



PARLIAMENT
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
(ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT- 2015/2016 SESSION)

FIRST REPORT
OF THE
JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE
ON
GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES

Ordered to be printed

TOGETHER WITH THE MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

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THE COMMITTEE

ESTABLISHMENT and MANDATE

1.1 Standing Orders 98 and 108 of the Senate and the House of Representatives, respectively, establish a Joint Select Committee on Government Assurances with the following mandate:

(1) The Committee on Government Assurances shall scrutinize the assurances, promises and undertakings given by Ministers from time to time on the floor of the House and report on-

(a) the extent to which such assurances, promises and undertakings have been implemented; and

(b) when such assurances, promises and undertakings have been implemented and whether such implementation has taken place within the minimum time necessary for the purpose.

MEMBERSHIP

1.2 At the sitting of the House of Representatives on Friday November 13, 2015 the following persons were appointed to serve on the Committee:

- Mrs. Bridgid Annisette-George, MP
- Mr. Adrian Leonce, MP
- Mr. Anthony Garcia, MP
- Dr. Surujrattan Rambachan, MP

1.3 At a sitting of the Senate on Tuesday November 17, 2015, the following persons were appointed to serve on the Committee:

- Ms. Christine Kangaloo
- Mr. Foster Cummings
- Ms. Khadijah Ameen
- Mr. H.R. Ian Roach

CHAIRMANSHIP

1.4 Pursuant to Standing Orders 99(8) of the Senate and 109(8) of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House were designated as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively.

SECRETARIAT SUPPORT

1.5 Secretariat support to the Committee was provided by:

- Mrs. Nataki Atiba-Dilchan - Secretary
- Mr. Johnson Greenidge - Assistant Secretary

MEETINGS

1.6 The Committee held one (1) meeting on Friday January 29, 2016. The Minutes of this meeting is at **Appendix 1**.

REPORT

2.1 In accordance with Standing Orders 104(3) and 114(3) of the Senate and the House of Representatives, respectively, the Committee wishes to make a report in relation to its powers, functions and proceedings.

2.2 At its First Meeting held on January 29, 2016, the Committee acknowledged that it was the first of its kind for the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. It was therefore necessary to formulate its own methods of operation. In the determination of the approach to be taken, the Committee considered a research document on the functioning of similar committees in other jurisdictions.

2.3 The Committee has decided that the following would be the key elements of its procedures of operation:

- the adoption of a list of standard phrases that indicate an assurance
- the maintenance of an Assurances Ledger
- the issuance of Notices of Assurances to Ministers/Permanent Secretaries

- requests for written responses/ updates on the implementation of assurances
- the issuance of reminders, where necessary
- site visits, if necessary
- periodic reporting to the Parliament

RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 In view of the foregoing, the Committee wishes the House to:

- i. take note of the procedures that will be utilized by the Committee in carrying out its mandate; and
- ii. consider and approve the List of Standard Expressions which are indicative of an assurance, as at **Appendix II**.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Kangaloo
Chair

February 23, 2016

**MINUTES
OF
PROCEEDINGS**

**MINUTES OF THE 1st MEETING OF THE
JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES
HELD IN THE ARNOLD THOMASOS ROOM (EAST), LEVEL 6, OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENT
TOWER D, THE PORT OF SPAIN INTERNATIONAL WATERFRONT CENTRE,
1A WRIGHTSON ROAD, PORT OF SPAIN ON
FRIDAY JANUARY 29, 2016**

PRESENT

Ms. Christine Kangaloo	-	Chair
Mrs. Brigid Annisette-George,MP	-	Vice-Chair
Dr. Surujrattan Rambachan, MP	-	Member
Mr. Adrian Leonce, MP	-	Member
Ms. Khadijah Ameen	-	Member
Mr. Foster Cummings	-	Member
Mr. H.R. Ian Roach	-	Member
Mrs. Nataki Atiba-Dilchan	-	Secretary
Mr. Johnson Greenidge	-	Assistant Secretary

ABSENT/EXCUSED

Mr. Anthony Garcia, MP	-	Member
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COMMENCEMENT

1.1 The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m. when a provisional quorum was present. The Chair welcomed all Members to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

1.2 The Chair indicated that Mr. Anthony Garcia, MP had asked to be excused from the meeting.

1.3 Members were informed that in accordance with Standing Orders 99 (8) of the Senate and 109(8) of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House were designated as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

2.1 The Committee agreed to a quorum of four (4) persons, inclusive of the Chair, with representation from each House.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

3.1 The Chairman reminded Members that the Terms of Reference were as follows: (HOR Standing Order 108 and Senate Standing Order 98)

(1) The Committee on Government Assurances shall scrutinize the assurances, promises and undertakings given by Ministers from time to time on the floor of the House and report on–

(a) the extent to which such assurances, promises and undertakings have been implemented; and

(b) when such assurances, promises and undertakings have been implemented and whether such implementation has taken place within the minimum time necessary for the purpose.

THE WAY FORWARD

4.1 The Chair initiated discussions on the way forward by drawing the attention of Members to a document, which was compiled based on research done on similar committees, in other jurisdictions.

Definition

4.2 The Committee Members agreed to the adoption of the definition of “**assurance**” as utilized by the National Assembly of Seychelles, because of its clarity, as follows:

“an assurance is a statement made to the House in which the Minister/Parliamentary Secretary promises to undertake an action or implement a policy or new plan.”

4.3 Members also agreed that Question Time, Debates on Bills, Ministerial Statements and the raising of Matters on the Adjournment, would be the occasions for the recording of assurances.

Standard Expressions

4.4 After much discussion, the Committee agreed that the phrases attached in Appendix I would be recorded as the intent of a Minister/Parliamentary Secretary giving an assurance to the Parliament.

Process for recording, review and follow up and reporting

4.5 The Committee agreed to the following steps in the execution of its mandate:

- The Committee Secretariat will review Verbatim Reports of Proceedings for statements of Assurances given by Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries.

- Statements will be recorded in e-format in an “Assurances Register” with details on Date/ House /By whom/Text of the Assurance/Follow-up Comments
- Ministers will be advised by Notice, within fourteen (14) days of the sitting, that their statements have been recorded as an Assurance.
- Ministries are given twenty-one (21) calendar days to provide an update on the implementation of the assurance.
- If after twenty-one (21) days an update is not received from a Ministry, one (1) reminder will be sent. If a response to the reminder is not forthcoming after seven (7) days, this will form part of the Committee’s report to the House.
- The Committee may also follow up by carrying out onsite visits to ascertain that an assurance or project is completed/implemented, in accordance with information received.
- The Committee will table at least one (1) report each session to the Parliament on the status of the implementation of assurances.

4.6 The Committee agreed, that given that this was a new committee, time was needed to observe this initial procedure at work. The Committee agreed to review the processes, if necessary.

OTHER BUSINESS

Committee Report

5.1 The Committee agreed that it was necessary to table a report in the Parliament with regard to the decisions taken, and to have the procedures formally acknowledged.

5.2 It was agreed that this draft report would be circulated for Members comments within one week.

Next Meeting

5.3 Members agreed that the Committee should meet at two-month intervals. The next meeting would be scheduled for the last week in March on a day that was convenient to Members.

ADJOURNMENT

6.1 The Chairman thanked Members and the meeting was adjourned.

6.2 The adjournment was taken at 11:43 am.

I certify that these Minutes are true and correct.

Chair

Secretary

Monday February 01, 2016

**LIST OF
STANDARD
EXPRESSIONS
WHICH INDICATE
AN ASSURANCE**

- I GIVE THE ASSURANCE THAT
- I GIVE THE UNDERTAKING THAT
- I GIVE THE COMMITMENT THAT
- I SHALL INFORM THE HONOURABLE MEMBER.
- WE WILL PUT THE MATTER IN THE SHAPE OF A RESOLUTION.
- THE MATTER WILL BE CONSIDERED AT THECONFERENCE/MEETING TO BE HELD ON
- THE MATTER WILL BE TAKEN UP WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF.....
- A COPY OF THE REPORT WHEN FINALIZED WILL BE PLACED IN THE PARLIAMENT LIBRARY.
- I SHALL SUPPLY IT TO THE HONOURABLE MEMBER.
- ALL THE POINTS RAISED BY VARIOUS MEMBERS WILL BE CONSIDERED AND THE RESULT WILL BE COMMUNICATED TO EACH MEMBER.
- THE INFORMATION IS BEING COLLECTED AND WILL BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE.