



# PARLIAMENT

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

FIFTH SESSION OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT (2014/2015)

**FIRST REPORT  
OF  
THE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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## THE COMMITTEE

### **Membership of the Committee – Fifth Session (2014/2015)**

The Committee is comprised of the following six (6) Members of the House of Representatives:

Mr. Wade Mark	Chairman
Dr. Roodal Moonilal	Member
Mr. Collin Partap	Member
Mr. Chandresh Sharma	Member
Mr. Colm Imbert	Member
Ms. Marlene Mc Donald	Member

### **Terms of Reference**

2. The Committee was established on Tuesday August 12, 2014 with the following terms of reference in accordance with Standing Order 90(1) of the House of Representatives:

*“The Standing Orders Committee shall have the duty of considering from time to time and reporting on all such matters, relating to the Standing Orders as may be referred to it by the House.”*

### **Committee Secretariat Support**

3. During the session Mrs. Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel, Clerk of the House, served as Secretary to the Committee and Ms. Chantal La Roche, Legal Officer served as Assistant Secretary to the Committee.

4. Additional Procedural and Legal support was provided by Ms. Keiba Jacob, Procedural Clerk, Ms. Candice Skerrette, Procedural Clerk Assistant, Ms. Sheranne Samuel, Parliamentary Intern, and Ms. Susan-Leigh Christopher, Legal Officer.

## **INTRODUCTION**

5. During the Fourth Session of the Tenth Parliament, the Standing Orders Committee extensively revised the Standing Orders governing the conduct of proceedings in the House of Representatives. Since gaining independence in 1961, the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives were amended once in 2000, when Departmental Joint Select Committees were established pursuant to section 66A of the Constitution.

6. By report dated December 13, 2013, the Committee recommended the proposed Revised Standing Orders for consideration and adoption by the House of Representatives. The Revised Standing Orders Committee were so adopted and came into operation on the commencement of the Fifth Session of the Tenth Parliament.

## **STANDING ORDERS REFERRED**

7. Whilst the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives 2014 radically improved the conduct of business in the House, the Committee identified areas in need of further revision, specifically the Standing Orders governing the operation of Joint Standing Committees and Departmental Joint Select Committees. Therefore at a sitting of the House of Representatives held on Friday May 17, 2015, the House referred amendments to the Standing Orders Committee pursuant to Standing Order 121.

## **DELIBERATIONS AND MAIN AREAS OF REVISION**

8. The amendments proposed seek to regularize the subject-based oversight Joint Select Committees so as to minimize overlap of responsibility-areas and harmonise with Section 66A(1)(a) of the Constitution.

*Omnibus Committees*

9. Departmental Joint Select Committees appointed pursuant to section 66A of the Constitution shall now consist of Committees on:

1. National Security;
2. Energy Affairs;
3. Foreign Affairs; and
4. Human Rights Equality and Diversity;

Additionally, the following Omnibus Committees will be established:

5. **Finance and Legal Affairs** (to include Finance, Planning, Trade, Tobago Affairs, OPM, Attorney General, Justice and Legal Affairs)
6. **Land and Physical Infrastructure** (to include Land, Agriculture, Marine Resources, Housing, Public Utilities, Transport and Works)
7. **Social Services and Public Administration** (to include Education, Health, Gender, Tourism, Public Administration, Labour, culture, Community Development and other Social Services)
8. **Local Authorities, Service Commissions and Statutory Authorities** (including the THA); and
9. **State Enterprises.**

*General Functions of Departmental Joint Select Committees*

10. The general functions of Departmental Joint Select Committees shall now include monitoring the performance of Ministries, departments, and bodies. The Committee shall also be empowered to make reports to the House as often as possible, in addition to recommending proposed legislation.

*Human Rights Equality and Diversity*

11. The Committee on Human Rights, Diversity, the Environment and Sustainable Development has been renamed and its mandate streamlined. It shall no longer be concerned with matters of the environment and energy efficiency, rather the promotion of measures to enhance the quality of life and equalisation of opportunities for marginalized groups in society.

## CONCLUSION

16. In presenting this Report the Committee recommends the proposed Revised Standing Orders for consideration and adoption by the House of Representatives. The Committee is confident that the amendments proposed will rationalise the operation of Departmental Joint Select Committees and prevent undesired duplication of among Parliament's Committees.

The Committee acknowledges its gratitude to all those who assisted in the completion of its work.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Wade Mark  
Chairman

**June 05, 2015**

## **APPENDICES**

# Appendix I

**Comparative Table of the  
Existing Standing Orders and Revised Standing Orders**

Existing Standing Orders	Revised Standing Orders
<p><b><u>98. JOINT STANDING COMMITTEES</u></b></p> <p>(1) Pursuant to the Constitution there shall be the following Joint Select Committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the Public Accounts Committee;</li> <li>(b) the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee; and</li> <li>(c) Departmental Committees appointed pursuant to section 66A of the Constitution.</li> </ul> <p>(2) As far as possible Cabinet Ministers should not be Members of the Committees established under paragraph (1). Where the circumstances require a Cabinet Minister to be appointed to such Committees any such appointment should be so made as to avoid occurrences of conflict of interest.</p> <p>(3) In addition, the following Joint Select Committees are hereby established:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee;</li> <li>(b) the Committee on National Security;</li> <li>(c) the Committee on Energy Affairs;</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>98. JOINT STANDING COMMITTEES</u></b></p> <p>(1) Pursuant to the Constitution, there shall be the following Joint Select Committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Public Accounts Committee;</li> <li>(b) Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee; and</li> <li>(c) Departmental Committees appointed pursuant to section 66A of the Constitution.</li> </ul> <p>(2) Unless the House otherwise directs, the Departmental Committees at paragraph (1)(c) shall be as set out in Appendix IV.</p> <p>(3) In addition to the Joint Select Committees at (1) above, the following Joint Select Committees are hereby established:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Public Administration and Appropriations Committee;</li> <li>(b) Parliamentary Broadcasting Committee; and</li> <li>(c) Committee on Government Assurances.</li> </ul>



<p>(d) the Committee on Foreign Affairs;  (e) the Committee on Human Rights, Diversity, the Environment and Sustainable Development;  (f) the Parliamentary Broadcasting Committee; and  (g) the Committee on Government Assurances.</p> <p>(4) A Joint Select Committee established under this Standing Order shall be Standing Committees appointed for the duration of the life of a Parliament.</p> <p>(5) Standing Committees shall meet in public, except—  (a) when deliberating upon evidence received;  (b) when deliberating on its report to the House; or  (c) if otherwise resolved by Order of the Committee.</p>	<p>(4) As far as possible Cabinet Ministers should not be Members of the Committees established under paragraphs (1) and (2). Where the circumstances require a Cabinet Minister to be appointed to such Committees any such appointment should be so made as to avoid occurrences of conflict of interest.</p> <p>(5) A Joint Select Committee established under this Standing Order shall be Standing Committees appointed for the duration of the life of a Parliament.</p> <p>(6) Standing Committees shall meet in public, except—  (a) when deliberating upon evidence received;  (b) when deliberating on its report to the House; or  (c) if otherwise resolved by Order of the Committee.</p>
<p><b><u>101. THE DEPARTMENTAL JOINT SELECT COMMITTEES</u></b></p> <p>(1) A Departmental Joint Select Committee appointed pursuant to section 66A of the Constitution shall be empowered to investigate, enquire into and report on the administration, the manner of the exercise of the powers, methods of functioning and any criteria adopted by the Ministry of body which is assigned to it by the House in the exercise of its powers and functions. In general, the Committee shall be severally empowered to review and report on—</p> <p>(a) the statute law relating to the Ministry/body assigned to it;  (b) the programme and policy objectives of the Ministry/body and its effectiveness in the implementation of same; and  (c) other matters relating to the management, organisation of the Ministry/body, as the Committee deems fit.</p>	<p><b><u>101. GENERAL FUNCTIONS OF DEPARTMENTAL JOINT SELECT COMMITTEES</u></b></p> <p>Generally, the functions of a Departmental Committee shall be to —</p> <p>(a) examine Bills and review all legislation relating to the relevant Ministries, Departments or Bodies or as may be referred to it by the House;  (b) investigate, enquire into, and report on all matters relating to the mandate, management, activities, administration and operations of the assigned Ministries, Departments or Bodies;  (c) study the programme and policy objectives of Ministries, Departments or Bodies and the effectiveness of the implementation;</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(d) assess and monitor the performance of Ministries, Departments and Bodies and the manner of the exercise of their powers;</li> <li>(e) investigate and inquire into all matters relating to the assigned Ministries, Departments and bodies as they may deem necessary, or as may be referred to them by the House or a Minister; and</li> <li>(f) make reports and recommendations to the House as often as possible, including recommendations for proposed legislation.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>103. THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY</u></b></p> <p>The Committee on National Security shall have the duty of considering, from time to time, and reporting whenever necessary, on all matters related to the national security policy of Trinidad and Tobago.</p> <p>In particular, the Committee shall be authorized to examine—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the security, safety and protection of citizens;</li> <li>(b) the working relationships between the various agencies involved in intelligence gathering, and how they collect, coordinate, analyse and disseminate information and how these functions might be enhanced; and</li> <li>(c) the mechanisms to review the performance and activities of the various agencies involved in National Security and critical infrastructure.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>DUTIES OF SPECIFIC DEPARTMENTAL JOINT SELECT COMMITTEES</u></b></p> <p><b>103. THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY</b></p> <p>The Committee on National Security shall have the duty of considering, from time to time, and reporting whenever necessary, on all matters related to the national security policy of Trinidad and Tobago.</p> <p>In particular, the Committee shall be authorized to examine—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the security, safety and protection of citizens;</li> <li>(b) the working relationships between the various agencies involved in intelligence gathering, and how they collect, coordinate, analyse and disseminate information and how these functions might be enhanced; and</li> <li>(c) the mechanisms to review the performance and activities of the various agencies involved in National Security and critical infrastructure.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>104. THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AFFAIRS</u></b></p> <p>The Committee on Energy Affairs shall have the duty of considering, from time to time, and reporting whenever necessary, on all matters</p>	<p><b><u>104. THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AFFAIRS</u></b></p> <p>The Committee on Energy Affairs shall have the duty of considering, from time to time, and reporting whenever necessary, on all matters</p>

<p>related to the expenditure, administration and policy in relation to Energy Affairs.</p>	<p>related to the expenditure, administration and policy in relation to Energy Affairs.</p>
<p><b><u>105. THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS</u></b></p> <p>The Committee on Foreign Affairs shall have the duty of considering from time to time and reporting, whenever necessary, on—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) International treaties and agreements entered into by the Government on behalf of the State; and</li> <li>(b) other matters relating to Foreign Affairs as may be referred to it by the House.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>105. THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS</u></b></p> <p>The Committee on Foreign Affairs shall have the duty of considering from time to time and reporting, whenever necessary, on—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) all matters relating to the foreign policy of the Government (including missions abroad) and examining the implications and likely effect on Trinidad and Tobago; and</li> <li>(b) International treaties and other agreements entered into by the Government on behalf of the State and advising the Parliament of their likely impact on Trinidad and Tobago; and</li> <li>(c) other matters relating to Foreign Affairs as may be referred to it by the House.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>106. THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, DIVERSITY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</u></b></p> <p>The Committee on Human Rights, Diversity, the Environment and Sustainable Development shall have the duty of considering, from time to time, and reporting whenever necessary, on all matters related to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the compatibility of Acts of Parliament with human rights, and any matters relating to human rights in Trinidad and Tobago (but excluding consideration of individual cases);</li> <li>(b) the creation of an inclusive and more equitable society through greater social justice and sustainable human development within Trinidad and Tobago; and</li> <li>(c) the environment, climate change, energy efficiency, sustainability, and planning the use, sustainable development and protection of land and other resources.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>106. THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</u></b></p> <p>The Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity shall have the duty of considering, from time to time, and reporting whenever necessary, on all matters related to—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the compatibility of Acts of Parliament with human rights, and any matters relating to human rights in Trinidad and Tobago (but excluding consideration of individual cases);</li> <li>(b) Government compliance with national and international human rights instruments to which Trinidad and Tobago is a party; and</li> <li>(c) the promotion of measures designed to enhance the equalisation of opportunities and improvement in the quality of life and status of all peoples including marginalised groups on the basis of gender, age (elderly, youth, children) disability and the creation of an inclusive and more equitable society</li> </ul>

	through greater social justice and sustainable human development within Trinidad and Tobago.
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## **Appendix II**

## Proposed List of Amendments to the Standing Orders

### **98. JOINT STANDING COMMITTEES**

(1) Pursuant to the Constitution, there shall be the following Joint Select Committees:

- (a) Public Accounts Committee;
- (b) Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee; and
- (c) Departmental Committees appointed pursuant to section 66A of the Constitution.

(2) Unless the House otherwise directs, the Departmental Committees at paragraph (1)(c) shall be as set out in Appendix IV.

(3) In addition to the Joint Select Committees at (1) above, the following Joint Select Committees are hereby established:

- (a) Public Administration and Appropriations Committee;
- (b) Parliamentary Broadcasting Committee; and
- (c) Committee on Government Assurances.

(4) As far as possible Cabinet Ministers should not be Members of the Committees established under paragraphs (1) and (2). Where the circumstances require a Cabinet Minister to be appointed to such Committees any such appointment should be so made as to avoid occurrences of conflict of interest.

(5) A Joint Select Committee established under this Standing Order shall be Standing Committees appointed for the duration of the life of a Parliament.

(6) Standing Committees shall meet in public, except—

- (a) when deliberating upon evidence received;
- (b) when deliberating on its report to the House; or
- (c) if otherwise resolved by Order of the Committee.

### **101. GENERAL FUNCTIONS OF DEPARTMENTAL JOINT SELECT COMMITTEES**

Generally, the functions of a Departmental Committee shall be to –

- (a) examine Bills and review all legislation relating to the relevant Ministries, Departments or Bodies or as may be referred to it by the House;
- (b) investigate, enquire into, and report on all matters relating to the mandate, management, activities, administration and operations of the assigned Ministries, Departments or Bodies;
- (c) study the programme and policy objectives of Ministries, Departments or Bodies and the effectiveness of the implementation;
- (d) assess and monitor the performance of Ministries, Departments and Bodies and the manner of the exercise of their powers;

- (e) investigate and inquire into all matters relating to the assigned Ministries, Departments and bodies as they may deem necessary, or as may be referred to them by the House or a Minister; and
- (f) make reports and recommendations to the House as often as possible, including recommendations for proposed legislation.

## **DUTIES OF SPECIFIC DEPARTMENTAL JOINT SELECT COMMITTEES**

### **103. THE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY**

The Committee on National Security shall have the duty of considering, from time to time, and reporting whenever necessary, on all matters related to the national security policy of Trinidad and Tobago.

In particular, the Committee shall be authorized to examine—

- (a) the security, safety and protection of citizens;
- (b) the working relationships between the various agencies involved in intelligence gathering, and how they collect, coordinate, analyse and disseminate information and how these functions might be enhanced; and
- (c) the mechanisms to review the performance and activities of the various agencies involved in National Security and critical infrastructure.

### **104. THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AFFAIRS**

The Committee on Energy Affairs shall have the duty of considering, from time to time, and reporting whenever necessary, on all matters related to the expenditure, administration and policy in relation to Energy Affairs.

### **105. THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

The Committee on Foreign Affairs shall have the duty of considering from time to time and reporting, whenever necessary, on—

- (a) all matters relating to the foreign policy of the Government (including missions abroad) and examining the implications and likely effect on Trinidad and Tobago; and
- (b) International treaties and other agreements entered into by the Government on behalf of the State and advising the Parliament of their likely impact on Trinidad and Tobago; and
- (c) other matters relating to Foreign Affairs as may be referred to it by the House.

### **106. THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

The Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity shall have the duty of considering, from time to time, and reporting whenever necessary, on all matters related to—

- (a) the compatibility of Acts of Parliament with human rights, and any matters relating to human rights in Trinidad and Tobago (but excluding consideration of individual cases);
- (b) Government compliance with national and international human rights instruments to which Trinidad and Tobago is a party; and
- (c) the promotion of measures designed to enhance the equalisation of opportunities and improvement in the quality of life and status of all peoples including marginalised groups on the basis of gender, age (elderly, youth, children) disability and the creation of an inclusive and more equitable society through greater social justice and sustainable human development within Trinidad and Tobago.

The Departmental Committees

Committee on:

1. **National Security;**
2. **Energy Affairs;**
3. **Foreign Affairs;**
4. **Human Rights Equality and Diversity;**

and the following omnibus Committees

5. **Finance and Legal Affairs** (to include Finance, Planning, Trade, Tobago Affairs, OPM, Attorney General, Justice and Legal Affairs)
6. **Land and Physical Infrastructure** (to include Land, Agriculture, Marine Resources, Housing, Public Utilities, Transport and Works)
7. **Social Services and Public Administration** (to include Education, Health, Gender, Tourism, Public Administration, Labour, culture, Community Development and other Social Services)
8. **Local Authorities, Service Commissions and Statutory Authorities (including the THA); and**
9. **State Enterprises.**