

Public Hearing Summary – Thirteenth Meeting

Wednesday March 22, 2023

Inquiry Subject:

Follow up on the implementation of the recommendations made in the Thirtieth Report of the Public Accounts Committee with reference to the concerns raised in Reports of the Auditor General on the Public Accounts of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago with specific reference to the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries.

Committee Members:

The following Committee Members were present for the meeting:

- Mr. Davendranath Tancoo, MP - Chairman
- Ms. Jearlean John - Vice-Chairman
- Ms. Charisse Seepersad - Member
- Dr. Amery Browne - Member
- Mr. Roger Monroe - Member
- Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy, MP - Member

Witnesses who appeared:

Auditor General's Department (AGD)

- Mr. Shiva Sinanan - Assistant Auditor General
- Mrs. Michelle Superville- Craigwell - Audit Executive I (Ag.)
- Mr. Mukesh Belgie - Audit Manager (Ag.)

Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries

- Mrs. Penelope Bradshaw-Niles - Permanent Secretary
- Mr. Marc Rudder - Director, Petroleum Operations Management Division
- Mr. Monty Beharry - Director of Minerals
- Ms. Candice De Gale - Manager, Energy Data Operations

Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries**Key Topics Discussed:**

1. The importance of oil and gas as a source of national revenue;
2. The challenges faced by Public Accounts Committee in attaining information from the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries (MEEI);
3. The status of progressive collaborative initiatives to curb illegal quarrying conducted by the MEEI, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) and the Commissioner of State Lands (COSL) since 2019;
4. The work of the Multi-Agency Taskforce on illegal quarrying established in 2019 and the legal action taken to date against persons involved in illegal quarrying;
5. The reasons for the delays in the MEEI procuring technology required to detect illegal quarrying;
6. The MEEI's procurement of services for the conduct of an aerial survey of lands to identify areas affected by illegal quarrying;
7. The status of the MEEI's review of the Minerals Regulations with respect to streamlining the quarry licensing process;
8. The MEEI's investments since 2019 in research on new methods or technologies that could assist in locating illegal quarrying;
9. The extent to which the findings and recommendations in the Auditor General's Reports influence the MEEI's initiatives and;
10. The obstacles to the MEEI's implementation of the AGD's recommendations;
11. The status of the MEEI's implementation of the recommendations made in the Production Verification Committee (PVC)'s Production Verification Report;
12. The status of and challenges encountered by the MEEI in implementing and operating the Energy Data Hub System;
13. The AGD's expansion of the audit scope to include Exploration and Production Licenses;
14. The penalties incurred for breach of license;
15. The MEEI's audit of Production Sharing Contracts;
16. The MEEI's strengthening of its staffing since 2019 through the recruitment of Minerals Inspectors, Petroleum Inspectors, geo-scientists and engineers;
17. The MEEI's determination of its human resource needs;
18. The sum spent by the MEEI on training for its technical officers since 2019;
19. The status of the digitalization of the MEEI's operations;
20. The ways in which the Ministry ensures that gas losses are within the agreed limits as set in the production contracts; and
21. The challenges faced by the MEEI in retaining trained staffed due to the competitive nature of the energy sector.

View the Hearing:

Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries

The hearing can be viewed on our YouTube page via the following link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zG-YzEIwqUI>

PAC Secretariat

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