

MINISTERIAL RESPONSE TO THE FOURTH REPORT OF
THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENT ON MINISTRIES (GROUP 1),
AND ON STATUTORY AUTHORITIES AND STATE ENTERPRISES
ON THE
ADMINISTRATION AND METHODS OF FUNCTIONING OF THE NATIONAL
SCHOOLS DIETARY SERVICES LIMITED



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October 14, 2013

Mrs. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel
Clerk of the House
Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago
Level G-1
Tower D
The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre
1A Wrightson Road
Port of Spain

Dear Mrs. Sampson-Meiguel,

**Fourth Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament on Ministries (Group I) and on
the Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises on the Administration and Methods of
Functioning of the National Schools Dietary Services Limited**

With reference to the subject above, I wish to thank you for your submission of the above named Report.

Please see Ministry's response to the recommendations listed in the Report.

Recommendation I- Organization and Management of the Company

The Board of the NSDSL should endorse the hiring of additional staff to fulfill the monitoring requirements of such a dynamic and essential organization.

The National Schools Dietary Services Limited (NSDSL) is in the process of completing its new Strategic Plan where the complement of staff will be increased from fifty-three (53) to ninety-six (96) persons. See the proposed Organizational Chart attached.

Recommendation 2- Financing of NSDSL

The budget of the NSDSL should be varied by the Ministry of Education and by extension the Ministry of Finance to take into consideration the increase in food prices.

- i. NSDSL continues to be proactive in its response to the escalation of food costs. In its budget plan for the upcoming fiscal year (2013-2014), it has requested an increase in the budgetary allocation for the costs of meals, as the company has done in previous budgets.

The NSDSL should be VAT exempted considering the type of service being provided.

- ii. NSDSL has never considered requesting an exemption for the payment of Value Added Tax (V.A.T). The Company will pursue this recommendation with immediate effect.

Recommendation 3- Legislative Requirements

Urgent attention should be paid to the legislative requirements suggested by the NSDSL to promote a more effective service.

The NSDSL is aware that efforts are being made by the various Ministries to address the following policies or laws to strengthen the legislative framework that NSDSL operates within, as identified on page 29:

- A National Food and Nutrition Policy – the Ministry of Food Production in collaboration with the various Food and Agriculture Organizations are working towards developing the above name Policy.
- A School Wellness Policy – the Ministry of Education has such a policy in draft.
- Revision of the Public Health Laws of Trinidad and Tobago – the Public Health Inspectorate under the Ministry of Health is in addressing the matter.

Recommendation 4- School Refectories and Basic Dining Etiquette Training

The Ministry of Education should:-

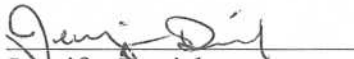
- i. *Consider equipping schools with proper eating areas; and*
- ii. *Adopt the practice of teaching students basic eating etiquette to improve their social skills.*

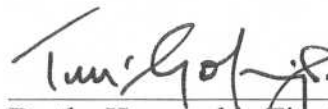
The Ministry will seek to provide adequate dining areas for students. However, such facilities would be more easily accommodated in newly constructed schools.

Teachers should also be encouraged to dine with students:

- The Ministry will be focusing in this regard at the Early Childhood Care and Education level where such a proposal is more feasible. Given the mandate for universal ECCE, over time the entire school population would have been exposed to such etiquette training.

Yours sincerely,


Jennifer Daniel
Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Ministry of Education


Dr. the Honourable Tim Gopeesingh
Minister of Education