



SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

ORDER PAPER

THIRTEENTH SITTING, FOURTH SESSION (2023/2024)

TWELFTH PARLIAMENT

MONDAY MARCH 25, 2024 AT 1:30 P.M.

1. PRAYERS
2. OATH OR AFFIRMATION
3. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT
4. BILLS BROUGHT FROM THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
5. PETITIONS
6. PAPERS
7. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES
 - (i) The Seventh Report of the Joint Select Committee on Social Services and Public Administration, Fourth Session (2023/2024), Twelfth Parliament, on an examination of the state of the regulation and administration of public and private early childhood institutions in Trinidad and Tobago.
(By Senator Dr. Paul Richards)
8. URGENT QUESTIONS
9. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWER APPEAR IN THE APPENDIX

Questions for Oral Answer

Question No. 22 to the Minister of Education

(By Senator Wade Mark)

Given May 2023 reports of a major CSEC examination leak from an examination Centre in Jamaica and the subsequent investigation into same, can the Minister advise as to the following:

- (i) has said investigation been completed;
- (ii) if the answer to (i) is in the affirmative, what were the results of said investigation; and
- (iii) what measures are being taken to address this breach; or
- (iv) if the answer to (i) is in the negative, what are the reasons for the delay in completion?

Question No. 23 to the Minister of National Security

(By Senator Wade Mark)

Given reports of an increase in digital gender-based violence and child abuse in this country, can the Minister indicate what measures are being taken to address this situation?

Question No. 24 to the Minister of Public Utilities

(By Senator Wade Mark)

Given that solar power is relatively expensive notwithstanding reports of the public's willingness to utilise same for daily residential needs, can the Minister advise as to what action, if any, is being taken to reduce the cost of solar power to residential and commercial users?

Question No. 76 to the Minister of Finance

(By Senator Damian Lyder)

In relation to the Value Added Tax (VAT) refunds still owed to businesses, can the Minister provide an update on the following:

- (i) the value of VAT refunds still outstanding as at January 31, 2024; and
- (ii) the average monthly accrual in this debt between January 2020 and January 2024?

Question No. 77 to the Minister of Finance

(By Senator Damian Lyder)

Given that Section 35(3) of the Value Added Tax (VAT) Act Chap.75:06 states that all VAT refunds that remain outstanding for a period longer than six months shall bear interest at the rate of one per cent per month or part thereof, can the Minister indicate the total value paid as a result of this requirement for the period January to December 2023?

Question No. 78 to the Minister of Trade and Industry

(By Senator Damian Lyder)

Given that the Phoenix Park Industrial Estate was developed with financing from the Export-Import Bank of China at approximately US\$104 million, can the Minister provide the terms and conditions of the loan agreement signed between the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Export-Import Bank of China?

Question No. 84 to the Minister of National Security

(By Senator Sunity Maharaj)

In relation to vacant positions in the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment and the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard, can the Minister provide the following:

- (i) the number of vacant positions by rank; and
- (ii) the number of officers in Acting positions?

Question No. 87 to the Minister of National Security

(By Senator Hazel Thompson-Ahye)

Can the Minister advise:

- (i) how many persons were charged for violations of the law with regard to public indecency in January and February 2024; and
- (ii) what measures are being taken to ensure that the laws governing public indecency are enforced?

10. REQUESTS FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE ON DEFINITE MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
11. STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS OR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES
12. PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS
13. INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

14. MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE SENATE AND MOVED BY A MINISTER
15. PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Motions:

- (i) **WHEREAS** it is provided by section 9 of the Beekeeping and Bee Products Act, Chap. 67:53 (hereinafter referred to as “the Act”) that the Minister may make Regulations, *inter alia*, restricting and regulating the importation or exportation of bees, bee products and bee supplies into or out of Trinidad and Tobago;

AND WHEREAS it is also provided by section 9 of the Act that Regulations made under that section shall be subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament;

AND WHEREAS the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries has on the 24th day of November, 2023 made the Beekeeping and Bee Products (Amendment) Regulations, 2023;

AND WHEREAS it is expedient that the Beekeeping and Bee Products (Amendment) Regulations, 2023 now be affirmed;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Beekeeping and Bee Products (Amendment) Regulations, 2023 be approved.

(By the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries)

- (ii) **WHEREAS** section 13(1) of the Trinidad and Tobago Revenue Authority Act, 2021 (Act No. 17 of 2021) provides, *inter alia*, that the Minister shall, by Notification subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament, appoint the Director General and such number of Deputy Directors General of the Authority as are required;

AND WHEREAS the Minister of Finance has, by Notification dated the 15th day of March, 2024, appointed **Mrs. Patsy Latchman-Atterbury** to the office of Director General of the Trinidad and Tobago Revenue Authority with effect from the date of her assumption of duty in that office;

AND WHEREAS it is expedient to approve the Notification:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Notification of the appointment of **Mrs. Patsy Latchman-Atterbury** to the office of Director General of the Trinidad and Tobago Revenue Authority be approved.

(By the Minister of Finance)

- (iii) **WHEREAS** section 13(1) of the Trinidad and Tobago Revenue Authority Act, 2021 (Act No. 17 of 2021) provides, *inter alia*, that the Minister shall, by Notification subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament, appoint the Director General and such number of Deputy Directors General of the Authority as are required;

AND WHEREAS the Minister of Finance has, by Notification dated the 15th day of March, 2024, appointed **Mrs. Helen Thomas-Brown** to the office of Deputy Director General—Domestic Tax of the Trinidad and Tobago Revenue Authority with effect from the date of her assumption of duty in that office;

AND WHEREAS it is expedient to approve the Notification:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Notification of the appointment of **Mrs. Helen Thomas-Brown** to the office of Deputy Director General–Domestic Tax of the Trinidad and Tobago Revenue Authority be approved.

(By the Minister of Finance)

- (iv) **WHEREAS** section 13(1) of the Trinidad and Tobago Revenue Authority Act, 2021 (Act No. 17 of 2021) provides, *inter alia*, that the Minister shall, by Notification subject to affirmative resolution of Parliament, appoint the Director General and such number of Deputy Directors General of the Authority as are required;

AND WHEREAS the Minister of Finance has, by Notification dated the 15th day of March, 2024, appointed **Mr. Riad Juman** to the office of Deputy Director General –Customs and Excise of the Trinidad and Tobago Revenue Authority with effect from the date of his assumption of duty in that office;

AND WHEREAS it is expedient to approve the Notification:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Notification of the appointment of **Mr. Riad Juman** to the office of Deputy Director General–Customs and Excise of the Trinidad and Tobago Revenue Authority be approved.

(By the Minister of Finance)

Bills Second Reading:

- (i) A Bill entitled, ‘An Act to amend the Property Tax Act, Chap. 76:04’.
(By the Minister of Finance)
- (ii) A Bill entitled, ‘An Act to establish the Private Security Service Authority and to regulate the private security industry and for other related matters’.
(By the Minister of National Security)
- (iii) A Bill entitled, ‘An Act to amend the Supplemental Police Act, Chap. 15:02’.
(By the Minister of National Security)

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS

Motions:

- (i) **WHEREAS** the Commissions of Enquiry Act, Chapter 19:01 provides for the establishment of Commissions to manage the conduct of enquiries into public officers, departments and matters of public welfare;

AND WHEREAS Commissions of Enquiry are recognised as an important tool for social investigation in contemporary society, an effective mechanism for delving into and ameliorating matters of public concern;

AND WHEREAS successive Government administrations have failed to adequately address public concerns which have arisen from time to time on whether the Commissions of Enquiry in Trinidad and Tobago have been effectively and efficiently carrying out their mandate;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Senate call on the Government to review the Commissions of Enquiry Act, Chap. 19:01 and the public inquiry process in Trinidad and Tobago with a view to effecting comprehensive reform of the Act and thereby improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the public inquiry process.

(By Senator Anthony Vieira, SC)

- (ii) **WHEREAS** the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Chap. 1:01 entrenches the principle of the Separation of Powers between the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary, which ensures the protection of citizens and a system of checks and balances in the exercise of power;

AND WHEREAS the Constitution provides protection to all constitutionally enshrined offices and institutions;

AND WHEREAS the actions of the Government in its engagement with constitutionally enshrined offices and institutions have caused public unease and concerns;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Senate calls on the Government to reaffirm its commitment to the principles and the practice of democracy in Trinidad and Tobago.

(By Senator Jayanti Lutchmedial-Ramdial)

- (iii) **WHEREAS** the Steelpan was inspired into creation in Trinidad and Tobago, which was recognised in the United Nations General Assembly's proclamation of August 11th as World Steelpan Day;

AND WHEREAS through the inventiveness, dedication and intelligence of generations of citizens, the Steelpan now stands as a powerful symbol of cultural identity and a source of national pride for citizens resident within and outside of Trinidad and Tobago, and occupies a distinctive place among the musical instruments of the world;

AND WHEREAS citizens widely revere the Steelpan as the national musical instrument of Trinidad and Tobago yet the recognition of the Steelpan as the national musical instrument of Trinidad and Tobago has not been codified in law;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Steelpan be declared the national instrument of Trinidad and Tobago;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a Joint Select Committee of Parliament be established to determine the best mechanism for giving meaningful effect to the declaration of the Steelpan as the national instrument of Trinidad and Tobago.

(By Senator Sunity Maharaj)

- (iv) **WHEREAS** the Central Bank's CLICO Resolution Plan, 2015 identified the sale of the Colonial Life Insurance Company's ("CLICO") shareholding in Methanol Holdings (International) Limited ("MHIL") as a means of settling the Company's outstanding debt to the State, which totals approximately TT\$1.1B as at December 2023;

AND WHEREAS MHIL was jointly owned by CLICO and Consolidated Energy Limited (CEL), whereby CEL held the right of first refusal to purchase the MHIL shares, pursuant to the Shareholders' Agreement;

AND WHEREAS CEL initially refused offers by CLICO to purchase said shares in 2017, 2018 and 2022, and the shares were subsequently sold to CEL in the last quarter of 2023 at approximately US\$337M;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate call on the Government to table, within fourteen (14) days, all relevant documents to the agreement between CLICO and CEL for the sale of the MHIL shares, including, but not limited to, any acquisition agreements, valuations and legal opinions;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate call on the Government to commission an independent forensic audit into said sale agreement, should these documents not be provided within the above stated period.

(By Senator Wade Mark)

- (v) **WHEREAS** the 2018 Green Paper on the National Policy on Gender and Development provides a framework for the inclusion of gender perspectives in all activities of Government and civil society aimed at promoting the full and equal participation of men and women in the development process;

AND WHEREAS the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognises the centrality of gender equality to development and as a prerequisite for progress across all its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of which SDG 5: Gender Equality, includes a specific indicator (5.c.1) that commits countries to developing systems to track and make public, budgetary allocations for gender equality;

AND WHEREAS there is a fragmented implementation of gender mainstreaming across policy areas and Government institutions resulting in a gender blind budgetary processes;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate call on the Government to adopt and strengthen policies and legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate call on the Government to table legislative proposals that provide for the elimination of gender inequalities among adults, adolescents and children in the national budgetary process.

(By Senator Wade Mark)

**Keiba Jacob Mottley
Clerk of the Senate (Ag.)**

**Senate Secretariat
Office of the Parliament
The Parliamentary Complex
The Red House
Abercromby Street
PORT OF SPAIN**

March 20, 2024

ORDER PAPER MONDAY MARCH 25, 2024
QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN ANSWER

***Question No. 64 to the Minister of Energy and Energy Industries**

(By Senator Wade Mark)

With respect to the oil and gas reserves audits of the upstream energy companies operating in Trinidad and Tobago, can the Minister advise:

- (i) when was the last audit conducted;
- (ii) which entity conducted the audit identified at (i);
- (iii) what were the results of the audit, including the proven, probable and possible reserves in each category of oil and gas?

(Answer due by 19.03.2024)

Question No. 81 to the Minister of Public Utilities

(By Senator Sunity Maharaj)

Given ongoing disruptions in the water supply to domestic users and the projection of a drier-than-usual dry season, can the Minister provide a detailed list of the commercial water companies that have been granted licenses to abstract water from surface, ground and coastal water sources, including the following information:

- (i) the dates of the award of each licence;
- (ii) the duration of each licence;
- (iii) the daily quota of water permitted for abstraction by each company;
- (iv) the rate applied to each company and the formula used to determine each rate;
- (v) the total annual volume of water abstracted by each company for the period 2010 to 2023 and the associated annual revenue accrued to the Water and Sewerage Authority;
- (vi) the status and reliability of installed equipment for monitoring water abstraction by each company; and
- (vii) details of the policy for adjusting the water quotas of commercial water companies during periods of drought and other disruptions in the public water supply?

(Answer due by 30.03.2024)

Question No. 82 to the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries

(By Senator Sunity Maharaj)

Will the Minister please provide an update on the 1,282.1073 hectares of land formerly owned by the Orange Grove National Company Limited indicating the following:

- (i) the acreage of land that has been leased or otherwise disposed of;
- (ii) the names of the individuals and/or companies to which said parcels of land have been leased or otherwise disposed of;
- (iii) in each case identified at (ii), the acreage of land involved, the land use conditions attached, the duration of the lease, the rate applied and the conditions for transfer of the leases to other parties or the use of property by other parties;
- (iv) whether any of the leased land is being used for purposes other than that stipulated by the relevant leases;
- (v) the percentage of the 1,282.1073 hectares that is currently used for agricultural production by the State
- (vi) the production output of the percentage of land identified at (v); and
- (vii) the Government's plans, if any, to use the unleased land or any part thereof for purposes other than agriculture?

(Answer due by 30.03.2024)

* Question No. 64 was deferred for two weeks on 19.03.2024

Question No. 83 to the Minister of Education

(By Senator Sunity Maharaj)

Can the Minister provide a detailed list of all Government and Government-assisted schools whose students have been relocated to alternative facilities including the following:

- (i) the current number of students relocated in each affected school;
- (ii) the reason(s) for the relocation of each student;
- (iii) the facilities to which students have been relocated;
- (iv) the respective dates of relocation;
- (v) the scheduled date for the resumption of classes at the affected schools; and
- (vi) an explanation in each case identified at (iv) where there is no scheduled date?

(Answer due by 30.03.2024)

Question No. 85 to the Minister of National Security

(By Senator Sunity Maharaj)

In relation to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, can the Minister of National Security provide the following information:

- (i) the current composition of the Criminal Injuries Board;
- (ii) the annual number of applications for compensation received by the Board since its inception;
- (iii) the number of victims of crime who have been granted financial compensation since its inception;
- (iv) the annual sums of compensation paid to the recipients identified at (iii);
- (v) the crimes committed against the victims identified at (iii);
- (vi) the geographical distribution of recipients?

(Answer due by 30.03.2024)

Question No. 86 to the Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister – Gender and Child Affairs

(By Senator Sunity Maharaj)

With regard to the gender diversity of Public Sector Boards, including State Enterprises, Service Commissions, Statutory Authorities and other bodies, can the Minister provide the following:

- (i) a breakdown by gender of each Board; and
- (ii) an outline of the Government's gender policy that guides appointments to Public Sector boards?

(Answer due by 30.03.2024)

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TWELFTH PARLIAMENT

MONDAY MARCH 25, 2024 AT 1:30 P.M.

NOTICE OF URGENT QUESTIONS

The under-mentioned Question which has been accepted by the Vice-President in accordance with Standing Order 25 is hereby forwarded for the attention of the Minister concerned.

1. TO THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

(By Senator Wade Mark)

In light of the recent million-dollar WASA water trucking scam unearthed in the rural community of Morne Diablo, can the Minister indicate what steps will be taken to rectify the situation and ensure residents receive an uninterrupted water supply?

**Keiba Jacob Mottley
Clerk of the Senate (Ag.)**

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