



**MINISTRY OF FINANCE & THE ECONOMY
GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD & TOBAGO**

Investments Division, Level 15, Eric Williams Finance Building,
Independence Square, Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad & Tobago.

Telephone: (868) 627-9700 • Fax: (868) 623-6338

FE(I): 2/19/1 Vol. 3

January 28, 2015

Mr. Julien Ogilvie
Secretary
Parliamentary Committee
Levels G – 7, Tower D
The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre
1A Wrightson Road
Port of Spain

Dear Mr. Ogilvie

**Re Tenth Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament on Ministries (Group I),
Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group I) on the Administration and
Operations of the National Insurance Board of Trinidad and Tobago (NIBTT) [with
particular focus on the Board's relations with the National Insurance Appeals Tribunal**

Further to your letter PARL: 14/5/14 Vol. III dated December 01, 2014 on the captioned subject, enclosed are fifteen (15) copies of the Ministry of Finance and the Economy's response to the Report.

An electronic copy of the response will be submitted to your e-mail address at coth@tpparliament.org as required.

Respectfully,


Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Finance and the Economy

Report Re Findings and Recommendations of Tenth Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament on Ministries, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (Group I) on the Administration and Operations of the National Insurance Board of Trinidad and Tobago (NIBTT) [with particular focus on the Board's relations with the National Insurance Appeals Tribunal (NIAT)]

Reference is made to Objective 1 *'To understand in greater depth the existing work relationship between the NIBTT and NIAT, vis-à-vis the processing of appeals; the business relations between NIBTT, NIAT, and the MOFE; reporting relationships; obligations of each entity; reference to sanctions and / or consequences for omissions, breaches and/or failures with respect to obligations'*

- I. Discussions have been held within the NIAT to establish a Case Management Committee. This Committee will be responsible for discussing and assessing issues of Appeals and any other related matters prior to their Hearing.
- II. The digitization of client records would assist NIAT and NIBTT with managing and creating effective Case File submissions for Hearings.
- III. The Tribunal has contracted the services of Ernst & Young Services Ltd to undertake a Business Process Review of the structures and operations of the NIAT. This is a six (6) month engagement which started in November 2014. This report will further assist the Tribunal in identifying some of the reasons for existing gaps in our current records.
- IV. The NIAT has limited control over the full constitution of Tribunal to facilitate the convening of a greater number of Hearings to reduce the backlog of Appeals. However, as of January 2015, the NIBTT in conjunction with the NIAT has undertaken an exercise that would allow appellants the opportunity to present to the NIBTT any additional information that may be useful to their existing claim made in the first instance resulting in a notice for Appeal application. NIBTT would also have the opportunity to present to the appellant/s the rationale behind their decision. Following this interview with the appellant, if he/she agrees with the NIBTT's proposal then the review is signed by both the NIBTT and the appellant and this is forwarded to NIAT for the matter to be withdrawn. On the other hand, if the appellant does not agree with NIBTT's proposal the Appeal continues in the usual manner. It is hoped that the backlog will be reduced coming out of this exercise.
- V. The recommendation is noted, further consideration will be given to this area.

Reference is made to Objective 2 *'To be apprised of the practices and procedures observed by the NIBTT in the processing of appeals filed against decisions of the Board.'*

- I. It is agreed that there is a significant need for public sensitization. However, the NIAT needs to be sufficiently prepared to handle the incoming Appeals that will increase as a result of public sensitization. At the conclusion of the Business Process Review, and the implementation of the Consultant's recommendations, the NIAT should be better poised to facilitate more public sensitization.
- II. The NIAT is looking at an overall review of its business processes as indicated before. This issue will be addressed in the Consultant's report.
- III. Recommendations are noted and the Ministry of Finance and the Economy is aware that the NIBTT has started a new filing system to assist with quicker retrieval. The new system was rolled out in approximately three (3) offices to date.
- IV. This is noted and has been addressed in Objective 1 point #1.

Reference is made to Objective 3 *'To comprehend the staff composition and utilization at the NIB particularly with respect to the employees responsible for treating with Claims and Benefit Unit Files.'*

- I. The NIBTT has advised that additional staff has been sourced and recruited for the Operations Business Unit.
- II. Chapter 32:01 of the National Insurance Act, paragraph 31 states "At a hearing before an Appeals Tribunal the appellant and the board may be represented by an Attorney-at-law or any person qualified or competent to represent either party to the Hearing and may call and question witnesses."

Reference is made to Objective 4 *'To gain insight into the claims process.'*

- I. The NIBTT has advised that to this end there has been an increase in seminars and public relations.
- II. The process for implementing these recommendations is that an Actuarial Review needs to be done to include legislative amendments. Such a review was done in 2013

and these are usually done every five years. These recommendations are noted and will be discussed to include into the new Actuarial Review in 2018.

- III. The NIBTT held an Amnesty in 2012 as mandated by the Minister of Finance at the time.

Reference is made to Objective 5 '*To understand the possible causes of delay in submission of Benefit Unit Files to NIAT.*'

- I. The NIAT at present does not have the human resource capabilities to execute this suggestion. However, the recommendations coming out of the Business Process Review which will be concluded by April 2015 will assist the Tribunal in ascertaining how many staff members need to be added to increase efficiency and better management and administration of the office.
- II. There will be further discussion and consideration on this recommendation since this is not a first line of business for the NIBTT to address. The introduction of this should parallel and supplement existing business processes through effective implementation and management.

Other Findings and Recommendations

In respect of the incorporation of Self-Employed Persons (SEPs) into the National Insurance System (NIS); Cabinet on January 21, 2010 instituted a High-Level Working Committee (HLWC) to consider proposals and make recommendations for the inclusion of SEPs into the NIS. The Committee finalized its report in January 2015 with the Ministry of Finance and the Economy and the Committee is currently in the process of preparing the requisite note for Cabinet consideration which will form the basis for drafting of the necessary legislation. Implementation is expected to commence within the current year."

*Ministry of Finance and the Economy
Investments Division
January 26, 2015*