was in closing out the contracts we inherited. In terms of the implementation we have seven subprojects; three of which are at various stages of tendering. We have one where tendering was closed, and we are undertaking the evaluation of these tenders presently. One of these projects, we are pursuing an alternate strategy for implementation, and we have two where we have completed the tender documents and we have to make submission to the Permanent Secretary for approval to go out to tender.

Madam Chairman: So, the project that you are considering the alternate strategy, what project is that—what subproject is that?

Mr. Burton: This is the erection of a perimeter fence at the Basilon Street Youth Facility. The challenge we face there is getting contractors to accept invitations to bid, because of the location. We are looking at approaching the East Port of Spain Development Company with respect to implementing the project on our behalf, or if they can supply us with a list of contractors who can go into the community to implement the project.

Madam Chairman: And the refurbishment of the Youth Development and Apprenticeship Centres?

Mr. Burton: Presently we have zero spend on that project. We have six projects; two are in the tendering stage presently, and one we completed the tender document and again, is to be submitted for approval to go out to invite tenders.

We have the Persto Praesto Youth Development and Apprenticeship Centre, this is where we have the two projects that are tendering. And the Chatham Youth Development and Apprenticeship Centre, in mid-May this year, NIPDEC handed that site back over to the Ministry.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Burton, might I ask, the fees that were owed NIPDEC for previous work, has that been settled?

Mr. Burton: Yes, it has been settled—the fees we owed to the contractors and the consultants.

Madam Chairman: That would be NIPDEC—what I am seeing here is, NIPDEC fees for previous work sum $338,000. Is that it?

Mr. Burton: Yes.

Madam Chairman: That is the contractors and NIPDEC? Or is it just NIPDEC alone? I am just trying to find out if there is more money that you—?

Mr. Burton: That is for the consultants.

Madam Chairman: The consultants?

Mr. Burton: Yes.

Madam Chairman: All right. So what moneys are owed and have been paid to contractors?

Mr. Burton: That would have been in the 2017 fiscal year.

Madam Chairman: But they were paid in 2017 not in 2018?

Mr. Burton: Correct. The contractors, yes.

Madam Chairman: So the only moneys you had from previous fiscal 2017 would be to NIPDEC?

Mr. Burton: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Yes? All right. Now you are telling me it is Chatham—the projects you have, you said are six? Six subprojects? I am not sure I heard correctly?

Mr. Burton: Six subprojects. We have two at the Persto Praesto.

Madam Chairman: Two at Persto Praesto.

Mr. Burton: And four at Chatham.

Madam Chairman: And four at Chatham. So which one in Persto Praesto you are not doing? I had seen construction of the perimeter fence, refurbishment of the assistant camp director's office and upgrading of animal pens and corrals?

Mr. Burton: Okay. We received a notice from the Ministry of Health concerning the kitchen and the dining hall. So we had to put the camp director's quarters and the animal pens on hold, to attend to the upgrades to the kitchen and the dining hall. And we are also undertaking the erection of the perimeter fence this year.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And is that likely to be completed this fiscal, the perimeter fence?

Mr. Burton: We will be able to start this year, but we would not finish this year.

Madam Chairman: Might I ask if that was the actual intended project, that it was going to span two fiscals or it was just intended to span one?

Mr. Burton: It was intended to span one.

Madam Chairman: And therefore, the cause for the delay?

Mr. Burton: We were faced with some challenges with regard to the human resource. Presently, the project unit has two technical officers and that has hampered our ability to implement some of our projects.

Madam Chairman: So that, for the perimeter fence, you are now out to tender? Am I correct?

Mr. Burton: The invitation to tender should be published in the newspaper soon.

Madam Chairman: All right. Now, Chatham; what are the projects at Chatham?

Mr. Burton: Chatham, the projects are the upgrades to the dormitory, the upgrades to the plumbing installations, upgrades to electrical installations and the play field.

Madam Chairman: The play field is the recreation ground?

Mr. Burton: Yes, the recreation ground.

Madam Chairman: So, if I understand well, in Persto Praesto you had a change, and therefore I wanted to ask by what process, by what authority the projects were changed from the camp director's quarters and the upgrading of the animal pens to the refurbishment of the kitchen? And I also see for Chatham, what I had was just the upgrade works to buildings and upgrade to the recreation ground. I also see an inclusion of plumbing and electricity as two different—so that in terms of where does the approval and the financing come for those two other projects? What are the processes that were followed?

Mr. Burton: Well, in terms of the change, we submitted a proposal to the Permanent Secretary for approval, to put on hold the two projects and implement the upgrades to the kitchen and in the dining hall. So we got approval and, of course, the financing would come from within the allocation.

Madam Chairman: All right. I just want at this stage to invite the Ministry Planning and Development, in terms of maybe commenting on some of the challenges that the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs have identified in the implementation of their PSIP and also with respect to some recommendations for going forward.

Mrs. Deoraj: I thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we are aware of some of the challenges that the Ministry identified particularly as we look at what you referred to as "legacy projects". We know that there have been a number of projects that keep coming back to us. Sometimes we repair a facility and then the next fiscal year we have to expend again. So yes, a maintenance schedule will really need to be built into their recurrent programme. But, we have also found that sometimes the users of the facilities do not take the requisite care that needs to be—and it could also be tied to the proper management structures for some of the uses of the facilities. So, those are the things that we have also spoken to the Ministry about when they came to us to discuss their 2019 proposal.

The reference with respect to, of course, capacity building, the Ministry seems to be greatly challenged with capacity, as well as the issue of timely procurement. There are significant delays and we have noticed that with the delays in the procurement, the projects will not be completed as intended in this fiscal to next fiscal.

So we have asked the Ministry and we do hope that they would, of course, use this project screening brief. They had not used it in the preparation for 2019 and we have been working with them, and to also work with them in terms of trying to ensure that they have a more robust maintenance plan and projects that can be effectively maintained and managed.

Madam Chairman: Might I ask, PS, in terms of these projects with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, in terms of regularity of site visits and so by your Ministry, is that done?

Mrs. Deoraj: Yes, we do site visits—maybe not as many as we would like to do. Sometimes it is challenging, but that is part of our programme, to do the site visits.

Madam Chairman: All right. And again, something again, you had mentioned this post-evaluation sort of tool that you were going to develop. How far has that reached?

Mrs. Deoraj: Well, we have been able to do some of that with some of the other Ministries, and so we are working on it. But, if a Ministry is ready to do some sort of evaluation, we work with them on it at the moment.

Madam Chairman: But that template which I think is intended to go to Ministries, what is the time frame for that?

Mrs. Deoraj: No, we have not done—we are hoping that by the latter part of this year, we would be able to start working—

Madam Chairman: You are talking fiscal or calendar?

Mrs. Deoraj: **—**no, calendar year—more aggressively with Ministries.

Madam Chairman: So that really—I am going to ask member Webster-Roy to ask her final questions and therefore—and we still have one more entity to do and we will continue the conversation with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs in writing.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted an update in terms of what has been done to facilities to facilitate persons living with disabilities?

Mr. Burton: With regard to the facility, the swimming pools, the indoor sporting arenas, persons with disabilities have full access at ground floor level to all our facilities.

With regard to the youth facilities, I know the work done by—when it was with the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development, they did in fact put in access ramps and so on. But, I honestly cannot say it is full access at this time.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: So, if I go to—so, okay. All the stadia, all the facilities, once they are multi-storey, we have elevators that are fully functional so somebody with a wheelchair who may have another disability will be able to access all floors?

Mr. Burton: Well, I will not be able to answer for the stadia; that does not come under my remit. But, with regard to the sport facilities, we have pavilions and so on with no access for wheelchair persons—only ground floor level. Above ground floor, no access.

Ms. Duke: Member, I will ask SporTT to respond.

Ms. Colley: Good afternoon, member. As it relates to the stadia, Sport would have in the past engaged consultants to conduct feasibility studies and conditional assessments of all our stadia, as well as designs for upgrade. These contracts, however, have since been terminated. We are currently in the negotiating process to settle claims for the works that have already been done.

The works that have been done, however, would have incorporated and taken into consideration the works that are required to adhere to the needs of the disabled. So in the future when we have the Cabinet approved sum for the upgrade of all these facilities, it is expected that the upgrades will in fact meet the needs of the disabled throughout the country.

Madam Chairman: Madam PS, I really have to bring the conversation to an end at this stage. I want to thank you for all the assistance that you have rendered. I want to thank the members of your team. You are now excused, I wish you all a safe journey home, and we will continue the conversation in writing. Thank you very much.

Ms. Duke: Thank you, Madam Chair, and to the Committee.

6.20 p.m.: *Meeting suspended*.

6.25 p.m.: *Meeting resumed*.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO POLICE SERVICE

Mr. Stephen Williams	Commissioner of Police (Ag.)
Mr. Deodat Dulalchan	Deputy Commissioner of Police ‘Operations’ (Ag.)
Mrs. Erla Christopher	Deputy Commissioner of Police ‘Administration’ (Ag.)

Mr. Trevor Boissiere	Head – Internal Audit
Mr. Felix Pearson	Head – Planning, Research & Project Implementation
Mrs. Mara Rosalina Harte	Head – Finance & Accounts
Mr. Someet Ramroop	Head – Administration
Mr. Miklos Badaloo	Head – Information Tech.

Madam Chairman: Good evening to the representatives of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. And I welcome you and I thank you for your indulgence in the delay. I therefore call upon the acting Commissioner of Police to introduce himself and the members of the service here with him.

Mr. Williams: Good evening Chairman and members of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee. I am Stephen Williams, I am the Acting Commissioner of Police, Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, and present with me, I will just get the individuals to all identify themselves so I do not pronounce some names inappropriately, starting from my right.

[*Introductions made*]

6.30 p.m.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. Acting Commissioner, I invite you to make a brief statement, if you wish, concerning your PSIP.

Mr. Williams: Madam Chairman and members of the Committee, I wish to advise what the police service would have utilized the allocations that we would have received. The releases are all highlighted in documents I just submitted for ease of reference. We do in fact have the Head of Planning who has the direct responsibility on a day-to-day basis for managing this portfolio for us, supported by some of the key heads within the police service. So this evening's activity, the Head of Planning will spend a lot of time in responding to the numerous questions that the Committee should have, supported by all other team members including myself.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Acting Commissioner. Okay. So to open up the conversation, I would invite member Rambharat to begin.

Mr. Rambharat: Thank you. Commissioner, let me just say, I was very pleased to see the report. My assessment is that you have done what you have to do, because in a lot of cases you have indicated either the works are completed or you are awaiting the release of funds. So it means that you have done your part in moving the projects along. There are five areas I just want to ask some questions on, just five areas to open. I see under the "Improvement Works to Police Stations" the electrical works associated with the firearm pulverizer machine at the Armoury. Now, I recall reading in the newspaper that—is that a new machine that was acquired? Was a machine not donated or something like that?

Mr. Williams: The machine highlighted, there is one which we would have purchased.

Mr. Rambharat: So you have more than one?

Mr. Williams: Well, that pulverizing machine, we only have one, and is one purchased with state funds.

Mr. Rambharat: Right. A few years ago, I remember a story in the media about a demonstration of a firearm being crushed.

Mr. Williams: I am aware of the story that you speak about. That is what we can call antiquated equipment that we would have received by way of a donation. Correct.

Mr. Rambharat: And what has happened to that antiquated piece of equipment?

Mr. Williams: Well, it still exists but it cannot fulfil the functions required for destruction of the weapons.

Mr. Rambharat: So is it totally out of use?

Mr. Williams: At the moment, I would say yes.

Mr. Rambharat: Right. So that clears that up. That is the first question. The second question I wanted to ask relates to your gym facilities on Sixth Floor, Riverside, and there is an allocation—a commitment of $292,000. Now that allocation is to do—where are you in establishing this gym facility and what is the commitment made in this fiscal going to do?

Mr. Williams: Well, I will pass on to Mr. Pearson and he will give you all the details.

Mr. Pearson: It is at the Riverside Plaza. The police service has just entirely populated that building, all 13 floors, with different units in the building. The sixth floor in that building is designated the use and recreational facilities where we will be having canteen facilities and a wellness fitness centre where the gym equipment will be installed.

The facility, the infrastructural works have already been completed, and during this fiscal our proposal is to equip the gym area with the equipment. We expect to take delivery of all equipment during this period, so we would expect that the expenditure would be settled and there will be no carry over into the next fiscal. It will be expended during this fiscal.

Mr. Rambharat: Okay. So the gym is not operational as yet?

Mr. Pearson: No, not as yet. The facility is ready. It is now being equipped with the equipment.

Mr. Rambharat: Now, when it is operational it will be accessible to all members of the police service or only those at Riverside Plaza?

Mr. Pearson: It will be accessible to all members of the police service.

Mr. Rambharat: Okay. That was my second question. The third question relates to establishment of Police Youth Club facilities and Commissioner, I wanted to ask you this question. I see—from time to time I receive letters from Police Youth Clubs requesting the use or access to state buildings, and I am always very concerned about it. For example, I got one from Biche, I got one from Rio Claro and some other areas and I am always concerned with allocating state buildings for single users, and I wanted to know if there was a policy for all Police Youth Clubs. I had asked the question about why they were not housed or facilitated at the police station, and I got an answer that was reasonable enough. But what is the policy for housing Police Youth Clubs? Are they all expected to have a separate facility and is the police service going to make financial provision for the acquisition of facilities for every Police Youth Club in the country?

Mr. Williams: The ideal position for the police service is to have facilities controlled by the police service for all youth clubs. That is the ideal position, but we know for a fact we will not necessarily reach that ideal position anywhere in the very near future. But we are operating from the almost—and if I use a convenient word—challenging position where we are coming from a point where very, very few youth clubs have had facilities assigned to them. So we are on a build-out process. Wherever we can be effectively supported in our thrust—because we went on an extensive outreach for the young people in the country, recognizing that the young people need support and direction and the police service has gone on an extensive outreach with that, but the outreach of engaging young persons in youth clubs is not flowing at the same rate of acquiring facilities to support those engagements.

So we have been trying in numerous communities with whatever facilities are there in communities, to seek out support for usage as we treat with the buildout of youth club facilities on a very slow process. So we have, if I can call it, two streams. The ideal position is to get facilities, but we know for a fact we will not get facilities for all youth clubs in the very near future. That is a distant dream. In the meanwhile, as we can buildout facilities, we build out and then in districts where there are state-owned property, we seek usage from the controllers of those state-owned property.

Mr. Rambharat: And then you will have the ongoing cost of maintenance which would add to your recurrent, right?

Mr. Williams: Yes. The ongoing cost adds to recurrent.

Mr. Rambharat: And is it that the Police Youth Clubs cannot—are there activities that they do that cannot fit into one of the existing youth facilities, for example, St. James Youth Facility or the others? We sat earlier with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. I believe there are seven youth facilities. Is it that they cannot fit into those youth facilities?

Mr. Williams: Sure they can fit into those youth facilities, but remember we are talking about, right now, 122 established Police Youth Clubs and the youth facilities are just a handful of youth facilities. So if we can have access to those youth facilities it will help us, but the number of youth clubs, there is no number comparing with that by way of youth facilities in the country.

Mr. Rambharat: Well, I mean from where I sit, I think if you have 160, then a comprehensive plan based on what you know or through your line Ministry, working with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and working with our Ministry too might help, because it is very difficult to deal with the request on an individual and an ad hoc basis without knowing, you know, what is required, because it will continue to add to your acquisition costs and your recurrent expenditure.

Mr. Williams: If we may be permitted, I think the Head Planning just wanted to add on your case.

Mr. Pearson: If I may add as well, one of the challenges that we have had, because we do have a level of cooperation with the youth clubs and the youth facilities, but one of the challenges that will emerge really has to do with the programmes of the Police Youth Club and sometimes the scope and the extent of the activity does not fit in with the schedules of availability for those facilities. So, where it is possible, yes we do have that happening, but the youth clubs themselves, based on their own programmes, would be better served having independent facilities which is what we try to work with.

Additionally, with the new police station construction programme, we have outfitted those stations with some community facilities so where possible, they can lend some support to Police Youth Club activities and we work with the Property and Real Estate Services Division to access other Government facilities where those do not exist so that we can have facilities available that we seek to outfit for Police Youth Club activities.

Mr. Rambharat: Okay, thank you. And then the fourth area was under "Development of a Computer System for the Police Service". I wanted for the Committee and for the public to know the details of it: What does this project involve? There is an $8 million allocation in this fiscal.

Mr. Williams: I will pass that one to the Head of IT, who will give the necessary details.

Mr. Badaloo: Good afternoon again. This project, it is 24 separate projects that have been sanctioned by Cabinet, and with the $8 million, we cannot narrow down the use of the funds to one particular project, mainly because there are so many different things that are going on at the same time. So you will find that we will be outfitting interview suites with equipment—cabling being done in certain stations to be able to facilitate the acquisition of computers, laptops, expansion of our IP PBX system to decrease our reoccurring fund. So it covers quite a bit. And for us it is very difficult to say that we have one part of those 27 projects completed, because there is not enough money or funds released to be able to facilitate a project and finish a project because there is a lot of dependencies.

Mr. Rambharat: Okay. I understand, because I thought it was a single system. So, for example, you may be having a new IT enabled communique. I thought it was a single system, but I understand it might be laptops, it might be equipment, it might be putting in IT equipment in a facility, and that sort of thing. So I am fine with that.

And Commissioner, the last one that caught my attention in the submission you walked in with was what seems to be an issue with Valencia Police Station. Is it a land issue? A building issue? What caught my attention was the fact that I saw the line which says: "If project implementation fails", but what is the constraint with the expansion at Valencia Police Station?

Mr. Williams: Just to put on record, Valencia has a Police Post. So it is almost like a subunit of the Sangre Grande Police Station, but the crime has grown in Valencia to the point where the demand for service requires upgrade.

Mr. Rambharat: I understand that. Your project is called expansion of the police station, but there is a constraint.

Mr. Williams: The main constraint is the land, the adjacent land which was occupied by the Ministry of Works and Transport. We had engaged the Ministry of Works and Transport. We had gotten the informal indicator that they were willing to facilitate us having the appropriate access. We have had change over time with Permanent Secretaries. I have recently engaged the present Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Works and Transport to say that we wanted to further the process. We had written before, but it has not been completed.

Mr. Rambharat: A request should be made to the Commissioner of State Lands. The Commissioner of State Lands has the ultimate responsibility for the lands, whichever Ministry it is assigned to.

Mr. Williams: Yes. I am reminded that the main reason for firstly engaging the Ministry of Works and Transport is that they had some old buildings on the compound.

Mr. Rambharat: Okay. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Minister Webster-Roy.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Good afternoon. I just want to have an update on the restoration work to the Moriah Police Station, please.

Mr. Pearson: Over the last period, we engaged the services of a consultant to advise us with respect to the status of the Moriah Police Station because of the condition that that building is in and because of the age of the building as well. The recommendation that came back to us was that Moriah would best be served with the construction of a new police station.

At this point in time, it is not one of those projects that has formed part of Government's portfolio for the Ministry of National Security, so we went to the next best option which was some recommendations with respect to refurbishments. Those works were essentially completed during the last fiscal period. We have been monitoring the project and we got some feedback with respect to some additional works that would have come out—the works that would have been completed, and those works are what we are now targeting for completion. It is some minor remedial works which basically has to do with some of the timber members in the building with respect to replacement and some termites and some window issues. So the main infrastructural issues related to Moriah, we have dealt with over the last period and we just have some minor infrastructural works to complete at Moriah.

Mrs. Webster-Roy: Is the building now OSH compliant?

Mr. Pearson: Yes it is largely OSH compliant. We have met the requirements for a lot of what was requested for that building.

Madam Chairman: Commissioner, in terms of this—and I am not seeing it in the updated document, so maybe you could assist me. There is a project, the design consultancy services for new HR strategic plan, which as of the 12th of June 2018 was in your procurement phase. So I just wanted to get some idea of what is involved in this and what is the current status—if it is at the procurement stages that you were looking for—you had just sent out the RFP or where is that?

Mr. Williams: I think it is listed at page 10, line 74. But just to share with you, we have had a proposal to develop the HR strategic plan for the police service, quite consistent with an activity out of the manpower audit. What we are looking for is the funding to engage that consultancy, well actually to develop an HR strategic plan beyond the design.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Thank you. Actually I was going to ask you about those last three, but your update—and it is on page 8 I have found it on—has given a status on all three, so I thank you very much.

What I want to ask Commissioner, in terms of you all approach, is it that you all use the project screening brief which has been prepared by the Ministry of Planning and Development?

Mr. Williams: I will pass on to the Head of Planning.

Mr. Pearson: Yes. We do utilize some elements of that project brief, in addition to which we look at other best practice in the industry as well. We also have a very close working relationship with other Government implementing agencies, NIPDEC and UDeCOTT, so we have the benefit of their practice as well. So together with reference to the practice and the documents we develop a model that we feel will best suit the needs of the police service.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Commissioner, let me ask you, in terms of your implementation of your PSIP for this year, what you estimate would be your implementation rate by the end of this fiscal?

Mr. Williams: Well, it is really constraint by the releases. We have an exceptional team. Our major challenge is really obtaining releases and once we get releases, we put all things in place to ensure that we can fully utilize the releases. So, at present, our main challenge is really releases.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Madam PS, I think the submission for the TTPS and the updates speak for themselves in that I think the Commissioner, in his opening statement, said that all releases they have gotten they have spent. Okay. And, you know, that is what this shows. This also shows that they have done their part either, you know, they have reached procurement whatever, they are waiting on releases of funds. What I wanted to ask is, what is the TTPS doing differently?

Mrs. Deoraj: Madam Chair, we do not have the benefit of the documentation that you have in front of you, and yes they are utilizing their funds that have been released. We are, however, not up-to-date with all the information that you have in front of you and that has been one of our challenges with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. There has been a shortening in terms of information. So in terms of—and we have also noticed there is also sometimes an absence of Cabinet approvals for some of the projects. So we have been working with them trying to get this type of information. So I am not sure what it is that they are doing better. Mr. Pearson has indicated that they have looked at several models in terms of project preparations and so, but we—

Madam Chairman: What I would want to say is that maybe when you get the benefit of the information that we have had, it may be a case to study in terms of how you supervise, monitor and interact with the other agencies, because I have heard what you said about the possible lacking of Cabinet approval and that is another issue and an issue that has to be treated with, but in terms of maybe importing and seeing how we use that with the other agencies, because we have not seen anything like this for the afternoon.

Mrs. Deoraj: Certainly, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Okay? All right. So, member Rambharat.

Mr. Rambharat: Commissioner, I was trying to avoid this comment, but I had missed that you actually have—I thought you had no provision for vehicles in this PSIP. I was surprised, but there is a small provision and I did not want to spoil your day, but why is it—let me put it this way. Do you plan an auction of the used vehicles soon?

Mr. Williams: Yes, we plan an auction. In fact—

Mr. Rambharat: As I see the fleet is growing.

Mr. Williams: Yes. Well, is one of the challenging issues that we face. As you will well know, the police service, criminals do not choose to relax on the roadway as you deal with crime. So we have a higher rate of accidents than other organizations.

Mr. Rambharat: No, I understand that. I understand that. But every Ministry, across Ministries, we see the pile up of vehicles and equipment. In fact, currently, we are dealing with photocopying machines from 30 years ago, and we understand that, but are you going anything to accelerate the disposal?

Mr. Williams: Well, I will get the Head Admin to give you the updated position with disposal, because that falls within his portfolio. So that is one of the beneficial things for me. I have a number of civilian heads who have been doing a fantastic job in aiding the Commissioner of Police in executing. So that is a big positive, but Mr. Ramroop is to the back, he will help us on the issue.

Mr. Ramroop: Good afternoon again. We presently have a number of vehicles that are not roadworthy. We have a request for an auction of a disposal of 75 vehicles presently. We also have another list, but before we reach to the Board of Survey or the actual disposal of the vehicle, we do an assessment to make sure that the vehicles are actually no longer serviceable. So we actually have one list at the Ministry of Finance awaiting to send to the Central Tenders Board to commission the Board of Survey, and that will deplete some of the build-up you speak of and we also have another list that will soon be coming to follow that.

Mr. Rambharat: Right. So what is at St. James there represents the vehicles from across the country?

Mr. Ramroop: Yes, from the entire TTPS and the way you see them laid out is because we actually would have been preparing for the actual auction itself over the last two months, so that is why you are seeing them to the front of the compound.

Mr. Rambharat: Yeah, I saw it was growing and I saw it was laid out and I figured something was happening, and I just wanted in fairness to you to give you the opportunity to explain that to listeners and viewers so they would know. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: So Acting Commissioner of Police and the other representatives of the police service and your excellent civilian assistants as you have described them, I want to thank you all for coming and sharing this very enlightening conversation with us. I think there are a few more questions we have, but we will continue our conversation in writing. I want to wish you all a safe journey home and to say that you all are now excused and thank you all.

In terms of the listening public, I want to thank all the members of the media and the listening public who stayed with us during the course of this examination. I want to thank the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Planning and Development and her team for spending the entire afternoon and aiding us and aiding the Ministries and Departments under their watch. I wish your all also a safe journey home. I now suspend this meeting. Thank you very much.

6.55 p.m.: *Meeting adjourned.*