

*Leave of Absence**Wednesday, April 13, 2011***HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***Wednesday, April 13, 2011*

The House met at 1.30 p.m.

PRAYERS[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have received communication from the following Members requesting leave of absence: the hon. Winston Dookeran, Member of Parliament for Tunapuna is currently out of the country and has asked to be excused from sittings of the House during the period April 13, 2011 to April 17, 2011.

I have also been informed that Mr. Patrick Manning, Member of Parliament for San Fernando East; Mrs. Patricia McIntosh, Member of Parliament for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West; Miss Donna Cox, Member of Parliament for Laventille East/Morvant and the hon. Dr. Lincoln Douglas, Member of Parliament for Lopinot/Bon Air West, have all asked to be excused from today's sitting of the House. The leave which the Members seek is granted.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Minister of Housing and the Environment (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, I just wish to inform the House that the Government is in a position today to answer all questions for oral reply, [*Desk thumping*] and during the course of the proceedings we will furnish the written reply for the very extensive question No. 70.

**Head of Mission/High Commissioner
(Details of)**

73. Mrs. Paula Gopee-Scoon (*Point Fortin*) asked the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs:

- (a) Could the Minister state whether a request had been made between the period May 25, 2010 and January 31, 2011 to the Government of Jamaica for a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago to serve as Head of Mission/High Commissioner for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago?

- (b) If yes, could the Minister provide the name of the person and state clearly the type of qualifications held by him/her, whether, university, technical or other professional?
- (c) Could the Minister state the outcome of the request?
- (d) Could the Minister state whether the Government of Jamaica refused the request or alternatively whether the Government of Trinidad and Tobago withdrew the request?
- (e) If yes in either case, the reasons for the refusal and/or withdrawal?
- (f) Could the Minister state whether the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has since submitted a new request for another person to serve as High Commissioner?

The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Hon. Dr. Surujrattan Rambachan):
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, a request was made on August 19, 2010 to the Government of Jamaica for a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago to serve as High Commissioner for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, the citizen's name is Mr. Anthony Moore. Mr. Anthony Moore possesses 32 years of experience in petroleum refining and offshore applications. Mr. Moore earned a master craftsman's certificate in electrical engineering from Metal Industries Limited; he also earned a mechanical engineering technician's diploma from San Fernando Technical Institute. Mr. Moore is a member of the American Petroleum Institute and the American Welding Society, both professional associations.

Mr. Moore also served as a committee member of the OWTU, Chairman of the Board of Directors for Point Fortin Civic Centre, a Member of the Board of Directors for First National Credit Union, Chairman of the Board of Trinidad Credit Bureau, Chairman of the Board of the Tree of Life Holding Company Limited, Chairman of the Parent\Teachers' Association of Cedros Composite School, he served as a member of the Point Fortin Chamber of Commerce and Chairman of the Point Fortin Kiwani's International

Mr. Speaker, subsequent to the request made by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Anthony Moore felt that he was not in a position to accept the post of High Commissioner to Jamaica citing personal reasons which led to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago withdrawing the request from the Government of Jamaica on November 15, 2010. Mr. Moore was recently appointed as Chairman of the Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, part (d), for the reasons stated earlier, that is, Mr. Moore's inability to accept the post due to personal reasons, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago withdrew the request from the Government of Jamaica. Mr. Speaker, as stated earlier, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago withdrew the request from the Government of Jamaica because Mr. Anthony Moore felt that he was not in a position to accept the post of High Commissioner to Jamaica due to personal reasons.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago submitted another request on January 18, 2011 to appoint Dr. Iva Gloudon as High Commissioner to Jamaica. Dr. Gloudon is, by training—she holds a Doctor of Education in physical education from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst; she has a Master of Science degree in physical education also from the University of Illinois; she has a Bachelor of Science degree in physical education also from the University of Illinois and she has a teacher's diploma from the Port of Spain Teacher's training College.

Mr. Speaker, from 1972—1979 she was an elementary schoolteacher; 1985—1988 a resident director at the University of Massachusetts; 1988—1992, Head of Department and Assistant Professor, Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, Spellman College, Atlanta, Georgia; 1992—1993, Advisor on Sport and Physical Education at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine; 1993, until she assumed the position of High Commissioner, Director of Sport and Physical Education and Senior Lecturer at the University of the West Indies.

Dr. Gloudon, since 1992, at the University of the West Indies, Sport and Physical Education Department became the central administrator for sport and physical education on the campus, established a sport and physical education journal and magazine called *Sped*; implemented extensive intramural programmes to students, staff and faculty; co-designed and implemented certificate and degree programmes in coaching physical education, sport and exercise, science and sport management; facilitated the exchange of ideas by including consultants from the British sports council, the USA, Australia, Wales and Canada to work within our different programmes, as well as renewed participation by students in several local, regional and international sporting leagues in competitions.

She also designed and implemented the University of the West Indies International Sport and Physical Centre's annual international half-marathon, which has become a premier racing event in the region. Its last outing in 2009 showcased over 950 athletes, which included over 100 international athletes and age group runners 15 years to 84 years.

Mr. Speaker, the candidate, Dr Iva Camille Gloudon, was a Trinidad and Tobago Women's Hockey Player of the Year and Witco nominee 1975; Government of Trinidad and Tobago National Sports Scholarship 1980; National Deans' List of America 1983; Fullbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Programme to Cameroon and Ghana 1989; Trinidad and Tobago Witco Sport Administration of the Year 1992; Trinidad and Tobago Women's Hockey Association Honourary Life Member 1996; Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs top 20 sport administrators of the millennium 2000; Trinidad and Tobago Alliance for Sport and Physical Education honorary member 2006; Trinidad and Tobago Olympic Committee nominee for the International Olympic Committee Women and Sport Award 2006.

Mr. Speaker, on February 17, 2011, Dr. Gloudon was appointed as High Commissioner to Jamaica by the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Prof. George Maxwell Richards, and she assumed duty as High Commissioner for Trinidad and Tobago to Jamaica. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Supplemental question to the hon. Minister. Would you please tell us what the criteria are or, further yet, the qualifications for the positions of High Commissioner or Ambassador?

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: Mr. Speaker, that is a new question which the Member can file and I, of course, would answer it.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Could the Minister tell us whether the previous candidate had met the qualifications set by this Government for the position of High Commissioner?

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: Mr. Speaker, I would not like to go into the past, but I wonder whether certain candidates who were appointed by the former administration way back in the 70s and 80s also met criteria that they would have set, and maybe the Member for Point Fortin could have passed on that criteria for me. But, Mr. Speaker, if they want criteria, I will bring criteria under a new question.

Dr. Rowley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister state whether at any stage in the proceedings the Government of Jamaica considered and made any comment with respect to the granting of agrément for Mr. Moore.

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Moore presented personal reasons as to why he could not accept the position and the Government of

Trinidad and Tobago acceded to his request and withdrew the application for Mr. Moore from the Government of Jamaica.

Dr. Rowley: Mr. Speaker, did the Government of Jamaica at any stage take any position with respect to the grant of agrément for Mr. Moore? I am not asking about Mr. Moore's withdrawal. I am asking whether the Government of Jamaica, at any stage, had to take any position on Mr. Moore. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of any position taken by the Government of Jamaica. I am aware that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago withdrew the request that was made by Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*]

Dr. Rowley: Was that withdrawal done before or after an agrément was not granted?

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: Mr. Speaker, it never reached to the point where an agrément was ever granted or not granted. This request for withdrawal was made on the basis of personal reasons advanced by Mr. Moore.

Consul General (Appointment of)

74. Mrs. Paula Gopee-Scoon (*Point Fortin*) asked the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Will the Minister state:

- (a) Whether the officer who assumed duties as Consul General in the Consulate of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago located on Brickell Avenue in Miami in February 2011 was a "Public Officer" prior to such appointment?
- (b) Whether the present Consul General had been a Foreign Service Officer at any time prior to that appointment?
- (c) Whether there was a Government policy in place up to May 31, 2010 to have the position of Consul General reserved for public officers and more particularly experienced and senior Foreign Service Officers?
- (d) If the answer to (c) above is in the affirmative, could the Minister state when and under what authority the policy to reserve such appointments for Public/Foreign Service Officers was varied?

- (e) Could the Minister also state which officer in the Consulate of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago will be deemed to be the “Accounting Officer” and whether the Consul General has been or will be assigned responsibilities for executing contracts of any kind and signing of financial instruments on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago?

The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Hon. Dr. Surujrattan Rambachan):
Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes I am advised that Dr Anil Ramnanan had been a public officer for 11 years prior to his appointment as Consul General to Miami in February 2011.

Mr. Speaker, from 2000 to 2010, Dr. Anil Ramnanan was employed as a veterinary officer with the Ministry of Food Production, Land and Marine Affairs. He also served as a senior veterinary officer with the same Ministry from February 2010 until his appointment as Consul General to Miami. The other work experience of Dr. Anil Ramnanan includes an Assistant Teachers III for the Ministry of Education and a part-time lecturer at the University of the West Indies.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Anil Ramnanan was not a foreign service officer prior to his appointment as Consul General to Miami.

1.45 p.m.

The answer to part (c) of question No. 74, Mr. Speaker, is yes. The duties of Consul General have in practice been performed by a senior foreign service officer. The prior government by Cabinet Minute No. 794 of April 02, 2009, agreed to the employment on contract of a Consul General at the Consulate General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in New York for a period of two years.

Mr. Speaker, in answer to part (d), the employment on contract of the Consul General of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for assignment to the office of the Consulate General in Miami was approved by Cabinet through Cabinet Minute No. 1453 of November 18, 2010.

Mr. Speaker, the accounting officer for the consulate office must be a senior foreign service officer. Since Dr. Anil Ramnanan was not a Foreign Service Officer prior to his appointment as Consul General to Miami, the responsibilities associated with the accounting officer will not be given to him. However, he is responsible for the effective and efficient functioning of administration,

immigration, security and information, to ensure that the consulate fulfils its goals and objectives. Dr. Anil Ramnanan also monitors and reports on political economic developments that are significant for Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Garth Lamsee, a Foreign Service Officer III, has assumed responsibility as the accounting officer for the Miami Consulate office.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Could the Minister tell us whether the Consul General is on no-pay leave at this time?

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: Mr. Speaker, I am not in position to answer that question at this time.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Supplemental again to the Minister; could the Minister tell us whether it is a fact that the Consul General, Miami, the recently appointed one, was on disciplinary charges from the Ministry of Agriculture before his appointment?

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: Mr. Speaker, I am not in a position—I do not have any such information at my disposal.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Supplementary question again; could you tell us whether or not, I will give you some more specific—was he importing dogs without the necessary permits?

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: Mr. Speaker, those are different questions which I do not need to answer. [*Crosstalk*]

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: Supplemental question again; is the Minister aware of the Civil Service regulations with regard to Public Officers on no-pay leave being granted overseas assignments especially where there are disciplinary charges attached to the officer?

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: Mr. Speaker, I will have to acquire that information and provide it to the Member.

Uff Commission of Enquiry

(Minister of Housing and the Environment)

75. Dr. Keith Rowley (*Diego Martin West*) asked the Minister of Housing and the Environment:

- (a) With respect to the Uff Commission of Enquiry, could the Minister state the total cost of any and all expenditure incurred (paid or outstanding), in relation to the participation of the Ministry or any agency under its purview to facilitate the said enquiry?

- (b) Could the Minister identify the recipients and state the total sums paid or due for payment to each individual or entity?

The Minister of Housing and the Environment (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Question No. 75. In response to part (a), it should be noted, Mr. Speaker, that the expenses incurred with respect to the Uff Commission of Enquiry involving the Ministry of Housing and the Environment have been incurred by two separate institutions:

- (1) The Ministry of Housing and
- (2) The Housing Development Corporation under the umbrella of the Ministry.

In response, Mr. Speaker—in relation to the Ministry of Housing, we inform that the Ministry of, then, Planning, Housing and the Environment by letter dated February 05, 2009, formally requested Alexander, Jeremie & Company to retain the services of forensic expert, Mr. Bob Lindquist, to conduct an enquiry into the Cleaver Heights Housing Project.

Mr. Lindquist's terms of reference included:

- Gathering and assessing financial information and conducting various financial analyses and enquiries with respect to the Cleaver Heights Housing Project.

By letter dated February 12, 2009, Alexander, Jeremie & Company indicated that Lindquist Forensic Accounting Company was formally retained on behalf of the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment on February 09, 2009, to conduct the investigation into the Cleaver Heights Housing Project. Alexander Jeremie & Company's support services included:

- The identification and procurement of relevant documents from the Ministry of Planning, Housing and the Environment (MOPHE), the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) and other relevant agencies;
- Title searches and the preparation of related reports as may be necessary;
- Company searches and the preparation of related reports as may be necessary;
- The preparation of a context memorandum;
- Providing legal advice and

- Such other services as may be required for the conduct of that investigation into Cleaver Heights.

You may recall, Mr. Speaker, there was some concern by the former Prime Minister over a missing \$10 million or so at that housing project—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Warner: “Where de money gone?”

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal:—where the former Prime Minister alluded to some wrongdoing there involving former officeholders. Mr. Speaker, for the company Alexander, Jeremie & Company, I believe the former Attorney General may have had some relationship to that company. I do not know —could not have been when he served as Attorney General, but:

Alexander Jeremie & Company:

Invoice dated April 6, 2009	\$404,150.26
Invoice dated April 30, 2009	\$ 58, 113.50
Total	\$462,263.76

Bob Lindquist:

Invoice May 18, 2009, this is paid from the Ministry of Housing, Mr. Speaker, \$115,272.35

Invoice June 26, 2009 \$142,103.00

Invoice April 6, 2009 \$191,208.91

Grand total between Alexander, Jeremie & Company and Bob Lindquist of:

\$448,584.26

Mr. Speaker, may I note now that to this date I am advised that the Ministry has not received a report from Mr. Bob Lindquist.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the Housing Development Corporation—[*Interruption*]

Mr. Warner: You are not shame?

Hon. Dr. R. Moonilal: “That is the man who is holding meeting on Monday night, you know.” Mr. Speaker, the Housing Development Corporation also participated in the Uff Commission of Enquiry particularly, as it related to that

matter of the Cleaver Heights Project and other related matters. The total cost of all expenditure incurred, non-outstanding to date is the sum of \$2,596,905.44 which was paid for legal representation during the enquiry. With respect to the recipients and the total sums paid to each individual, I will just read it—I think the Member asked to name the recipients:

Payment Date	Name of Recipients	Amount
19.01.2009	Deborah Peake S.C.	\$345,000.00
	Rishi Dass	\$200,000.00
	Darrel Allahar	\$210,000.00
10.02.2009	Darrel Allahar	\$340,000.00
	Rishi Dass	\$300,000.00
	Deborah Peake S.C.	\$253,000.00
	Charles Law	\$255,000.00
	Kathleen Mohammed Legal Consultant	\$6,720.00
13.03.2009	Charles Law	\$105,000.00
	Rishi Dass	\$100,000.00
	Deborah Peake S.C.	\$92,000.00
	Darrel Allahar	\$140,000.00
03.06.2009	Charles Law	\$72,956.31
	Darrel Allahar	\$91,229.13
	Deborah Peake S.C.	\$46,000.00
	Rishi Dass	\$440,000.00
Total Sums Paid		\$2,596,905.44

Total sums paid to each individual or entity:

Name of Entity	Total Sum Paid
Kathleen Mohammed	\$6,720.00
Deborah Peake S.C.	\$736,000.00
Darrel Allah	\$781,229.13
Rishi Dass	\$640,000.00
Charles Law	\$432,956.31
Total	\$2,596,905.44

Paid by the former administration to lock up the Member of Parliament for Diego Martin West.

Mr. Warner: “You not shame?”

1.55 p.m.

**Uff Commission of Enquiry
(Minister of Finance)**

76. Dr. Keith Rowley (*Diego Martin West*) asked the hon. Minister of Housing and the Environment:

- (a) With respect to the Uff Commission of Enquiry, could the Minister state the total cost of any and all expenditure incurred (paid or outstanding), in relation to the participation of the Ministry or any agency under its purview to facilitate the said enquiry?
- (b) Could the Minister identify the recipients and state the total sums paid or due for payment to each individual or entity?

The Minister of Housing and the Environment (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. Minister of Finance, the Ministry of Finance per se incurred no expenditure with respect to the Uff Commission of Enquiry since the responsibility for this expenditure lies with the Office of the Prime Minister. However, from the Office of the Prime Minister we can look at the payment to members of the commission.

Professor John Uff:

\$4,560,522.97.

Commissioners

Kenneth Sirju:	\$600,000.00.
Desmond Thornhill:	\$600,000.00.
Israel Khan:	\$600,000.00.

Goods and Services

Payment of Goods and Services:	\$3,281,920.00.
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From the Office of the Prime Minister, therefore, there is a total of \$9,642,443.67.

**Uff Commission of Enquiry
(Minister of Planning, Economic and
Social Restructuring and Gender Affairs)**

77. Dr. Keith Rowley (*Diego Martin West*) asked the hon. Minister of Planning, Economic and Social Restructuring and Gender Affairs:

- (a) With respect to the Uff Commission of Enquiry, could the Minister state the total cost of any and all expenditure incurred (paid or outstanding), in relation to the participation of the Ministry or any agency under its purview to facilitate the said enquiry?
- (b) Could the Minister identify the recipients and state the total sums paid or due for payment to each individual or entity?

The Minister of Housing and the Environment (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the hon. Minister of Planning, Economic, Social Restructuring and Gender Affairs, the expenditure incurred with respect to the Uff Commission related to the UDeCott under the portfolio of the Minister of Planning, Economic, Social Restructuring and Gender Affairs. UDeCott falls, of course, as an entity under the purview of that Ministry and I would just like to read into the record the data.

Commission of Enquiry Fees for the Period 2008—2010:

Mr. Stuart Young:	\$1,973,400.00.
Mr. Frank Solomon SC/ Devesh Maharaj & Associates:	\$15,506,665.05.
Mr. Andrew Goddard:	\$11,002,511.40.

There is an outstanding amount for Mr. Andrew Goddard to the tune of \$2 million. I think you made that point at the speech at the wedding.

Pollonais & Blanc:	\$3,230,004.35.
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Geoffrey Robertson:	\$1,184,333.00.
Kim Franklin:	\$188,505.81.

A grand total for UDeCott of \$33,085,389.61.

For the benefit of the Member and the public, the grand total for the Uff Commission of Enquiry which we have, based upon all the presentations today, would be \$46,235,586.74 of taxpayers' money.

ANTI-TERRORISM (AMDT.) BILL

Bill to amend the Anti-Terrorism Act, Chap. 12:07 [*The Minister of National Security*]; read the first time.

PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES (IMPACS) ORDER

The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Hon. Dr. Surujrattan Rambachan): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

Whereas it is provided by section 9 of the Privileges and Immunities (Diplomatic, Consular and International Organisations) Act, Chap. 17:01 (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") that the President may by order declare that any international or regional organization or agency named or described in such Order shall, to such extent as specified in the Order, be accorded certain privileges and immunities;

And whereas it is also provided by section 9 of the Act that every Order made under that section shall be subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament;

And whereas the President has on the 15th day of February, 2011 made the Privileges and Immunities [CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS)] Order, 2011;

And whereas it is expedient that the Order now be affirmed;

Be it resolved that the Privileges and Immunities [CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) Order, 2011 be approved.

Mr. Speaker, this is the matter before the House, the Privileges and Immunities (IMPACS) Order, or what is normally called "The Order". It is described as the Privileges and Immunities (IMPACS) Order, subsidiary legislation made in accordance with section 9(2) of the Privileges and Immunities (Diplomatic Consular and International Organisations) Act, the primary legislation.

IMPACS refers to the CARICOM Implementation Agencies for Crime and Security, a regional institution established in 2006 that is charged with the advising on and implementing of the region's security agenda. Just for the information of this honourable House, the overall budget of IMPACS is US \$8.7 million, of which Trinidad and Tobago contributes US \$2.1 million or approximately 25 per cent.

Just for the information of this honourable House, IMPACS is one of several organizations both in the Caricom region and internationally towards which Trinidad and Tobago makes substantial contributions.

For example, for the 2011 financial year, the contribution to the Caribbean Community Secretariat, Caricom, will be \$32,506,000; to the Association of Caribbean States which we host in this country—\$2,850,000; to a Grenada Consular and Trade Office, which is housed in Trinidad and Tobago and which serves Grenada—\$444,000 annually. Then Trinidad and Tobago also contributes to certain Commonwealth bodies: the Commonwealth Secretariat—\$1,852,000, that is the budget for 2011; the Commonwealth Foundation, this year—\$395,000 and for a number of UN organizations Trinidad and Tobago also makes substantial contributions. For example, for the United Nations Regular Budget and Working Capital Fund, the allocation for 2011 is \$6,561,700, of which \$4.2 million has already been paid; the United Nations Programme of Assistance and Exchange in the field of International Law—\$65,000; United Nations Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, what is called ECLAC—\$1,360,380; United Nations Peacekeeping Operations—\$4.2 million; International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, this year the allocation is \$49,800; International Criminal Tribunals—\$505,000; the International Criminal Court—\$600,000; Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons—\$300,000; Trust Fund in support of Special Missions and other Activities related to Preventative Diplomacy and Peacekeeping—\$100,000; The United National Information Centre, the rental of office space—\$763,200; United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund which is remitted through the permanent mission to the United Nations, New York—\$268,000.

I give you all these figures because I think it is important to know that Trinidad and Tobago makes substantial contributions to all of these international organizations, so that we can locate the discussion on IMPACS within all of this. The Caricom Single Market and Economy Secretariat—\$4,100,000 allocated this year; Trinidad and Tobago Venezuela Steering Committee—\$100,000. And other transfers abroad: the ACP Secretariat budget—\$1.7 million; Latin America

Economic System or SELA—\$148,600; Pan American Union, the regular budget of the OAS—\$819,000; Inter-American Council for Integral Development, Special Multilateral Fund—\$200,000. As I said, I give you these figures to locate the discussion so that we understand that when we spend money in this way, we also wish to have some kind of results and some kind of benefit, and this is why we have been talking about value for diplomacy in terms of our approach.

We are here discussing, therefore, the Caricom IMPACS Privileges and Immunities Order, and within recent times issues concerning crime and security have gained increasing prominence in the Caribbean. Vulnerability to security threats affects the peace, physical and psychological safety which people need to have in any country. Geography has also increased the vulnerability of the Caribbean as a whole. Why? We are small-island states spread over a large maritime region, and are therefore exposed to numerous threats. The threats are well known to all of us. The threats include: drugs and arms trafficking; serious organized crime; murders; kidnapping; counterfeiting; public safety and terrorism; human trafficking; illegal and irregular migration; financial and electronic crime; criminal deportees and corruption.

It is well known that among the threats to our nation's security that I have listed, drugs and arms trafficking, as well as organized crime, have become a plague in the Caribbean, not just in Trinidad and Tobago but in the Caribbean, given our location, given our vulnerability, our nexus to the Latin American region. The stability of our society and that of the region has been severely undermined also by the use of small arms, light and larger conventional weapons. Though we in Trinidad and Tobago are not producers of arms and ammunition, yet the Caribbean and this part of the world have been hit very seriously and suffer very, very seriously because of the trade in illegal firearms, small arms, in particular.

Armed violence limits the delivery of public services and takes away from security, human rights, social and economic development. In fact, armed violence undercuts investment in economic and social capital, and one need not remind all of us about the scenes we see on a daily basis where the use of arms brings about destruction to families, to family life and to communities.

In 2007, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank gave a very interesting estimate that said that if Jamaica were to reduce its rates of homicide to the level of Costa Rica, the country will see an increase in its growth rate of 5.4 per cent annually. That is why we in Trinidad and Tobago, the People's

Partnership Government, are relentlessly pursuing the battle against crime, because if we can bring the rates of homicide down, we will affect the growth rate of this country.

Specifically, it has been noted that in the region the effects of small and light weapons would result in declining economic activity and diminished trade and investment due to the level of violence. We all know that. People do not want to come to a country where they feel insecure or where they have to look over their shoulders. Therefore, it is imperative that we support organizations like IMPACS in terms of the work that IMPACS is doing, in order to bring a greater degree of security, not just for Trinidad and Tobago, but for the region as a whole. We must speak more of regional security rather than simply of country security.

2.10 p.m.

We must speak about neighbourhood security in the sense of the region rather than simply about village security. We must speak country security, yes, but the country is part of a region, and once one part of the region is affected the entire set of countries is going to be affected. Therefore, we have to look at this in terms of the paradigm of a neighborhood for security.

Secondly, the effects of small and light weapons would result in the disruption of access to health care facilities, to education, and to productive markets. The report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime also noted, that one of the effects of small and light weapons or what is called Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) would result in firearm-related fatal and non-fatal injuries, that over extend healthcare facilities.

In fact, just to give you an idea, there is a report done by Francis Forbes advisor on crime security and liaison at IMPACS in 2011. It is an overview of Caricom Member States strategies to combat the illicit arms trade, and in this report it shows that between 2006 and 2009 in the Caricom Member State 7026 seizures of firearms took place—7026. What is interesting is, the second highest number of seizures took place in Trinidad and Tobago: 1285—that is between 2006 and 2009 with the highest number 482 being seized. In 2009, Jamaica had 2,552 seizures and Suriname 1,089 seizures. It was interesting that small Bahamas had 646 seizures over those four years, and it shows therefore the extent of the problem that in the Caribbean region 7,026 seizures took place.

Our inability and difficulties we have in coping with these threats have increased the pervasiveness also of the gang culture. The Caribbean region has now earned the unenviable title of being the most murderous region in the world.

The most murderous region in the world—Trinidad and Tobago and that is not something anyone takes any delight in saying.

In this 2007 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime UNODC World Bank report entitled: *Crime, Violence, and Development: Trends, Costs, and Policy Options in the Caribbean*, it was stated that the regions high murder rates at 30 per 100,000 population annually are higher than that of any of the regions in the world. I want to say that again, this UNODC World Bank report entitled *Crime, Violence and Development: Trends, Costs and Policy Options in the Caribbean* is a 2007 report. It was stated that the region's high murder rates at 30 per 100,000 population annually are higher than that of any of the regions of the world.

What is even more interesting is that in 2008, 79 per cent of the murders that took place in Trinidad and Tobago were gun-related. In 2007, it was 77 per cent and in 2006 it was 72 per cent, so while it is hovering in the mid-seventies—you know the trend 2006:72, 2007:77, 2008:79—it is something that we ought to be concerned about, very concerned about. And this is why the Caricom region regard the arms trade treaty as one of high importance, and is convinced that an arms trade treaty would reduce considerably the irresponsible trade of conventional arms and ammunitions and consequently the number of cases of diversion of weapons which are commissioned in more than 70 per cent of murders in the region.

Mr. Speaker, the larger Caricom States like Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Guyana are the ones that have been most severely affected by the proliferation of crime. Between 2006 and 2009 Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica accounted, therefore, for 67 per cent of the total illegal firearms seized, and the Bahamas accounted for another 10.2 per cent of the total illegal firearms seized now of the more populated Caricom regions.

As I was saying, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago homicide figures per 1,000 are amongst the highest in the region, and smaller member states such as St. Kitts and Nevis, and Belize have not been spared. The debilitating socio-economic effects of rampant gun violence, and a high incidence of murders committed with firearms. It will shock you to know that during the same 2006/2009 period, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana represented 92 per cent of the 9,315 homicides reported for the region—92 per cent in three countries.

The ramifications of widespread crime are far-reaching. Political boundaries are no deterrent to criminals. Caricom member states are caught in the movement of guns for major source countries such as Europe and the United States. Several

economic and social costs are associated with widespread crime as I mentioned, and I want to say again, including the disincentive to investment and the restriction of social opportunities. By threatening socio-economic development, political stability, the internal and external security of states and the physical and mental security of our people, crimes and criminals do much to reduce the quality of life of those of us who have chosen to be law-abiding members of this society.

In that connection, you will begin to understand why the Government of the People's Partnership is placing so much emphasis on the root cause of some of these problems, which is poor parenting and poor commitment by parents, and by elders in regions to mentor, to guide and take care of young minds in the country. The National Mentorship Programme which was so successfully launched by the Minister of National Security, and General Powell is yet another attempt in order to reach out to those who are falling through the cracks in this society in order to deal with this problem. [*Desk thumping*]

It is instructive, very instructive, that in one of the television stations last night, the question was asked—the night before—the question was asked of the people: “Do you think that the National Mentorship Programme will reduce crime in Trinidad and Tobago?” Over 80 per cent answered yes. [*Desk thumping*] [*Interruption*] It does not matter whether it is a PNM initiative or it is a People's Partnership initiative.

We must learn in this country to rise for Trinidad and Tobago. We must learn in this country [*Desk thumping*] the meaning of the word “national”. We are about to celebrate 50 years of Independence. Fifty years of Independence means that we would have developed a sense of maturity—of mental maturity, of intellectual maturity—that will take us forward now as adults where as adults in a society, we will know that our responsibility is to take care, as good caretakers, of that which we have inherited, to add value to it and to bequeath it to the future—the children of the future—in a better form than we received it, to the sustainability of a great society. [*Desk thumping*]

Hon. Dr. Browne: Would the Minister give way?

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: Mr. Speaker—

Hon. Dr. Browne: In that same spirit would the Minister give way? Thank you for giving way. Mr. Speaker, I was really very impressed by that noble pronouncement from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and I wonder if that same public-mindedness and love for country and patriotism would not have guided those opposite, when they were in Opposition, and refused to attend Independence Day and all other events of State. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, Caricom recognized—[*Interruption*], I just want to say one thing please in response to the noble Member for Deigo Martin Central.

Hon. Sharma:—for the first time in the history of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker: I am not even hearing you properly because of the crosstalk. So I am trying to ask Members to keep it undertone. It is overtoned. Continue.

2.20 p.m.

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: Mr. Speaker, I was saying, last year when the People's Partnership Government came into office, the People's Partnership Government made sure that not only in the towns like Port of Spain and San Fernando was Independence celebrated, but all the villages and regions [*Desk thumping*] were given money in order to celebrate Independence because we know the importance of bringing the entire country together. We know that when a country is united we can win together, but when a country is divided we cannot win. Therefore, we intend to continue to unite this country so that Trinidad and Tobago can be a winner, not only now but into the future. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker, it would be nice if my friends on the opposite side would take off their party symbol and demonstrate their national unity to Trinidad and Tobago. [*Desk thumping*] Caricom recognized that a coordinated regional strategy was urgently required to address security threats that are faced by member states, and the need for systematic coordination is particularly evident with regard to the arms trade.

In a January 2010 Regional Workshop to Advance Action in the Region on Small and Light Weapons, it was noted that the region had problems with: export, import and transit; regulation of possession; storage and accountability; marking, tracing and information sharing; regulations of private security firms; and collaboration with civil society.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to export, import and transit, the following problems plagued the region:

- the lack of a centralized system to audit licensed dealers and brokers;
- the need for regulations to ensure dealers and brokers submit biannual reports.

I am just showing you how open the system is, and subject to corruption and manipulation.

It also showed that one of the problems plaguing the region with regard to export, import and transit was the need for ballistic recording to address the problem of renting or loaning of licensed firearms. We know the situation has been widespread, and said that firearms belonging to police officers have been rented out. That has been something reported over and over in the media.

With respect to regulation and possession, it has been noted that it is difficult to negotiate regulatory systems and frameworks in multilateral forums, owing to the wide variation in national standards on civilian possession.

With respect to the marking, tracing and information sharing, there are insufficient controls for marking and tracing of imported firearms. All of this is true.

With respect to regulation of private security firms, in the region private security firms are a part of a poorly regulated sector, with little or no oversight and little or no training of private security personnel. Notably, their small arms capabilities are greater than law enforcement in many Caribbean states, and we have known even in Trinidad and Tobago where bandits have walked into firms and taken away—not one or two—several guns and so on. So, therefore, we need regulation of private security firms in the country, in order to make sure that these guns that are placed in their hands for the purposes for which they were formed do not get into the hands of bandits.

With respect to collaboration with civil society, it was highlighted in that report that it was an area that requires a regional response. It is believed, therefore, that effective collaboration between law enforcement agencies and related ministries of national region and international levels would help to identify the challenges and the requirements for advancement.

Mr. Speaker, with all of that in mind, Caricom recognized that the region was in dire need of a robust institution that could address the region's security challenges and threats in a coordinated and systematic manner. IMPACS is that institution. IMPACS, of course, means the Implementation Agency for Crime and Security.

At its 26th Meeting, the Conference of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community agreed to the establishment structure for the crime and security agenda that included, inter alia, an Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, (IMPACS), and it was envisioned that Caribbean IMPACS would be the nerve centre of this management framework and institution of Caricom, with

primary responsibility for implementation of the regional crime and security agenda, and that IMPACS will report directly to the Council of Ministers with responsibility for national security and law enforcement.

So, Mr. Speaker, accordingly, an Intergovernmental Agreement establishing Caricom IMPACS—the Intergovernmental Agreement as an entity—was concluded on July 06, 2006 at Basseterre, St. Kitts and Nevis, by the Caricom Heads of Government, including the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. *[Interruption]*

Dr. Gopeesingh: Mrs. Gopee-Scoon, were you there?

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: Article 2, subsection (3) of the Intergovernmental Agreement stipulates that the headquarters of IMPACS should be located in the territory of a contracting party to be determined by the contracting parties.

At the 17th Intercessional Conference, Trinidad and Tobago agreed to host the Caricom IMPACS headquarters in Trinidad and Tobago, since it was the successor organization to the regional task force on crime and security, which was also headquartered in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, there is, of course, an agreement between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Caricom Implementation Agency for Crime and Security concerning the headquarters of the Caribbean Implementation Agency for Crime and Security and its privileges and immunities. I must say it is a very important document to read because it defines the relationship between Trinidad and Tobago and IMPACS, and part of what we are discussing here today is the matter of the Privileges and Immunities Order.

Mr. Speaker, Caricom IMPACS has, therefore, been located in Trinidad and Tobago since July of 2006 and is directly responsible for research, monitoring, evaluation, analysis and preparation of background documents and reports, as well as project development of the regional crime and security agenda. That is very important, and that is why I was emphasizing that you cannot talk about crime in one country whether it is Trinidad or Jamaica. You have to talk about regional security; you have to talk about the neighbourhood security, but this time in terms of the Caribbean neighbourhood. *[Interruption]*

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: I am happy to hear those words.

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: Mr. Speaker, Article 9 of the Intergovernmental Agreement establishing Caricom IMPACS requires the contracting parties to accord to IMPACS the status, immunities, exemptions and privileges set out in the

agreement. This obligation was addressed by the conclusion of an agreement, which I just referred to, between the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Caricom Implementation Agency for Crime and Security on the headquarters of the Caribbean Implementation Agency for crime and security and its privileges and its immunities which I will hereby refer to as the Headquarters Agreement. The conclusion of the Headquarters Agreement was insufficient to ensure that the organization has the benefit of the privileges that the Government committed to granting the organization.

Under the laws of Trinidad and Tobago, legislation is required to give legal effect to many of the provisions of the Headquarters Agreement. The Privileges and Immunities (Diplomatic Consular and International Organizations) Act, Chap. 17:01 provides that an Order may be made by the President, granting intergovernmental organizations established by treaty and privileges and immunities, usually granted to international organizations operating in Trinidad and Tobago.

Accordingly, the Privileges and Immunities (Caricom Implementation Agency for Crime and Security) Order, 2011, made under section 9(2) of the Privileges and Immunities (Diplomatic Consular and International Organizations) Act seeks to grant Caricom IMPACS effective from the commencement of its operations in Trinidad and Tobago, privileges and immunities usually enjoyed by international organizations operating in Trinidad and Tobago.

I want to speak, therefore, about the elements of the Order. Section 3 of the Order stipulates that pursuant to clause 2(a) of the Privileges and Immunities Act, IMPACS shall possess such juridical personality and be invested with the status of a body corporate within the meaning of section 37 of the Interpretation Act—and the lawyers would be in a fine position to elucidate on what this means in legal terms.

In conformity with Part I of the Fifth Schedule of the Act, section 4 provides that the headquarters shall be inviolable. Section 5 accords to the IMPACS, its property, funds and assets, immunity from suit and legal process and search; and section 6 recognizes the inviolability of the official archives of IMPACS wherever located. These are some of the privileges and immunities which IMPACS should have, and which is dealt with in this Order which we are discussing here this afternoon.

In accordance with Article 5 of the Headquarters Agreement, section 7 stipulates that in matters relating to communications, IMPACS will enjoy treatment

no less favourable than that accorded to international organizations. I did share with this honourable House the number of international organizations with which Trinidad and Tobago enjoys excellent relationships, and which come under the Immunities and Privileges Act, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Article 9 of the Headquarters Agreement and Part 1 of the Fifth Schedule, IMPACS, section 8 grants IMPACS and its assets and property an exemption from direct taxes except fees for public utilities services and an exemption from customs duties, prohibitions and restrictions on imports in respect of Articles intended for official use.

Section 9 affords IMPACS the right to hold funds of any kind and operate accounts in any currency.

Pursuant to Article 9 of the Headquarters Agreement, on Parts II and IV of the Fifth Schedule, section 10 affords IMPACS and experts performing missions certain privileges and immunities. They include:

- exemption from all forms of direct taxation on salaries and other emoluments paid to them by IMPACS;
- immunities from legal process in respect of words spoken or written, and all acts performed by them in the exercise of their official functions;
- inviolability of all papers, documents and materials related to the work of IMPACS;
- exemption from immigration restrictions and alien registration requirements in respect of their official duties;
- exemption from any national service obligation;
- treatment no less favourable than that accorded to diplomatic offices of comparable rank with respect to exchange control requirements; and finally
- enjoyment of the same protection and repatriation facilities as are accorded officials of comparable rank of diplomatic missions in the event of international disturbances or international conflict.

Mr. Speaker, nationals and permanent residents, though, are not entitled to exemption from all forms of direct taxation on salaries, exemption from immigration restrictions and exemption from any national service obligation, or to

treatment no less favourable than that accorded to diplomatic officials of comparable rank with respect to exchange control requirements. So there is a bit of difference for nationals and permanent residents.

Section 10(5) affords the Executive Director and his family the same privileges and immunities as heads of Diplomatic Missions in Trinidad and Tobago. These privileges and immunities may be modified by written agreement where the director is a national of Trinidad and Tobago; and section 11 provides that the Order should be made retroactive to the commencement of operations in Trinidad and Tobago by Caricom IMPACS. July 06, 2006, incidentally, is the date that Caricom IMPACS began its operations in Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Speaker, I have outlined here the areas where immunities and privileges are granted or should be granted and, as I say, section 11 provides that the Order should be made retroactive to the commencement of operations in Trinidad and Tobago by Caricom IMPACS—that is way back on July 06, 2010. It is nearly five years since Caricom IMPACS commenced operations and this Order has not been approved and what have you.

2.35 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the Caricom Framework for Management of Crime and Security is led by the Caricom Heads of Government. The responsibility for crime and security devolves to the lead Head of Government responsible for crime and security in the Caricom quasi-cabinet which is the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, the hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar. Crime and security are her responsibility in that quasi-cabinet of Caricom.

Our Prime Minister oversees the Council of Ministers responsible for National Security and Law Enforcement which has responsibility for three bodies: The Security Policy Advisory Committee which is called SEPAC—S-E-P-A-C; the Coordinating Information Management Authority (CIMA), and Caricom IMPACS. So, Caricom IMPACS is, in terms of the quasi-cabinet, the responsibility of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago within the Caricom region.

Now, people might be wondering, Mr. Speaker, what does IMPACS do. What do they do? IMPACS carries out the following activities:

1. Implementing actions agreed by the Council of Ministers of National Security or what is called the Council;
2. Advising the Council on the appropriate regional responses to crime and security arrangements on the basis of research and analysis;

3. Mobilizing resources in support of the regional crime and security agenda and negotiation of technical assistance;

And that is very important. So, it liaises with international organizations in order to bring to the region the support, technical support and resources—whether it is human resources or other material or financial resources or equipment—in order to carry out the regional crime and security agenda.

4. Contributing to the development and implementation for the effective representation of Caricom on a regional and international level on matters relating to crime and security.

And that is very important, as I will point out in a short while with relation to matters at the UN, initiatives by the United States, and what have you.

5. Collaborating and coordinating with national and international crime control agencies to determine trends, methodologies and strategies for crime prevention and enhancing security for the Caricom community.

Mr. Speaker, having had the privilege of attending several of the Caricom meetings where the work of IMPACS was discussed, I want to say that IMPACS does make a really major contribution to the region, and perhaps it is an organization whose work has not been publicized, or the effectiveness of whose work has not been made known to the community as it should be made known, especially at a time when regional security is so important, and when we need to have intelligence available to us in order to deal with problems and security problems which are not just regional, but which are global. [*Interruption*] Yes, and which are cross border.

Mr. Speaker, IMPACS is also responsible for the coordination of meetings of five standing committees. They include:

- The Standing Committee of Commissioners of Police;
- The Standing Committee of Military Heads;
- The Standing Committee of Chiefs of Immigration;
- The Standing Committee of Chiefs of Customs; and
- The Standing Committee of Heads of Financial and Intelligence Investigative Units.

IMPACS oversees three subagencies and special departments also. One, the Joint Regional Communications Centre which acts on behalf of individual Caricom

member states for the purpose of pre-screening passengers from air and sea carriers, a very important function.

Dr. Gopeesingh: Advance passenger information.

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: That is right. That is a very important function. So, sometimes this organization will help you to identify people who might be considered to be a risk, in terms of entering your country, or entering an aircraft and deal with that matter even before they get on that aircraft. So, the Joint Regional Communications Centre is a most important subagency of IMPACS because it acts on behalf of individual Caricom member states for the purpose of pre-screening passengers for air and sea craft. That means that millions of people, millions of people coming to the Caribbean are pre-screened. The second subagency: the Regional Intelligence Fusion Centre which provides intelligence to ensure the detection, deterrence and control of crime in the region.

And thirdly, the subagency: the Liaison Office which provides technical support and assistance to IMPACS.

Now, there are many interesting and valuable projects that are undertaken by IMPACS, and I want to spend a few minutes, Mr. Speaker, talking about some of these projects because these projects are valuable to us. The first one I want to speak about is what is called RIBIN—R-I-B-I-N—the Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network. And this was an organization—it is a project—that has been established to combat the illegal trade of weapons. RIBIN seeks to assist those Caricom territories without the forensic technology to identify the fingerprint of the ammunition used in a crime and to record the details on the firearm used. This is intended to boost member states, capacity to identify firearms used by specific gangs with the aim of stamping out the organized trade in illicit small arms and light weapons ammunition. This is a very serious project because we are suffering, even in this country, from trade in small arms, light weapons and ammunition.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when the head of a family gets shot down, it is the women and children who really suffer, and there is a great social burden upon the country and upon the community where such crimes take place. So this is a very important function that is undertaken by IMPACS.

A second programme: under the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) as it is called, this project focuses on drug supply reduction and activities under this project include:

- A human resource capacity assessment of law enforcement and security training institutions in all 15 Caricom Member States.

- An assessment of the forensic capacity of the Member States.
- Training of national points of contact in standardized operating procedures, threat assessment formats and intelligence management.

And this particular project was completed in May 2010 where 22 law enforcement officers were trained in Trinidad and Tobago at the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago facility.

Also, under this European Development Fund—the 9th European Development Fund—there was a project called CISNET: the expansion of Caricom Intelligence Sharing Network and the provision of training in the use of equipment and software for practitioners.

And finally, under this EDF Fund, the 9th EDF Fund, training of law enforcement officials in precursor chemicals and alternative substances identification, to be done in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

And you will accept, Mr. Speaker, that all of these are important projects because, when I started my presentation, I showed that all of these were gaps that affected the regional security and the security of the region. So that, IMPACS has done a needs analysis of what are the needs in the region and they have been developing projects in relation to those needs. So, it is a very focused organization in terms of what it is doing.

Then, there are certain border security projects, such as the Advance Passenger Information System, which is an automated system which seeks to enhance border security over the region by supplying law enforcement officers with data on passengers and crew members, prior to arrival and departure from Caricom member states, and that is very important, extremely important. These activities facilitate the detection of stolen and fraudulent travel documents along with the identification of and monitoring the movement of persons of interest who are considered a high security threat to the safety and security of the region.

Mr. Speaker, the following statistics will surprise you. Between February 01, 2007 and June 30, 2010, over 55 million passengers have been screened both manually and electronically because of the Advance Passenger Information System run by IMPACS in Caricom; 55 million passengers coming in and travelling in Caricom.

That is a stunning number, because it shows you how much work is being done by this project. Why? For our safety. I am saying all of this because I want to re-emphasize that IMPACS is an important organization in the Caricom region.

2.45 p.m.

The advance cargo information system is another security project. It is called ACIS. IMPACS has begun to work on the establishment of the ACIS, which will allow customs authorities to examine in advance documents presented when trading goods, and determine whether any item requires custom intervention. It is a very important thing, the advance cargo information system. It will allow customs authorities to examine in advance documents presented when goods are being traded and determine whether any item requires customs intervention. It is a preventative kind of mode.

ACIS will result, therefore, in the pre-screening of and profiling of cargo, using risk management techniques. Some member states such as Barbados, Dominica, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago already have the capability to receive electronic manifests. Advanced cargo information is now considered integral to the world customs organizations' safe framework of standards as one of the four core elements. The system will assist the region's states in standardizing and harmonizing electronic cargo information requirements to facilitate regional compliance. Use of automated technology will facilitate cooperation between states, other government agencies and international bodies.

In conclusion, IMPACS has been operating in Trinidad and Tobago for almost five years, without the legal protection that the Privileges and Immunities (Diplomatic, Consular and International Organisations) Act, Chap. 17:01 of the Laws of Trinidad and Tobago provides to inter-governmental organizations operating in Trinidad and Tobago. It is therefore important to rectify the situation as soon as possible. The organization has reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that its operation is being adversely affected by the delay in making the Order.

According to the headquarters agreement, the Government, if necessary, can make appropriate administrative arrangements for the remission of refund of taxes paid by IMPACS. However, the Ministry of Finance has been unable to make such refunds to IMPACS in the absence of the Presidential Order setting out the Privileges and Immunities of IMPACS. An efficient and effective IMPACS is fundamental to the collaborative regional strategy to combat local and transnational organized crime and terrorism.

This Government, the People's Partnership Government, is committed to ensuring that IMPACS has a sound foundation upon which it can build an anti-crime and anti-terrorism institutional framework that serves the interest of this

nation and the region. This commitment is founded on the realization that confronting the crime and security challenges, which we currently face in Trinidad and Tobago, requires the implementation of coordinated national as well as regional initiatives designed to achieve well articulated common goals.

We are acutely aware that a successful IMPACS is as good for Trinidad and Tobago as it is for the rest of the region. In the region, we have become victims over time, of porous land and sea borders; inadequately patrolled coastlines; unmanned airstrips; perceptions of increasingly unacceptable levels of corruption and mismanagement in the public sector; and systemic corruption in several security entities.

This Government's steadfast support for regional initiatives intended to arrest and reverse the burgeoning crime in the community was evidenced by the two regional workshops Trinidad and Tobago co-hosted on the negotiations for the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty.

It is noteworthy that, at the second workshop, a representative of Caricom IMPACS highlighted the importance of what is described as the balloon effect and the importance of combatting the balloon effect. What is the balloon effect? The balloon effect occurs when a squeeze by law enforcement in one place causes a bulge in criminal activity in another. When other regions work to implement strategies to reduce and eliminate crime in their jurisdictions, criminal activity in our region will increase unless we strive assiduously and in concert to safeguard our shores.

IMPACS—I referred to this earlier and I said I would come back to it—has warned that under the Merida Initiative, the United States is providing more than US \$1 billion over three years in counternarcotics assistance to Mexico. We have to be concerned about that, because that US \$1 billion includes weapon detection technology, surveillance and intelligence-gathering equipment, helicopters and training for police, prison and military personnel.

It is our duty as lawmakers to ensure that our region does not succumb to the balloon effect as a result of this initiative with Mexico, by ensuring—not only that but others as well—that the domestic legal infrastructure required to buttress our regional anti-crime initiatives and infrastructure is put in place. This is an important point. We must not be victims of the balloon effect and, therefore, we must do that which we have to do in order to be prepared. We must ensure that domestic legal infrastructure of the kind that is required to buttress our regional anti-crime initiatives and infrastructure is put in place.

Approval, therefore, of this Order will ensure that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago puts in place the domestic legal apparatus to enable it to fulfil the international obligations to CARICOM freely assumed when it was agreed to host IMPACS in Trinidad and Tobago. Very importantly also, approval of this Order will signal this Government's continuing commitment to prioritize efforts and activities geared towards the eradication of crime in our society locally, as well as regionally.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to make this presentation to this honourable House, and I beg to move.

Question proposed.

Mrs. Paula Gopee-Scoon (*Point Fortin*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have listened this afternoon to the presentation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who went into great detail about the work of IMPACS. Of course, I am happy to hear about that. Also, he spoke quite a bit on the Arms Trade Treaty and Trinidad and Tobago's response to that and I will attempt to add, as well, to this particular topic. He also went into great detail about the contributions which this Government makes to the international organizations.

As well, I was very happy to hear some talk of neighborhood and the question of regional security and a regional approach to dealing with the matters of crime and security, because those—I am certain that the public is very concerned about this Government's approach to regionalism, having regard to some of the utterances and having regard to some of the actions of the Government over the last 10 months, relating to the Caribbean and in particular to Caricom countries.

I was thrilled, as a matter of fact, to see this on the Order Paper, because I thought, at once we would hear the Government's foreign policy towards the region. I thought, perhaps, the Minister would have seized the opportunity to go into the foreign policy of the Government towards the region, but it is very clear that this Government really does not yet have an articulated position on policy on the Caribbean. That is clear from the Minister's statement today. Really, what you should be addressing is how you want Trinidad and Tobago to be seen and how you want the world to see us.

I want to quote from the *Review of the Foreign Policy of Trinidad and Tobago: Bridging the World to Achieve Vision 2020*, which is a foreign policy document which was prepared by the PNM government, had gone to Cabinet and was ready to be brought to Parliament when the Government came into office. They would do well to look at that and to adopt the policy which was laid down there.

How we saw Trinidad and Tobago and we want the world to see us is as a united, resilient, productive, innovative and prosperous nation, committed to good governance, transparent management of its economic and social resources as a principled member of the global community—I want to highlight the word “principled”—pursuing friendly relations with all countries and peoples, but foremost as an effective, regional leader and I am not sure that that is what we have been seeing since this Government came into office—conducting its relation on the basis of respectful rule of law, the sovereign equality of nations, the non-use of forced dignity and fundamental human rights of all peoples, the awareness of the humanitarian responsibilities of the global community, and much less, I am speaking about the humanitarian responsibility which we owe to the Caribbean.

What I am speaking about is an approach of principled humanitarian leadership in the region and in the world. That is how Trinidad and Tobago is supposed to be seen, principled humanitarian leadership in particular, towards the region and that is a litmus test. The question is: are we truly the leader in the Caribbean? Is our leadership a principled one, and is it humanitarian?

To start, I go straight to the Order, which is before us, the Privileges and Immunities [Caricom Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS)] Order, 2011. Indeed, the Minister would have outlined all of the features of the Order, and I would not repeat what is in there. In fact, I can say that there is nothing untoward that is deserving of any special commentary other than that made by the Minister. I concur. We on this side concur with the contents and the features of the Order. It is consistent with similar documents detailing the privileges and immunities applicable to this agency. A similar document would have been set up for any international organizations that are headquartered in Trinidad and Tobago.

I would say first off that we agree with the details that are given in this Order. The Minister, in his discourse, would have spoken about the Caricom framework for the management of crime and security and where IMPACS fits in it. He spoke about the responsibility being that, of course, of the Caricom Governments, but with the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago having lead responsibility in the quasi-Cabinet. He went in to talk about SEPAC, CIMA and IMPACS being the three bodies which the Council of Ministers for National Security and Law Enforcement would be responsible for. I would not go into any further details; he has done that already.

He spoke about their role of implementation, their advisory role and the fact that they are able to mobilize resources, and their usefulness in representing Caricom on the regional and international level, at that level, on matters relating to crime and security and the importance of the collaboration by IMPACS as well with the international community.

Primarily, IMPACS' role is about security enhancement for the region. I believe he went on to speak also about the subcommittees of police and military heads, customs, et cetera. I will not detail that.

3.00 p.m.

He also spoke about the three sub-agencies of IMPACS, the Joint Regional Communications Centre (JRCC), the Regional Intelligence Fusion Centre and again the liaison office. And I want to add that the work of IMPACS has been tremendous and the unit has been successful thus far in creating for the region a more reliable security network, and generally a safer zone for all of us.

I am very, very, pleased with the work of IMPACS thus far from inception of 2006. Of course, we know why IMPACS was set up, it was, in fact, done in 2006 particularly to deal with the Cricket World Cup 2007 which was about to take place. And what happened after that was that we saw how successful those systems that were introduced for Cricket World Cup 2007 were, and in fact they were a huge success and contributed generally to the hosting of a great tournament and, therefore, this is why Caricom decided to retain many of those security systems and of course, IMPACS. So, IMPACS came on in 2006 and has remained, as well, as part of the enhanced regional security arrangements.

The Minister went on to detail the projects, speaking about the Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network which had been established to combat the illegal trade of weapons. He spoke about the EDF as well and with the focus being on drug supply reduction, speaking about all the human resource courses that they have been involved with, and training of national points of contacts, et cetera. He spoke about the Advance Passenger Information System (APIS), he gave us details about the number of passengers who had passed through APIS, the 55 million passengers.

He also spoke about the Advance Cargo Information System as well and the advantages of that. He perhaps forgot to give us the details about CARIPASS which is also work that is being done, another project that is being done and CARIPASS, as you would know, is where one would use a credit card sized swipe card which has biometric matches of fingerprints and facial recognition technology, and what

it allows for is automated immigration clearance throughout the islands. So, you literally swipe and—you are off the plane, you swipe your card and you are off, so that is one of the other projects that IMPACS is involved with as well.

There are also some other programmes, very, very important programmes, which he neglected to detail and I am sure there are too many and it is no fault of his, but certainly they have been involved in building relationships and partnering with a lot of international agencies and also countries as well. There has been an attraction of some TT \$12 million from the Anti-Crime Capacity Building Programme of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. That project is to run for three years and then, of course, there is the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) which was agreed on coming out of the Fifth Summit of the Americas where the President announced a US \$40 million assistance programme where Caricom is expected to take advantage of those resources and other technical assistance available to them from the US.

Also in January 2011 there was the signing of an MOU between IMPACS and Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) which would see those bodies working together on the issues of financial crime. And also there would be a further collaboration and a three-year accreditation programme for Caricom and CFATF in this region. So that generally there has been a lot of assistance from Canada and from the UK and also from the USA to IMPACS that really shows the relevance of IMPACS in the region as well. So, I would say that their work again has been extremely progressive. I am very pleased with that.

Yes, the Minister also spoke about the Headquarters Agreement which was signed. Though IMPACS had been established in 2006, Mr. Speaker, the headquarters agreement was signed in July 2009, between the agency and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. I signed in the capacity as Minister of Foreign Affairs on behalf of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and the executive director of IMPACS, Ms. Lynne Anne Williams, signed on behalf of the agency.

The feature address was given by Ms. Williams and she spoke of the work of IMPACS and in particular she took the time to thank the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for giving IMPACS its home and, in fact, she lauded the efforts of all the governments of the Caribbean for supporting the regional crime effort recognizing, of course, that no one country can do it on its own given especially the geographical positioning of the islands and, of course, our inherent vulnerabilities.

So that I would want to say, Mr. Speaker, had it not been for our government's commitment, generosity and leadership position in the Caribbean, none of this perhaps would have been possible and we gave our commitment to being the host country for IMPACS and we saw it through to the end [*Desk thumping*] which is this—and I have to say that this is inconsistent with the position of the UNC where in fact they lobbied, argued and committed to being the host for the Caribbean Court of Justice and to this date they really have not lived up to their commitments towards the Caribbean Court of Justice. There is certainly a difference in the leadership here where we undertook something, we stood by it and saw it through to the end.

Recognize, of course, Mr. Speaker, that all of these security developments which have taken place within Caricom would have taken place under the leadership of Trinidad and Tobago as lead head responsible for crime and security under the guidance of Prime Minister Patrick Manning who has been there for a number of years, but certainly under the People's National Movement administration government. We were the ones responsible for the status of crime and security in the region and all of the developments which have taken place. Indeed, IMPACS employs as well a number of persons, we are talking about 80 persons among IMPACS' and its subregional agencies and those people contribute to the economy of Trinidad and Tobago as well.

Mr. Speaker, you and all of us in the House would be familiar with the pillars of CARICOM being trade and economic integration, foreign policy relations and functional cooperation. The fourth pillar was added in 2006 and that fourth pillar is the matter of security, and it is from there that this new architecture to manage the region's crime and security agenda was developed. And let us accept that this question of security—I would agree with the Member for Tabaquite that the issues of crime and security have been and will continue to be of increasing importance to us in the region, and organizations like IMPACS are absolutely vital if we are to deal with the illicit drug trade, the proliferation of illegal firearms, issues of money laundering, corruption, criminal deportees and, of course, the continuing threat of terrorism.

The effects are really far-reaching and I will agree, because the Minister spoke about it affects our ability to make progress, it impedes even our sustainability and I am speaking about economic and otherwise. So that I would want to agree that a coordinated regional response is absolutely necessary, but also it must be under the guidance of responsible and sincere leadership. I am not sure that I have seen sincere leadership by this Government when it comes to the region.

3.10 p.m.

Thus far, I would want to say that there have been fundamental shifts in the glimmers of foreign policy towards the region; shifts from the positions adopted by our government when we were in office. The shifts have been significant within the 10 months that they have been in office. Quite frankly, I am wholly committed to the Caribbean and Caricom and this Opposition is also very much committed to the Caribbean and Caricom.

Just as an aside, I was quite happy to see, this week, the visit by the hon. Minister with responsibility for trade in Jamaica, Mr. Samuda, and this augurs well for the progressive interaction in the interest of the business community. I look forward to continuing exchanges and sorting out of the differences that have been holding us back and some advancement towards pushing through the cobwebs of bureaucracy that exist with regard to Caricom and some of the individual governments.

I am very happy about those kinds of forward-thinking moves, but I am concerned about the fundamental shifts that we have seen in foreign policy towards the region by this Government. I am not too sure they take their responsibility toward Caricom as seriously as we would have done in government.

When we attended Caricom meetings, we attended the entire meetings. We took that responsibility seriously. I am not sure, but even for the last intercessional that was held in, I believe, Guyana, the Prime Minister of this country, who has lead responsibility for crime and security, attended for only one day, which is quite contrary to her attendance at meetings and other things outside of Caricom. Those have been quite extensive: nine days to London and Wales; seven days to Washington; and, when it comes to Caricom, at the last intercessional, one day, to return to the Skinner Park calypso semi-finals, which was an occasion of boos and booze. I am not sure; I really question the commitment of this Government to the Caricom meetings.

You would realize that our attendance, Member for Tabaquite and Minister of Foreign Affairs—you need only go through the information from the meetings that we have attended and you will see the kind of responsibility we undertook when we attended those meetings. The Prime Minister would, normally, as lead head, begin with some sort of intelligent assessment given by the Director of the Regional Fusion Centre and then perhaps IMPACS would have been invited, as the agency with responsibility for crime and security, to give critical updates on major elements of the crime and security agenda. Then, he too would have taken

the time to respond seriously to a number of areas, including gang violence, deportees and the myriad of activities undertaken by this Government as having the responsibility for crime and security. I want you to note the serious approach we took when we were in office.

You spoke volumes about the Arms Trade Treaty, recognizing that the proliferation of small arms and ammunition presents a drastic threat to public safety. We, the Opposition, share this view and see it as a priority; but I am not sure that you really do because, by your actions, it is almost inconceivable that you are really serious about the whole question of the entry of arms and ammunition. This is especially so when a statement coming from the Member for Siparia was that crime should be fought on land and not on the sea. This statement is totally oblivious to the fact that there are already weapons, arms and ammunition coming into Trinidad and Tobago through our porous borders and jagged coastlines.

There seems to be an obvious disconnect in saying that you support this treaty with the intensity with which you spoke today and, at the same time, not going ahead with the various avenues that you can assist in the control of the entry of arms and ammunition into Trinidad and Tobago. I am not sure that you really have the political will to address this whole question of the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons.

We see that Caricom as a body has taken regional initiatives to address this scourge and IMPACS has a serious role here. We see this joint engagement of all the countries as very critical but my question is: is this Government truly committed to Caricom? This is especially so when it reneges on all the arrangements—I can be corrected on this one. For instance, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago had undertaken to provide radar facilities for Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and I know that your initial response was no.

This gave way to the whole question and comments about Trinidad and Tobago not being an ATM card. I am not certain whether subsequently you reversed your decision on that, but this causes me to really question your commitments to crime and security in the region. This is especially so when you abruptly took a decision to sever a government-to-government contract which was in place for the provision of the offshore patrol vessels, without any preliminary dialogue at all. This was to have benefited not only Trinidad and Tobago but also the Caribbean, in particular the Eastern Caribbean.

These are some of the difficulties that I have with your thinking and I am concerned generally about the relations of Trinidad and Tobago and the rest of the

Caribbean territories. I am not going to articulate the kind of comments that came after Hurricane Tomas, but we know that the relations with some of the countries are strained.

Hon. Member: Not with Trinidad.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: There is a reason why you could not enter St. Vincent to appear to assist with relief after Hurricane Tomas. It was because your Government was not allowed.

I met recently, on a flight back to Trinidad and Tobago, a member of government of one of the Eastern Caribbean islands, who told me he was just from a meeting where they were considering shifting their importation of products from Trinidad and Tobago to perhaps Central American countries. You see the result of the strained relationships created by this Government—a changed position from when the PNM was in power.

Coming back to the whole question of crime and security, I am with you on that. I hope that the Government realizes that the drug culture is worsening; that gang conflicts are increasing and banditry and crime are on the rise. As the Minister himself said, there is an increasing threat to sustainable development and peace. With that in mind, is this Government really serious about its information and intelligence systems? We all know the repercussions of not having this in place. As a matter of fact, one would look at the millennium development goals and see that there will be great hindrances to achieving these goals if this Government really is not serious and in sync with the Caribbean on the whole question of crime and security.

You have voiced a lot of support today, Member for Tabaquite, but I am not sure that you really mean a lot of the things you say. I would want, as I finish, to speak, in particular, to the Arms Trade Treaty. I want to say that we in the Opposition are fully committed to a framework that seeks to deal with this matter and all its concurrent activities. We support the conclusion of the Arms Trade Treaty as well. We have always been articulating this at the UN fora from as far back as—I have the details for 2006 onwards, but certainly Trinidad and Tobago has taken a firm position with regard to matters of small arms, light weapons, ammunition and armed violence.

We have always spoken on it at the UN, as well, and generally, while there is Caricom representation at the UN, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica, I would tell you, are the very active ones in support of the Arms Trade Treaty and all the

matters emanating from it. We have been very active in the first committee and this has been—as I said, I can only speak about the data before me from 2006 onward.

Mr. Speaker, I started off by expressing my disappointment that the Minister did not choose the occasion of the Order to articulate its foreign policy position towards Caricom. You are concerned, I know, Member for Diego Martin West, as to whether there is one and I did have a look at the Pillar 7 in the Prosperity For All Manifesto by the UNC-plus. What they vowed to do is to work in concentric circles, beginning with Caricom, into an increasingly connected and interdependent world to secure space and opportunity to our country and region.

Certainly I would want to say: concentric circles? They have been going in circles with regard to foreign policy in the Caribbean. We have been going in circles with regard to foreign policy in the Caribbean. They went on to call for a new foreign policy approach, but we are yet to be given any details of this and what is in it for us. I did not want to go there again. I think that the country has beaten them enough on that.

3.25 p.m.

On Caricom, they said that they would reengage fully with the regional integration process; contribute to the strengthening of the overall Caricom framework. We have not really seen that. They vowed to appoint a special envoy ambassador to Caricom. Well there is one appointed but I really could not tell you of any work done by this special envoy to Caricom appointed by the UNC Government. That is as far as it goes with regard to foreign policy and the UNC plus Government.

And I would like to show you an extract, Mr. Speaker, from “Positioning Trinidad and Tobago for the global age 2000-2020”—[*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Browne: A UNC mindless Government.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: A vision presented by the political leader on January 23, 2000, at the PNM convention on the 44th Anniversary of the party winning its first general election. And this is what we had to say about our Caricom position, as a party. And it is, Mr. Speaker, that “the PNM reiterates its commitment to Caribbean cooperation and integration as an important part of our approach to foreign policy.” Very clearly articulated! [*Crosstalk*] and that we acknowledge that the—[*Interruption*] Mr. Speaker, can I have your protection from the Member for La Horquetta/Talparo please. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Member: No, no, no, no.

Mr. Speaker: Member, I have myself noticed. I know that you are probably a little agitated, but allow the Member for Point Fortin to speak with your full attention. Continue Member.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I continue to quote from this document that:

“We acknowledge that the future viability of each Caribbean territory is linked intimately with the viability of the entire region.

The imperative for Caribbean cooperation and integration is determined by the social and cultural realities born out of our common historical past. Caricom is our nation’s second largest export market; a market that is growing in scale, scope and importance.

And while member states of Caricom continue to guard their individual sovereignties, the industrialized countries have formed powerful regional blocks.”

And that is a fact, noting what has happened with the European Union where they had moved to one economy and one market and introduced one currency. “Therefore making it imperative that we come together to maximize our competitiveness in the global economy.”

These were the kinds of statements that we were articulating as a party. And again we spoke of the economies of the constituent territories being disjointed and therefore requiring new initiatives within Caricom, so that these economies may flourish.

We went on to say that;

“the development of Trinidad and Tobago is intimately tied up with the development of Caricom and henceforth as we pursue our developmental objectives we will do so not in isolation but at the same time take the developmental objective of Caricom countries into account.”

And that was documented, an unselfish developmental objective for Trinidad and Tobago towards Caricom.

And it went on to say that:

“the PNM intends to play a greater part in Caricom and to exert a leadership role in this important body. The PNM asserts that in the conduct of its foreign

policy, Caricom must assume an ever more important place since it redounds to the mutual benefit of all the partners especially Trinidad and Tobago. Important sectors for rapid regional integration include exploration of marine space, exploration of the marine living resources of the sea, preservation of marine environment and the promotion of external trade in specified goods selected services and ideas.”

So that they were very, very clearly articulated policies by the PNM towards Caricom. But, Mr. Speaker, it did not start in 2000, and I will not give too much details but this started from 1962. And I can perhaps refer to “Forged from the love of liberty Selected Speeches of Dr. Eric Williams—as you know, Dr. Eric Williams was also the Minister with responsibility for external affairs. So that there were clearly documented ways in which Trinidad and Tobago approached its relations with other states, external to Trinidad and Tobago but in particular to Caricom.

And I would just want to, perhaps, read a bit from this, Mr. Speaker, so that you would understand the important role. Trinidad and Tobago undertook its role of leadership in a very, very serious manner. And I am reading from one particular speech, *the Caribbean*, and it says:

“With independence Trinidad and Tobago entered a commitment to work for closer association between the diverse states of the Caribbean. The goal was a Caribbean Economic Community and towards this end, Dr. Williams devoted considerable energies as Trinidad and Tobago’s first Minister for External affairs.”

And then our next move towards the achievement of a Caribbean economic community was to organize what had come to be called the Conference of Heads of Governments of Commonwealth Caribbean countries. And towards that, Dr. Williams said that he cleared the way personally for this by private and informal discussions with the Prime Minister of Jamaica and the premiers of Barbados and British Guiana. And the first conference was held in Port of Spain in July 1963. And there it was our commitment to Caricom and its development, it started from then, with the formation of the Caribbean Community Treaty.

Dr. Williams went on to say that the break-up of the Federation, the first step taken by Trinidad and Tobago on the authority of the then Cabinet, was an attempt to pick up the pieces and the most important initiative that emerged, and there were others, it came from Trinidad and Tobago, and what emanated was the eight conference which produced the Caribbean Community Treaty and the Georgetown Accord.

Again the PNM under, the stewardship of Dr. Eric Williams being one of the initiators of the Caribbean Community Treaty and we would know that the Georgetown Accord and the Community Treaty provided for: a common market, the harmonization of fiscal incentives for the Caribbean Investment Corporation, a double taxation treaty.

As well, the Treaty also provided for the standing committees for ministers in various fields: health, labour, foreign affairs, finance, et cetera. And within that treaty there would have been fully integrated into the entire scheme the Caribbean Development Bank, the Caribbean Investment Corporation, the West Indies Associated States Council of Ministers, the Council of Legal Education, the University of the West Indies, the University of Guyana as well. So I need not go further but it serves to highlight Trinidad and Tobago's very serious commitment in the early days to the Caribbean community being one, treated as one, being seen as one.

And even today, Mr. Speaker, we come to the draft foreign policy which I made reference to earlier when I began speaking, bridging the world to achieve vision 2020. We were very, very clear on our position with regard to Caricom and in particular with regard to security diplomacy. Our recommendations were very, very clear that the rise of multi-dimensional security issues calls for multilateral efforts at co-operation. Trinidad and Tobago must continue to subscribe to policies of co-operation at subregional, regional and global levels in addition to the national level. That is our commitment. And that since Trinidad and Tobago holds the security portfolio within Caricom, Trinidad and Tobago must not only be mindful of its domestic responsibilities in this area but must also promote initiatives that secure the region as a whole bearing in mind that regional resources are scarce and national capabilities are weak.

3.35 p.m.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this was a very strong position on regionalism, articulated by the then government of Trinidad and Tobago under the PNM administration when I was in office. We articulated therein as well that our stated position was to continue playing a leading and proactive role in developing and participating in anti-crime initiatives, in cooperation with Caricom, with developed country partners and with the broader region and hemisphere.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, the Opposition stated in that foreign policy document that Caricom is central to Trinidad and Tobago in economic as well as security matters, but the fact is that intra-Caricom relationships are founded more on social

and cultural ties and simple instrumental calculations and, therefore, we looked at Caricom as being conceived as one single domestic space, and that we would continue to contribute toward the strengthening of regional integration.

That is our clearly articulated foreign policy position with regard to Caricom, the region and with regard, in particular, to issues of security. I am not sure what the People's Partnership Government—or the UNC-plus or whatever you choose to call them—policy is toward Caricom. I would like to think that it is not limited to what I read for you from the manifesto or the sorts of signals that we have been getting from them within the last 10 months.

As you know and, indeed, the public knows that there have been tremendous international relations faux pax and errors—[*Crosstalk*—tragedies, my colleague the Member for Diego Martin Central, chooses to call them—by this Government over the short period that they have governed this great country.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

Motion made, That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Hon. C. Sharma*]

Question put and agreed to.

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and also to my colleagues on both sides of this august Chamber. [*Crosstalk*]

Mr. Sharma: And what about me?

Mrs. P. Gopee-Scoon: And the Member for Fyzabad. [*Desk thumping*] I was speaking to the numerous errors which have been made by this Government in the conduct of its relations with the international community and, more specifically, with Caricom and our Caribbean neighbours. I would say that there is no point in detailing all of these since they are well known, but some of them are of tremendous concern to me, and I will give you a few instances, and this one has not been talked about too much since they have come into office.

One matter that is certainly of concern to me is the position which the Government took, when it was in Opposition, toward the Delimitation Treaty which had been signed between the governments of Grenada and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago settling the maritime boundaries for the two countries and paving the way for the development of the resources of the EEC and the

continental shelf appertaining to these two coastal states. As you know, Mr. Speaker, that was an obligation under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

So, it is not a question of any country's right or so or nothing to be discussed or debated. This is a right under the United Nations Convention, and there it is the comment from this Government by the Member for Siparia, speaking on behalf of the then Opposition—she was the Leader of the Opposition then—was calling on this government to cease and desist from signing the agreement. This would have been contrary to the United Nations policy.

We find this really ludicrous and we really question their concern for the rest of the Caribbean. Clearly, they did not want Grenada to have what they are entitled to. So, again, it is either that they do not understand what the law is, or they were just being irresponsible, or they just lack leadership when it comes to matters of Caricom and the region. So that is one of the instances to cease and desist the signing of the agreement. That was the call from the Opposition at that time.

Of course, the other which is quite notable, and which I spoke of, was the CCJ and the treatment by the UNC on this issue which is, indeed, very shameful where the very same UNC Cabinet in 2001, agreed to signing the agreement establishing the CCJ and the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. At that time, they said also that they would lobby to be the seat of the court, and in so doing they assured their Caribbean colleagues of the commitment of Trinidad and Tobago toward the CCJ.

Today, I want to ask the question to this very same UNC Government, UNC-plus Government, where is this commitment which it gave in 2001? [*Desk thumping*] Is this a sign of their position and their commitment to regional integration that the Minister has espoused today. I would leave that question to be answered by them as to really what is their true commitment toward the CCJ and to regional integration as well.

Again, another instance, and I am not sure if I spoke of it, is that just a few weeks ago we had the visit here—I suppose it was a private visit to the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago—by Sen. The Hon. Alan Chastanet, the Minister with the responsibility for Tourism and Transport in St. Lucia. Coming out of that, there appeared to be some statement by that minister and this Government, and that Minister endorsing on behalf of the government of St. Lucia the support for Caribbean Airlines as a regional airline and, certainly, the airline for transport into St. Lucia.

Whilst I was very happy to hear of that, because it means increased business for Caribbean Airlines—and, certainly, St. Lucia/Trinidad and Tobago is a profitable route—what I would have expected from this Government is that they should have probably guided and, perhaps, waited to give a more whole Caricom approach statement towards air transport in the region. I got the impression that they were getting involved in regional politics with regard to airlines.

What I wanted to hear from them is that they would be responsible enough to undertake not only the profitable routes but the unprofitable ones, even if they were going to see themselves as a competitor to Liat. So, I would have expected a statement that would say that they would be willing to undertake all of the routes; in fact, a whole Caricom approach even for the unprofitable routes into, let us say, Kawan and Anguilla and so on. I know those would be unprofitable routes. I remember going into Carriacou on a 19-seater Liat aircraft, and there are reasons why they would only use a 19-seater. So, again, I expected a different kind of statement coming from this Government if they are seeing themselves as really a leader, even in the area of transport into Caricom.

I spoke earlier about this matter and I would repeat it again. I was very disappointed at the attendance at the last intercessional, where I know the Prime Minister attended for only one day. We would have had representation for the rest of the meeting—one day for a very serious meeting on matters of the region when, in fact, the Prime Minister on the trip to London and Wales took nine days, and the more recent one to Washington, six days.

I want to say publicly that I really despise the sort of statements which come from the Government after these trips; a lot of senseless padding and it is really appalling. [*Desk thumping*] I think the people of Trinidad and Tobago must not accept that. Seven days on a trip which was only described as a very important OAS meeting and, really, at that meeting, I believe there was only one leader of government from any nation present at that meeting, I am told, and the Minister may wish to clarify that. The only leader present was the leader of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, and no other leaders were there. That is what the Prime Minister left this country to do.

There are things that you just decline. Perhaps you may have someone read a statement on your behalf, but this did not take place, but seven days to make a statement with no other leaders present—no one of your ilk—and also to then attend meetings with two thinktanks; the Brookings Institute, which I think is really caught up with the business of public policy and then, of course, the Woodrow Wilson Institute as well.

I really do not know what the high point of this trip was, and then it just happened that the ex-president of Brazil was there and so they met for a meeting. Naturally, if you are visiting the OAS, you would talk to the head of the OAS as well. Generally, I would say this was a wasted trip and I would like to see the full attendance of the Prime Minister and her delegation at the full meeting of Caricom rather than wasting the moneys of the Treasury on these senseless trips abroad.

So, generally, I would wish to close at this time but, in so doing [*Desk thumping*] I would want to say that we, in fact, approve the Order that we have come here today to approve, but my disappointment is in not hearing clearly articulated, well-defined foreign policy by this Government toward the region. This would have been an opportunity for them to espouse this in a very significant way, and especially having regard to the differences that have been coming from them within the last 10 months whilst they were in office. So, again, we approve the Order which we have come here to deal with today.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Works and Transport (Hon. Jack Warner): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The matter before the House today is the Privileges and Immunities [Caricom Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS)] Order, which we have brought before Members here. I sat here for over 50 minutes listening to the last speaker, the Member for Point Fortin, talking about the Privileges and Immunities [Caricom Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS)] Order. I must confess that the Member has not made a single impact on this House. [*Laughter*]

Dr. Moonilal: And abused the privileges of this House.

Hon. J. Warner: For 50 minutes, we sat here listening to some political trivia, and if that is not an abuse of the privileges in this House, I do not know what is.

Dr. Moonilal: And they are not immune to that.

3.50 p.m.

Hon. J. Warner: No impact whatsoever! And what compounds it further, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Point Fortin was the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the last government.

The Member is quoted as saying, the public is concerned about this Government's approach to regionalism. The Member is not happy over this Government's foreign policy towards the region. I ask the question, you were the Minister of Foreign Affairs for several years, after having been the fourth selectee in Point Fortin constituency—they picked four before you—you were the fifth, and then, of course, you got the nod from the great one. The fifth selectee nosed through as foreign minister, Member of Point Fortin, I ask you, what have you done? What is your legacy before you hugged Obama? [*Desk thumping and Laughter*] What did you do as Minister of Foreign Affairs? What was your government's foreign policy? And after you hugged Obama, what was it?—zero—nothing. And you come here today to pontificate on this Government's foreign policy.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point that we have to understand sometimes where we must not tread, and if I were the Member for Point Fortin, and having been the Minister of Foreign affairs, I would have never gone there. The Member for Point Fortin said, "Vision 2020 is a foreign policy document."

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: No, no, no, I never said that. Get the *Hansard*.

Hon. J. Warner: The Member said, I quote here, "Vision 2020 is a foreign policy document of the PNM government." Mr. Speaker, but the PNM was rejected by the electorate, and therefore, if the electorate rejected the PNM they rejected Vision 2020. Of what relevance is that in this House? So therefore, I ask, the government was rejected—so today you have no partner to your left, none to your right—and therefore, I am asking you, if you are rejected, your Vision 2020 has also been rejected? And I will tell you something too, Mr. Speaker, four years from now, that will be the same fate of the last speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have also been accused on this side of not having principled leadership. And the question was asked: are we truly the leaders of the Caribbean? And I say to you today, yes, we are; yes, we are. [*Desk thumping*] In fact, I ask the question, since the Member for Point Fortin is so au courant with principled leadership, where is the principled leadership in the PNM? Where is it? Where is it? In fact, I ask the question, what does the Member for Point Fortin know about principled leadership? Is it, of course, unprincipled when a Member of your party is hugging another Member on this side? What do you know about principled leadership? And we are accused of not having principled leadership. I ask the question: what do you know about principled leadership?

Mr. Speaker, then the Member went on to outline all that the Member for Tabaquite had said, and she spent about 15 to 20 minutes telling us all that the Member for Tabaquite had said. We were here you know, we were here. We listened to him too. We did not ask you to regurgitate all he said. We were here and we listened to him even more avidly than you did. So therefore there was no point in spending 20 minutes telling us all that he said.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I make the point and I always say, if you have nothing to say, say nothing. [*Interruption*] You could have simply ended, or began, as you had ended: I beg to move—and that was all. Furthermore, I ask the question: why was the IMPACS Order referred to as often as the Member for Point Fortin did, Mr. Speaker, and not telling us what her government did when this was passed in July, 2006? July 2006, this was introduced—I ask the question, Mr. Speaker, tell us, of course, what they did? And, in fact, at the same time too, tell us about the Brian Lara Stadium and save us the ordeal of another forensic enquiry. The last speaker—the Member for Point Fortin said, I quote, “I signed the headquarters agreement in 2009”, and I ask the question: what did you do after that?

Mr. Speaker, the agreement was insufficient to ensure that the organization has the benefit of the privileges that the Government committed to granting that organization. Under our laws, when you sign that agreement, you have to pass more legislation to give legal effect to many of the provisions in the agreement. What did you do after you signed the agreement? Did you pass any laws to give effect to the provisions in the agreement? What did you do? And you come here today to spend time telling us, of course, about you signed the agreement in 2009. Yes, you did and then after that what? After that what?

Mr. Speaker, more importantly, the Member for Point Fortin said that what is being said by the Member for Tabaquite is inconsistent with the UNC and the Caribbean Court of Justice—what we are doing is inconsistent, she says. I want to make the point that we are being criticized because the UNC, we are advised, supported the Caribbean Court of Justice and when we became the Government, we did not support it. Mr. Speaker, the UNC may or may not have supported the Caribbean Court of Justice. And, Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that we did on that side. When we came here as a People’s Partnership Government, the UNC is bound to take into consideration the views of all the members of the coalition and if, at this point in time, the People’s Partnership Government wants to review its position, it has a right to do so. But when they were in government they supported the hanging Bill and it is the same PNM, in no different configuration, that did not

support the hanging Bill. So what is the big issue? What is the big issue? When you were here, the hanging Bill was nice, when you there—No! No! No! That is what you said. What is the big issue?

We here are a people's government of which the UNC is just one part and we must take the views of all of our coalition partners and we are saying, we shall review it. What is wrong with that? What is the big thing? It is inconsistent with the Member for Point Fortin. Mr. Speaker, the Member for Point Fortin said that IMPACS is absolutely vital—absolutely vital. Those were the words; and if it was so vital, the question then is, what did the government do about it since 2006—2009?

Furthermore, I am quoting, “IMPACS must be under responsible and sincere leadership”. Responsible and sincere leadership, that is why we are here. That is why we are here and you are scrambling over there—two, four, six, seven. That is why we are here. And furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I am a bit pained when I hear that, of course, the Member for Point Fortin made the point that she is concerned about the fundamental shift by this Government in foreign policy. The Member for Point Fortin said, I quote, “...I am concerned about the fundamental...” shift “...by this Government...” in its foreign policy. I do not understand. This Government pledged to be an active participant in Caribbean affairs. That is why we went to St. Lucia to help them after the hurricane. [*Desk thumping*] It was this Government who, by our principles and sincere and responsible Prime Minister, had gone to the Commonwealth and led the Commonwealth with distinction.

4.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, it is this Government that has internationalized the Children's Fund. We have internationalized the Children's Fund. What are you talking about responsible leadership? It is our Prime Minister who has been rated among the 10 best female leaders in the world. And we have come here to be told about being irresponsible in our leadership?

I ask the question of the last speaker: what legacy did she leave as Minister of Foreign Affairs—[*Crosstalk*]

Dr. Moonilal: “She hug up Obama.”

Hon. J. Warner:—besides hugging up Obama? What legacy did she leave? The legacy she has left was to take the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which in any country is one of the most important ministries, from Knowsley to nowhere. [*Laughter*]

She has said not one single word about her new leader and his vision under the new PNM, as they call it. Not one single word has she said about the foreign policy of the new PNM, if, God forbid, they were to ever come on this side. But she goes to some old books to quote the foreign policy under the last Prime Minister, the Member for San Fernando East. That is the foreign policy, one that is totally irrelevant, that has them where they are today and has us where we are. That is the legacy she has left.

She made the point where she asked for a serious approach. I want to make the point that everything we do here is serious and everything we do here is an approach. We do that here. I would tell you what was not serious, the brown bag for cricket that you got. That was not serious. The Brian Lara Stadium that was built for a tsunami, that was not serious. A Foreign Minister, Knowlson Gift, was fired, and to this day the country does not even know why. He was fired. Therefore, as far as we are concerned, we take our “ting” seriously, they do not. [*Crosstalk*]

We were told by the last speaker that we did not have the political will to address the scourge of arms and ammunition. We were asked: are we truly committed to Caricom? We were also told by the last speaker it was a shame for Trinidad and Tobago to say that it was not an ATM card. Let me say again: Trinidad and Tobago is not an ATM card. It is because in their time they were an ATM card that we cannot pay people the kinds of salaries they want to get. You heard this afternoon that they spent \$3 million to put the present Leader of the Opposition in jail. That was what they spent to put the Member for Diego Martin West in jail. Mr. Speaker, they spent \$46 million on the Uff Enquiry. We did not have that luxury.

They went through the Treasury, to quote Norman Manley, “Like a dose of salts”, and they come to tell us now about an ATM card. We are not, and I make no apologies whatsoever for saying that. We are not.

Then the Member spoke about this Government having a strained relationship with the Caribbean. I do not understand. Before I came here today, Edwin Carrington, the former Secretary General of Caricom, and Mia Mottley, the former Attorney General of Barbados came to Trinidad and Tobago. What did they come for? To begin discussion on a regional ferry in the Caribbean. [*Desk thumping*] They came here. I had to apologize, out of deference to your office, to come here in time and leave them there, because I could not stay back. If it was so strained, what are they doing here? If we were not serious, why did they come? [*Interruption*] You keep quiet.

Dr. Browne: Mia Mottley is here to attend an HIV conference. [*Crosstalk*] You are misleading the House.

Hon. J. Warner: I have nothing to tell him about Dale Enoch. That is not my business.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make two other points. [*Interruption*]

Dr. Browne: He is misleading the House; puffed up.

Hon. J. Warner: I recall a meeting being held on Monday night in San Fernando East at the GTM building; a whole Cabinet. The Member for Diego Martin West was not invited.

Dr. Moonilal: The Member for Point Fortin was there.

Hon. J. Warner: Yes. At that meeting the theme, I am told, was “Do not hug up”. I am also told at that meeting the effort was, “At all times you have to go on the attack; attack them, attack them.” “If even what they do is good, attack them.” We are told that the Member for Diego Martin West is weak. We on this side have given him an easy berth, so to speak—attack. If that was the advice given, it was misplaced. What we heard this afternoon had absolutely no relevance whatsoever. Worse yet, the last speaker, the Member for Point Fortin, came to this House, with an Eric Williams book, full of dog ears, to quote Dr. Eric Williams and to tell us about his book; total irrelevance.

If I were to come here with a book by Dr. Williams, I would make sure it was top class and not with one like what you came here with this afternoon; dog ears. You are asking people to support Dr. Eric Williams, and you quote to us with no relevance whatsoever. [*Desk thumping*]

I want to make two quick points before I go into the Bill properly, because I think the Member for Point Fortin must not be allowed to get away with what passed here today for a debate, as a contribution.

We were told that we were unprincipled. We were accused that CAL had a meeting with the Member for Tourism and Transport in St. Lucia and that we have done nothing for the wider Caricom. We have been told also that we have not accounted for all the tours of the Prime Minister, as they call them. We do not call them tours; we call them “missions”. I want to ask a question. Did your government ever account for the \$1 billion spent for the two Summits to get one signature? Did you ever account for it? Did the last leader ever account for that? Did your government ever account for the wanton waste that took place in this country for the last three years? Did you ever account for it?

You come here in this House today to tell us that we do not account? Every trip the Prime Minister of this country has made, she has come here and accounted to this House. [*Desk thumping*] She comes here and accounts to this House, within hours. She says before she leaves and when she comes back. No other Prime Minister has ever done that. She comes to this House before she leaves, whether it is nine days, six days or one day, and accounts before she leaves about what she is going to do. When she comes back, she gives an account. [*Crosstalk*]

Hon. Member: Rhetoric!

Hon. J. Warner: Rhetoric, rhetoric. If it is even rhetoric, have you ever done that? [*Crosstalk*] And you are coming to talk about accountability?

Mr. Speaker, I have spent so much time answering the last speaker, it would give the impression that her contribution was excellent. I do not want to do that. Therefore, I want to make the point to you and this House that within recent times there have been very serious issues in the region concerning crime and security. Crime and security are the two things that have gained prominence in the Caribbean. As a consequence I am saying that the region is vulnerable. In the region, we lack the means to respond to these threats in any effective way, any effective manner. I should also add that geography has made it even more difficult for us to respond to these threats, these scourges, as we call them, crime and security.

In the region, we are small island states, all of us, and the maritime region is large. As a consequence of this, it makes the threats to which we are exposed even more difficult and dangerous. I would not go into all, but the threats to which we are exposed in the region are, of course, drugs, arms trafficking, human trafficking and so on. You also have, as you say, illegal migration and a host of other threats, criminal deportees, corruption, and a host of them. We, therefore, can only help ourselves and save ourselves based on our collective will, based on the collective efforts of all of us. In a real sense, that is what this Bill is about.

Therefore, any child listening would understand what we are talking about today, not rambling aimlessly all over the place, holding some book upside down and talking, a book with dog ears. What is important here today is that our inability to cope with these threats has increased, as it were, the pervasiveness of the gang culture. Gang culture has increased; not only here, but throughout the region. It has become pervasive, because we are not able to fight these threats individually or collectively.

In fact, the Member for Tabaquite said that the Caribbean, and rightly so, has earned the title of being the crime region of the world. He gave some statistics and figures and quoted from different sources to show that the region is the crime region of the world. Learn something; that was what he said. Therefore, you have to ask yourself: how do we respond to that? How does this Bill address that? Do not come here with a dog-eared book to quote some irrelevant substance from Dr. Williams. Answer those points he made; look at what he said and see, in the context of what he has said, how we could deal with those issues.

In Caricom there are three large countries: Jamaica, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. These countries are the ones, I heard him say today, where crime is the highest. Mr. Speaker, 90 per cent of the crimes are in these three countries. He said that the proliferation of crime is rampant in these three countries. I heard him. In fact, he gave some figures; I do not have all correctly. He talked about homicides, and he showed where in these three countries the homicide rate was high. As such, what you see here is the fact that political boundaries cannot save us, because too many of us are unable to help ourselves.

What you see happening in the Caribbean, therefore, is a level of political instability, which we have to address. If we cannot conquer crime and security, we shall have in the region political instability. Therefore, the penultimate speaker, the Member for Tabaquite, was saying that those were issues we have to address.

At the last meeting of the Heads of Government, the 26th meeting, Caricom members agreed to establish a structure to fight crime and to address security. It was from that meeting IMPACS was born. They said that Caricom IMPACS—I-M-P-A-C-S—as against what you did not give, I-M-P-A-C-T, [*Laughter*] would be:

“...the nerve centre of Management Framework”—an institution of Caricom—“with primary responsibility for the implementation of the Regional Crime and Security agenda and reporting directly to the Council of Ministers.”—blah, blah, blah.

That is where it was born. On July 06, 2006, the entity was formed and this resulted in where we are today.

4.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I want also to say that Caricom IMPACS has been located in this country since July 2006, and Caricom IMPACS is responsible for research, monitoring, evaluation analysis and preparation of background documents and so on.

Mr. Speaker, Caricom IMPACS requires the contracting parties to accord IMPACS the status, immunities and exemptions which, of course, the agreement has set out. Mr. Speaker, I am saying the agreement as I said earlier on, did not—for the agreement to be relevant, laws had to be passed in the respective countries—the host country—so as to make it relevant and applicable.

Mr. Speaker, I say once again, under the laws of this country legislation is needed—is required—to give legal effect to many of the provisions in the accordance agreement. So, you passed the agreement but now you have to pass laws in the country, to make the agreement effective. Mr. Speaker, I say again, this agreement was signed by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2009. Not a single law was passed. Not a single law was passed!

Mr. Speaker, I go further I make the point that at the end of the day, what we are doing here today is to pass this Bill which will now give Caricom IMPACS the status of an organization which now has immunities—simple, very simple. Mr. Speaker, I want to add that they will have immunities which other international organizations have enjoyed and are enjoying. That is what it is all about. That is what it is saying. That is all that it is saying, nothing more than that.

Mr. Speaker, IMPACS—based on the law—according to the Bill, will now have its property, funds, assets and all of these things immune from being sued on record. That is what it is saying, as simple as this. As we said, Mr. Speaker, IMPACS will enjoy conditions that are no less favourable than those which we give to international organizations. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, they would be exempt from paying direct taxes, except of course, for fees for telephone and lights and so on. [*Crosstalk*] Yes—you should have told them that. You did not say that, you should have told her that.

Mr. Speaker, and following that, they are saying that they would then regularize their status so that they would be able to enjoy—I repeat—immunities. As such therefore, Mr. Speaker, they have given you all the activities of IMPACS which we need not go into. There is no point for me to come here and tell you IMPACS' activities. It is there. And therefore, we make the point that which are several which are being carried out, these activities would make IMPACS not only relevant but now they would be on the playing field, same level as all the others.

Mr. Speaker, I want also to make the point that, and I plead again, IMPACS has been in this country for five years—I heard that being said by the Member for Tabaquite. He said for five years they have been here. For five years they have been here he said, and nothing has been done to correct the situation, and that is

what he does not want to hear. He said for five years they had been here and they have not gotten the legal protection that they needed. That is what he said. Five years! The same thing—like 29 years to build a bridge in Arima, 18 years to bring traffic wardens, 20 years to pay people from Oropune their money for their land. Five years he said! Five years, and they have not been given any legal protection, and I would have thought that when the Member rose to speak she would tell us why, why five years and why now in 10 months this Government has now to correct it? Tell us that! That is what I want to find out!

In other words I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that what the Member for Tabaquite was saying is that we have to rectify the situation quickly, soon, now, and we did it in 10 months. That is what he is saying. I will talk to you during the tea break, right. Because, Mr. Speaker, the point is being made that if this is not done, he says our fight against crime and security will not be successful, cannot be successful. Regional crime, Mr. Speaker, security and so on needs a fillip, a push, and this Bill today does that.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by saying that this Bill today has—and by the way I am happy to note that it says that it has your party's approval. That came like music to my ears; that it has your party's approval. Mr. Speaker, this Order today does not deserve any lengthy debate, does not deserve any irrelevant quotation from text and books and so on. The Order is needed, is relevant, it is an Order to rectify a situation, it is a good order which the Minister, the Member for Tabaquite, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in this Government has brought, which you did not do, which your government could not do; he has done it.

It has your approval, say so and say I beg to move. Say that “We agree with you.” That is all you have to say. Say that you approve it and close the debate, but unlike you, Mr. Speaker, I would say, we on this side support this fully, and we thank all those on that side who also wish to do the same. Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. Colm Imbert (*Diego Martin North/East*): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the points made by the last speaker I found very intriguing, that there is no point in telling us what are IMPACS' activities, they are there.

Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. I think we need to know exactly what the Caricom Implementation Agency for Crime and Security has done, is doing and will be doing in the future, because what we are about today is the approval of an Order—and just for clarity, I know the Member for Chaguanas

West likes to claim newness when he makes errors with respect to the proceedings of the Parliament, but the Member for Chaguanas West has now been an MP for four years, I believe I think he was first elected in 2007.

What we are debating today is not a bill, it is an order. [*Desk thumping*] And there is a significant difference between a Bill and an Order. This matter flows from the Privileges and Immunities Diplomatic and Consular International Organizations Act, Chap. 17:01, and it is commonplace after an agreement has been signed for the establishment of the headquarters of an international organization, in a country such as Trinidad and Tobago, for the Cabinet to ask the President to prepare an Order giving certain privileges to the organization itself and to the persons, the officials who work in that organization.

The headquarters agreement was only signed in 2009, and it is only after the signing of the headquarters agreement that the question of giving privileges and immunities to the headquarters itself and its staff and officials could be done. It is therefore not correct to say that IMPACS has been here for five years and that nothing was done. The fact of the matter is that the headquarters agreement was signed in 2009, the PNM administration went out of office in 2010, and it has taken you one year to prepare a simple Order because all that is required with this Order—oh, I am so sorry I am told by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs that this Order was actually prepared before the General Election of May 2010.

4.25 p.m.

It has taken your Government almost one year to do the simple task of taking an Order, and this Order—[*Desk thumping*]—when you prepare an Order like this, all you do is photocopy another one, because they are all the same, and you simply replace the name of the organization and some other little details that may be pertinent to that organization, and you cut and paste and you produce this. This was produced prior to the last general election. It has taken you, I repeat, 12 months to do the simple task of bringing it to Parliament for affirmative resolution. [*Interruption*]

But, Mr. Speaker, what is more important is, what does IMPACS do? Because according to the last speaker it is not important, we do not need to know and there is no point in telling us. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important, because we are here today to confer diplomatic immunity on this organization, and as part of the Order, we are being asked to agree that officials of IMPACS and experts performing missions for IMPACS, which is, as I said, the Caricom Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, so it is a very important organization dealing with

crime and security in the region, we are here today and being asked to allow officials of IMPACS to be given the following privileges and immunities: exemption from all forms of taxation, immunity from legal process in respect of words spoken or written and all acts performed by them in the exercise of their official functions and inviolability of all papers, documents and materials related to the work of IMPACS.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are two fundamental issues, two fundamental operations that IMPACS is associated with. One is coordination of the regional response to the threat of illicit drugs and small arms as articulated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs; and the other equally important function of IMPACS is the sharing and dissemination of intelligence information. What the Member for Chaguanas West may not know, maybe he does—he did not think it was important—is that the agency that has been designated to liaise with IMPACS and all of the other regional organizations and international security organizations in the United States, in Latin America, Great Britain, Europe and so on, the agency that has been designated as our lead agency is the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important that I inform this Parliament about certain proposals of the Government with respect to the restructuring of the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago.

I have in my possession a report on the proposed reorganization and restructuring of the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago which was submitted to the Minister of National Security on Tuesday, December 28, 2010. And since SAUTT, the SIA and the SSA are the primary agencies in Trinidad and Tobago that must of necessity liaise with the regional intelligence agencies, liaise with IMPACS, liaise with all of the law enforcement agencies in the country, I think it is very important that the country understands that a proposal has been made that SAUTT shall formally cease its operations on August 31, 2011, that all personnel of SAUTT shall return to their respective agencies by May 31, 2011; that all UK personnel contracted by SAUTT must return to the United Kingdom by March 31, 2011; that the SSA should be abolished by Parliament; that the SIA should be dismantled and that a number of far-reaching decisions are proposed for the intelligence agencies in Trinidad and Tobago.

What I want to ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I would like to know since it is the intention of your Government to close down SAUTT, to abolish the SIA, to abolish the SSA—

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East, it is now 4.30 p.m. It is a good time for us to suspend the sitting for tea. This sitting is now suspended until 5.00 p.m.

4.30 p.m.: *Sitting suspended.*

5.00 p.m.: *Sitting resumed.*

Mr. C. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, before we took the break I was talking about the agencies that IMPACS will have to liaise and communicate with. I think it is necessary to get a better understanding of exactly what IMPACS is.

Now, as speakers before me have said, IMPACS—well, I would read from their website. They described it as:

“...the nerve centre of the Region’s new multilateral Crime and Security management architecture, specifically designed to administer a collective response to the Crime and Security priorities of Member States.”

And among its responsibilities are: the execution of regional projects relating to matters of crime and security and also the coordination of a number of subcommittees, as the Minister advised us, including the Standing Committee of Heads of Intelligence and Financial Investigative Units, and within IMPACS there are a number of subagencies and special departments, one of which is the Joint Regional Communications Centre (JRCC) and the Regional Intelligence Fusion Centre. [*Cellphone rings*]

Now, the history of IMPACS is that it was first established as a regional security strategy for the International Cricket World Cup of 2007, and it was felt by the regional heads and by the various countries within Caricom that the implementation agency for crime and security was so successful that at the Eighteenth Intercessional Meeting in St. Vincent in February 2007, the heads endorsed a proposal for the permanent establishment of this agency and the subagencies such as the communications centre and the intelligence centre. The Joint Regional Communication Centre is the central clearing house for advanced passenger information and it prescreens passengers from air and sea carriers traversing the region.

Additionally—and this was the point I was making before the break—the Joint Regional Communication Centre acts as a conduit to ensure effective communication among law enforcement personnel, which is essential to enhanced border control related activities. The communication centre also assists regional law enforcement personnel in the detection of persons who are travelling with

stolen or fraudulent travel documents, it also monitors persons of interest, criminals including those who may have a high degree of security threat to the safety and security of the region. The Region and Intelligence Fusion Centre provides intelligence support—[*Cellphone rings*]

Mr. Speaker: Listen! Just one second. Members, we do not have a ban on Blackberries in this honourable House. We have never made a ruling on it. Members are allowed to walk with their Blackberries, but this House will take umbrage to Members having their Blackberries on. Put all your phones on silent, please, otherwise I would have to make a ruling here on this matter of Blackberries in the Chamber.

On four occasions in this few seconds we hear noises coming from these telephones which are interrupting the proceedings of this honourable House, so I appeal to Members, put your Blackberries on silent. Thank you very much. Continue, Member for Diego Martin North/East.

Mr. C. Imbert: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I can assure you that my Blackberry is on vibrate. [*Laughter*]

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, the Regional Intelligence Fusion Centre provides intelligence support to key stakeholders in an effort to detect, deter and control crime within the region. The liaison office was established with a special department of IMPACS to provide critical technical support and assistance for facilitating IMPACS' mandate to the Caricom Regional Framework on Crime and Security.

So, Mr. Speaker, apart from dealing with the drug interdiction effort, one of IMPACS primary responsibilities and primary functions is to ensure that there is effective communication, coordination and collaboration between law enforcement agencies, law enforcement personnel, in particular, security agencies and intelligence agencies.

This is why I was referring to the fact that it has come to our attention that the Government intends to dismantle all of the security agencies in Trinidad and Tobago, because at this time and prior, the reporting agencies for IMPACS in Trinidad and Tobago were the Security Intelligence Agency (SIA), the Strategic Services Agency (SSA) and the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (SAUTT), as well as the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and other law enforcement agencies within Trinidad and Tobago.

I am advised that after the new Government came in and the confusion erupted within SAUTT, within the SIA and so on, it created serious difficulties for the communication and cooperation between international agencies, agencies

from the United States and other international security agencies in terms of who they should be talking to in Trinidad and Tobago with respect to the detection of crime and the identification of persons of interest, criminals, criminal activity and so on.

I am told, Mr. Speaker, that the Government's plan to dismantle all of the security agencies in Trinidad and Tobago is now creating all sorts of problems within IMPACS, within regional security agencies and within the whole arrangements in this hemisphere, North and South America and also Europe with respect to their communication and collaboration with our security intelligence agencies in Trinidad and Tobago. I am asking the Minister of Foreign Affairs to tell me what is going to happen when these recommendations are implemented and who will IMPACS be communicating with.

I want to know, because if I read this report that was submitted to the Minister of National Security in December 2010 and also came to the attention of Cabinet, I am advised, it was the result of an effort done by a four-person steering committee appointed by Cabinet to look at the security agencies in Trinidad and Tobago, and I am advised that these are the recommendations. If these recommendations are implemented, I would like the Minister of Foreign Affairs to tell us, how is IMPACS going to communicate with the law enforcement agencies in Trinidad and Tobago, and who in Trinidad and Tobago is going to be the lead agency cooperating with IMPACS, and would read them into the record?

5.10 p.m.

The recommendations are as follows:

The Special Anti-Crime Unit should formally cease operations as a law enforcement agency on August 31, 2011.

I would like to know, after August 2011, who will IMPACS be liaising with?

All service personnel—Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force assigned to the Special Anti-Crime Unit shall return to their respective agencies/and or units by May 31, 2011.

I would like to know if that is still going to happen. Since May is upon us, since May is a month from now, who is going to be liaising, coordinating and communicating with IMPACS on the other regional security agencies, in their respective territories and the International Agencies, the Drug Enforcement

Privileges and Immunities (IMPACS) Order
[MR. IMBERT]

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, and all of the other agencies that operate within our space? I would like the Minister to tell me, since according to this document all service personnel assigned to SAUTT are to return to their units by the end of May 2011?

All UK personnel contracted to the Special Anti-Crime Unit must return to their home land by March 31, 2011.

Well we are in April. March 31, 2011 has passed. I would like the Minister to tell us if this has occurred and, if so, which agency in the United Kingdom will the law enforcement agencies be communicating with in the context of IMPACS. Another recommendation to facilitate the formation of something called a National Intelligence Agency:

Parliament should abolish the SSA, and the Act that created the SSA should be repealed and replaced by the National Intelligent Agency.

Is the NIA going to be the agency now that works within the region? I would like to know.

All employment contracts of intelligence employees of the SIA and SAUTT should be terminated by August 31, 2011.

If that is going to happen, if you are sending everybody home, how are you going to recruit and rearrange and reorganize the security agencies in Trinidad and Tobago so that there will be effective communication, cooperation, collaboration and integration within the regional security systems, since you are sending everybody home by August 31, 2011? [*Desk thumping*]

The air ship should be decommissioned immediately and then sold.

I would like to know if that is true, if that is true then how is IMPACS going to function without air surveillance capability?

Mr. Speaker, there is something in this report which I should just read into the record, because I think it has tremendous implications for the operations of the security services in Trinidad and Tobago and tremendous implications for the regional security effort. Because if one reads this report and believes it, then I think there is going to be mass confusion in Trinidad and Tobago within the next couple of months.

I read from page 43 of this report, which is what I said was submitted to the Minister of National Security in December 2010:

The new agency's manpower would come from three major sources; the old Special Anti-Crime Unit, the SIA and civilians.

This is the part that I found somewhat disturbing, the official Government document.

The committee recommends that concrete steps should be put in place to effect ethnic and gender balance in the composition of this new organization.

Dr. Browne: No, no, no.

Dr. Rowley: That is where Mr. Nizam Mohammed gets his story from.

Dr. Browne: Who were the authors—*[Interruption]*

Mr. C. Imbert: I do not know. I do not know. On page 44 it is repeated: A conscious determination followed by concrete steps must be put in place in order to bring some semblance of ethnic and gender balance. This will take time, but it must be done and it starts with the creation of this new national intelligence agency.

So I am reading from an official Government document which states that with respect to the creation of the new national intelligence agency there will be—*[Interruption]*

Dr. Rowley: How?

Mr. C. Imbert: When they are appointing and recruiting people, in the recruitment they are going to ensure ethnic and gender balance. Clearly, so there will be 50 per cent males and 50 per cent females, 40 per cent persons of African descent, 42 per cent of East Indian decent, 0.5 per cent of people looking like me and so on. This is what this thing is saying and I really hope, Mr. Speaker, that this misguided policy is not put into effect, because if it is—*[Interruption]*

Mr. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, 36 (1) imputing improper motives. That is not a Government document that is not a Cabinet document. Could he please tell this Parliament what document he is reading from and who are the authors *[Crosstalk]*

Mr. Speaker: 36(1) is being irrelevant. *[Desk thumping]*

Mr. C. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for your ruling, but for the benefit of the Member, since he was obviously sleeping when this matter was tabled, Report and Operational Plan to Reorganize and Restructure the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago. Terms of reference: the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, through a Cabinet decision appointed a four-person steering committee to reorganize and restructure the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago.” *[Desk thumping]*

The directive calls for an operational plan which the steering committee was asked to do. The three-month effort commenced in late October 2010. The final report was completed on time, on December 22, 2010, and submitted to the hon. Minister of National Security on Tuesday, December 28, 2010.

At the back of the document it reads as follows;

Summary of specific recommendations: After three months of an intense and progress effort undertaking to execute Cabinet's mandate with respect to the reorganization and restructuring of the Special Anti-Crime Unit, the four-member steering committee has reached a consensus. It wishes to enjoin the Cabinet to carefully consider.

Those are the recommendations that I read out.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, if the Member is not aware that he sat in a Cabinet that set up a four-man steering committee—four persons actually, I should read out the names of the persons. The steering committee was made up of: Mr. Stephen Williams who is the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Ms. Julie Brown—*[Interruption]*

Hon. Members: Who! What!

Mr. C. Imbert: Ms. Julie Browne, Mrs. Jacqueline Wilson and Prof. Daniel Gibran. And in terms of responsibilities, Ms. Julie Browne constructed the organizational chart for the proposed new national intelligence agency.

Dr. Rowley: Oh! Now you make sense.

Mr. C. Imbert: Yes, Ms. Julie Brown, Ms. Julie Brown. Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister of Foreign Affairs to tell us in the context of this report, of this Cabinet appointed committee and these recommendations, especially that very curious recommendation, that in the creation of the new National Intelligence Agency when they abolish the SAUTT, SSA, SIA—they have scrapped all those things, they send everybody home and they recruit, please explain this concept of ethnic and gender balance; whether it is a quota system, whether meritocracy will not be used to appoint the people, whether it is, as I said, percentages in terms of persons' ethnic balance and gender and so on. I just want to know. *[Crosstalk]*—of course, of course.

Mr. Roberts: Thank you very much for giving way. As an experienced parliamentarian, are you putting it to this Parliament that any Cabinet that sets up a steering committee to go out, investigate and report to the Cabinet it then becomes automatically government policy? Please!

Mr. C. Imbert: I do not know, Mr. Speaker, if that is a question or a statement. The fact is that some persons connected with the Government have already started to implement this policy. [*Laughter*] So I do not know—I mean, we had a lot of confusion recently over this. I do not know. Since this was done for the security agencies, I do not know if this document was sent to the Police Service Commission. And certain persons took it as official Government policy. [*Desk thumping*] That is for you to deal with. I am simply reading out what is in the document. That is for you to deal with. You all have to explain that.

Mr. Speaker, more importantly, more importantly, I am very concerned because there is absolutely no doubt that we in Trinidad and Tobago—and the Minister was quite right, both Ministers, the Member for Chaguanas West spoke; not sure he knew what he was saying—the Minister of Foreign Affairs spoke, and I would like to show the Parliament a diagram entitled the Movement of Drugs. This comes from regional security discussions held in November 2008.

Dr. Browne: You have to ask for permission.

Mr. C. Imbert: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: No problem.

Mr. C. Imbert: No problem? This document shows the Caribbean Region. Here we have South America, Colombia, next to Colombia, Venezuela, next to Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago, then you go up the islands; Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, et cetera, and then you get up to Puerto Rico and so on, Haiti and so on.

5.20 p.m.

This chart shows the producer country being Colombia, the producer of illicit drugs; it describes Venezuela as the storage area, then it shows the movement of drugs coming out of the storage country, Venezuela, into the Caribbean through the waters between Trinidad and Tobago and St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Lucia, and so on, getting into the British Virgin Islands, Antigua/Barbuda and then going off to Europe and going up to the United States.

So this is the movement of drugs within our region. It is produced in Colombia, stored in Venezuela and then sent up through the Caribbean between Trinidad and Tobago and the other Lesser Antilles and then it is sent off to Europe from somewhere in the vicinity of the US Virgin Islands and so on, and sent off to the United States.

In that context, one would understand why at a security meeting—just let me get my document, please—on July 06, 2007, members of the Caribbean Community were meeting in Barbados to discuss security issues and the then Prime Minister—and I have no problem with naming the then Prime Minister, because that is what he was:

“Prime Minister Manning pointed to a recent report by the Inter American Development Bank and the United Nations, which identifies the drug trade as the single most important reason why crime is at the level where it is in the Caribbean.”

He went on to say:

“...That report said that if the murder rate were brought down in Jamaica and Haiti to the level it’s at in Costa Rica, they would experience on an annual basis an increase in their growth of 5.4 per cent.”

Now, this is not Mr. Manning saying that; he was simply repeating what had been published in a report from the Inter-American Development Bank, the IDB. He went on to say:

“So important is this question of crime and so debilitating have been the effects of it in some countries in the region...

...it’s imperative for CARICOM States to cooperate in this regard.”

This is all part of the theory and the underpinnings that informed the creation of IMPACS, the establishment of the headquarters in Trinidad and Tobago, and now we are here today to give effect to the diplomatic privileges and immunities for this organization.

But one of the statements made by the former Prime Minister at that meeting in Barbados in 2007 was as follows:

“Prime Minister Manning said that Trinidad and Tobago is taking additional steps to address crime and security concerns within the region. He said his country is purchasing three offshore vessels.

‘What it does is it puts us in a position to provide some of these services, to the extent of our capability in parts of the Eastern Caribbean. What we plan to do in Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago is to pool these resources beginning with the aircraft that we have.’”

One of the important features of this whole discussion is something called the Maritime and Airspace Agreement. I do not know if the Minister referred to the Maritime and Airspace Agreement.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: He did not.

Mr. C. Imbert: He did not. Okay. But the Caricom, in 2008, agreed to a Caricom Maritime and Airspace Security Cooperation Agreement, which allows for cooperation between the maritime and air agencies; the various air wings and the various coast guards and so on, within the Caribbean and within Caricom, to cooperate in terms of the boarding of vessels, the interception of suspected drug traffickers and so on. This agreement was signed in July 2008 by Antigua; it was signed again by St. Vincent and the Grenadines; it was signed by Suriname; it was signed by Trinidad and Tobago in July 2008 by Mr. Manning.

Out of this comes the regional security effort and what Mr. Manning had said, that the Maritime and Airspace Agreement for Caricom member states will allow member states to make the best use of available resources in order to provide surveillance of the maritime environment while the arrest warrant will put in place a legal mechanism to effect surrender of suspected persons and fugitives across borders. In the first instance, the focus will be on providing coverage for the maritime environment shared by Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Lucia.

So I go back to the map, and you see the drug come out of Colombia, go to Venezuela and then come through the Lesser Antilles, and the whole point of having an offshore patrol capability was to intercept these drugs that are coming from Colombia through Venezuela into the Lesser Antilles en route to Europe and the United States—very, very simple stuff.

The vessels were also designed for another aspect of—

Mr. Roberts: Mr. Speaker, 35(3). I was trying my best—reviving.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think he is referring to 35(3). It is really 36(3). In fact, I was about to let you know that that matter has been exhausted. We have dealt with the OPVs on several occasions. En passant you could proceed, but do not delve too long, please.

Mr. C. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, I would abide by your ruling, but I can assure you the matter will continue to come up.

One of the responsibilities of the implementation agencies for crime and security is the whole question of dealing with the trafficking in illicit drugs in the region, and whether we have OPVs or we do not have OPVs, we have to deal with that! And the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has belatedly realized that this is reality. For whatever reason, the new Government sabotaged and undermined the efforts of the former administration and the countries within the region to put in place a capability—I do not have to call it OPV—to deal—a maritime capability in the context of the Caricom Maritime and Airspace Security Cooperation Agreement, which is a regional agreement, in the context of the implementation agency for crime and security. So if we cannot talk about OPVs, no problem; we will talk about trafficking in drugs within the Caribbean region. [*Desk thumping*]

What is Trinidad and Tobago doing about the Maritime Security Cooperation Agreement? Because this country had taken the lead and had offered the other countries in the region, in collaboration with the United States government, in collaboration with a number of countries from Europe: France, Great Britain and other countries, that perform surveillance and monitoring and drug interdiction operations within the region; this country had indicated that it was going to join that effort by increasing our maritime capability.

There is no denying the fact that that effort has now been sabotaged and undermined, and the Government is now, belatedly, one year later, coming to its senses, because I read from an article, which I certainly cannot rehash, because it was only published on April 10, 2011.

“Government is currently in talks with the US, Italy and Spain to secure vessels to patrol local waters and provide naval protection and surveillance.”

The headline in the *Trinidad Express* is: “Government looking for new border patrol vessels.”

One year later, after undermining and sabotaging the Maritime Security Cooperation Agreement, which is a fundamental pillar of IMPACS and a fundamental core operation of the regional cooperation in security—one year after sabotaging that, the Government has said they are now looking for new border patrol vessels. [*Interruption*] It is the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, the UNC-coalition Government.

There are many things in this article that bother me, because, as I said previously, we have a report here from a Cabinet committee that says they are going to abolish all of the security agencies in Trinidad and Tobago; they are going to close down SAUTT, close down SIA; abolish SSA; send everybody home

and then start up a new agency based on these very curious criteria of ethnic and gender balance. That is a whole Pandora's box all on its own. That agency will get nowhere.

But what bothers me with this article is the statements made by the Minister of National Security. This is Brig. John Sandy, the Minister of National Security speaking.

“Right now, we are in the process of accepting proposals from some respective”—I guess respectable—“companies. I am speaking with some embassies as well.

We interacted with the Spanish (Government) about two months ago and they indicated their willingness to contribute as well. However, they have not sent in their proposals but they should be forthcoming soon, Sandy said.

We are not going for the OPV...”

I am sorry for bringing up the words, Mr. Speaker.

“but a smaller craft but big enough to stay out there for about three weeks.”

OPVs were out there for 35 days; these could stay out for 21 days, so it is 14 days less. The fact of the matter is, I want the Minister of Foreign Affairs to tell this Parliament, since the Minister of National Security clearly speaking on behalf of the Government, has said:

“...we are in the process of accepting proposals from some respective companies. I am speaking with...embassies as well.

We interacted with the Spanish (Government) about two months ago and they indicated their willingness to contribute as well. However, they have not yet sent in their proposals but they should be forthcoming soon.”

What was the procurement process used? Was it open invitations? Was it by way of public advertisement? Was it done in secret? Was it done in accordance with established practice? Was it a transparent process in the acquisition of these border patrol vessels which the—[*Interruption*—]Yes. “Government looking for new border patrol vessels”.

I would like the Minister of Foreign Affairs to tell this Parliament, on what basis is the Government in the process of accepting proposals from companies for the supply of border patrol vessels? How were the bids invited? Were there any bids? Were they unsolicited bids? Is it some partner-partner thing? This is serious business, because even though these vessels are not as large as the previous ones,

a vessel that can stay offshore for three weeks is going to cost this country well in excess of \$100 million; I dare say, \$200 million or \$300 million. And it is plural, “eh”: “Government looking for new border patrol vessels”, so it is more than one; at least two.

So that we are seeing here the acquisition of equipment and military assets to assist with the regional Implementation Agency for Crime and Security mandate of dealing with drug interdiction; we are seeing the acquisition of military assets of hundreds of millions of dollars and there is no process, and this Government came in on the altar of transparency and accountability.

We have discussions taking place in a joint select committee with respect to a new procurement regime for Trinidad and Tobago. I wonder if the Government has told the representatives of the private sector that while persons are sitting discussing a new regime that will be equitable, that will be fair, that will be transparent, the same Government is engaging in soliciting and accepting proposals for \$100 million boats in secret. So I would like the Minister of Foreign Affairs to deal with that, because, you see—

Mr. Roberts: I like how you talk with a straight face.

Mr. C. Imbert: But it is a fact. One of the problems in all of this, the Government went into the SIA like a bull in a China shop, destroyed our intelligence-gathering capability; destroyed the relationships that had been built up between the SIA and our regional counterparts; destroyed the whole system of intelligence-gathering within the Caricom implementation agency for crime and security, to the point that foreign agencies do not know who to trust in Trinidad and Tobago; do not know who to speak to! [*Desk thumping*]

5.35 p.m.

They are no longer sharing intelligence information with us, because they do not trust this Government and they do not trust the people that they have put in charge of our security agencies.

So we have a situation where our security apparatus is being systemically dismantled, and yet, we are here today to give diplomatic immunity to the Caricom Implementation Agency for Crime and Security. [*Interruption*] No, because this is serious business. Because one of the things that the Minister did not say, and the other Minister did not tell us, because he did not think you needed to talk about it, is what is diplomatic immunity? That is what we are doing here. What is diplomatic immunity? And for the benefit of persons who do not know, such as the Member for Fyzabad.

Mr. Sharma: Only you know nothing.

Mr. C. Imbert: Diplomatic immunity is a form of legal immunity.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the speaking time of the hon. Member has expired.

Motion made, That the hon. Member's speaking time be extended by 30 minutes. [*Miss M. Mc Donald*]

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. C. Imbert: Mr. Speaker, I thank all Members for extending my time especially the Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara. [*Interruption*] Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, diplomatic immunity is a form of legal immunity. It is an agreement between governments that ensures that diplomats are given safe passage, and are not susceptible to lawsuit or prosecution under the host country's law. Essentially, that is what we are doing today. We want to allow the officials within IMPACS immunity from lawsuits or prosecution under the laws of Trinidad and Tobago. Now it may seem simple, but in my research I found some very interesting details of diplomatic incidents. I do not know if the Member for Tabaquite is familiar with this one because—[*Interruption*] I am not going there.

Mr. Speaker, when one gives diplomatic immunity, one essentially allows diplomats to behave badly. Now, most diplomats do not. Ninety, 95 per cent of diplomats are public servants or persons who have come through the ranks, and they behave properly. But I want to give you some examples of what can happen when you give diplomatic immunity.

This is an incident that happened in Sri Lanka. The Burmese Ambassador in Sri Lanka in 1979 shot his wife as she got out of the car after seeing a player in a night club band of whom she was enamoured. The next morning his neighbours were surprised to see the ambassador building a funeral pyre on the back lawn. When the police were called, the ambassador opened the metal gates just enough to say there was no trouble, and to remind them that his house was Burmese territory, and had diplomatic immunity. He then went back inside.

All of the neighbours around his property, all of the houses were now alive with fascinated spectators, as the ambassador emerged with the body of his wife, placed it on the funeral pyre and set it alight. So he shot his wife, because he caught his wife with another man, and he burned his wife in his backyard. This is

the Burmese Ambassador to Sri Lanka. He was well connected at home, but after an awkward interval he was recalled. It does not go on to say whether he was prosecuted in his home country.

Let me give you another example. Douglas Kent, the American Consul General in Vladivostok, Russia was involved in a car accident in 1998 that left a young man, Alexander Kashin, crippled. Kent was not prosecuted in a United States court under the Vienna Convention, which is what this whole thing is all about. Immunity does not apply to civil actions relating to vehicle accidents. However, in 2006 a United States Court of Appeal ruled that since he was using his vehicle for consular purposes he could not be sued civilly.

So this person, the American Consul General in Russia, crippled a young man in a vehicular accident, and was immune from prosecution for criminal liability, and was also saved from a civil suit.

Mr. Roberts: “Yuh have a local example?”

Mr. C. Imbert: That is for you to give. [*Laughter*] The Ambassador of the Republic of Georgia to the United States caused an accident in 1997 that injured four people and killed a 16-year-old girl. He was found to have a blood alcohol level of .15 per cent—way over the limit—but was released from custody because he was a diplomat, and the list goes on and on.

An American marine serving his Embassy in Bucharest disregarded a traffic signal to stop, collided with a taxi and killed a popular Romanian musician in 2004. His blood alcohol content was also over the limit, but he refused to give a blood sample, and claimed diplomatic immunity. So these are just some of the things that can happen when you convey diplomatic immunity on organizations and their staff.

There are also other issues that can arise when you convey diplomatic immunity on an organization. And some of the more well-known problems that we have had are questions of employee abuse, and the worst abusers have imprisoned their employees in their homes, deprived them of wages, passports, communication with the outside world, abused them physically and emotionally, deprived them of food and invaded their privacy. And there are quite a few incidents in Great Britain. I have read about that in the last couple of years of this kind of problem.

In terms of financial, the problem of large debts run up by diplomats has also caused problems. Some financial intuitions do not extend credit to diplomats, because they have no legal means of ensuring that the money is repaid. Local

citizens and businesses are often at a disadvantage when filing civil claims against a diplomat, especially in cases of unpaid debts. The bulk of diplomatic debt lies in the rental of office space. Individual debts can range from a few thousand dollars to \$1,000,000 in back rent, and there are many other instances all over the world of organizations being given diplomatic immunity, not paying rent, running up huge bills and then they are immune from civil suit and from prosecution.

So what we are about today is quite serious. What we tend to do in this Parliament is just go along with these Orders when the Order comes, and we are requested to agree to give diplomatic immunity, or extend diplomatic privileges to these regional and international organizations, but I thought it was necessary to indicate exactly what we are giving up, because some very bad things can happen. And what is bothering me is that this particular agency is dealing with crime and security, and this particular agency is dealing with drug interdiction, it is dealing with intelligence gathering, it is dealing with monitoring of the movement of criminals, assisting with money laundering and all forms of international corruption.

There are serious questions that the Government has to answer, because while on the surface it is easy to pay “lip service” to what we are about, because that is the impression that I am getting from the Government side, they are simply paying lip service to this process of providing diplomatic immunity to IMPACS, and we have to, there is no problem with that, but what is the point of providing diplomatic immunity to an agency that will be dysfunctional, because Trinidad and Tobago does not have the maritime intervention capability, because you have destroyed it, because Trinidad and Tobago does not have the security intelligence capability, because you have destroyed it.

That is the question I would like the Minister of Foreign Affairs to answer. What is the point of having the Caricom Implementation Agency for Crime and Security headquartered in Trinidad and Tobago when all of the tools, all the systems that are required to allow this agency to work, to allow this agency to stop the scourge of drug trafficking, to stop the scourge of the trafficking in small arms, to stop the movement of criminals through our territory, all of these things have been dismantled by the UNC Coalition Government, what is the point?

5.45 p.m.

So, I pose these questions to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I would like you to tell us, after you abolish and dismantle all the security agencies in Trinidad and

Tobago, who will IMPACS coordinate, collaborate and communicate with? After you have destroyed our maritime capability, how are we going to deal with the movement of drugs from Colombia through Venezuela into the Lesser Antilles?

I thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Desk thumping*]

Mr. Speaker: Anybody else on—the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs. [*Desk thumping*]

The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Hon. Dr. Surujrattan Rambachan): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me thank all those Members on both sides who contributed to the debate here this afternoon on this matter of the Order, the Privileges and Immunities Order with respect to IMPACS. Let me begin by saying that in the context of issues raised with respect to Caricom, Trinidad and Tobago has stated over and over its commitment to regional integration. [*Desk thumping*] This point has been made over and over, and I want to state very clearly that Trinidad and Tobago continues to be committed to regional integration. Unequivocally, we are committed to it. [*Interruption*]

Dr. Rowley: Unequivocally?

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: The Member for Point Fortin must recognize, from the policy position she read with respect to Caricom and what have you, that there is a vast difference between a policy position and action that will support that position.

She would agree that her government, also, was grossly guilty of not pushing action towards regional integration. But that does not mean to say that this Government will not, and that there are certain steps that this Government is taking and will take in order to achieve regional integration.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: What kind of thing is that? What kind of statement is that?

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Point Fortin talked about principled humanitarian leadership, but the Member for Point Fortin seems to have a short memory in terms of what the hon. Prime Minister and this Government have done in the last couple of months with respect to humanitarian leadership in the Caricom region.

The hon. Member would recall the hurricane and disaster in St. Lucia, when a visit was made by the Prime Minister, incidentally, with a team of technical people.

Mrs. Gopee-Scoon: After 10 days. Ten days.

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: In addition to which, several containers of supplies were sent to St. Lucia, so too, St. Vincent. The Member would recall that at the last Intercessional Meeting of Caricom, the Prime Minister proposed a Caricom Children's Life Fund which was accepted by the leaders, and they are working out the mechanism now for that.

The Member for Point Fortin would recall that when we visited Jamaica at the opening of the new cement plant there, a Jamaican Children's Life Fund was established with donations from the cement plant. You would also recall, hon. Member, that the country continues to pay \$444,000 a year to support the Grenada Consular office. You would also recognize and accept that we continue to adhere to the movement of people and continue to sign the skills certificates for people who come to work here, and a number of them are working in this country.

You would have heard recently of Government's intention to bring nurses from St. Vincent and other Caricom nations.

Hon. Member: We have done that.

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: You would know, hon. Member, that there is an MOU with Grenada and St. Vincent, to help people from those countries—their nationals—who need surgery. They come to Trinidad and are helped. The Member would also recall that Trinidad and Tobago granted a number of scholarships to Haitian students. I believe it was 50 Haitian students who have now completed.

The Member would also recall the visit of Mr. P.J. Patterson, the person who represents the Caricom with respect to Haiti. When he came to Trinidad and Tobago, the Government facilitated a meeting with several retired public servants in order to help re-establish governance and a government, and to help in the governance process in Haiti. Very recently, Trinidad and Tobago joined Caricom in supporting a Trinidadian national, Mr. Colin Granderson, as a UN Representative to Haiti. So in all of these ways, Trinidad and Tobago has been reaching out in terms of humanitarian leadership to the Caricom region, and all of this is factual.

The hon. Member for Point Fortin will also know that Trinidad and Tobago is hosting the Caribbean Investment Forum on June 13 and June 14, 2011. It is not just an investment forum that says Trinidad and Tobago Investment Forum. It was deliberately called the Caribbean Investment Forum because Trinidad and Tobago

recognizes that all the islands of the Caribbean require investments in order to spur their development. Invitations are currently being sent out to all of those countries to come and talk to investors like we will be talking to investors, so that they too can benefit from what will occur here on June 13 and June 14, 2011—again, reaching out to our partners.

It was your administration that supported Air Jamaica when Air Jamaica ran into trouble. We have not run away from that. We have continued to honour those arrangements because we are a Government that is honourable, a Government of integrity [*Desk thumping*] and we honoured the agreement with Air Jamaica. We did not change the name “Air Jamaica” either. We know about brand equity and we are forging deeper links.

You made mention of the visit of the Minister of Tourism and Transport from St. Lucia. He came here—it is true—and had a meeting with the Prime Minister and, at the end of it, announced St. Lucia’s decision to support CAL as the regional airline. That is good because Trinidad and Tobago is also reaching out to improve air transport in the region, and when the ATRs are finally delivered later this year and in the following year, you will find that the region will benefit. Not just Trinidad and Tobago, the region will benefit in terms of the increase of airplanes that are available.

Also, I stand corrected, but I believe it was the very first time in a long time, perhaps the very first time, that the Minister of Trade of Jamaica came here and was facilitated by the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry. What it says is that Trinidad and Tobago—we know, we understand. Like in everything else there are always going to be differences between people like there are differences in families, but you do not leave differences to fester and, our hon. Minister of Trade and Industry, the Member for Chaguanas East, did not wait. He invited the Minister of Trade from Jamaica, and they sat and conversed.

We believe that nothing can be solved unless you have conversations with people, and rather than allow conflicts to fester, have conversations. The Minister of Trade and Industry should be complimented in terms of his foresight and approach to dealing with these problems because what we are doing, through these conversations and this new attitude of friendly engagement, peaceful engagement—not throwing words over the shores, but peaceful engagement—is bringing together the Caribbean in a new relationship.

The Member for Point Fortin and, I believe as well, the Member for Diego Martin North/East made reference to the CCJ, but the Member for Point Fortin in

particular. I have not heard that Trinidad and Tobago had said that we have given up on the CCJ. We have not reneged on our commitments to the CCJ. We have not done any of those things, but one must recognize that important decisions take time. No one had said from the Trinidad and Tobago Government that Trinidad and Tobago has reneged on its commitment with respect to decisions regarding the CCJ. So let us be very careful that you do not put words that do not exist into the mouths of the Government but perhaps words that you would like to become reality. I assure you that we are going to keep true to what we have promised and that in time these matters are going to be dealt with.

The Member for Diego Martin North/East was referring to a report by a committee that was established—he read—by Cabinet

Mr. Imbert: You know the committee.

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: I want to say, Member, that the policy of this Government is a very clear policy.

Mr. Imbert: What is it?

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: It is a policy that is based on meritocracy.

Mr. Imbert: Not that one.

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: A report can have anything, but the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has never said anything else, except that meritocracy is going to be the approach by which this Government is going to operate. [*Desk thumping*] That is what—meritocracy! People are going to be judged by their ability and by their performance, not by the tilt of their nose, the colour of their eyes or the tint of their hair. They are going to be judged by their capacity to perform and equal opportunity and equality of opportunity is there for all under the People's Partnership Government. [*Desk thumping*] That is the policy of this Government.

Hon. Member: I hope so.

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: So much, Mr. Speaker, has been said about so many other things, but I want to say that the promotion and protection of the interest of the Government and people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago—in reply to my friend, the Member for Point Fortin who was asking about foreign policy—determines the strategic international priorities of the country, and such interest spans the social, economic, commercial, security and cultural areas, and are advanced in the bilateral and multilateral spheres.

Mr. Speaker, global dynamics require the strengthening of alliances with regional and traditional partners concurrent with the development of new linkages and a proactive role in hemispheric and international undertakings. In this regard, with respect to new linkages and a proactive role in hemispheric and international undertakings, this is one of the reasons why the Prime Minister is making these visits—whether it is the OAS, or UNGA, or Brazil as is coming up—because we have to create new frontiers for Trinidad and Tobago. When we create new frontiers for Trinidad and Tobago, we create an entirely new frontier for the Caribbean region.

Trinidad and Tobago, like any other sovereign state, must act in support of its interest. Continued adherence to and the protection of the basic tenets of international law, respect for human rights, the rule of law and good governance remain the one solid defence for a small-island developing state, vulnerable as we are to external shocks and with limited resources to exert political, military or economic might. In that context, you will understand why we are reaching out, hemispherically, to the region.

Mr. Speaker, human development, public security and prosperity remain at the centre of the domestic agenda with ongoing efforts to create a more diversified, competitive and knowledge-based economy. Therefore, in response to my hon. friend, the Member for Point Fortin, to this end, the country's relations on the international stage target, *inter alia*:

- investments geared towards all sectors;
- opportunities for the expansion of trade in goods and services;
- tourism initiatives for Tobago and Trinidad;
- promotion and marketing of Trinidad and Tobago's culture and cultural industries;
- trade missions to facilitate business including promoting south/south cooperation;
- expansion of offers of scholarships and placements of TT nationals in specialized training;
- technical cooperation and assistance;
- institutional strengthening and capacity building programmes;
- reversal of decisions taken in the international arena inimical to the economic and development objectives of Trinidad and Tobago;

- engaging the diaspora in a very serious way;
- protecting the interest of nationals abroad through Consular support;
- collaboration to address transnational challenges, example, narcotic trafficking, human trafficking, illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons;
- climate change; and
- sea level rise.

Mr. Speaker, while I say sea levels rise, this morning I had an opportunity to be part of the signing of an agreement between the Association of Caribbean States and the University of the West Indies. I do chair the ministerial council at this point in time of the Association of Caribbean States. What was very interesting, there was a mini lecture given by Prof. John Agard, a serious environmentalist and who shared in a Nobel Peace Prize. He indicated that the sea level rise in Trinidad and Tobago used to be 1.8 millimeters, but it is now up to 4.4 millimetres—[*Interruption*]

Dr. Gopeesingh: Annually?

Hon. Dr. S. Rambachan: Annually, which creates some very serious problems, Mr. Speaker, with respect to our industrial sites which are on the coastal areas and so on.

6.00 p.m.

And I know the Minister of Housing and the Environment is taking this into consideration already, and the Minister of Works and Transport has initiated studies in the coastal areas to begin to deal with these matters.

So, Mr. Speaker, collaboration therefore to deal with things like these, with sea level rise, natural disasters, we have going on in Trinidad right now FAHUM, which is a collaborative effort between the Governments of Trinidad and Tobago, Canada, the UK and the USA in order to simulate a serious earthquake that will take place, and how we might deal with such a disaster. That is part also of what we are doing in terms of our foreign relations.

And also, we are advancing candidatures for strategic international positions I just gave you one. We are advancing the candidature of Justice Lucky; we are advancing the candidature of Mr. Colin Granderson, and finally to support regional integration. And it is in furtherance of these objectives, Mr. Speaker, that Trinidad and Tobago maintains close relations with Venezuela, North America, the UK, India, South Africa, China and Japan, among the other European, African and Latin American States.

Mr. Speaker, you will be very happy to know, for example, that because of the relationship that we deepening with the OAS, the Secretary General of the OAS will himself be coming to Trinidad and Tobago for the June 13—14 Caribbean Investment Forum, because he sees it as an opportunity for him to market to all the OAS countries, the unification, the togetherness of the Caribbean region with Latin America. And it is this kind of approach that we are using that is demonstrating a new leadership in terms of foreign relations in Trinidad and Tobago.

This is what the Prime Minister is doing, Mr. Speaker. This is why so many business persons from Trinidad and Tobago are going at their own cost on these missions, because they want to be part of the new frontier, they want to be part of the new drive to create the new Trinidad and Tobago, the one that will be sustainable in terms of future success.

Mr. Speaker, countries of the Caribbean Community (Caricom), are key geostrategic partners and represent a principal export market for Trinidad and Tobago's manufacturers—we know that—and because of that, also, we know the importance of Caricom, and we know our responsibilities to Caricom. This is why I listed at the beginning of this final contribution all the good things, all the humanitarian things that we are doing.

Mr. Speaker, in consonance with the domestic thrust towards personal and public security, Trinidad and Tobago, as the country with lead responsibility for crime and security within Caricom, was at the forefront of advancing the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative between the Caribbean, Caricom and the Dominican Republic and the United States. The CBSI was launched, as you know, in May 2010 with a key strategic priority being to substantially reduce illicit trafficking. A safer country and region will always be pivotal to attracting new business, investments and tourists.

The hon. Member spoke about leadership. Trinidad and Tobago is committed to responding quickly and taking the leadership in the face of any set of circumstances that can have a negative impact, not only on this country, but upon the region. A case in point is the proposed increase in the UK's air passenger duty and the potentially adverse socio-economic impact that was supposed to have for the tourism industry. Because of the intervention of the Caribbean Tourism Organization and meetings that the Prime Minister held with the Ambassadors of the Caribbean, the High Commissioners in London, as you know, that has been put off until 2012. They have postponed the action until 2012.

Mr. Speaker, our High Commissioners are building strategic alliances, like the High Commissioner in the UK, in a combined effort to ensure that pivotal issues that affect this country, and affect the Caribbean, receive due attention by lawmakers in the UK. A great deal has been said about the appointment of trade ambassadors. Well, we have appointed two Ambassadors in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Mr. Mervyn Assam, who is responsible for trade and Ambassador Makandal Daager for cultural relations in Caricom, because we believe that if you can bring people together, you can integrate the community easier. If you bring cultures together—because cultures can unite. When people understand each other, they understand each other because they understand the cultures between each other.

Mr. Speaker, in that regard, Trinidad and Tobago is pursuing partial scope agreement with Panama, we are into the third stage of the negotiations, and we are also beginning to pursue one with Guatemala, and eventually with the Central American region as a whole. So, I want to assure my hon. friend for Point Fortin that this Government has a vision of what its foreign policy is all about, and where we are going with our foreign policy.

Mr. Speaker, Trinidad and Tobago is a small country, relatively young, 49 years, we will be 50 years old next year, but has long been able to influence global affairs. Our country gained international respect for its role in the conclusion of negotiations on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the establishment of the International Criminal Court. And more recently, the country succeeded in having a high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly together with our Caricom partners on non-communicable diseases, and that will be convened in September 2011.

The hon. Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago is also campaigning for a colloquium of women leaders in the margins of this year's UN General Assembly to address the plight of women and children, particularly girls, and Mr. Speaker, that is a very noble initiative because too many girls yet in the world are being left behind, even in this country. It is fortunate that we have been able to achieve universal primary and secondary school education, and now we are headed for early childhood education, and to achieve universal early childhood education and the Minister of Education in this Government is going to achieve that. [*Desk thumping*]

He is going to achieve that, and we will be among the first countries in the World, if not the first, to have achieved that. And General Powell said that. He said, in the fight against crime, you have to start from the time the babe is in the

womb because from the time the babe is in the womb, the babe is listening, and that is an established fact now. This is why women who are pregnant, doctors encourage them to listen to certain types of music or to eat certain types of food. Mr. Speaker, we are in the right direction in this Government with respect to early childhood education.

And therefore, when we pick up an issue like women's leadership and issues of women and girls, what we are doing is networking worldwide, not only for the interest of women in the Commonwealth or women in Latin America, but also for the women and girls in Trinidad and Tobago, and that is a noble objective. That is leaving a legacy of value, that is adding value to the lives of people so that they can contribute purposefully to the country in the future.

Mr. Speaker, Trinidad and Tobago also has held principal positions within the Organization of American States and is actively involved in the Association of Caribbean States. As I said, Trinidad and Tobago today is leading the Ministerial Council of the Association of Caribbean States which is headquartered in Port of Spain. And just for the information of the hon. Member for Diego Martin North/East, Trinidad and Tobago will host the third meeting of Ministers responsible for Public Security in the Americas (MISPA3) in November 2011, which presents an invaluable opportunity to secure hemispheric collaboration on initiatives aimed at improving public security. So that is part of our foreign relations also with respect to public security.

So, Mr. Speaker, though small, the strength of the nation's leadership and Trinidad and Tobago's championing of just causes across the globe enhances this country's competitiveness and attractiveness. Trinidad and Tobago's active role in regional, hemispheric and global affairs remains of primary importance.

Mr. Speaker, with all of this in mind, we are very, very happy this afternoon that the Opposition has joined us in supporting this Order that is before us, and I so beg to move. [*Desk thumping*]

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved:

That the Privileges and Immunities [CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS)] Order, 2011 be approved.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Housing and the Environment (Hon. Dr. Roodal Moonilal): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do stand adjourned to

Adjournment

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Friday, April 15, 2011 at 1.30 p.m., and to indicate to the House that on that afternoon it is the intention of the Government to deal with three matters: Motion No. 8 on the Order Paper; the Motion from the Member of Parliament for San Fernando East, addressing the issue of legal representation at a committee of the House. The second matter: the Census Bill, and the third matter on that day, the Financial Intelligence Unit (Amdt.) (No. 2) Bill, 2011.

I invite Members as well to make appropriate arrangements for a late sitting as the Leader of the House will also make appropriate arrangements.

Question put and agreed to.

House adjourned accordingly.

Adjourned at 6.11 p.m.