SE

PARLIAMENT

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON

STATE ENTERPRISES

13th REPORT OF THE

on

An inquiry into the operations of MIC Institute of Technology (MIC-IT) with specific reference to the high drop-out and failure rate of its trainees

March, 2020

An electronic copy of this report can be found on the Parliament website: www.ttparliament.org

The Joint Select Committee on State Enterprises

Contact the Committees Unit

Telephone: 624-7275 Extensions 2828/2309/2283, **Fax:** 625-4672

Email: jscse@ttparliament.org

PARLIAMENT
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Joint Select Committee on State Enterprises

An inquiry into the operations of MIC Institute of Technology (MIC-IT) with specific reference to the high drop-out and failure rate of its trainees

Thirteenth Report 2019/2020 Session, Eleventh Parliament

Report, together with Minutes

Ordered to be printed

Date Laid	Date Laid
H.o.R: 04.03.2020	Senate: 03.03.2020

Published on ________ 202__

The Joint Select Committee on State Enterprises

Establishment

1. The Joint Select Committee on State Enterprises was appointed pursuant to the directive encapsulated at section 66A of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The House of Representatives and the Senate on Friday November 13, 2015 and Tuesday November 17, 2015, respectively agreed to a motion, which among other things, established this Committee to inquire into and report to Parliament on State Enterprises falling under its purview with regard to:

- ¶ their administration;
- ¶ the manner of exercise of their powers;
- ¶ their methods of functioning; and
- ¶ any criteria adopted by them in the exercise of their powers and functions.

Current Membership

2. The following Members were appointed to serve on the Committee:

Mr. Anthony Vieira

Dr. Lester Henry

Mrs. Cherrie-Ann Crichlow-Cockburn

Mr. Wade Mark

Mr. Fazal Karim

Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Ancil Antoine

Mr. Adrian Leonce

Mr. Foster Cummings

Powers

3. The Committee is one of the Departmental Select Committees, the powers of which are set out principally in Senate Standing Orders 91 and 101, and HOR Standing Orders 101 and 111. These are available on the Internet via www.ttparliament.org.

Secretarial Support

4. Secretarial support was provided by Mr. Brian Caesar, Clerk of the Senate, who served as Secretary to the Committee, Ms. Sheranne Samuel, Assistant Secretary, Mrs. Krystle Gittens, Graduate Research Assistant, and Ms. Safiyyah Shah, Graduate Research Assistant.

Contacts

5. All correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary to the Joint Select Committee on State Enterprises, Parliamentary Complex, Cabildo Building, St. Vincent Street, Port of Spain. The telephone number for general enquiries is 624-7275; the Committee's email address is jscse@ttparliament.org.

Table of Contents

General Findings

During the inquiry, the Committee made the following findings:

1. According to submissions by the Investments Division, Ministry of Finance, MIC-IT has been tardy with submissions of the following:
   - Board Minutes;
   - Quarterly Reports;
   - Cash Flows of Operations;
   - Litigation Reports;
   - Return of Awards of Contract Reports;
   - Internal Audit Reports; and
   - Investment in Securities Reports.

2. However, the Committee is of the opinion that MIC-IT has tried to adhere to the stipulations of the SEPMM, including submission to the line Ministry of its Annual Performance Review and Appraisal.

3. Currently there are fourteen MIC-IT centers across Trinidad and Tobago servicing approximately 1,900 trainees.

4. A major challenge to MIC-IT's ability to achieve its mandate is that as an organisation, MIC-IT is primarily dependent on subventions from the Government to fund its operations.

5. In fiscal 2016/2017 there was a 50% reduction in MIC-IT's subvention. This cut has had a negative impact on MIC-IT's ability to meet the demand for its training programmes, particularly those for which a stipend is paid to participants.

6. The Committee learned that the Ministry of Education cut subventions to all eleven of its State Enterprises due to the financial constraints being experienced by the Government.

7. However, a Cabinet Note for increased funding has been submitted by the Ministry.

8. MIC-IT's plans to continue all programmes despite decreased funding, and has remained afloat by using unspent balances accumulated from subventions received prior to the fiscal 2016/2017 reduction, to help offset some the current costs.

9. Additionally, MIC-IT has engaged in more aggressive local and regional marketing of its other services and products, with the objective of generating more revenue.

10. MIC-IT's work in the region includes:
    - Training in St. Maarten;

- Work at the Grenada Airport; and
- Training in St. Vincent.

11. Moreover, MIC-IT has a partnership with UTT's Aviation Institute that may generate future income.

12. At the time of this Report, the Draft Education Policy had been approved by Cabinet, after two National Consultations.

13. The Ministry of Education has committed to the following activities in order to develop TVET as an aspect of the Education Policy[1]:
    - Review the Legislative Framework governing the TVET Sector;
    - Rationalise the Sector;
    - Ensure that relevant labour market studies are conducted;
    - Establish a National TVET System to:
        - Develop, implement and maintain a TVET plan that links all aspects of training and certification;
        - Institute and implement a process of seamless transition for:
            - Student access to any Public/Private Service Provider Institution,
            - Student access from school to work, and
            - Student access from school to TVET Tertiary Level Institutions;
        - Promote lifelong learning;
        - Expand Workforce Assessment Centres;
        - Establish a Quality Assurance System; and
        - Implement the Regional Qualifications Framework.
    - Promote and market TVET:
        - As a first option;
        - As an alternative;
        - As a natural choice; and
        - As training for vulnerable groups.
    - Standardise all programmes and courses by levels offered by all providers;
    - Link all course titles to occupational areas defined;
    - Ensure that all TVET providers offer programmes that have an adequate mix of theory and practical training;
    - Implement a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the TVET Sector; AND
    - Promote TVET as a viable teaching career and provide Teacher Training opportunities from Level 1 to 4.

[1] Draft Education Policy Paper 2017-2022 Final - Technical Vocational Education to Trinidad and Tobago http://moe.gov.tt/Portals/0/Documents/Notices/Draft%20Education%20Policy%20Paper%202017-2022%20final.pdf?ver=2018-10-04-114243-487 Accessed January 24, 2019

Summary of Recommendations

The following is a summary of the recommendations proposed by the Committee:

1. MIC-IT should commit to completing the outstanding requirements necessary to achieve full adherence to the SEPMM. These include:
   i. Submission of the following documents to the line Ministry:
      - Board Minutes;
      - Quarterly Reports;
      - Cash Flows of Operations;
      - Litigation Reports;
      - Return of Awards of Contract Reports;
      - Internal Audit Reports; and
      - Investment in Securities Reports.

   ii. Finalization of the following policies:
      - Project Management Protocol;
      - Risk Management Policy;
      - Fraud Policy; and
      - Whistleblower Policy

2. Given the current constraints on MIC-IT's operating income, the Committee supports efforts by MIC-IT to develop additional income streams, while reducing expenditure.

3. That being said, the Committee recommends that a cost/benefit analysis be completed prior to the commitment to any new project or venture.

4. In light of the fact that MIC-IT did not receive authorization to retain unspent balances, the Committee recommends that such authorization be acquired urgently to ensure that MIC-IT is not found in breach of any of the regulations for State Enterprises.

5. MIC-IT's efforts must be supported through the Ministry's diligent implementation of the activities outlined in the Education Policy.

Report Summary

This report examines the operations of MIC Institute of Technology with specific reference to the high drop-out and failure rate of its trainees. During the inquiry, the Committee focused on the following objectives:

i. To determine whether MIC-IT is adhering to the framework for operations as outlined in the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual;
ii. To determine whether MIC-IT is achieving its mandate by developing National Technical and Vocational competencies for competitive industries through quality training, innovation, manufacturing and engineering products and services;
iii. To determine whether MIC-IT is poised to support the achievement of the Government's policy objectives as outlined by the Ministry of Education; and
iv. To determine whether MIC-IT is experiencing a high failure and dropout rate, and if so, what measures are being implemented to address this.

In summary, the Committee is of the opinion that MIC-IT has tried to adhere to the stipulations of the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual (SEPMM), though there have been instances of tardiness with submissions. This is encouraging.

In the course of the Committee's interrogation it was noted that without the implementation of the Ministry of Education's Education Policy 2017-2022, MIC-IT would be hard-pressed to achieve viability, given the persistence of:

i. Financial constraints;
ii. MIC-IT competitors offering similar training, see **Appendix III**; and
iii. Issues with retaining trainees.

Recommendations proposed by the Joint Select Committee on State Enterprises are intended to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the operations of MIC-IT.

1. Introduction

Literature Review and Background

1.1.1. The State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual outlines the framework within which State Enterprises and the Minister of Finance (Corporation Sole) interact. It defines:

i. the roles of the major interacting agencies involved in monitoring the State Enterprise Sector;
ii. the Monitoring Mechanism;
iii. the Performance Monitoring Indicators applicable to the Sector;
iv. Compliance as well as the inputs for generating synergies within the Sector.

1.1.2. The rationale for this document is to facilitate the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) thrust to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the State Enterprise sector.

1.1.3. This five-part manual is the result of extensive consultation with stakeholders and the collaborative effort of officials of the State Enterprises and the Ministries[2].

1.1.4. The Framework for State Enterprises Operations is attached at **Appendix I**.

Entity profile:

1.1.5. MIC- IT was established in 1874 and offers Technical and Vocational Training, Industry Services and Construction Services. It is the only tool and dye making workshop in the country to support the manufacturing sector with the design and production of tools, dyes and moulds. MIC-IT also operates as a commercial factory and is one of the leading providers of engineering solutions for the local and regional industrial sector through its Design and Engineering, Plastics Services and Industrial Training.

1.1.6. The Construction arm of MIC-IT was launched in 2016 and with the help of its trainees and skilled instructors, MIC-IT provides high quality, low cost building and maintenance solutions to the construction industry. Their competitive advantage includes specialised training partnerships with institutions such as the ICON-Institut, the German Chamber of Crafts and Trades and the American Welding Society where many of their experienced tradesmen and supervisors have been trained.

1.1.7. As a premier training institution, MIC-IT offers a range of programmes including:

¶ **Technical Vocational Instructor & Teacher Training (TVITT)**

[2] State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual, 2011: http://www.finance.gov.tt/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/State-Enterprise-Performance-Monitoring-Manual-2011.pdf

The aim of this programme is directed towards meeting the needs of instructor/teacher learners by transforming them into effective professionals in delivery, designing, developing, implementing and managing of the curricula of the MIC Institute of Technology and other vocational training programmes.

¶ **Industrial Craft Programme (ICP)**
The ICP is designed to fill the gap between the unskilled and the skilled industry-ready craftsman, and to provide graduates with skills and competencies in their chosen occupational field to enter the world of work and contribute effectively to the economy while gaining an income.

¶ **Multi-Sector Skills Training (MuST)**
The trainees are exposed to the real world of work and Life Skills Training while at the same time learning a Technical Skill to gain sustainable employment. This programme has exposed over 20,000 unemployed nationals to occupational skills training within the Construction, Hospitality and Tourism Sectors.

¶ **Helping You Prepare for Employment (HYPE)**
HYPE is designed to train and develop young individuals in skills, knowledge and abilities to be self-supporting and to take advantage of opportunities. HYPE offers a stipend and other Government funded support to assist trainees.

¶ **Mechatronics and Renewable Energy programmes**
Mechatronics covers the integration of electronics, electrical and mechanical disciplines into modern engineering applications. This course will meet the needs for all those requiring and understanding of these engineering applications.

¶ **National Skills Development Programme (NSDP)**
The programme follows the German Dual System of Technical Vocational Training and uses the Factory Training Concept where foundation theoretical and practical skills are developed in MIC-IT, and mastery of these skills are developed in the industry under guided supervision of a skilled Supervisor or Master Craftsman.

¶ **Master Craftsman Qualification**
Participants of this programme are trained at the highest level of technical competency whilst learning the basics of management and supervision. A graduate of this programme will be able to function as a specialist in his/her occupational area and be qualified for supervisory or trainer positions.[3]

[3] http://www.mic.co.tt/page/about-us

Significance of Technical Vocational Education to Trinidad and Tobago

1.1.8. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is used as a comprehensive term to "*describe those aspects of the general education process that include the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of social life.*" For many persons, the normal academic curriculum is not best suited to their skills and abilities. As such, TVET allows for the development of these individuals by providing alternative training methods in a diversity of fields.

1.1.9. "*Trinidad and Tobago has a long history of apprenticeships and technical and vocational training. Starting with the curriculum of the Senior Comprehensive School proposed in the 15-Year Plan for Educational Development (1968-1983), successive Administrations have promoted technical and vocational training (TVET) as a viable alternative to academic instruction, and equally deserving of the respect afforded scholastic competence. In this way, they have sought to remove the stigma attached to technical and vocational education, and to give to persons who pursue technical courses a more meaningful and central place in the education system.*"[4]

1.1.10. While TVET is an important means of building on the education of youth, it can also be relevant for adults and target segments of society like women's groups. TVET helps learners acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to develop professional careers and enter the world of work, creating a vibrant labour market and contributing to the economic growth of Trinidad and Tobago.

Education Policy Paper 2017-2022 Final - Technical Vocational Education to Trinidad and Tobago[5] (TVET)

Policy Statements: TVET SECTOR

1.1.11. The TVET Sector has to be transformed and overhauled if it is to function as a main contributor to the growth of the economy of Trinidad and Tobago. Holistic development must take place at all levels in order to achieve this goal. The under-mentioned policies will be undertaken with a view to maximising the potential of all citizens in the provision of relevant, high-quality training that will redound to the benefit of the country. The issues identified in the Situational Analysis are summarised here as it pertains to the policy prescriptions, and are presented under the appropriate goals of the Ministry.

[4] No time to quit: Engaging Youth at Risk Executive Report of the Committee on Young Males and Crime in Trinidad and Tobago, http://www.ttparliament.org/documents/2197.pdf

[5] Draft Education Policy Paper 2017-2022 Final - Technical Vocational Education to Trinidad and Tobago http://moe.gov.tt/Portals/0/Documents/Notices/Draft%20Education%20Policy%20Paper%202017-2022%20final.pdf?ver=2018-10-04-114243-487 Accessed January 24, 2019

Effective Governance and Administration

Sector Management

Issues Identified/Areas of Concern

- Need for dedicated oversight of the Sector; and
- Need for rationalisation of the Sector.

Policy Statement

The Ministry of Education will:

- Review Legislative Framework governing the TVET Sector; and
- Rationalise the Sector.

Building a Research Agenda

Issues Identified/Areas of Concern

- Need for holistic labour-market studies.

Policy Statement

The Ministry of Education, through its implementing body, will ensure that relevant labour market studies are conducted.

ISSUES IDENTIFIED/AREAS OF CONCERN

- Duplication of Services;
- Absence of Quality Assurance; and
- Inadequate Workforce Assessment Centres.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Ministry of Education, through its implementing body, will establish a National TVET System to:

- Develop, implement and maintain a TVET plan that links all aspects of training and certification;
- Institute and implement a process of seamless transition for:
  - Student access to any Public/Private Service Provider Institution,
  - Student access from school to work, and
  - Student access from school to TVET Tertiary Level Institutions;
- Promote of lifelong learning;
- Expand Workforce Assessment Centres;
- Establish a Quality Assurance System; and
- Implement the Regional Qualifications Framework.

Public Awareness Campaign

ISSUES IDENTIFIED/AREAS OF CONCERN

- Stigmatisation and lack of public awareness.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Ministry of Education, through its implementing body, will promote and market TVET:

- As a first option;
- As an alternative;
- As a natural choice; and
- As training for vulnerable groups.

Curricula Planning and Development

ISSUES IDENTIFIED/AREAS OF CONCERN

- Lack of standardisation of programmes and courses across levels and across institutions;
- Lack of harmonisation between occupational and programme course titles; and
- Emphasis placed either on theoretical or on practical training in TVET institutions.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Ministry of Education, through its implementing body, will:

- Standardise all programmes and courses by levels offered by all providers;
- Link all course titles to occupational areas defined; and
- Ensure that all TVET providers offer programmes that have an adequate mix of theory and practical training.

Curricula Service Delivery

ISSUES IDENTIFIED/AREAS OF CONCERN

- Absence of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

POLICY STATEMENT

The Ministry of Education will develop and implement a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the TVET Sector.

Teacher Training

ISSUES IDENTIFIED/AREAS OF CONCERN

- Acute shortage of TVET teachers at Secondary School level.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Ministry of Education, through its implementing body, will promote TVET as a viable teaching career and provide Teacher Training opportunities from Level 1 to 4.

Mission:

"To be a catalyst for developing National Technical and Vocational competencies for competitive industries through quality training, innovation, manufacturing and engineering products and services."[6]

Vision:

"Creating national competitive advantage through strategic partnerships with the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) and industry for growth and prosperity."[7]

Reported Issues/Challenges Experienced by MIC-IT

1.1.12. In a Guardian Newspaper article dated Saturday July 23, 2016, the chairman of the MIC-IT, Professor Clement Imbert, was reported as saying that *"Approximately 3,500 people sign up for technical vocational training programmes at the MIC Institute of Technology each year. Of that, 20 to 25 per cent either drop out or fail the programmes."* He went further to state that, *"the attrition rate, failure and the people dropping out is higher than you would find at the universities, for instance. This is because many of the programmes are filled by people who we attract almost off the streets"*[8].

1.1.13. Additionally, MIC-IT's Independent Auditor Report[9] (as at September 30 2015), presented the following issues within the Qualified Opinion Report.

¶ "The company did not maintain proper records in relation to its transactions with the National Skills Development Programme (NSDP) and the Helping You Prepare for Employment (HYPE) programmes as at 30 September 2015. We were therefore unable to satisfy ourselves as to the accuracy and completeness of the Due to Related Parties balance."

¶ "The company did not prepare proper schedules and reconciliations for various receivable and payable accounts as at 30 September 2015. We were therefore unable to satisfy ourselves as to the accuracy and completeness of balances included in Accounts Receivable and Prepayments and Accounts Payable and Accruals."

[6] http://www.mic.co.tt/page/mission-vision-core-values
[7] http://www.mic.co.tt/page/mission-vision-core-values
[8] http://www.guardian.co.tt/news/2016-07-23/prof-imbert-high-drop-out-failure-rate-mic
[9] http://www.mic.co.tt/uploads/media/MIC-IT%20ANNUAL%20REPORT%20Final%202015-2016%20(as%20at%2017%20Jan%202017)_2.pdf

¶ "We draw attention to Note 2 (I) in the financial statements which discloses that as at 30 September 2015, the company's current liabilities exceeded its current assets by **$22,035,469.00**. In the absence of continued support from the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, these conditions indicate the existence of a material uncertainty that may cast significant doubt about the company's ability to continue as a going concern."

Suggested Rationale for the Inquiry

1.1.14. Given the forgoing and taking into account the following:

i. It is an opportune time to verify that MIC-IT is adhering to the framework for operations as outlined in the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual;
ii. In the wake of high unemployment rates, citizens are in dire need of dynamic educational development to enhance their marketability;
iii. It is an opportune time to assess the performance of MIC-IT's trainers and trainees; and
iv. It is unclear whether MIC-IT is achieving its mandate, and is in alignment with the Government's policy objectives for Education.

An inquiry into this entity seemed appropriate.

Objectives of the Inquiry

i. To determine whether MIC-IT is adhering to the framework for operations as outlined in the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual;
ii. To determine whether MIC-IT is achieving its mandate by developing National Technical and Vocational competencies for competitive industries through quality training, innovation, manufacturing and engineering products and services ;
iii. To determine whether MIC-IT is poised to support the achievement of the Government's policy objectives as outlined by the Ministry of Education; and
iv. To determine whether MIC-IT is experiencing a high failure and dropout rate, and if so, what measures are being implemented to address this.

Conduct of the Inquiry

1.1.15. At its Thirty-Sixth (36th) Meeting held on February 11, 2019, the Committee agreed to conduct an inquiry *into the operations of MIC Institute of Technology (MIC-IT) with specific reference to the high drop-out and failure rate of its trainees*.

1.1.16. The Committee held one (1) public hearing over the course of the inquiry with entities listed in **Table 1** below.

1.1.17. At the hearing, the Committee posed questions on the various matters in connection with the inquiry objectives set out.

Table 1

Persons who appeared and provided oral evidence

Name of Official	Portfolio	Organization
Public Hearing Held on April 01, 2019		
Professor Clément Imbert	Chairman	MIC Institute of Technology (MIC-IT)
Mr. Anil Ramnarine	Chief Executive Officer	MIC Institute of Technology (MIC-IT)
Mrs. Angela Reneaud-Lewis	Director	MIC Institute of Technology (MIC-IT)
Mr. Randy Monilal	General Manager, Corporate Services	MIC Institute of Technology (MIC-IT)
Mr. Ian McIntosh	General Manager, Training	MIC Institute of Technology (MIC-IT)
Mrs. Lenor Baptiste-Simmons	Permanent Secretary (Ag.)	Ministry of Education (MoE)
Mr. Kurt Meyer	Permanent Secretary (Ag.)	Ministry of Education (MoE)
Ms. Carol Bickram	Director (Ag.), Research, Planning and Technical Services	Ministry of Education (MoE)
Ms. Bhagwati Manick	Director, Finance and Accounting	Ministry of Education (MoE)
Mrs. Jennifer Lutchman	Deputy Permanent Secretary	Ministry of Finance, Investments Division (MoF)
Mr. Ryan Maharaj	Senior Business Analyst (Ag.)	Ministry of Finance, Investments Division (MoF)
Mr. Suresh Dan	Senior Business Analyst (Ag.)	Ministry of Finance, Investments Division (MoF)

1.1.18. Prior to the hearing, requests for information were sent to officials, and in response, written submissions were received. These responses provided a frame of reference for the questions posed during the hearing.

1.1.19. During the hearing the Committee proffered supplementary questions for written response, which were also submitted by the respective officials.

1.1.20. The Minutes of the Meetings during which the public hearings were held are attached as **Appendix II** and the Verbatim Notes as **Appendix III**.

2. Key Issues, Findings and Recommendations

Objective 1: To determine whether MIC-IT is adhering to the framework for operations as outlined in the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual.

2.1.1. According to submissions by the Investments Division, Ministry of Finance, MIC-IT has been tardy with submissions of the following:

- Board Minutes;
- Quarterly Reports;
- Cash Flows of Operations;
- Litigation Reports;
- Return of Awards of Contract Reports;
- Internal Audit Reports; and
- Investment in Securities Reports.

2.1.2. However, the Committee is of the opinion that MIC-IT has tried to adhere to the stipulations of the SEPMM, including submission to the line Ministry of its Annual Performance Review and Appraisal.

2.1.3. In order to achieve full compliance, MIC-IT also committed to finalizing its draft:

- Project Management Protocol;
- Risk Management Policy;
- Fraud Policy; and
- Whistleblower Policy.

2.1.4. Additionally, in response to the issue highlighted in "five qualifying opi auditors" concerning MIC-IT's improper "disaggregation of the acc, changes were made to the accounting systems.

2.1.5. At the time of this Report, Fiscal 2017/18 Management Accounts were ready for Audit by Parnell Kerr Forster (PKF).

Recommendations

2.1.6. MIC-IT should commit to completing the outstanding requirements necessary to achieve full adherence to the SEPMM. These include:

i. Submission of the following documents to the line Ministry:
   - Board Minutes;
   - Quarterly Reports;
   - Cash Flows of Operations;
   - Litigation Reports;
   - Return of Awards of Contract Reports;
   - Internal Audit Reports; and
   - Investment in Securities Reports.

ii. Finalization of the following policies:
- Project Management Protocol;
- Risk Management Policy;
- Fraud Policy; and
- Whistleblower Policy

Objective 2: To determine whether MIC-IT is achieving its mandate by developing National Technical and Vocational competencies for competitive industries through quality training, innovation, manufacturing and engineering products and services.

2.1.7. Metal Industries Company Limited (MIC), the former incarnation of MIC-IT, was a tool and dye maker, and provider of precision machining services.
- The skill of tool and dye making requires a very high precision machinist. At that time there were no institutions in the Caribbean to provide such training.
- Expertise was sought from Europe through the UNDP and UNEDO to carry out in-house training at MIC.

2.1.8. In 1994 a training relationship was formed between MIC and Ferrostaal of Germany, for in-house training in their Journeyman and Master Craftsman programmes.

2.1.9. MIC benefitted from three areas of development in the Master Craftsman programme:-
- Technical;
- Entrepreneurial; and
- Industry work.

2.1.10. From 1996 to 2019, MIC-IT transformed from a mere tool and dye producer, to a training institute, and construction and manufacturing provider. This transformation included a rebranding from Metal Industries Company Limited to MIC-Institute of Technology.
- Helping You Prepare for Employment (HYPE) training programme, which was launched in 2002 by the National Energy Skills Center, and was geared toward preparing persons for employment, was transferred under MIC in 2004.
- In 2006, with the inception of the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), all high-level training programmes offered through the John Donaldson, and the San Fernando Technical Institutes were subsumed under UTT, and all Industrial Craft Programmes (ICPs) and training of Tech/Voc teachers for the high schools, were adopted by the MIC.
- In 2011, the Multi-Sector Skills Training (MuST) programme that was started by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education in partnership with the National Training Agency, was transferred to MIC.

2.1.11. Currently there are fourteen MIC-IT centers across Trinidad and Tobago servicing approximately 1900 trainees.

2.1.12. A major challenge to MIC-IT's ability to achieve its mandate is that as an organisation, MIC-IT is primarily dependent on subventions from the Government to fund its operations.

2.1.13. In fiscal 2016/2017 there was a 50% reduction in MIC-IT's subvention. This cut has had a negative impact on MIC-IT's ability to meet the demand for its training programmes, particularly those for which a stipend it paid to participants.

- The Committee learned that the Ministry of Education cut its subventions to all eleven of its State Enterprises due to the financial constraints being experienced by the Government.
- However, a Cabinet Note for increased funding has been submitted by the Ministry.

2.1.14. MIC-IT's plans to continue all programmes despite decreased funding, and has remained afloat by using unspent balances accumulated from subventions received prior to the fiscal 2013/2017 reduction, to help offset some the current costs.

2.1.15. According to a submission received from the Ministry of Education dated April 15, 2019, *"MIC-IT has not produced evidence of a specific authority which authorises the Company to retain unspent balances. However, the Management indicated that retaining unspent balances has been practiced over the years. In this respect, the Ministry of Education has written to the MIC-IT asserting that with immediate effect, permission must be sought from the Minister of Finance with respect to retaining unspent balances."*

2.1.16. The following actions have been taken to reduce operating costs at MIC-IT:

- Reassigning of activities in some Centres to enable savings;
- Proposal for Centre in Sangre Grande to replace the current rental;
- All satellite Centres in Tobago consolidated into the Tobago Technology Centre; and
- Proposal for Woodford Lodge Centre in Chaguanas to be rescaled from $25Mn.

2.1.17. At the time of this Report there were no immediate plans for staff reduction, but if the subvention is not increased in the near future retrenchment may occur.

2.1.18. At the same time, MIC-IT has engaged in more aggressive local and regional marketing of its other services and products, with the objective of generating more revenue.

2.1.19. MIC-IT's work in the region includes:

- Training in St. Maarten;
- Work at the Grenada Airport; and
- Training in St. Vincent.

2.1.20. Additionally, MIC-IT has a partnership with UTT's Aviation Institute that may generate future income.

Recommendations

2.1.21. Given the current constraints on MIC-IT's operating income, the Committee supports efforts by MIC-IT to develop additional income streams.

2.1.22. That being said, the Committee recommends that a cost/benefit analysis be completed prior to the commitment to any new project or venture.

2.1.23. In light of the fact that MIC-IT did not receive authorisation to retain unspent balances, the Committee recommends that such authorization be acquired urgently to ensure that MIC-IT is not found in breach of any of the regulations for State Enterprises.

Objective 3: To determine whether MIC-IT is poised to support the achievement of the Government's policy objectives as outlined by the Ministry of Education; and Objective 4: To determine whether MIC-IT is experiencing a high failure and dropout rate, and if so, what measures are being implemented to address this.

2.1.24. At the time of this Report, the Draft Education Policy had been approved by Cabinet, after two National Consultations.

¶ TVET is a major aspect of the Policy.

2.1.25. The Ministry provided the Committee with an implementation plan for the Education Policy, see **Appendix II**.

2.1.26. Efforts by MIC-IT to support the achievement of the Government's policy objectives are being stymied by circumstances beyond their immediate control, in particular:

¶ Financial constraints;
¶ MIC-IT competitors offering similar training, see **Appendix III**; and
¶ Issues with retaining trainees.

2.1.27. The Ministry of Education has committed to the following activities in order to develop TVET as an aspect of the Education Policy[10]:

¶ Review the Legislative Framework governing the TVET Sector;
¶ Rationalise the Sector;
¶ Ensure that relevant labour market studies are conducted;
¶ Establish a National TVET System to:
  o Develop, implement and maintain a TVET plan that links all aspects of training and certification;
  o Institute and implement a process of seamless transition for:
    Á Student access to any Public/Private Service Provider Institution,

[10] Draft Education Policy Paper 2017-2022 Final - Technical Vocational Education to Trinidad and Tobago http://moe.gov.tt/Portals/0/Documents/Notices/Draft%20Education%20Policy%20Paper%202017-2022%20final.pdf?ver=2018-10-04-114243-487 Accessed January 24, 2019

- Á Student access from school to work, and
- Á Student access from school to TVET Tertiary Level Institutions;
- o Promote of lifelong learning;
- o Expand Workforce Assessment Centres;
- o Establish a Quality Assurance System; and
- o Implement the Regional Qualifications Framework.
- ¶ Promote and market TVET:
  - o As a first option;
  - o As an alternative;
  - o As a natural choice; and
  - o As training for vulnerable groups.
- ¶ Standardise all programmes and courses by levels offered by all providers;
- ¶ Link all course titles to occupational areas defined;
- ¶ Ensure that all TVET providers offer programmes that have an adequate mix of theory and practical training;
- ¶ Implement a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the TVET Sector; AND
- ¶ Promote TVET as a viable teaching career and provide Teacher Training opportunities from Level 1 to 4.

2.1.28. According to submissions by MIC-IT, the cost to train one trainee for each of its programmes offered is:
- ¶ HYPE - $54,162.00
- ¶ MuST - $66,300.00
- ¶ NSDP - $77,071.00
- ¶ ICP - $62,185.00

2.1.29. The above cost translates into the following breakeven numbers of trainees for each of the programmes offered:
- ¶ Hype – 517
- ¶ MuST – 271
- ¶ NSDP – 534
- ¶ ICP – 346

2.1.30. Based on submissions received from MIC-IT (see **Appendix IV**), the Committee became aware that:
- ¶ Several programmes have very low trainee intake levels; and
- ¶ There has been a drastic fall in overall trainee intake over the period 2013-2018 from 5,705 to 1,875.

2.1.31. Given that MIC-IT depends on a subvention to deliver its programmes, the Committee understands why the 50% reduction has resulted in a suppression of intake numbers.

2.1.32. In order to generate revenue, MIC-IT has done the following:
- ¶ Entered the regional market through work with St Maarten;

- ¶ Collaborated with institutions such as the Civilian Conservation Corps and East Port of Spain Development Company Limited;
- ¶ Procured four (4) additional moulds to increase plastics products portfolio;
- ¶ Established a Construction Department with the aim of providing construction and facilities maintenance services to various Ministries and agencies; and
- ¶ Entered discussions with other regional and local stakeholders with a view to expand MIC-IT's revenue portfolio.

2.1.33. MIC-IT also continues to explore innovative ways to bridge the skills gap in Trinidad and Tobago through new initiatives like:

- ¶ Mechatronics;
- ¶ Hybrid vehicle maintenance; and
- ¶ Solar energy technology - discussions with UTT, Shell and MIC-IT to establish a solar farm.

2.1.34. According to MIC-IT, the issues with retaining trainees were primarily due to:

- ¶ Lack of personal finances;
- ¶ Trainees acquiring a job whilst pursuing the training;
- ¶ Inability of trainees to cope with the level of work or training delivery;
- ¶ Inability of trainees to attend classes due to area of residence (crime hot spots);
- ¶ Domestic and family issues;
- ¶ Poor health issues; and
- ¶ Legal/criminal issues.

Recommendations

2.1.35. Given the current circumstance, MIC-IT's options for becoming profitable and self-sustaining must focus on rejuvenating its income streams while reducing expenditure.

2.1.36. MIC-IT's efforts must be supported through the Ministry's diligent implementation of the activities outlines in the Education Policy.

3. Conclusion

3.1.1. In light of the above, the Committee is optimistic that with diligent implementation of the recommendations proffered, MIC-IT will be better poised to ensure that it is effectively able to fulfill its mandate, and support the policy objectives of the Ministry of Education.

3.1.2. Your Committee therefore awaits the response of the Minister of Education (MoE) to the recommendations listed on **page 8**, in accordance with Standing Orders 100(6) and 110(6) of the Senate and the House of Representatives respectively which states inter alia that –

> *òThe Minister responsible for the Ministr sixty (60) days after a report from a Standing Committee relating to the Ministry or Body, has been laid upon the Table, present a paper to the House responding to any recommendations or comments contained in the report which are addressed to it*

3.1.3. Your Committee therefore respectfully submits this Report for the consideration of the Houses.

Mr. Anthony Vieira
Chairman

Dr. Lester Henry
Vice-Chairman

Mrs. Cherrie-Ann Crichlow-Cockburn, MP
Member

Mr. Wade Mark
Member

Mr. Fazal Karim, MP
Member

Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Ancil Antoine, MP
Member

Mr. Adrian Leonce, MP
Member

Mr. Foster Cummings
Member

APPENDICES

FRAMEWORK FOR STATE ENTERPRISE OPERATIONS[11]

[11] State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual, 2011: http://www.finance.gov.tt/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/State-Enterprise-Performance-Monitoring-Manual-2011.pdf

The following framework provides the guidelines for the effective operations of a State Enterprise as outlined in the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual. These guidelines were used as a benchmark against which the JSC on State Enterprises conducted exploratory assessments of State Enterprises operations.

Criteria	**Policy**	**Compliance Requirements**
Appointment, Removal And Resignation Of Board Directors	Strong Boards are vital for the effective governance of State Enterprises. GORTT appoints and removes Directors of Boards of State Agencies which must be done via the respective Line Ministers of State Agencies incorporated under the Companies Act, Chap 81:01 and by statute. The statutes specify the composition and required skills/experience of Directors. Letters of resignation of Directors of State Enterprises incorporated under the Companies Act, Chap. 81:01 must be forwarded to the Minister of Finance (Corporation Sole) under whose responsibility this lies	The Investments Division maintains a register of Boards of Directors of State Agencies.
Annual Meetings		The Agenda of Annual Meetings (AM) should include the following: 1. Confirmation of minutes of the previous AM 2. The consideration of the financial statements 3. The directors' report 4. The auditors' report, if any 5. The sanction of dividends 6. The election of directors 7. The election of auditors

Appointment And Removal Of An Auditor	State Enterprises are no longer required to appoint the Auditor General as their Auditor unless required under the relevant statute of incorporation or if so desired. Auditors are appointed at an AGM with prior approval of the Corporation Sole.	
By-Laws	Special provisions are included in the Model By-Laws of State Enterprises to govern the interaction between the Minister and Companies. Changes to the By-Laws of Companies are to be approved by the Minister of Legal Affairs then accepted by the Corporation Sole and presented at an Annual or Special Meeting	
Procurement Procedures	GORTT has agreed that the Minister of Finance review and audit contracts awarded by State Enterprises as considered necessary and appropriate.	State Enterprises are required to submit to the Minister of Finance within fourteen (14) days following the end of each month, lists of all contracts which were awarded during the month, together with the value of each contract. Tender rules and any amendments must also be submitted to the Minister of Finance for approval. Details on the Standard Procurement Procedures for the Acquisition of Goods, Provision of Services, Undertaking Works and Disposals of Unserviceable Items in State Enterprises/Statutory Bodies (State Agencies) are given at Appendix B of the SEPMM.
E-Auction	All State Enterprises have been mandated to use e-Auctions to procure items of large spend.	The Ministry of Finance, in keeping with its initiative to reform Public Sector Procurement, is facilitating the implementation of e-auctions among State Enterprises. The e-Auction system is a procurement tool using web-based software

		that allows suppliers to bid online for a contract to supply goods and services. The e-Auction or online/electronic reverse auction (e-RA) is a bidding event sponsored by a buying organisation and forms a single part of the greater e-Procurement strategy. It is an online dynamic negotiation or bidding process between suppliers who compete to supply products by successively bidding prices downward.
Dividend Policy	GORTT has agreed that the profitability of the Enterprise, its liquidity, legal restrictions/loan covenants and the replacement cost of essential capital goods are considered in determining the quantum of dividends that a Company would be required to pay. State Enterprises are also required to pay interim dividends based on semi-annual financial results. Actual distributions of profit are to be agreed with the Minister of Finance and appropriately disclosed in the financial statements. State Enterprises with Retained Earnings in excess of Working Capital requirements may be required to pay a Special Dividend.	
Approval For Overseas Business Travel	Managers (include Managing Directors and Executive Directors) and other senior personnel of State Enterprises who are required to travel obtain the approval of the Board of Directors of their Companies, who may delegate this authority. Chairmen and Non-Executive Directors who are required to travel obtain the approval of the Line Ministers responsible for their respective Companies.	The Company is required to meet only the expenditure related to official business. The costs associated with foreign travel should comply with the guidelines published by the Comptroller of Accounts or the Company's Business Travel policy approved by the Minister.

Board Fees And Allowances	Board Fees and Allowances for State Enterprises are determined by GORTT.	
Use Of Cellular Phones And Laptop Computers	State Enterprises may wish to utilise wireless portable communication devices at the level of the Board of Directors to enhance the efficiency of their operations. State Enterprises may therefore adopt the policy approved by GORTT on the use of Cellular Phones and Laptop Computers for the members as outlined at Appendix C of the SEPMM.	
Appointment Of Executive Directors And Consultancy Contracts	Boards of Directors are required to obtain the written non-objection of the Minister of Finance (Corporation Sole) to authorise the following: (i) appointment of Directors to be the holder of any executive position; (ii) entry of Directors into consultancy contracts with their companies. In each case, the detailed rationale for the proposal must be provided.	
Procedures Regarding Negotiation Of Pay And Other Terms And Conditions Of Employment	GORTT has agreed that: ¶ the monitoring of wage and salary negotiations, the establishment and/or revision of pay and other terms and conditions of employment of employees of State Enterprises, including managerial staff and persons employed on contract should fall under the purview of Ministerial Committee for monitoring remuneration arrangements, a sub-committee of Cabinet.	

	¶ terminal benefits such as separation packages and gratuities, other than those already specified in Collective Agreements, which State Enterprises propose to pay to employees be also subject to the approval of the Ministerial Committee for monitoring remuneration arrangements.	
Payment Of Bonuses	Bonuses are payable on the attainment of a minimum of eighty percent (80%) of the approved performance targets, after approval by the Line Minister. The bonus to be paid to each employee is limited to one (1) month's salary annually. Payments which do not conform to the policy require specific approval of the Ministerial Committee for monitoring remuneration arrangements.	At the beginning of the fiscal year, each State Enterprise is required to provide the respective Line Minister with identified performance targets, which could include, but not necessarily be limited to: ¶ Profits ¶ Quality of product and service delivery ¶ Productivity The targets to be used in the evaluation of progress in achieving objectives should be verifiable, feasible, measurable and consistent with the Business Plan of the State Enterprise. These targets must be agreed upon with the Minister to whom the State Enterprise is required to report on its performance. The Annual Performance Review and Appraisal Reports (Appendix K) certify the Company's performance. Requests for approval of the payment of bonuses should be made within four (4) months of the end of the Company's financial year and the response time from Line Ministries is within six (6) weeks after receipt of requests.

Approval Of New Assets/ Investments, Debt And Contracts	State Enterprises or their subsidiaries are required to obtain prior approval of the Minister of Finance for the acquisition of significant assets, new investments in non-government securities, the incurrence of new/additional longterm debt and entering into significant contracts (relative to the Company). In addition, all GORTT guaranteed borrowings of State Enterprises under the Guarantee of Loans (Companies) Act, Chap 71:82 are to be negotiated by the Ministry of Finance on behalf of the enterprises.	
Inter – Agency Debt		State Enterprises are to inform the Ministry of Finance on matters related to Inter-Agency Accounts Receivables and Payables that are unmanageable as detailed in the Quarterly Returns Report
Litigation Proceedings	State Enterprises are to utilise avenues other than the courts for resolution of disputes. Under no circumstances should legal action be initiated by one State Enterprise against another without prior approval of the Minister of Finance.	State Enterprises are to inform the Ministry of Finance on matters related to litigation proceedings as detailed in the Quarterly Status Report
Publishing Of Financial Statements	State Enterprises are required to publish in at least one (1) major daily newspaper a summary of its audited financial statements within four (4) months following the completion of the financial year and a summary of the un-audited half-yearly statements within two (2) months of the mid-year date subject to the approval of the Minister of Finance. These summary statements	

	should contain the disclosures required by the Securities Industry Act, 1995.	
Shares And Transfers	State Enterprises are required to submit to the Investments Division original Share Certificates in the name of Corporation Sole and the Government Nominee Shareholders within five (5) weeks after the allotment of these shares and within two months after the date on which a transfer of any of these shares is presented to the Company for registration. The issuance of Government Shares must be with the approval of the Minister.	
Statutory Compliance	¶ Payment of Royalties and Taxes ¶ Integrity in Public Life ¶ Occupational Safety and Health ¶ Environmental Management	Occupational Safety and Health State Enterprises are required to comply with the Act (as amended), which came into force in February 2006. Environmental Management In accordance with the Environmental Management Act, Chapter 35: 05, State Enterprises are required to collaborate with the Environmental Management Authority to facilitate the proper management of the environment and to achieve the goal and objectives of the National Environmental Policy
Performance Monitoring		Strategic Plans ¶ Companies are required to submit their Strategic Plans to both the Investments Division and the respective Line Ministry at least six (6) months prior to the start of the

		implementation period of the plan, for those receiving subventions to allow for National Budgetary Preparation activities and one (1) month for others. Annual Operating Budgets ¶ Companies that require subventions from GORTT are required to submit their annual Budgets to the Investments Division and respective Line Ministry for assessment at least six (6) months prior to commencement of the Fiscal year. The Investments Division and Line Ministry will review the Budget and respond within one (1) month prior to the start of the Fiscal Year. Project Management Protocol ¶ GORTT has agreed that a Project Management Protocol be adopted as part of the governance framework for the management of some of the State Enterprises with specific mandates. Risk Management ¶ The success of risk management will depend on the effectiveness of the management framework providing the foundations and arrangements that will embed it throughout the organisation at all levels. Audited Financial Statements

		¶ State Enterprises are required to submit the following: a) Audited Financial Statements (2 originals and 120 copies) to the Minister of Finance within four (4) months of their financial year end. These reports are to be laid in Parliament and subsequently submitted to the Public Accounts and Enterprises Committee for consideration; b) Copies of their Management letters issued by Statutory Auditors. Administrative Reports ¶ Under Section 66D of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Act No 29 of 1999, State Agencies are required to report to the public on their performance annually. Board Minutes ¶ Board Minutes should be made available to the Investments Division and respective Line Ministries to ensure that the Board is proceeding within the framework of the Strategic Plan and GORTT policy decisions.

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

MINUTES OF THE THIRTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON STATE ENTERPRISES, HELD IN THE ANR ROBINSON EAST AND WEST MEETING ROOMS, LEVEL 9, TOWER D, THE PORT OF SPAIN INTERNATIONAL WATERFRONT CENTRE, 1A WRIGHTSON ROAD, PORT OF SPAIN ON APRIL 01, 2019.

Present were:

Mr. Anthony Vieira	Chairman
Mr. Fazal Karim, MP	Member
Mr. Wade Mark	Member
Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Ancil Antoine, MP	Member

Secretariat

Mr. Brian Caesar	Secretary
Ms. Sheranne Samuel	Assistant Secretary
Mrs. Krystle Gittens	Graduate Research Assistant
Ms. Safiyyah Shah	Parliamentary Intern

Absent were:

Dr. Lester Henry	Vice-Chairman
Mrs. Cherrie-Ann Crichlow-Cockburn, MP	Member
Mr. Adrian Leonce, MP	Member (Excused)
Mr. Garvin Simonette	Member (Excused)

Also present were:

MIC Institute of Technology (MIC-IT)

Professor Clément Imbert	Chairman
Mr. Anil Ramnarine	Chief Executive Officer
Mrs. Angela Reneaud-Lewis	Director
Mr. Randy Monilal	General Manager, Corporate Services
Mr. Ian McIntosh	General Manager, Training

Ministry of Education (MoE)

Mrs. Lenor Baptiste-Simmons	Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Mr. Kurt Meyer	Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Ms. Carol Bickram	Director (Ag.), Research, Planning and Technical Services
Ms. Bhagwati Manick	Director, Finance and Accounting

Ministry of Finance, Investments Division (MoF)

Mrs. Jennifer Lutchman	Deputy Permanent Secretary
Mr. Ryan Maharaj	Senior Business Analyst (Ag.)
Mr. Suresh Dan	Senior Business Analyst (Ag.)

CALL TO ORDER

1.1 The Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. Those present were welcomed.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF 37TH MEETING OF 11.03.2019

2.1 There being no amendments, the motion for the confirmation of the Minutes was moved by Mr. Wade Mark and seconded by Mr. Fazal Karim.

2.2 The Minutes was approved.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3.1 **Paragraph 3.1, page 2**: The Chairman informed Members that MIC-I Tô s r e s p o n s e received on March 13, 2019, save for questions 40, 41 and 70. The responses to these questions were received on March 20, 2019. The responses were circulated to Members. Members confirmed receipt of the documents.

3.2 **Paragraph 3.5, page 2**: The Chairman indicated that the requested information from NFM, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Finance was received. The responses wer e a v a i l a b l e i n Me m b e r s ô p a c

3.3 **Paragraph 8.3, page 5**: The Chairman informed Members that the additional information was requested from CEPEP and the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, with a deadline of March 27, 2019. Both entities requested an extension to Friday April 05, 2019 for the submission of the responses. The Secretariat was directed to circulate the CEPEP response once it was received.

A request for information was subsequently sent to the Ministry of Finance, Investments Division also with a deadline of March 27, 2019. The Ministry indicated that the response would be sent on April 01, 2019.

3.4 **Paragraph 9.1, page 5**: The Chairman reminded Members that via round-robin it was agreed that the meeting would be rescheduled to Monday April 01, 2019.

3.5 **Paragraph 6.3 (p), page 4**: A Member sought feedback on inviting the former external auditor of CEPEP to appear before the Committee. The Committee agreed that it would await the submission of the additional information from CEPEP before determining whether another hearing was warranted and with whom.

PRE-HEARING DISCUSSION: MIC-IT INQUIRY

4.1 The Chairman indicated that an Issues Paper was prepared based on written submissions received from MIC-IT and that the document was emailed to Members on March 29, 2019. Members confirmed receipt of the document.

4.2 The Chairman informed Members that officials of the following entities would be appearing before the Committee:

a. MIC-IT;
b. Ministry of Education; and
c. Ministry of Finance, Investments Division.

4.3 The Committee engaged in a pre-hearing discussion relative to the MIC-IT inquiry.

OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Mr. Mark proposed that the quorum of the Committee be reduced from four (4) to three (3), given the competing demands on Membersô time. The Committee agreed to give the entire Membership notice of the proposal and that it would be placed on the agenda of a subsequent meeting.

5.2 The Committee agreed that it would next examine TSTT on Monday April 15, 2019 and that if this was not possible then the Committee would consider the re-engagement of CEPEP. The Secretariat was directed to keep the Committee informed of the agenda for the next meeting.

Suspension

6.1 The Chairman suspended the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

PUBLIC HEARING: MIC-IT INQUIRY

The meeting resumed at 10:40 a.m. *in public*, in the ANR Robinson East Meeting Room.

7.1 The Chairman welcomed officials and introductions were exchanged.

7.2 The Chairman outlined the objectives of the inquiry.

7.3 Detailed hereunder are the issues/concerns raised and the responses proffered during the hearing with the officials of MIC-IT, MoE and MoF:

a. MIC-IT starting off as a tool and die maker, but rebranded to fill the skills-training gap in Trinidad and Tobago;

   ¶ No institutions in the Caribbean to provide high precision machinist training at that time;

b. Expertise sought from Europe through the UNDP and UNEDO to carry out in-house training at MIC-IT;

c. In 1994, former Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Patrick Manning and Professor Ken Julien examined the German training system and found this to be suitable for citizens;

d. Technical Management training in 1996 for the German Master Craftsman programme. Three areas of development in the Master Craftsman programme:-
    i. Technical;
    ii. Entrepreneurial; and
    iii. Industry work;

e. Helping You Prepare for Employment (HYPE) training programme started in 2002 and was geared toward preparing persons for employment;

f. With the inception of the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), all high-level training programmes offered through the John Donaldson, and the San Fernando Technical Institutes were subsumed under UTT;

g. The Industrial Craft Programmes (ICPs) adopted by the MIC-IT in 2006;

h. Multi-Sector Skills Training (MuST) programme put trainees to work immediately, e.g. 4 days work, 1 day training;

i. Technical Vocational Instructor and Teacher Training (TVITT), formerly provided by the John Donaldson Institute, placed under the MIC-ITôs purview;

j. From 1996 to 2019, MIC-IT moved from more than just a tool and die producer, to a training institute, and construction and manufacturing provider;

k. Fourteen MIC-IT centers across Trinidad and Tobago servicing approximately 1900 trainees in 2019;

l. Massive cut in subvention funds issued to MIC-IT (by 50%):
    ¶ financial surpluses accumulated from the past being used currently to help offset some costs at MIC-IT;

m. MIC-ITôs competitors offering similar training.
    ¶ a consolidation of programmes among all public Institutes is needed;

n. National Energy Skills Center (NESC) offering welding, plumbing etc. like the MIC-IT, but with an emphasis on providing those skills for the Energy sector;

o. Shortage of skilled labour impacting on industries;

p. Higher demand for training but a lack of funding to treat with the demand.

q. MIC-ITôs dependence on subvention for payment
and Instructor salaries.

r. Marketing of MIC-ITôs services and products through
more revenue;

s. MIC-IT's work in the region:
   - training in St. Maarten;
   - Work at the Grenada Airport; and
   - training in St. Vincent.

t. MIC-IT's partnership with UTT's Aviation Inst
   - institute half-built until recently;
   - institute to be accredited; and
   - expected formal opening soon;

u. The Laventille Technology Center - 100 Trainees, 90% being from that locality:
   - journeyman, welding, and other low-level skilled programmes offered;
   - social issues with persons living in that area;
   - the center's facilities ... the social environment; ... ng maximis
   - armed Police presence requested - $7000 per week; and
   - Instructors unwilling to attend classes at this Center;

v. Consideration of MIC-IT assisting the Police Academy in St. James with some training, at no cost to offset the money paid for police presence at the Laventille Techonology Center;

w. Bridging the skills gap in Trinidad and Tobago through new initiatives like:
   - mechatronics;
   - hybrid vehicle maintenance; and
   - Solar Energy technology - discussions with UTT, Shell and MIC-IT to establish a solar farm.

x. Ministry of Education considering the rationalisation of TVET programmes within the National Education Policy:
   - TVET framework is in the works;
   - who and how still to be determined; and
   - priority being given to this area, with meetings on weekly basis;

y. The cost to buy molds from China being lower than if they were to be produced in Trinidad and Tobago;

z. Resources being directed to innovative technologies, and designs:
   - *"Unless a decision is made to spend on i*

aa. Draft Education Policy approved by Cabinet, after two National Consultations:
   - TVET and ECCE are major aspects of the policy;

bb. MIC-IT's increase in Operati ... -15 to $60,534,062 in 2016- ... om $49
17 being attributed to payment of salary increments for staff;

cc. Minimum requirements for MIC-IT's programmes:
   - HYPE, MuST - *"off the streets"*

- Journeyman – 3 O'Level subjects including Mathematics, English, and preferably a Science;
- ICP - 3 O'Level subjects including Mathemati
and
- TVITT - tertiary level, or holder of any teaching service position;

dd. Cost to start programmes at MIC-IT - negligible administrative fees;

ee. Stipends paid to HYPE and MUST Trainees;

ff. Programmes offered not necessarily profitable in nature due to the mandate of MIC-IT;

gg. Welding programme entitled SENSE which was ran out of the American Welding Society discontinued due to lack of subscription and funding;

hh. MIC-IT changing its accounting systems, to deal with the issue of improper disaggregation of how money was spent, as highlighted in the Auditor General Report;

ii. Fiscal 2017/18 Management Accounts ready for Audit by Parnell Kerr Forster (PKF), and expected to start within the next week;

jj. MIC-IT's plans to continue all programmes des

kk. Reassigning of activities in some Centers to enable savings:
- proposal for Center in Sangre Grande as opposed to renting; and
- proposal for Woodford Lodge Center in Chaguanas to be rescaled from $25Mn;

ll. No immediate plans for staff reduction, but if the subvention is not increased in the near future retrenchment can occur;

mm. All satellite Centers in Tobago consolidated into the Tobago Technology Center;

nn. Performance Appraisals fulfilled prior to the public hearing and submitted to the Line Ministry;

oo. Draft Project Management Protocol, Risk Management Policy, Fraud Policy and Whistleblower Policy to be finalised in three months;

pp. MoE subvention cuts across its eleven State Enterprises:
- Cabinet Note for increased funding submitted; and
- submission for additional funding received from MIC-IT;

qq. Investments Division, MoF concerns with tardy submissions of the following by MIC-IT:
- board minutes;
- quarterly reports;
- cash flows of operations;
- litigation reports;

¶ return of awards of contract reports;
¶ internal audit reports; and
¶ investment in securities reports;

rr. Training project in St. Maarten facilitated by MIC-IT:
¶ hurricanes Irma and Maria caused infrastructural damage;
¶ skills gap realised during rebuilding efforts;
¶ need for masons, carpenters, plumbers, and electrical workers;
¶ World Bank funding;
¶ first cohort of 70 persons trained in masonry and carpentry;
¶ profitable venture; and
¶ blended approach to be used in the second group, as a more cost-effective measure.

ss. Bespoke Programme housed at the MIC-IT compound:
¶ 27 Trainees inclusive of 1 Barbados national;
¶ National Training Agency (NTA) suggested that MIC-IT be used to obtain accreditation;
¶ Graduation ceremony hosted for the first group of graduates;
¶ Programme not yet accredited; and
¶ MoE liaising with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, MIC-IT, and the NTA in terms of facilitating the Programme.

tt. MIC-ITôs partial compliance with the Occupati
¶ no regular wired or wireless PA system in Centers.

uu. Recommendation for more money to be spent on innovation and thereby assist MIC-IT in achieving its mandate.

7.4 The Chairman thanked officials for attending and they were excused. The Chairman also thanked the viewing and listening audience for tuning in.

(Please see Verbatim Notes for detailed oral submissions)

Suspension

8.1 The Chairman suspended the meeting at 12:38 p.m.

POST-HEARING DISCUSSION

9.1 The Chairman reconvened the meeting *in camera* at 12:42 p.m.

9.2 The Chairman invited discussion on the just concluded public hearing.

9.3 Request for additional information were made of the MIC-IT and MoE.

ADJOURNMENT

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

10.2 The adjournment was taken at 12:51 p.m.

I certify that these Minutes are true and correct.

Chairman

Secretary

April 11, 2019

VERBATIM NOTES

VERBATIM NOTES OF THE THIRTY -EIGHTH MEETING OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON STATE ENTERPRISES.

MIC INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (MIC-IT)

Prof. Clement Imbert	Chairman
Mr. Anil Ramnarine	Chief Executive Officer
Mrs. Angela Reneaud-Lewis	Director
Mr. Randy Monilal	General Manager, Corporate Services
Mr. Ian McIntosh	General Manager, Training

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Mrs. Lenor Baptiste-Simmons	Permanent Secretary
Mr. Kurt Meyer	Permanent Secretary
Ms. Carol Bickram	Director (Ag.), Research, Planning and Technical Services
Ms. Bhagwatie Manick	Director, Finance and Accounting

MINISTRY OF FINANCE ï INVESTMENTS DIVISION

Mrs. Jennifer Lutchman	Deputy Permanent Secretary
Mr. Ryan Maharaj	Senior Business Analyst (Ag.)
Mr. Suresh Dan	Senior Business Analyst (Ag.)

Mr. Chairman: Good morning. The time is now 10.40 a.m., and I would like to call this sitting to order. Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Anthony Vieira, and I would like to extend a very warm welcome. I appreciate your attendance here today. Before I ask other members of the Committee to introduce themselves, may I just indicate for the record that the following members have asked to be excused: Mr. Simonette and Mr. Leonce. Member Henry and member Crichlow-Cockburn, I understand, are on their way. I will now ask the other Committee members to please introduce themselves:

[*Introductions made*]

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Now, may I ask members of MIC to please introduce yourselves?

[*Introductions made*]

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. We also have with us Ministry officialsð officials from the Ministry of Education and from the Ministry of Finance, may I ask you to also introduce yourselves please?

[*Introductions made*]

Mr. Chairman: Thank you all. Before we start the official proceedings, just a couple housekeeping matters. I would be grateful if your cell phones can either be put on silent or turned off, and as you have been doing, when you are about to speak turn on the microphone and after you speak turn it off. Time is limited, we have to conclude by 12.30 and there are a lot of things we would like to cover. So I would ask participants to keep questions and answers as brief and focused as possible so that we can maximize the number of persons who have a chance to contribute.

The purpose of this enquiry is to commence our enquiry into the operations of MIC Institute of Technology, including the performance of its technical and vocational education and training programmes. As you would appreciate, the role of this Committee is, firstly, to examine the issues which arose based on MIC Institute written submissions to the Committeeôs questions, and
in improving its performance and operations, resulting in a more efficient and effective organization. However, in addition to our oversight function, these sessions also afford you a forum to share your concerns, your challenges, your disappointments, your achievements, and to make recommendations. They provide unique opportunity to increase public awareness, understanding and support in respect of your operations.

This meeting is being broadcast live on Parliament Channel 11, Parliament radio 105.5 FM and the Parliamentôs YouTube Channel. Viewers and l
to todayôs engagement via email to parl101@t
Facebook.com/ttparliament, or on Twitter @ttparliament.

Before inviting the Chairman to make brief opening remarks, and providing us with salient information about the company, I see that MIC Institute of Technology was established in 1974. Some 45 years now you have been around. So, can you help set the stage by stating for the record and the viewing public, tell us who you are, what you do? Tell us about yourselves.

Prof. Imbert: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just before we begin I would like to make two minor corrections to the submission, written submission we made. To question 22, the comma after the word ñnoò should be deleted, if it is not it does not
we had no interagency debt, but we do. We have done work for EFCL. We have recently established a construction arm of MIC, construction arm facilities, and we did work for EFCL. They had 2.3 million for us, they paid us 1 million, so they still have 1.3 million for us. Just a front.

So now on to MIC, and what MIC is. Well, MIC means Metal Industries Company. It is Limited but we use the acronym MIC. And that was up until some years ago when it was changed to MIC Institute of Technology. That was done by the last Government. That was, I think, a very good rebranding, MIC. Because MIC started off as in fact, as the name said Metal Industries Company Limited, it started off as a tool and die maker, so tools, dies, moulds, and in order to make tools and dies for industry you need precision machinist, so we also supplied precision machineryð machining, sorry, services. In order to produce a tool and die maker, a very high precision machinist, it takes a long time, and there was noð there were no institutions in the Caribbean at the time to produce people like that. So, UNDP and UNIDO, which were two institutions which had head start MIC, so to speak, provided experts mainly from Europeð as you know it is list on the Germanð experts to train the local people. So, MIC had been engaged in training since inception, but it was in-house training. Of course, a number of these people who were trained left and new cohorts were brought in and so on. So there was continuous training going on, but in-house for the people who are hired to do the moulds and dies and so on.

Twenty years later in 1994, Ferrostaal of Germany, which had interest in methanol companies in Trinidad and Tobago, invited the Government to have a look at the German training system, and it is well-known that the German technical training system is probably the best in the word, particularly their practical engineers, if I may so term them. So, in 1994 a visit was made by Prof. Ken Julien, and with them, Prime Minister Patrick Manning, to Germany to see what this training was about. Because Ferrostaal is a big company, and these big companies have their own in-house large training institutions. Actually good income. So, having seen they were very impressed with what was there, and because Trinidad had beenð there is a weaning of apprenticeship in the oil companies in Caroni and so on, T&TEC, there was a bit of a weaning of that where you had apprentices, even engineers were apprentice to get hands on experience, they thought that it was a good idea to introduce this type of training. Because, the training they looked at was what is called the journeyman and master craftsman. There are two levels, the journeyman first and the master craftsman, and these are very high level practical training of technicians and technologists.

So, first of all, there were a number of people who were sent to Germany to train in what I would call technical management. So the people who were at the level of the managers, particularly the technical people in MIC, were sent to Germany, and after that two years later we had the first cohort of trainees who went to Germany to train as master craftsman. Now, just a small word about master craftsman. There are three areas that master craftsmen are trained in: Those who teach, those who are trained to become entrepreneurs, so that you could not open a bakery in Germany unless you are a master craftsman in that field or you hire a master craftsman, and so on for other things. In Trinidad and Tobago, it is only in the pharmaceutical industry you must be a pharmacist and so on.

So, you can be a teacher. Some are trained to be entrepreneurs, and some are trained to actually work in an establishment. So, the master craftsman gets training in those three areas. The emphasis differs a bit, depending on what you choose. So, after that, that was in 1994ð 1996; later on the

Government decided to set up something called HYPE, Helping you Prepare for Employment. HYPE was started by a sort of sister company called NESC, but they thought it wise two years later, it was started in 2002, two years later in 2004, they say, look, MIC you are better placed to do that because NESC their focus was on energy, and HYPE was dealing with at the low level, at the lower level of training, while fromð people literally of the streets, as we say. So that the construction trades or what we have were training people in HYPE.

Then UTT was established, and UTT subsumed San Fernando Technical Institute and John S Donaldson Technical Institute. But UTT, if I could put it this way, was only interested in the higher level programmes that were done there, the technicians programmes, so the NET, triple ET and so on, the mechanical engineer and technicians and so on. So that all the other programmes that were the craft programmes and other programmes that were done at these technical institutes had to be taken up by somebody, and the Government asked MIC to do that, and that was in 2006. So we had to adopt the Industrial Craft Programmes, as you call it, ICP. Then MuST was started. MuST is a programme similar to HYPE. The difference is that MuST put you to work right away. So, you work four days a week, again in the construction trades, and you come for one day in the classroom. HYPE was the complete opposite, but at the same level more or less. So MuST was started in the Ministry and was run through the Ministry for a number of years. In 2011 the does not belong in a Ministry, this should be with MIC. You guys are accustomed to these kinds of training.ò

One of the sort of legacy programmes also that we had to take from John D, was a programme that catered for a training tech/voc teachers for the high schools. That was a special programme that was done in John D. So, if you are a teacher and you had the skills, that sort of content, you are in woodwork or whatever, if you went and got that specialized teacher training as a tech/voc teacher, you would go from Teacher I to Teacher III, Teacher II to Teacher IV, something like that. So that had to be, again, MIC was thought to be the best place to adopt that programme. So, MIC from 1996 has really been transformed, not just as a tool and die and precision machining operation, but has been transformed and morphed into a more of a training institution rather than that manufacturing type. We still operate our manufacturing operations. So that in a nutshell is what MIC is about up to today. If I have missed anything, I am sure the CEO would address.

Mr. Chairman: So, as I understand it, you have morphed over the years where today you are in fact developing technical and vocational competencies in Trinidad? Right?

Prof. Imbert: Correct.

Mr. Chairman: Mainly with a view to strengthening the manufacturing and the engineering?

Prof. Imbert: Manufacturing, construction, and other trades.

Mr. Chairman: Right.

Prof. Imbert: Because some of the programmes that we inherited from the technical institutesð and food preparation for instance, tailoring for instance, bookbinding, because somebody had to do it. Because when UTT actually took over the space of San Fernando Tech and John D, there was a bit of a scramble, eh, and I was Chairman at that time to have to go and fix that for me.ò So, that was i

Mr. Chairman: But I am trying to, for myself, and as I suspect the public, to understand, what is your footprint? Are you operating at one place? Do you have centres spread out throughout Trinidad and Tobago?

Prof. Imbert: Throughout Trinidad and Tobago. Over the years, it started in Macoya, where the headquarters still is, and it has spread to about 14 locations throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Chairman: So you are spread throughout Trinidad and Tobago? And how many, would you say, students, or apprentices, or interns do you have in your programme at any one time?

Prof. Imbert: Well, we used to have several thousand, but now we have just under 2,000. Because, three years ago, well this is the third year, we have had a massive cut in our subvention, so we have had to have much fewer trainings now than we had before, and now we have about close to 1,900 at this point.

Mr. Chairman: Before I open the floor, I just have a couple questions. So, what separates your activities from other similar providers like YTEPP, and NESC, and so on?

Prof. Imbert: All right, you spoke about YTEPP. YTEPP has a number of programmes that we do not have. YTEPP has cosmetology, for instance. We do not have that, and a number of programmes. But there are many programmes that had come back. And, in fact, one of the things I have been trying to do to persuade the authorities is that, especially consolidate, we have to rationalize, and that we cannot beð sometimes we seem to be tripping over each other, because there are a lot of common programmes, welding, plumbing, a number of those things, particularly in those trades that are in common with YTEPP.

NESC, the E in NESC is for energy. So NESC really concentrates moreð they do a lot of what we do, but with an emphasis for the energy industry, and actually they have a unique board. The board members at NESC all come from the energy industries, and you tend to have really very high level people from the different energy industries in Trinidad and Tobago on the board of NESC. So, they serve a more specific sector of industry in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, thank you. I am going to open the floor, I believe member Karim had some questions.

Mr. Karim: Okay, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me join with the Chairman in welcoming all of you to this very useful meeting, we predict. Mr. Chairman, starting with some of the comments you would have made, and let me continue to agai to MIC-IT on your 45th year. It must be a very significant contribution you would have made. But I would be asking a few different types of questions, but let me start with one that you spent quite a little while on, and that is in terms of the training provision part of it. Recently, and to be expected, on Tuesday the 19th of March, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, which has responsibility for MIC-IT, indicated that there a shortage of skilled labour that was killing industries. Do you see that as an indictment on MIC-IT? And, what would have caused such a statement to be made? I am not asking you to answer to the Minister, but from your perspective have you experienced that, that there is this shortage that is killing industry, and MIC-IT has been a provider in the main for industries of yours?

Prof. Imbert: Well, from our point of view, the demand far exceeds the supply. And what do I mean by that? We are dependent almost solely, not totally, on subvention from the Government, and then the HYPE and MuST, these people are paid a stipend. So, whatever subvention we get from the Government as to satisfy all the requirements, paying the instructors salaries and so on, and those stipends.

Now, we have had, and it is understandable, because of the state of the economy and the Government coffers, we have had a 50 per cent cut for the last three years. So that, yes, we have a higher demand, and I believe that that demand reflects the actualð the demand for training actually reflects the demand that there is an industry for training people. But, as I said, we can only spend what we have. So, I hope that is a satisfactory answer.

Mr. Karim: I really was getting a little more to the substance of the statement in that the shortage was killing industry. Because if it kills the industry by not supplyingð you know, I have always used the terminology that education and training should be demand-led, and never supply-driven, or else you are going to have a mismatch. But what is it that MIC could be doing now, even with that reduced budget where you are expected to do more with less, seeing the very strong connection you had with industry and continues to have, that a statement like this can be corrected and not one to be indictable on the MIC? What do you think the MIC could do with industry, bearing in mindð I am almost answering the questionð the apprenticeship system, is there something that could have been different that you can now consider? And having asked that question, could you also say whether there is any plan to mothball or to coreless NESC and the MIC?

Prof. Imbert: First of all, we have had to do more with less, or we have had to do sufficient with less. It is very difficult to do more with a 50 per cent cut, but we have tried to do sufficient with less. And we have been implementing measures to be much more prudent in our spending, much more efficient in the way we do things. I think all state enterprises have to do that in the circumstances, and we are embarking on a more aggressive marketing programme for services that we provide. The services and the products, because we make plastic products, and I could explain why, but I do not think you need that now.

Recently, for example, we have been more aggressive in the Caribbean because we realize that MIC is in factð because I worked at the University for a number of years, and other things, I have been all over the Caribbean, and I know all the technical institutions in the Caribbean, and MIC is by far number one. So that we have been going after business in the other territories in the Caribbean, and we just got a fairly, actually I do not want to say lucrative, but a very good project in St. Maarten.

Mr. Chairman: Chairman Imbert, sorry to cut you, but I think member Karim was going in a particular direction, let me see if I could echo what he is asking. You are an institute of technology.

Prof. Imbert: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: I believe we are interested in knowing what are you as an institute of technology doing in terms of managing the skill gap in Trinidad and Tobagoôs technology se in terms of job creation? Are you doing anything for our technical companies, for facing this gap in skills and technology? So if you can help us understand that?

Prof. Imbert: Okay, I was saying that we can only do what we get a subvention to do. MIC does make some money outside of the subvention, and we are trying to do more of that so that we can do more training with the smaller government subvention. So I was mentioning that we have a training programme in St. Maarten. We just did some work for the Grenada airport. We are in contact with the Government in St. Vincent, because we understand that they need people to be trained, and things like that. We are going after a much more aggressive marketing campaign.

Mr. Chairman: Is that helping?

Mr. Karim: Let me ask another question that might help us to get there. For example, I know that you are aware of all the technical training providers in the Caribbean, why is MIC not in Georgetown, and do you have plans to go there?

Prof. Imbert: Yes. I was in Georgetown recently as a business, and I have met a number of manufacturers there.

Mr. Karim: MIC also, I am sure you remember, because I am not sure if you were there, you may have been there. There would have been a multi-partied agreement signed, UTT aviation and MIC was is a signatory and was expected to do a part of that, are you on board with it? Are you doing any work in that regard as yet?

Prof. Imbert: Well, that aviation institute has only now got accreditation. It was built. It was half built. I think everybody knows I am the deputy chairman of UTT also. It was half built. It has only nowð well, it was completed and then we got accreditation. So, yes, MIC is a partner with that, with CAL and the airports authority and so on, and we expect to have a formal opening soon. There was some sort of opening, I believe before, but the Camden campus was never really properly opened, because it was not finished. So, yes, MIC is a partner with them, and to supply certain services for the aviation institute.

Mr. Karim: That is where I was going in terms of the killing of industry. That statement that was made.

Prof. Imbert: I think we will see some nice things with the aviation unit. It was a good idea, and I think we would see some nice things coming out of that pretty soon.

Mr. Karim: You did mention in fact, in your earlier remarks, about the board and governance, and so on. Is MIC complying fully, as we have the Ministry of Finance here, with the state enterprises monitoring and performance manual and guidelines?

Prof. Imbert: As far as I know, we are.

Mr. Karim: How many members of the current board of MIC would have been former employees of NESC?

Prof. Imbert: One? Two? Sorry, I forgot, Mr. Mark Sandy and Mr. Kape Toby.

Mr. Karim: Okay. And the earlier question I had asked, because it is related to governance, is there any plan, or has there been any discussions with MIC and the NESC? There were some discussions in many years ago, are you all going to be merging?

Prof. Imbert: Well, as I said, I am trying to persuade the authorities right now. Whether it is a merger or what have you, but to rationalize and so on, the whole tech/voc sector in Trinidad and Tobago. But specifically, NESC, there is a round bond with Laventille that was converted into a technology and continuing education centre. And NESC was the institution charged with running that centre. But NESC realized very early on that there were many programmes that were better done by MIC.

11.10 a.m.

And in those days MIC did not have all these centres all over the place and MIC is in the East-West Corridor, Laventille is in the East-West Corridor. So, MIC had been doing, in fact, more training programmes at the Laventille Technology Centre than NESC, but NESC was the landlord. And a couple months ago, well, last year actually, with again the downturn and the cutting of subventions and so on, NESC realized, listen, the best thing is for MIC, you take it over. So we have had an agreement where MIC will really take over 90 per cent. They have kept one programme because they have some continuing contractual arrangements. That is a programme with just two technicians who run a recording studio.

Mr. Karim: So is there a plan for the MIC and the NESC to be subsumed under one organization?

Prof. Imbert: To be quite frank with you, this is something I am working towards, but let me be frank again, people in Trinidad and Tobago do not like to give up territory very easily. And people have their own little territory. You say tomorrow MIC wants to subsume or merge with NESC, I am sure there is going to be resistance at various levels. But it is something that we have to work towards. Again, I would mention in this guava season we cannot have people duplicating effort.

Mr. Karim: Let me just ask with respect to the Laventille Technology and Continuing Education Centre, which is very important in that geographic spaceð

Prof. Imbert: Absolutely.

Mr. Karim:ð how many programmes do you have since you have now taken over the programmes, the courses from NESC? How many programmes do you have currently and what is the number of trainees at that expansive facility?

Prof. Imbert: I will ask McIntosh, our GM, Training, if he could answer that question, please.

Mr. McIntosh: Thank you. Currentlyð do you want me to list the programmes, member?

Mr. Karim: If you could tell us the programmes, you know, by name and the total number of students or if you have the data you can share with us. And there is a particular reason because of what the Chairman was indicating and because I was alsoð I started the premise in terms of the lack of skills killing industry, and that is in a very formidable area. So if you could tell me the programmes and if you can tell us the number of trainees.

Mr. McIntosh: So currently we have the Journeyman Programme, more focusing on the mechanical area, the machine shop. We have a welding programme there also, MIC. We work together with the Civilian Conservation Corps, the CCC, and we deliver all their programmes for them there. We are also working with the NESC. We have somewhat taken over the automotive programme that they had there through NESCôs request. We have absorbed their programme and we hope to expand that programme to include hybrid technology in automotive. We also have special programmes for persons in the Laventille constituency where we have found that they are a bit challenged to access or to follow some of the higher level, the Journeyman Programme we have there. So we have some lower-level semi-skilled programmes that they are specially targeting those persons in the Laventille/Beetham constituency.

I would say, we have about 100, I want to be conservative. The challenge we have there is that, because of the social issues with persons who are living in the Beetham and persons who are living in Laventille, we have found it necessary that it is challenging for us to have both groups of persons in the Laventille Technology because it leads to fighting and so forth. So most times the students or their parents will come and tell you that they cannot access training in that centre because of the warring between the factions in those areas.

So, many a time we have to trainees areas, et cetera, and we feel because of that social environment that the centre is not being maximized because the students they do not mingle well when they come from the different communities where the Laventille Technology Centre is supposed to be providing the opportunities. I do not know if I have answered your questions.

Mr. Karim: What percentage or how many persons you feel are from the immediate environment that attend that facility? What number?

Mr. McIntosh: Currently about 90 percent of the current population are from the area.

Mr. Karim: How many, I mean in quantitative terms, how many— 10, 20, 30, 40— how much?

Mr. McIntosh: I would say about 80.

Mr. Karim: Eighty persons? All right. Before we go on, I just want to ask another question because I think it is kind of— not directly related but it has a semblance of the title. Recently there were some discussions, I am not sure whether you would have signed any agreement or MOA or MOU with the TTPS. Did you?

Prof. Imbert: The situation in Laventille has caused us to have to request the presence of armed policemen there. Unfortunately, the TTPS decided that they are going to charge us. We spend— how much is it?— $7,000 a week we have to pay for armed police there. As Mr. McIntosh said, it is a very tense situation there and I have had instructors saying that they are not going back there. So I have told them, listen, I go there whenever I wish. Maybe because I am not from Laventille or the Beetham, nobody has shot me yet. But I show the example by going there and talking to them and going there as much as necessary.

Mr. Karim: But did you sign in the agreement with the TTPS to do any articulation of programmes with MIC/TTPS and the academia?

Prof. Imbert: No. What the—

Mr. Karim: No training at all was going to be provided to TTPS?

Prof. Imbert: No. What we have discussed at MIC is that we could offer training to the TTPS to offset that huge amount that we have to pay for that protection.

Mr. Karim: In what areas of training?

Prof. Imbert: All right. But I will go further. There is a Police Academy in St. James and MIC has some very experienced people and we have been assisting the Police Academy. Just recently we had our Mr. John do a two-day course there in what is called DACUM. DACUM is simply a method of curriculum development. And we have also had another one of our MIC personnel assist them in actually getting registration and now towards accreditation. And they have been very successful in that.

So MIC has lent its support to the Police Academy; Mr. Ali, you know Mr. Ali, who is the Dean there. I know him a long time in the Ministry, he asked us for support and I said why not? We have that kind of skill in MIC so we are assisting them. So in that way we are assisting them, but it is pro bono.

Mr. Chairman: Something is troubling me and I am trying to get it. So I understand that you are largely dependent on Government for subventions and they were cut by 50 per cent. I understand that you are attempting to rejuvenate and expand your income stream, so you are going to places like St. Martin, you are partnering with the Civilian Conservation Corps, you are providing construction and facilities and maintenance. I understand all of these things. The CEO had said that you can go in two directions. You can operate as you have been doing in the past 40-something years and continue suffering yearly deficits or you can firmly develop core competencies and build on your competitive advantages. Correct?

But what is troubling me is that we know today more than ever that the nature of work is changing. We have a skills gap. You are an institute of technology. I would like to know, and maybe the Ministry of Education can help me on this, what are we doing in terms of trying to bridge that skills gap and using this institute to really develop our citizens into making them more productive as we go into the 21st Century?

Prof. Imbert: I can mention three areas that MIC has focused on recently. There is the area of mechatronics. Mechatronics is a hybrid term, which means the electronic control and data acquisition of mechanical systems. So your car now can be considered mechatronically controlled because of the brain, as the guys call it, the computer systems and so on. Two other areas that we haveð and these three areas were assisted by the Germans because you cannot get that technology readily in Trinidad at that level.

Another area that was mentioned just briefly is the area of hybrid vehicles. We have had people trained and these are trainers who are trained to deliver programmes in the care and maintenance of hybrid vehicles. As you know, a hybrid vehicle has a very large battery because it uses an electrical motor with the energy from the battery. So it is a huge battery, not the little battery that you have. And there is a safety issue there because the battery is such a high voltage you cannot play around with it as a normal batteryð you could electrocute yourself. And the third area that weð well, there is a fault, but the third area that we have also had people trained in, and we are looking to do some refresher in that, is the question of photovoltaics.

Now, photovoltaics is the technology behind solar energy. And in fact, recently there was a discussion between UTT, MIC and Shell in trying to get a substantial solar farm developed in Trinidad and Tobago. I hopeð I should not have said Shell, I should have just said a company. I do not know if the TV will expunge that but it is probably there already. So those are the areas. Then there is the fourth area: There is an engineer who was, in fact, one of my students at UWI who has won a number of prizes in the i2i and those kinds of things. He is very, very innovative. And we have hired him and one of the first very successful projects he has had is the regeneration of old batteries. So, there are batteries that you can regenerate and use again, and he is working on some other projects.

So we have also started an agricultural programme in Tobago and we hope to use one of his ideas where we will have a more modern system of hydroponics. So, those are some of the areas where we are attempting to fill the skills gap. We are trying not to go into areas where a lot of people are in, like, just straight computer technology and so on, but actually the use of the computers in these particular areas.

Mr. Chairman: Ministry officials, I am interested in knowing from a Ministry of Education point of view: In light of this need to fill the skills gap, how do we rationalize or justify this drastic cut in the subvention, and do you have a broader vision for moving the development and use of MIC?

Mrs. Baptiste-Simmons: Thank you, Chair. With respect to the cut in subvention, the Ministry of Education, we would have submitted what we would call our estimates of expenditure and we would have received at the end an allocation and these would have been the allocation that MIC and other agencies would have received. So it is dependent on the Ministry of Finance and the state of the economy.

With respect to the rationalization, what we were looking at is respect to the articulation from ourð at secondary level into tertiary. So you have the CVQ, Level 1 and the training. The Ministry at this time is looking at the rationalization. But what we are looking at is with respect to the pathways and the development of a TVET framework, then we would begin to look at who would be providing the services and begin to map against that. But I can ask PS Meyer to articulate a little more. Thank you.

Mr. Meyer: Well, I think that is basically it, because we have started to look at all our agencies, YTEPP, MIC, and I think that at the end of the day we will have a clearer idea of how we are to provide TVET services and I think more importantly who would provide the TVET services in light of our current financial situation.

Mr. Chairman: What priority are you putting on these TVET services?

Mr. Meyer: In terms of priority we are meeting almost on a weekly basis.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: To MIC, given this 50 per cent cut in your subvention, how do you plan to generate revenue? To deal with the different projects that youð

Prof. Imbert: Well, I had mentioned before that we are embarking on a more aggressive marketing campaign for both our services, and our services are reallyð there are two types of services we produce: industry services, machining and so on, mould and die making and the plastic products that we produce. There have been large changes in industry over the world as we know. A manufacturer can buy a mould from China, send the design, buy a mould from China for almost half the cost that we can make a moulding. That has severely impaired, if you li

However, when you have to repair a mould and there are other things like that that we have been provided, which is a much smaller aspect of our income, those things cannot be done, you do not send a mould back to China to do a little repair. So those are the kinds of things that we have had to shift our focus on and that is the reality of that aspect of our business. It has been very difficult over the years. Mas costumes that were made in mas camps, almost 95 per cent are imported from China. They are cheap. You give them the design, they make it and they send it down and so on. That is one area. Our training services, that is not something you can get in China just like that, at least at the moment. So our training services we have been, as I said, going in a more aggressive marketing campaign throughout the Caribbean to deal with that.

Our plastic productsð and the reason we make plastic products is that when we were making moulds, when the plastics industry was growing and burgeoning in Trinidad and Tobago we were making all the moulds for them. So we had to have machines to test those moulds before we gave them and those machines are to be industrial machines. So rather than leave those machines idle for 98 per cent of the time we decided that we would use those machines to make products. And this is what those machines were there primarily for. But now we are using them because we have that ability to make plastic products which we are, again, having a more aggressive marketing.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: And given the fact that as the Permanent Secretary said that you would expect no increase in your subvention in the next fiscal year, is there a time frame that you see that you would be able to come out of?

Prof. Imbert: I do not want to be overambitious and over-optimistic. I would say it would take about two or three years realistically. You see, MIC has enjoyed over the years reasonably generous subventions from the Government, so much so that we have had surpluses and those surpluses are what we have been using over the last two and a half years to survive, in that we have tried to avoidð one has to understand that in many industries, in a training industry, particularly, and while we are overwhelmingly training now, the bulk of your expenditure goes on salaries. We have tried our best to avoid any massive retrenchment at MIC, but we have not been able to renew contracts and so on. If it continues like this will be probably unavoidable. But we have tried all kinds of cost-cutting measures to try and avoid that. So I do not think it will be at the end of this year, I think it will take two to three years together.

Mr. Chairman: What do you see as the main challenges facing Trinidad and Tobago in developing our technical and vocational competitiveness?

Prof. Imbert: I think this is a general question. The question of really putting resources into innovation. Forty years ago South Korea was an agrarian economy. The phone that you are probably using was made in South Korea, probably drive a car from them, probably play music on something from them. They spent several percentage points of their GDP on innovation. In Trinidad and Tobago we spend a small fraction, a small fractionð they have to put a point and a zero before you could get to a figure on innovation. It is a general question, unless we decide that we are going to spend and it has to be in the billions, because if you say our budget is about 50 billion, we have to spend about a minimum of 3 billion on innovation. We are not doing that. So that is the answer everywhere, whether it is at the universities, whether it is at MIC or wherever.

Mr. Mark: Morning again, and welcome. I wanted to ask both the Ministry and your good self, Chairman, the proposed draft education policy that the Ministry is about to finalize, given the challenges that you have outlined and the reality of the emerging mismatch between certification and the real job market that requires a certain skill set, can you share with us, first of all the Ministry of Education, what time frame is the country looking at for the finalization of the education policy? And given what is taking place in the tech/voc sector, is that a major component of that education policy?

Mrs. Baptiste-Simmons: With respect to the time frame we wou with respect to the education policy paper. We received that on Thursday of last week which would have been the 28th of March. At this point we are beginning the roll-out. One of the things we would have done is that we would have done at least two national consultations which would have weighed heavily with respect to the TVET. So we know that we have included within that those areas: the tertiary and the TVET, we looked at the ECCE and then we are trying to see how best we can bring it all under the Education Act. So those are areas that, as you said, there is going to be prominent space with respect to that area.

Mr. Mark: Mr. Clement, if you could, there appears to be a contradiction or maybe even a challenge between, first of all, the increase in expenditure for your executive management team under the rubric of operating costs. And I refer to page 16 of your submission, Item 64 which moved from 49 in terms of operating costs, 49 million or thereabouts, to 60; 49 in 2014 to 60 in 2018.

Now, while this is taking place there is a simultaneous reduction in your staff members from 826 to 642. That is why I mention the contradiction. So you have an increase in your operating costs and at the same time you have a reduction in your staff level. Can you explain or provide to this Committee the reason for this apparent contradiction from where I sit?

Prof. Imbert: If you look at the table on the same page 16 you would see that from 2013 to 2014, it went from 49 to 58; it went down a bit and then more or less levelled off at about 60. In 2014 and 2015 there was a back pay, well there was an increase in salary because all the unionsð unfortunately MIC has four unions. It started off with it one and now there are four unions. And there was a huge increase because there had not been an increase for a long time. Actually if finances permit there would be a huge increase again because people have not gotten any increase since that time, four years ago. So that is what accounted for that, that big increase.

Mr. Mark: What about the staff reduction?

Prof. Imbert: The staff reduction was mainly the lower level staff who were on contract that we could not renew the contracts because of theð and of course everything kind of goes up, inflation, even when you think you have static emoluments, remuneration, there is no static because there are certain things, certain allowances that go up and are tied to inflation. But the main thing is that in that year, in that 2014/2015, there was a large increase because people had not gotten an increase for a long time.

Mr. Mark: What is the name of the four trade unions that are in MIC institute?

Prof. Imbert: It started off with a union called MASATT when MIC first started and then the PSA came on board and got a number of different categories of workers. Then the senior managers and so on decided to form their own in-house unionð association, let us call it thatð and the security people who were not covered, for some reason, decided to go with NUGFW. So, I mean, how that has evolved over the years, I really do not know, but that is what has happened. I met it so, way back when Ið

Mr. Mark: All right. Share with this Committee what appears to be another unfortunate development. A lot to the young people, especially in Trinidad and Tobago in the range of, I would say 15 to 24, even up to 29, you find that the statistics or the data is showing a very high level of unemployment among that category. And a lot of them are literally idle all over the country.

11.40 a.m.

Now, opportunities for training is required and your institution is well placed to provide these young people, the skills that they require. However, as you have admitted earlier, there has been a drastic reduction in the intake of trainees, from a high of 5,702 in 2013 to, as you said, just under 1,900 at the present time. Now, could you share with us what are the entry requirements for each of your programmes that you conduct?

Prof. Imbert: HYPE and MuST are literally off the street, catering for exactly some of the persons you are talking about. Well, first of all, I think I have explained why we have had to take much fewer trainees because of the cut. HYPE and MuST are people off the streets. The other programmes, the higher level programmes like, take for instance, the Journeyman Programme. The Journeyman Programme is a technician programme. Journeyman is the word that is used in many parts of the world and it is the translation that we use from the German programme. The *meister*, that is the German word, and the Master Craftsman is the closest thing to that. To get into the Journeyman Programme— because to become a master craftsman you have to go through the Journeyman Programme. It is a step. To get to there, what was traditionally asked for of people who entered the technician programmes, the higher level programmes in John D and San Fernando Tech, that is three O Levels with Maths and English and another subject, preferably, if we have to make a selection, a science subject.

The ICP is a similar thing, the Industrial Craft Programme that we inherited from the technical institutes. The TVET, Teachers Training Programme, that programme is a tertiary level programme that has a higher level entry requirement. So normally it would be people who are already in some teaching service, not necessarily Government teaching service. If you are at Servol and you want to come to it; if you are in NESC, wherever, and you want to come to that programme—

Mr. Mark: Are these things advertised and the public is aware of these things?

Prof. Imbert: We “do” have to advertise. But we yes, we advertise, but because we are so well known and we can take so few people now.

Mr. Mark: All right. Could you provide to this Committee, in writing, what you have just said, rather than getting it in detail? Could you also tell us what is the cost that each trainee would have to bear if he has to enter these programmes? Is it free of charge?

Prof. Imbert: Free of charge. Not only free of charge, the people in HYPE and MuST are paid a stipend to encourage them to come. But there is no admission fee. There is no tuition. There are one or two little fees that you have to pay, very negligible. You know, if you go to UWI, for instance, in addition to the tuition fee that you pay to the Unit, “listen, for us to take care of you, you have to pay $500 a year”, or whatever it is. So as such.

Mr. Mark: Well, could you again put in writing what you said?

Prof. Imbert: Yes, we will.

Mr. Mark: And could you share with this Committee what is the cost to your institute to train one trainee for each of the programmes that you offer? What does it cost the institute? You must have that information available somewhere.

Prof. Imbert: That was not a question before, but if that is a question now, we can supply that information. I ñdohò have the answer offhand.

Mr. Mark: And then you could also supply what is considered to be the breakeven number of trainees for each of the programmes that you offer. Are any of the programmes that you offer profitable in terms of getting some kind of return on your investment?

Prof. Imbert: Well, the Government pays us a certain amount of money to run the programmes. We try to break even. Well, we have to break even now. Or even, as I said, we have been using some surpluses we had before to survive without sending home too many people, without reducing our intake too much.

Mr. Mark: Are you considering discontinuing any of your current range of programmes?

Prof. Imbert: Well, we have discontinued one welding programme becauseð welding at that level is called the SENSE Programme. We used to run that programme. It is a programme that is run out of the American Welding Society. When I say out of the American Welding Society, MIC is the only certified training institution by the American Welding Society in the region, and we used to run a number of programmes. The SENSE Programme is the lowest level programme. They are not very low level, but it is the lowest level of the welding programmes, and we have discontinued it because the SENSE Programme was run out of basically surpluses. We do not get a Government subvention for that. And in the HYPE, the MuST, the CCC Programme that we run, or welding programme that we run for the CCC at East Port of Spain, welding is very well served there. So that is one programme that we have discontinued and it is because we were not getting anyð

So you will see in some of the tables when yo

Mr. Mark: I know that one of the challenges we have at the secondary school systemð not the primary levelð is the dropout rate.

Prof. Imbert: Yes.

Mr. Mark: Very significant. Now, can you share with us, briefly, and then put in writing, how many trainees have failed to complete their respective programmes over the last five years? In other words, for each yearð I know that you gave us a broad figure of 10 to 15 per cent, but we did not getð for instance, if you can give us like a breakdown of each year, how many persons have enrolled and how many persons have failed to complete their programme for the last five years.

Prof. Imbert: There are some tables in this report which give the enrolment, the number of people who sat the exam and the number of people who were successful. There are a number of them here, and one of them isð in fact, one of them is a supplementary report that we gave. When we did this first report here we did not have the data, so the supplementary report, it is there.

Mr. Mark: So that report that I am supposed to have deals with the number of failures?

Prof. Imbert: Yes, if you subtractð well, there are three figures. We enrol 100 people; 20 of them drop out; 80 did the exam and 70 passed. So we have those three figures: enrolled; those who did the exam; those who passed. So there is some information there.

Mr. Karim: Thank you, Chairman. Am I correct in saying from the data submitted, that the numbers are decreasing but the expenditure is increasing?

Prof. Imbert: Yes.

Mr. Karim: Might you be able to give usð

Prof. Imbert: Well, I did mention that a couple years ago we had a massiveð well, a large increase in expenditure because of the settlement of collective agreements.

Mr. Karim: Okay. Now I notice in the notesð before I go on there, I was looking for the management letters to the Auditorôs Report get it. I did not see a

Prof. Imbert: This board inherited five qualifying opinions from the auditors. We have been able toð one of them is really a legacy issue. It was a question of not being able to properly disaggregate the moneys, because the Government gives us money for HYPE, for MuST, for NSDP and so on, and all that money comes into MIC. There was not a proper disaggregation of the accounts and that is a real legacy issue. That is fromð I do not knowð about 15 years ago, or more, that has been there. So every year the accountantsð I even told the accountant the last time, qualifying opinions. We have strivedð every year we have eliminated one or two. We eliminate all four. That legacy thing there, that how we ñgoò elimin

I mean, we changed the accounting systems in programmes; accounting programmes inð We had a big flood there once where some of the recordsð I mean, we have had proper accounts over the years. And, in fact, we are up to date, except for this year where the accountants, our internal PKF, have been delaying us. We are ready with our management say, ñHey, we are going to JSC. What are we goin April. ò So we hope to get the PKF people next week the last year. We have everything else before. know if that could ever be resolved because it is there sinceð I ñdo hðò 2004 or somewhere like that.

Mr. Karim: Okay. I see on the notes with the financial statements that I have here, there has been an increase from 2016/2017 with the MuST Programme, from minus $11 million to minus $23 million. I am sure that is an owing figure, a debt. You could enlighten us as to why that figure has increased so much?

Prof. Imbert: I have two ACCA people here, if they could help me out with that.

Mr. Ramnarine: Good morning. The primary reason for that increase was because of the fact, in 2015 when the subvention went down, we had in the system already a certain amount of students that we had to continue their training. So what had happened was that the increase in the figure was really because of the fact that we had to utilize some additional funding, some surpluses, to treat with it. So it really was the accounting treatment forð

Mr. Karim: Will you be discontinuing the MuST Programme, or are you going to continue with it?

Mr. Ramnarine: No. Our plans, as far as funding is forthcoming, our plans are to continue all programmes.

Mr. Karim: What about centres?

Mr. Ramnarine: What we did within recent timesð and it is in the submissionð is, we reassigned some centres; we relocated. So what basically happened with the reduction in activities in some of the core centres, what we did was, we transferred centres so there was no loss or training opportunities for anyone in any location. This led to significant savings in rental costs.

Mr. Karim: You could give us an example of what centre you transferred to where? And are there any plans to do any more like that in 2019?

Mr. Ramnarine: As it is now, we are of the opinion that we have maxed in terms of what we can do. However, we have just one small rented facility, that is that Grande, and we submitted proposals to the Ministry to get additional funding to build a centre. But because of the demand in the Sangre Grande regionð Toco/Manzanilla, Sangre Grandeð it is difficult for us to relocate from Sangre Grande at this time.

Mr. Karim: What about the Chaguanas centre?

Mr. Ramnarine: The Chaguanas centre is the same. We have a MuST centre in Main Road, Chaguanas that we continue to operate. However, we have submitted, also, proposals to the Ministry to construct a centre at Woodford Lodge. But, again, it is because of the funding challengesð

Mr. Karim: But did you get an allocation in this budget for the Chaguanas MIC-IT Woodford Lodge Centre?

Mr. Ramnarine: There was an allocation but, again, it was notð

Mr. Karim: Are you going to be building it at all?

Mr. Ramnarine: Our plan is to build a centre at Chaguanas.

Mr. Karim: When is that going to happen?

Mr. Ramnarine: As soon as funding is available.

Mr. Karim: So you ñdoò have a ð any drawings in place? that you would

Mr. Ramnarine: Drawings have been completed. The infrastructural work has been completed. Depending on the availability of funding, what we have thought about so far is thinking about contingency plans in a terms of rescaling the plan itself. As it is, the original plan was somewhere on or about $25 million. So what he have been doing as management, and discussing with the Ministry, how can we, you know, if funding is limited, we can downscale the project so that we can have our own facility.

Mr. Karim: Do you have any plans for staff reduction in 2019, 2020?

Mr. Ramnarine: As it is now, none.

Mr. Karim: So nobody will be sent home, retrenched, severed?

Mr. Ramnarine: As it is nowð

Mr. Karim: You are on record, eh.

Mr. Ramnarine: As it is nowð

Mr. Karim: I am asking the question again. Do you have any intentionð

Prof. Imbert: I want to jump in here. ñLeh meh jump in here.ò If have to retrench. I want to contradict my CEO. I cannot go on record and saying that we will not retrench this year. If we do not have the money, it is the highest cost in any budgetð wagesð we may have to.

Mr. Karim: So, Chairman, since you are on recordð

Prof. Imbert: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Karim:ð given the circumstances that are in front of you now in terms of the finances, are there any immediate plans you are looking at to reduce staff?

Prof. Imbert: I would not say there are immediate plans, but it seems as though it is not too far off on the horizon if the funding continues as it is, Sir.

Mr. Mark: I just want to follow up, through the Chair. Mr. Chairman, Tobago. I know that the technology centre which is the flagship centre in Tobago, there were about four satellite areas in Tobago where you were conducting programmes or thereabouts.

Prof. Imbert: Two.

Mr. Mark: Two. But those now have been closed down and they have, everyone is now in the Tobagoð

Prof. Imbert: There were three at one time. They are all now consolidated in the one centre.

Mr. Mark: Okay. I just wanted to follow up that. Faz
areas.

Mr. Karim: I just want to continue. On the notes agai
there has been a significant increase in legal and professional fees, from $588,000 to $2.8 million. Could you give us a little explanation on that?

Mr. Ramnarine: Primarily, legal and professional fees account for a number of things. Again, it accounts for legal fees, which will arise out of primarily industrial relations issues. We have had one issue that we had to sort out within that financial period. In addition, there were some professional payments we had to make, as far as I can recall, and these particularly dealt with developing staffð training and development. So those are some elements that were included in there, and it related to the Master Craftsman training that we had conducted in 2017.

Mr. Karim: This significant amount, that increase, that is for training of the Master Craftsman? What is it for? Apart from the legal feeð

Mr. Ramnarine: Right. In 2017 we trained 20 Master Craftsmen, 15 in electrical and five in auto. It is totally aligned to what Prof. Imbert was indicating earlier on, in terms of what MIC is doing is different from other institutions in terms of developing our staff to be ready for the world of work and to change the landscape a bit. So we focused a lot on the electrical and that was in line with the mechatronics, particularly, and also, too, in terms of automotive and the plans to move within the hybrid realm of training.

Mr. Chairman: Just a follow-up on that. So may I take it, then, that you have sort of done like a needs assessment and you have identified growth poles for training? Yes?

Mr. Ramnarine: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Now, you mentioned we could not make the mas costumes. They were being made in China. Why can we not do the mas costumes in Trinidad and treat that as a growth pole?

Prof. Imbert: That is a difficult question. These are difficult questions for MIC. I really do not know how to answer that. It is like the moulds. It costs much cheaper. So even if MIC decided that they were going to make moulds for mas costumes, and so on, I think the China import will continue, as it has in many areas. But I mentioned the mas, because that has been a dramatic turnabout. It was gradual, but it is dramatic, in that, I mean, I know. I am into pan a lot. I know many pan people who got their jerseys printed away; some in China. I am not saying it was All Stars; I am not saying it was Exodus; I am not saying it was Invaders, but they had their jerseys bought and printed away and got them there. That is the reality of the world economy, the world market.

Mr. Chairman: I know MIC cannot answer this solely, but it is a huge haemorrhaging of money and the irony is that the mas is supposed to be indigenous here. So I am thinking that an investment into that would redound to our advantage down the road. Again, the point of solar panels, Africa is predicted to be coming into its own in the 21st Century, and largely because of the use of deploying vast amounts of solar panels in a place where the sun actually shines. What are we doing about solar panels in Trinidad and Tobago?

Prof. Imbert: Well, I think I mentioned before that we have had people trained in photovoltaics, which is the science behind solar power, and we are hoping that there are some RFPs out for solar panels; some small, some larger. So MIC is gearing itself to train people and to get involved in that area, particularly in the training. Now, as you mentioned mas, a cultural thing, MIC has a programme in pan tuning, because we have recognized that that is something thatð not that we are losing it. People say we are losing it. We are not losing it, but a large share of the market for pans is being satisfied by people outside of Trinidad and Tobago. So we have a programme that is a major in one of the mechanical engineering journeyman programmes, pan tuning. And actually, NGC was impressed with what we are doing and NGC, in fact, hired us to train people from their pan side. NGC sponsors four pan sides and they have asked us to help those pan sides get some trained people in tuners. So we have got involved in the cultural field, I suppose mainly because of my influence and my work, and so on, in the pan area.

Mr. Mark: Mr. Chairman, the CEO mentioned about some matters at the industrial relations level that might have cost MIC some extra moneys. Could you provide this Committee, in writing, with a full list of all current litigation matters and the cost to the MIC in terms of both legal, professional, industrialð in writing? You do not have to give that now.

Prof. Imbert: Yes, we will do that.

Mr. Mark: The other thing I wanted to clarify is that in your submission you had indicated that the MIC, Institute of Technology, has not submitted any performance review or appraisal report. Mr. Chairman, could you provide this Committee with a time frame for the completion of these reports?

Prof. Imbert: When we got your communication and request we realized that there were a few things that you had asked, and we had everybody diving into the performance monitoring manual and saying, ñHey, you know, we have done 90 per cent of what we are supposed to do in supplying things, but there are one or two things we did not do. So let us have fulfilled everything up to now, and we did send the last performanceð

Mr. Mark: Oh, so that has been forwardedð

Prof. Imbert: That has gone to theð well, the Minister has to sign it. So I guess it is on his desk. That was sent to him a week ago, or some time.

Mr. Mark: And that will be subsequently forwarded to the Committee?

Prof. Imbert: Well, when he signs it. Yeah, we will ask him for it and send it to you.

Mr. Mark: So we have to depend on the Minister signing offð

Prof. Imbert: Yes. The Minister has to sign it because it is an evaluation. It is a sort of self-evaluation and the Minister has to say, ñI agree with what

Mr. Mark: All right. May I also ask, when are you going to finalize in the short term, the following policies which you already committed in draft form: Project Management Protocol; Risk Management Policy; Fraud Policy and the Whistleblower Policy? You indicated that you have that in draft form. When are you going to finalize them?

Prof. Imbert: Give us three months, if I may so plead.

Mr. Chairman: Member Antoine.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: My question to the two Ministries, going back to the 50 per cent cut in subvention that resulted in a number of challenges for MIC-IT, what strategies have the Ministries implemented to deal with these challenges, and how effective have their strategies been in dealing with challenges to MIC-IT?

Mrs. Baptiste-Simmons: Can you repeat the question, please?

Brig. Gen. Antoine: The 50 per cent cut in subvention that resulted in a number of challenges for MIC-IT, what strategies have the Ministries implemented to deal with those challenges and how effective have those strategies been in dealing with challenges to MIC-IT?

Mrs. Baptiste-Simmons: The Ministry of Education has 11 state agencies that fall under its remit. And across the board, to be honest with you, we have had a cut. What we have been able to do is that we have, in fact, been writing and requesting additional funding. We have submitted Cabinet Notes. The mid-year review we would request additional funds to cover. But as we said, we are beginning to rationalize. In the area of the TVET, we are beginning to look at rationalizing the programmes, looking at a framework and then looking at the providers. But what we have done over the years is to try to increase the amount of funds during the mid-year review, or where we have shortfalls we would try to ensure that we provide additional funds to these agencies. Because, let me reiterate again, there are 11 State agencies that now fall under the Ministry of Education.

Mr. Chairman: But I am focusing on MIC-IT. So therefore, they can look forward to something in the mid-year review?

Mrs. Baptiste-Simmons: Well, once they made the submission to us, which they have, we would then forward it for consideration.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: Has MIC-IT made overtures to the Ministry of Education?

Prof. Imbert: I am gratified that we keepð we are associated with MIC so often, very gratified. Yes, as the PS just said, we have made a submission because, actually, we are in dire straits right nowð dire, dire straits right now.

Brig. Gen. Antoine: And the Ministry of Finance, Investments Division, any response?

Mrs. Lutchman: Good morning, everybody. The Investments Division welcomes the rationalization of the state enterprises that are under the line Ministry of the Ministry of Education. However, given the scarce resources that we have, the Ministry of Finance would have to distribute accordingly. The Ministry of Education is one of the largest Ministries, and therefore, as the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education said, she would make submissions for the mid-year review and that would be for the consideration of the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Chairman: But we are not talking about a cut with a cutlass. You want a cut with a scalpel.

Mrs. Lutchman: Understood.

Mr. Karim: Thank you very much, Chairman. As we are with the Ministry of Finance, can I ask the Ministry of Finance whether you are satisfied with all the reporting relationships that you have so designated to the MIC-IT? Or are there any concerns?

Mrs. Lutchman: We have some concerns. Prior to this year we received financial statements. We did not receive some of the reports that we would have requested, and we would have reminded the state enterprise, like other state enterprises who have not complied, that they needed to submit their reports.

Mr. Karim: So you are saying that the MIC-IT did not comply?

12.10 p.m.

Mrs. Lutchman: Prior to 2019?

Mr. Karim: In which areas again?

Mrs. Lutchman: Well, we received their signed financial statements as I said. We did not received board minutes, minutes of meetings. We did not receive their quarterly reports, their cash flows of operations, their litigation reports, the return of awards of contract reports, their internal audit reports, and their investment in securities reports. However, we noted this year that there has been some level of compliance.

Mr. Karim: Do they still have outstanding matters for you of those listed?

Mrs. Lutchman: Yes.

Mr. Karim: For how long now?

Mrs. Lutchman: Well, we have never received some of these statements prior to this year, but we do not have sight of their internal audit reports at the moment, and their investments in securities as at 31 December, 2018.

Mr. Karim: And those are mandatory items for you?

Mrs. Lutchman: Yes, in accordance with the SAP MM.

Mr. Karim: So they are not complying with the requirements of the Ministry of Finance?

Mrs. Lutchman: Yes.

Mr. Karim: Having said that, are there any other areas that you would like to enumerate, that you would like to see a better reporting relationship apart from those that you mentioned?

Mrs. Lutchman: Well, the Chairman would have alluded to it earlier where we had some concern about the financial statements. We would have brought it up at the AGMs that we— repor[illegible] would have been present as representatives of corporation sole. And we understand— and they have given us assurances at these AGMs that they are looking into the matter.

Mr. Karim: If the Chairman could indicate by when do you think these matters will be forwarded, the items that are outstanding and required for the Ministry of Finance?

Prof. Imbert: I will put you on to the CEO and maybe Mr. Moonilal also, both as I say are the ACCA people. I am a little puzzled by the last statement however. I did say that we had five qualifying statements by the auditors. We have cleared up four. The last one, I am saying I do know how we could clear it up. It is a legacy issue for at least 15 years, I do not know how we could clear it up. So I do not think with respect to up-to-date audited accounts we have a problem. I am a little surprised to hear that we have so many outstanding things from the Ministry. As far as I know these reports have been going in to the Ministry.

Mr. Karim: Something is amiss.

Prof. Imbert: I would not say something is amiss. The most important thing is our audited accounts.

Mr. Karim: Well, there are some things that are even not present in the audited accounts that I alluded to before which the Ministry of Finance is also confirming.

Prof. Imbert: I am not a finance person, so let me stop there. I think I should stop there.

Mr. Karim: Well, before you go on to— I know you are asking the two other persons to answer— I would like to ask you to consider answering, very soon afterwards you answer, I want to get some details on two projects, the St. Maarten project that you said that you engaged in— because you were also in

Grenada you said, and St. Vincentð some details of the St. Maarten project as well, revenue earner, and also the bespoke tailoring which when it was read in the budgetð and I recall particularly it was page 58 of the budget speech, the top left-hand corner, one paragraph, where the Bespoke Tailoring Programme was supposed to be, and it is read as being assigned to the UTT, and I would like to getð I will ask some questions with respect to that. So I will just alert you to that.

Prof. Imbert: Before we answer the financial ones, I can give you answers to both the St. Maarten project, and I will leave them to give details of the costing and so on. The people in St. Maarten, NIPA, that is the body that is the sort of equivalent of MIC in St. Maartenð of course, this is with the ôNIPA,ô so that is the Dutch side as opposed

They got in touch with us and told us that they were shopping around throughout the Caribbean for an agency that could assist them in training locals, because after they had these two massive hurricanesð well, one in particularð the Irma and Maria, they found that they did not have many locals who could rebuild simple things, houses and so on. So masons and carpenters in particular, and plumbers and electrical people, those four, they did not have sufficient.

If you know St. Maarten, it is an area with a huge expatriate population if you like. An expatriate not necessarily from Europe and the United States, but Caribbean people who come in there, do work and they go on and so on. So they came to us and we said sure we can do this. So they had some World Bank funding so we gave them a proposal of what we could do for them and that has been running for some time. We are supposed to start a second cohort of trainers in those areas. The first started with the masonry and the carpentry because that was the main one.

Mr. Karim: How many persons?

Prof. Imbert: About 70 people. They first started with a sort of pilot project. They actually sent down seven people here, and they visited twice to see how this was going and if we really can train people in those areas quickly. And then now, of course, we are sending people up there in St. Maarten.

Mr. Karim: Has it been a very profitable project?

Prof. Imbert: It is profitable for sure. I mean, it is not going to make tens of millions, but it will make a few million dollars, yes.

Mr. Karim: Now, the approach was you go there and train?

Prof. Imbert: Yes, yes, because with the numbers of people now. They first sent seven people, but when you start to see 70 people it is much easier for us to send one.

Mr. Karim: You are not using the blended approach?

Prof. Imbert: Not yet.

Mr. Karim: Because the blended approach might help to reduce some of your costs.

Prof. Imbert: You know, at the level of, again, ñoff th easiest thing to do, especially with very hands-on programmes it is not easy to do. We have plans because they have asked us also to train their trainers in NIPA, in the school there. So we do have plans in the second cohort of training to use the blended approach.

Mr. Karim: That will reduce costs substantially too, in terms of travel and accommodation, and long-stay.

Prof. Imbert: Well, fortunately we have people whoð

Mr. Karim: Have you had long-stay issues?

Prof. Imbert: Yes. We have had guys up there for three months, four months. They seem happy.

Mr. Karim: All right. Soð

Prof. Imbert: So that is that. The bespoke. Now, the Bespoke Programme, the Ministry of Trade and Industry made a request to MIC if we could house really do not have the to put back on centres. We cut back on one in ñ We ar Tunapuna, we cut back on one in Trincity, and so on. We do not have the space, but we just put up a building on our main site and if it is that you want to use it Ministry, you would have to pay us a rent because we are really in a tight squeeze. We can said fine. They thenð the Bespoke Tailoring Programme was looking for approval. It is called programme approval. Accreditation is at the higher level, ACCTT; the NTA for Levels I and II in our qualifications framework. The NTA are the people who would give what they call programme approval and centre approval. The accreditation people call itð

Mr. Karim: Institutional.

Prof. Imbert:ð institutional. Well, they have not started the programme accredited. But they use accreditation. So what the NTA reported back t approval, trying to get approval on their own will be extremely difficult. So what we suggest is that they get it through MICò, and that process is almost

Mr. Karim: So that programme does not have programme approval by the National Training Agency?

Prof. Imbert: Not yet.

Mr. Karim: Neither does it haveð it is being housed at the MIC IT?

Prof. Imbert: It is housed at the MIC IT and theð

Mr. Karim: But it is not managed by the MIC IT?

Prof. Imbert: No. MIC ITð

Mr. Karim: So in a sense it is not a throughput accreditation from MIC IT?

Prof. Imbert: Well, it was suggested by the NTA that that is the only way they could get it in a reasonable time.

Mr. Karim: So it does not have a nomenclature of accredited programme approved? It is not an accredited programme?

Prof. Imbert: Not at the moment. It is almost there.

Mr. Karim: It is either you are accredited or you are not accredited. So in this case it is not accredited, from what you are saying?

Prof. Imbert: They are almost there becauseð

Mr. Karim: No, but they are not accredited at this point?

Prof. Imbert: No, it is not accredited.

Mr. Karim: But there was a graduation?

Prof. Imbert: Yes.

Mr. Karim: So there was a graduation to a non-accredited programme?

Prof. Imbert: If you want to put it that way, yes.

Mr. Karim: And who bore the cost of it?

Prof. Imbert: The cost of what?

Mr. Karim: Of the programme.

Prof. Imbert: Not MIC.

Mr. Karim: Who did?

Prof. Imbert: Well, I do not know. I suppose the Ministry.

Mr. Karim: The Ministry?

Prof. Imbert: It was alsoð

Mr. Karim: So what is the role of UTT in it?

Prof. Imbert: Eh?

Mr. Karim: Remember, UTT I indicated was the budget was read and it wasð

Prof. Imbert: No, no, I do not know about this UTT business. Maybe when the budget was read at that time the Ministry was scouting around and they were asking UTT, but it ended up in MIC.

Mr. Karim: Okay. So the graduation took placeð

Prof. Imbert: Yes, a graduation took place.

Mr. Karim:ð and the MIC reallyð was it at the MIC?

Prof. Imbert: No. It was at Stollmeyerôs.

Mr. Karim: And you all were just invited?

Prof. Imbert: Well, I was invited, yes. I even spoke.

Mr. Karim: All right, I will come back to it.

Mr. Chairman: But that raises an interesting point, because Ministry of Education in instances where programme providers are other state enterprises, what, if anything, is the Ministry attempting to do or doing in terms of coordinating programmes so that you are not competing with each other for getting best value?

Mrs. Baptiste-Simmons: Chair, as Professor would have alluded, the Ministry of Trade and Industry would have approached the Ministry of Education with respect to the Bespoke. I think it was Savile Row Academy. So we would have met with the Ministry of Trade and Industry, MIC IT, as well as UTT because we were told that the fashion industry is at UTT. So what we would have done is that we would have met and we have been coordinating to ensure, through the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Trade and Industry that in fact, as you said, the centre approval and the programme approval was completed. So I have been liaising with both NTA and MTI, as well as the Ministry of Trade and Industry. So we have been facilitating. That is the role we have played thus far.

Mr. Karim: Just one question, if I may?

Mr. Chairman: We are going to take your question from the start and get the answers from the ACCA, then you, member Mark.

Mr. Karim: I want to find out, I know it is housed by you, but therefore they may come through your gate and security, and so on. The students who are on that, you have an idea how many they were?

Prof. Imbert: Twenty-seven as far as I know.

Mr. Karim: All Trinidad and Tobago nationals?

Prof. Imbert: No. There was somebody from Barbados, I believe. I am not sure if they were any other nationals.

Mr. Moonilal: Good morning again, to the Committee. With reference to our compliance with the State Enterprise Performance Monitoring Manual, we have been compliant at this time with all requirements except the submission of the internal audit reports. As the Chairman would have highlighted earlier, we were slightly tardy with the submission of some, but come the 26th of March we will have sent quite a bit of these documents to the Ministry of Finance, notably the Deputy Permanent Secretary, Michelle Durham-Kissoon. So just for clarityð and again, I have the dates hereð we would have sent the quarterly status of investments and securities portfolio just by way of example, return on award of contracts on the 26th of March. So the only thing at this time we have pending or outstanding is the submission of the internal audit report.

Mr. Mark: May I askð

Prof. Imbert: Could I just answer to that? I think we were of the impression that if we sent the board minutes to our line Ministry, it would get distributed. So if we did not send it to Investments Division also, I must apologize and realize that we have to send it to both because we regularly send the minutes, yeah? I am not saying weð you know, the monitoring manual has some stringent deadlines, one week after this and oneð sometimes I am not around to sign the board minutes, I am Chairman. They want me as Chairman to sign it, I might be away or something. So we have as you said, met all nowð I mean, when we got your stuff I went there and I said, ñAy, an please do it nowò so when we go there we could s will continue to obey the rules except for the lil stringent things that we will want a lil deadline sometimes.

Mr. Mark: Mr. Chairman, I want to make it very clear that the accounting aspect as you said, Mr. Chairman, is up to mark. In other words, you have submitted up to 2017/2018 so far. The performance manual on state enterprises, although it is not a legal document we all have to follow the guidelines there, and if what I was told a short while ago by the official out of the Investments Division, that this seems to have been a practice at the level of the MIC, not to submit a number of documents outside of what was identified. So even though you are claiming that you are sending these things to your line Ministry and not to the Investments Division, the performance manual makes it very clear that these things must go to the Investments Division.

So I would suggest that, as Chairman, you read the riot act to your people and have these things sent almost immediately as outlined by the official from the Investments Division. And further, from here on in these things must be sent on a regular and frequent basis because what we have been told here is that they have not been receiving these things for a very long time. So it might have been preceding you as the Chairman. So this is something that we have to deal with and address once and for all. You happen to be in the driverôs seat, and therefore

Prof. Imbert: Mr. Chairman, I take the advice and the n advisementò absolutely. I do not know if I will have to read the riot act or wield the big stick or whatever, but I will tell them, ñAy

Mr. Mark: And may I ask, Mr. Chairman, health and safety. You know and I know that is a very, very serious matter. I think you, the Chairman that is, of the company, in its submission indicated that you are partially compliant with the Act which again leaves a lot to be desired, and you mentioned areas that have been enhanced and health and safety risk assessments and health surveillance, and even a public address system for emergency response notification, but I want to ask, through the Chairman, how long has MIC IT been in partial compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act? That is what I would like to have clarified.

Prof. Imbert: All right. We have six officers dedicated to that area. One of them is, of course, head of the unit if you may call it that. We, as far as I know, we have tried our best to comply, which again is quite stringent and we have tried our best to comply, but we have had a visit and it is on that visit we were told that there are certain things that are lacking. We got a very good report but there are certain things that are lacking, and once we were told that we said hey, we have to find a way of doing that. And one of them, as you say, the most important and most expensive one there, will be the question of, in our centres, putting in some sort of PA system. We are looking for interim measures, whether we get a bull horn or something at the moment but we have to put a regular wired or wireless PA system.

Mr. Mark: Any particular time frame, Mr. Chairman, for these things to be complied with?

Prof. Imbert: Because of the cost of one of them, again, I will have to ask for a few months. The first two are easy. We have really implemented that right away. The last one, because of the cost of a PA system in 14/15 centres, we will need some time.

Mr. Mark: But do you not think that the lifeð you see, health and safety as you know, as a professional, is a very serious matter and a PA system is critical so in event of an emergency you can communicate with all of your members of staff rapidly. I do not think money can substitute for life in an emergency. So I would like to respectfully suggest, Sir, that you give this utmost priority, talk to your line Ministry, let your line Ministry talk to Finance and indicate that this is a law that is being breached at this time and you need the money, as Max Senhouse would say, in order to comply with the law. And I would say that it should be done within a matter of maybe two weeks or a month, max. But I do not think we should go into months for a matter that could deal with the life and the safety of employees, because the last thing you would like, Mr. Chairman, is for anything to happen untoward and because of this deficiency you live with that for the rest of your life. So I would like to suggest that we take urgent steps to address this matter.

Prof. Imbert: Well, I would say the interim measures we are using is like what they would popularly call a bull horn for a safety warning which is something that, because of our centres, can be heard if you go in the yard and you really blast it, but that is not the final solution.

Mr. Mark: We might have to make a visit to all your centres, Sir. We will have to make a site visit to see if that is adequate to deal with an emergency in the context of the life, health and safety of the workers and your employees. Mr. Chairman, I think we will have to do that.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, member Mark. Before I invite closing comments, your mandate, you say your primary role is:

> ñTo be the catalyst for developing Technical
> regional industries, through quality training, innovation, manufacturing, construction and engineering products and services.ò

If you could wave a magic wand, what would you like to see changed or done in helping you meet that mandate and role?

Prof. Imbert: More money. I hope that does not sound too crass. But to expand on what I said before, more money yes, for training per say but we really need to wake up in this country and realize that we have to spend much more money on innovation.

Mr. Chairman: Okay. Well, thank you very much. I would now like to invite closing comments from officials of MIC Institute of Technology, Ministry of Education and then the Ministry of Finance, in that order. Thank you.

Prof. Imbert: You want to start it with MIC?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, please.

Prof. Imbert: Well, first of all I would like to thank the JSC for waking us up and making us send all those reports right away, and I endorse Mr. Mark
and not lapse any further. I am normally a very calm pers
wonder how much jamming they will give you toda
enjoyable. I mean, you have pointed out many things, asked us questions to make us question ourselves and to improve. So, I really want to thank the JSC for inviting us. You will invite us again. I think we will have much more positive answers the next time, at least in the areas we have control over. So thank you for your comments. Some of them were mildly scolding, but mildly, and I take it very graciously and under advisement, to repeat as the Americans say. So thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Mrs. Baptiste-Simmons: Chair and members of the Committee, MIC IT is one of the agencies which offers technical and vocational training, industry and construction services at centres located throughout Trinidad and Tobago. One of the things that was brought up today is the need to rationalize. For example, the questions were asking: What are you doing differently or what are you doing very similar in terms of programme delivery for YTEPP as well as NESC? There was also a question with respect to how are we looking at industry and how industry could have even improved or helped in terms of even ensuring that we probably look at different ways that we would have able to provide stipends to our young persons.

We also undertook the fact that MIC is also looking outwardly in terms of ensuring that they begin to look at revenue generation. MIC, as again, the question of us looking outward is that we need to understand what is happening in the sector, the industrial craft sector, and we needed to see what new, probably areas that we need to branch out in for training. What was clear is that the Ministry of Education, we need to rationalize and ensure that our programmes are well funded, or we at least receive more funding from the Ministry of Finance.

The Ministry of Education takes on board the fact that we have been reaching out to all of our 11 agencies and we have been requesting that they comply even in areas that were not in the SEPM for the Ministry. We have been requesting that they also submit to us, and we will work along with MIC IT to ensure that this is done. We note that the Minister would have had, as you say, the performance review, that document that was requested, that at least we would be able to, once signed off that we return the submission to MIC IT, onward submission to both the Ministry of Finance and to the Committee. Thank you so very much for having us.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Ministry of Finance.

Mrs. Lutchman: Well, the Investments Division, Ministry of Finance would like to thank the Committee for inviting us to this JSC. We are happy to hear today that there will be continued compliance with the SAP MM. A point to note is that the SAP MM has the deadlines for submission on all the reports. So we look forward to compliance.

Mr. Chairman: Put on your mic please.

Mrs. Lutchman: Oh. Sorry. I will say it over. Well, the Investments Division, Ministry of Finance would like to thank the Committee for inviting us to this JSC, and, as I said, we note the commitment for compliance with the SAP MM and the reports that are required, and we would just like to highlight that the SAP MM has the deadlines for submissions and we look forward to their compliance. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: And can I just make a plug for both Ministry of Education and MIC Institute of Technology? I know it is a guava season, but we have to invest in innovation, we have to invest in skills and technology.

Mrs. Lutchman: I will convey your comments and your concerns. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: I thank you, and I wish to thank Chairman Imbert and the various Ministry representatives for your contributions. Ladies and gentlemen, it would appear that this concludes our business today. I would like to declare the meeting suspended, and in closing, may I thank the company, the media, and the viewing and listening audience. Good day.

12.39 p.m.: *Meeting adjourned*.

ATTENDANCE REGISTER

ATTENDANCE REGISTER

2018/2019 Session, Eleventh Parliament

Name	31st Meeting 29.10.18	32nd Meeting 03.12.18	33rd Meeting 17.12.18	34th Meeting 14.01.19	35th Meeting 28.01.19	36th Meeting 11.02.19	37th Meeting 11.03.19	38th Meeting 01.04.19	39th Meeting 06.05.19	40th Meeting 27.05.19
Mr. David Small	ã									
Mr. Anthony Vieira[12]		ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã
Dr. Lester Henry	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	Exc.	Exc.	ã
Mrs. Cherrie-Ann Crichlow-Cockburn	Exc.	Exc.	ã	Exc.	Exc.	ã	ã	Exc.	Exc.	ã
Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Ancil Antoine	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã
Mr. Adrian Leonce	ã	ã	ã	ã	Exc.	Exc.	ã	Exc.	ã	ã
Mr. Fazal Karim	ã	Exc.	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã
Mr. Wade Mark	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã	ã
Mr. Garvin Simonette[13]		ã	ã	Exc.	Exc.	Exc.	ã	Exc.	ã	Exc.

[12] Mr. Anthony Vieira replaced Mr. David Small w.e.f 27.11.18
[13] Mr. Garvin Simonette replaced Mr. Ronald Huggins w.e.f 27.11.18