



4th Report

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON

FINANCE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

on an

**inquiry into the efficiency and effectiveness of the
Central Statistical Office (CSO)**

SECOND SESSION (2021/2022) OF THE 12TH PARLIAMENT

An electronic copy of this report can be found on the Parliament website:

The Joint Select Committee on Finance and Legal Affairs

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OF THE

**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS**

ON

**AN INQUIRY INTO THE EFFICIENCY AND
EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CENTRAL STATISTICAL
OFFICE (CSO)**

Date Laid: HoR:

Senate:

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Term
CARTAC	Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Centre
CSO	Central Statistical Office
CSSP	Continuous Sample Survey of Population
e-GDDS	Enhanced General Data Dissemination System
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MPD	Export Import Bank of Trinidad and Tobago
NSIB	National Statistical Institute Bill
NSITT	National Statistical Institute of Trinidad and Tobago
NSO	National Statistical Organisation
NSS	National Statistical Units
ODIN	Open Data Inventory
RPI	Retail Price Index

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MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE



Mrs. Hazel Thompson-Ahye
Chairman



Mr. Marvin Gonzales, MP
Vice Chairman



Mr. Keith Scotland, MP



Ms. Jayanti Lutchmedial



Mr. Laurence Hislop



Mr. Saddam Hosein, MP



Mr. Terrence Deyalsingh, MP



Mr. Hassel Bacchus

THE COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MANDATE AND ESTABLISHMENT

1. Section 66A of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago declares, that not later than three months after the first meeting of the House of Representatives, the Parliament shall appoint Joint Select Committees to inquire into and report to both Houses in respect of Government Ministries, Municipal Corporations, Statutory Authorities, State Enterprises and Service Commissions, in relation to their administration, the manner of exercise of their powers, their methods of functioning and any criteria adopted by them in the exercise of their powers and functions.
2. Pursuant to the foregoing provision, motions approved in the House of Representatives and Senate on November 20, 2020 and November 17, 2020, respectively, the **Joint Select Committee on Finance and Legal Affairs** was established.
3. Standing Order 91 of the Senate and 101 of the House of Representatives outline the general functions of a Committee of this nature. They are as follows:
 - a. to examine Bills and review all legislation relating to the relevant Ministries, Departments or Bodies or as may be referred to it by the House;
 - b. to investigate, inquire into, and report on all matters relating to the mandate, management, activities, administration and operations of the assigned Ministries, Departments or Bodies;
 - c. to study the programme and policy objectives of Ministries, departments or bodies and the effectiveness of the implementation;
 - d. to assess and monitor the performance of Ministries, Departments and Bodies and the manner of the exercise of their powers;
 - e. to investigate and inquire into all matters relating to the assigned Ministries, Departments and Bodies as they may deem necessary, or as may be referred to them by the House or a Minister; and
 - f. to make reports and recommendations to the House as often as possible, including recommendations of proposed legislation.

SPECIFIC AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

4. The Joint Select Committee on Finance and Legal Affairs is mandated to inquire into areas related to Finance, Planning, Trade, Tobago Affairs, Office of the Prime Minister, Attorney General, Justice and Legal Affairs as listed in Appendix IV and V of the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives and Senate respectively.

POWERS OF THE COMMITTEE

5. Standing Orders 101 of the Senate and 111 of the House of Representatives delineate the general powers of the Committee which include:
 - a. to send for persons, papers and records;
 - b. to sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the House;
 - c. to adjourn from place to place;
 - d. to report from time to time;
 - e. to appoint specialist advisers either to supply information which is not otherwise readily available, or to elucidate matters of complexity within the Committee's order of reference;
 - f. to communicate with any other Committee on matters of common interest; and
 - g. to meet concurrently with any other Committee for the purpose of deliberating, taking evidence or considering draft reports.

MEMBERSHIP

6. The Committee comprises the following members:
 - i. Mrs. Hazel Thompson-Ahye – Chairman
 - ii. Mr. Marvin Gonzales, MP – Vice-Chairman
 - iii. Mr. Keith Scotland, MP
 - iv. Mr. Dinesh Rambally, MP
 - v. Mr. Terrence Deyalsingh, MP
 - vi. Ms. Jayanti Lutchmedial
 - vii. Mr. Hassel Bacchus
 - viii. Mr. Laurence Hislop¹

¹ Mr. Rambharat was replaced by Mr. Laurence Hislop w.e.f. June 14, 2022

SECRETARIAT SUPPORT

7. The following officers were assigned to assist the Committee:
 - i. Mr. Julien Ogilvie - Secretary
 - ii. Mr. Brian Lucio - Assistant Secretary
 - iii. Ms. Terriann Baker - Research Assistant
 - iv. Ms. Ria Rampersad - Research Assistant

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. At its 7th Meeting held on November 19, 2021, the Committee resolved to pursue an inquiry into the efficiency and effectiveness of the Central Statistical Office (CSO).
2. The inquiry process involved the collation of relevant oral and written evidence from primary and secondary stakeholders as well as from the public. In this regard, the Committee received evidence from the following stakeholders in public:
 - i The Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD); and
 - ii The Central Statistical Office (CSO).
3. Data is a key component of the public policy cycle and is the evidential basis which informs the decision to justify and adopt policyⁱ. Considering the central role of data in policy articulation and against the backdrop of increasing scrutiny in the overall performance of the CSO, the Committee thought it apt to undertake an inquiry into the organisation's efficiency and effectiveness.
4. Based on the aforementioned evidence, the Committee was able to gain a holistic overview of the variables affecting the CSO's level of performance, the efforts made by the organisation to re-calibrate and proposed strategies for the way forward.
5. Some of the issues which the Committee took into account were as follows:
 - i. The CSO was constrained from producing at its full potential due to a lack of human resources and funding to expand the range of data that it collects and the statistical analyses that it is able to perform;
 - ii. The decision to collect specific categories of data is often the result of a policy directive based on governance criteria and is often limited in scope due to staff and resource limitations;

- iii. The CSO had actively acknowledged its shortcomings and was making concerted efforts to improve its productive capacity through ICT enhancements, website upgrades and observance of international standards to make data transparent, consistent and accessible;
- iv. Due to the absence of more forceful measures to penalise non-compliance, the CSO was reliant on a persuasive and conciliatory approach to access data from its stakeholders;
- v. Public trust and education on the value of data was a function of the CSO's portfolio that the organisation must actively seek to enhance;
- vi. The cost of conducting surveys to obtain primary data was an expensive undertaking hence the preference for use of administrative data, however, this authority cannot be granted without the transition to the NSITT; and
- vii. The NSITT would provide for an improved organisational structure, opportunities for staff training and capacity building and enhanced authority to collect data but is hindered by the special majority required in Parliament to pass the legislation.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are key recommendations proffered by the Committee:

- A. The details of the official protocol to guide the collection of data by CSO staff should be communicated to the Committee in the Ministerial Response of the Ministry of Planning and Development which becomes due within sixty (60) days of this report being laid in both Houses of Parliament.**
- B. There may be need to conduct some type of job evaluation of the operational and technical job positions within the CSO with a view to determining whether the current qualifications and skills that are documented for positions are properly aligned to the actual job responsibilities.**
- C. Although the human resources and technological deficiencies existing within the CSO requires urgent attention, the Ministry of Planning and Development should:
 - consider conducting an evaluation of the qualification criteria used to employ staff to ensure that it meets current needs; and**
 - provide in the Ministerial Response, an update on all the initiatives taken to improve the human resource capacity and technological infrastructure of the CSO.****
- D. The Committee advises that the CSO prioritise the employment of professional statistical staff in the short-term as barring the transition to the NSITT, this would have a significant improvement on the productive capacity of the organisation.**

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

- i. National Statistical Units (NSS) should provide a cohesive and context specific system of data collection that is guided by specific nomenclatures. A statistical unit or body should also operate from a strong policy framework. This system works both ways as statistics also inform policy and decision-making. However, a statistical unit must balance the integrity of the statistics with that of total policy relevance. Thus, statistical data collection should be timely, consistent, revised to a minimum and sufficiently analysedⁱⁱ.
- ii. The collection and analysis of statistical data should be guided by:
 - Accuracy and objectivity;
 - Professional and ethical standards;
 - Publicised methodologies;
 - Transparency; and
 - Pre-determined times for publication of data.
- iii. Given that high quality, independent and official statistics are needed to support development, the role of a national statistical system is recognisedⁱⁱⁱ. To effectively fulfil its mandate, an NSS will require a strong legal basis, institutional coordination and common framework of standards.

The Central Statistical Office (CSO)

- iv. The CSO, a Division of the Ministry of Planning and Development, is charged with the responsibility of conducting censuses in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago as well as collecting, compiling, analysing and publishing statistical information relating to all social and economic activities therein^{iv}. The CSO is governed by the provisions of the Statistics Act, Chapter 19:02^v. The entity's core functions are data collection, data processing, data dissemination, marketing, monitoring and evaluation, consultancy and training and statistical coordination^{vi}.

The proposed National Statistical Institute of Trinidad and Tobago (NSITT)

- v. The National Statistical Institute of Trinidad and Tobago, Bill, 2018 (NSIB) was introduced in the House of Representatives on June 20, 2018 after being brought forward from the previous session^{vii}. The intent of the NSIB was to repeal and replace the Statistics Act Chap. 19:02 and to establish a National Statistical Institute of Trinidad and Tobago (NSITT). The bill lapsed at the close of the 11th Parliament^{viii} and was not re-introduced.

- vi. The NSIB would have provided for the following^{ix}:
 - a. **Clause 6-** Creation of a body corporate to be known as the National Statistical Institute of Trinidad and Tobago;
 - b. **Clause 7-** An expansion of the functions as follows:
 - Collecting, compiling, abstracting and analysing statistics and disseminating or authorising such dissemination of official statistics;
 - Conducting of censuses and surveys;
 - Ensuring compliance with standards for statistical purposes;
 - Collaborating with individuals, firms, partnerships, associations, unincorporated bodies and companies;
 - Promoting, developing, maintaining, directing the operations and monitoring and evaluating the functioning of the National Statistical System;
 - Liaising with other countries and regional and international organisations on statistical matters; and
 - Analysing data and providing reports for public information.
 - c. **Clause 8-** Provided for the establishment of a **Board of the NSITT with a Director General** who had a minimum of 10 years' experience in Statistics. The input of the Board was to be independent of the work of the NSITT; and

- d. **Clause 11-** Provided for the establishment of ad-hoc committees to be appointed by the Director General based on the need for further advisory input.
- vii. One of the more noteworthy proposed changes that could occur in the transition from the CSO to the NSITT is the ability of the new organisation to access confidential data, a power not previously assigned. This issue was identified as being the major impediment to the realisation of the transition. This concern and others related to the CSO's performance received an in depth overview by the Committee which were directed by the objectives outlined below.

OBJECTIVES

- viii. In view of the above, the Committee agreed that its inquiry will be guided by the following objectives:
1. **To assess the effectiveness of the CSO in fulfilling its mandate to provide relevant and current data for national policy development;**
 2. **To determine the existing gaps in the creation of a modern, relevant and objective national statistical institute; and**
 3. **To evaluate the change management systems and procedures that are proposed to manage the transition to the proposed National Statistical Institute.**

CONDUCT OF THE INQUIRY

- ix. At its Meeting held on February 18, 2022, the Committee convened a *Public Hearing* with the following entities:
- The Ministry of Planning and Development; and
 - The Central Statistical Office.

The Minutes of the Meetings during which the public hearings were held are attached as Appendix I and the Verbatim Notes as Appendix II.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OBJECTIVE 1: TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CSO IN FULFILLING ITS MANDATE TO PROVIDE RELEVANT AND CURRENT DATA FOR NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Overview of the Central Statistical

1. The CSO was established by the Statistics Act, Chap. 19:02 and is mandated to “organize a coordinated scheme of social and economic statistics relating to Trinidad and Tobago.” It is under this influence that the CSO was able to request data from stakeholders in accordance with internationally recognised categorisations and classifications.
2. Whilst the CSO is Trinidad and Tobago’s National Statistical Office, the Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD) is the parent Ministry that provided administrative support and financial oversight, the main aspects of which is provided in **Appendix III**. The MPD was instrumental in both advocating for data to be shared with the CSO, and providing liaison services between the CSO and other entities seeking to access this data.
3. As the National Statistical Organisation (NSO), the CSO was dependent on an extensive list of public, non-governmental, civil-society and, in instances where data was not available, international organisations (e.g. the United Nations) to provide statistical estimates.
4. CSO’s data was accessible via its website and requests were also facilitated by email and telephone. Some of the categories of data produced are available in Table 1.

Table 1: Categories of Data Produced by the CSO

1. Population and housing censuses	2. Producer Prices Index
3. Continuous Sample Survey of Population (Labour Statistics)	4. Average Weekly Earnings
5. Food Crop Surveys	6. Trade Statistics
7. Poultry and Livestock Production	8. Household Budgetary Services
9. Estimates of Annual Gross Domestic Product (Current and Constant Prices)	10. Births and Deaths
11. Index of Retail Prices (Inflation)	12. Visitor Arrivals
13. Domestic Production Index	14. Visitor Expenditure
15. Retail Sales	

Relevance of CSO Data

5. Notwithstanding data requests received from individuals, academic institutions (e.g. University of the West Indies) and independent organisations (e.g. United Nations, International American Development Bank, International Monetary Fund, CARICOM secretariat), international rating agencies (e.g. Moody's and Standards and Poor's), the public sector appeared to be the primary consumers. The agencies cited as especially reliant were:
- The Ministry of Planning and Development;
 - Ministry of Finance;
 - Ministry of Health;
 - Ministry of Trade and Industry;
 - Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries;
 - Ministry of Labour;
 - Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago;
 - National Insurance Board; and
 - National Committees- Standing National Labour Market Council, the Inter-Ministerial Research Committee and Child Labour Committee.

Utility of CSO Data

6. The MPD provided examples of the various documents in which statistical data collected by the CSO contributed to evidenced based decision-making and policy formulation. These are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Governance documents in which CSO data is used

Type of Document	Details
Vision 2030 documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vision 2030 National Performance Framework; and ▪ Vision 2030 National Development Strategy; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Vision 2030 National Performance Framework is a development tool used to monitor, track and report on the performance of the Vision 2030 National Development Strategy wherein CSO’s data is instrumental. ▪ The main data sources used in the development of these documents included the: continuous sample survey of population (CSSP), estimates of annual gross domestic product (current and constant), index of retail prices, household budgetary surveys, trade statistics and the population and housing census demographic report.
Voluntary National Review	CSO’s data was also used to guide the selection of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)’s 3-8, 10, 13, 16-17 to compute indicators and analyse the country’s performance for the Voluntary National Review in preparation for the United Nations High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.
Research Reports	Data obtained from the CSO also advanced the completion of the following research papers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Examination of Migration in Trinidad and Tobago”, ▪ “Report on the Labour Skills Assessment in the ICT Platform and Service Sector in Trinidad and Tobago” and ▪ “Report on the Labour Skills Assessment in the Energy Engineering Services Sector in Trinidad and Tobago”.

The Impact of COVID-19 on Productive Output

Challenges with data collection

7. Data collection for the multiple indicator cluster survey (MIC-S), as well as monthly and quarterly surveys were stymied as a result of the restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the lifting of restrictions, staff were provided with personal protective equipment to facilitate field work, however, the original timelines were negatively affected. The impact of COVID-19 however, also led to several improvisations needing to be made including the use of internationally recognised methods for alternative sources of data and data imputation, introduction of remote work arrangements, employment of additional field staff and consideration by the CSO to be more flexible and responsive in the production of non-core data sets.

Retail Price Index (RPI)

8. Due to the restrictions and subsequent lockdown measures, the collection of price data was specifically affected such that, indices of retail prices and inflation were up to date only until November 2021. In a bid to manage the lack of data, internationally recommended techniques to impute for missing prices were utilised as an interim measure. However, the entity did highlight other efforts to navigate the barriers to physical access, these measures included:

- Liaising with retailers to collect archived digital price data;
- Electronic distribution of price collection sheets and use of online price data; and
- Resumption of data collection upon the lifting of restrictions.

Continuous Sample Survey of Population (CSSP)

9. The pandemic restrictions also affected the ability to collect household data for the CSSP, of which labour force characteristics were a key component^x. A revised survey was scheduled for July 2022 but preliminary unemployment data was accessible through the results of the *Rapid Response Survey undertaken with the UN Resident Coordinator*. In order to return the dissemination of unemployment specific data for first quarter 2022 to schedule by end of June 2022, additional staff inclusive of short-term contract field staff were recruited.

Survey of Business Establishments

10. Questionnaires for the annual survey which covered all industries in Trinidad and Tobago were dispatched for 2019. The 2020 and 2021 surveys were in the preparatory stages to be dispatched by the second quarter 2022.

National Population Census

11. Last conducted in 2011, the next scheduled census budgeted at TTD 150 million was carded for 2022, in contrast to the TTD 83 million cost of the previous. The increase was attributed to the establishment of a census unit, advertisement, digitisation of maps, information technology assistance among other elements. The upcoming census was also expected to be a hybrid model accommodating both physical and online responses and include an expansion in the number of data sets.

Relevance of Data Sets

Core Data Sets

12. The CSO emphasised its continuing focus on multiple use core data sets (inflation, unemployment, population and housing censuses) that was in alignment with those routinely produced by National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and which were determined based on adherence to regional and international commitments. New data sets may be added based on governance requirements but were subject to resources and practicality of obtaining the necessary data.

Non-Core Data Sets

13. The entity emphasised that its ability to produce non-core data sets were not only limited by access to resources but also the availability of relevant data collected by other organisations. As such, the *Rapid Response Survey*² that examined the impact of COVID-19 on lives and livelihoods undertaken in conjunction with the UN Resident Coordinator, was the sole source of COVID-19 specific data produced by the CSO.

² A total of 3,700 responses were received and results were scheduled for release by March 2022

Sustainable Development Indicator Framework

14. An example of the process required to engender a change in the data set produced was the Sustainable Development Indicator framework. New data sets such as these were requested from time to time based on governance requirements and were necessary to advance policy planning. In instances where this data was not already in existent as administrative data, special purpose surveys would become necessary to collect the appropriate data. Due to resource limitations it was essential that the indicators chosen by the CSO to measure progress on the SDGs be able to meet most of the criteria for assessment. Commitment by the MPD to develop a workable and sustainable structure was expressed in this regard.

Quality of Data Sets

15. Data was periodically reviewed by organisations such as Statistics Canada and the IDB to determine the suitability of design and areas of weakness. Other than said reviews, no internal needs assessments had been conducted by the CSO to determine the efficacy of data sets. The principles that informed the CSO's commitment to quality standards for data production and analysis are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: CSO Indicators of Quality Standards for Data Production and Analysis

Indicator	Details
Validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All survey instruments are pre-tested and piloted for accuracy and consistency of measurement ▪ Questionnaires are reviewed by international development partners ▪ Data is validated and those that exceed certain boundaries are flagged ▪ Error reports are produced and data is subject to multi-layered review
Objectivity	All surveys are based on international templates which have been reviewed for objectivity standards but are cross-checked prior to implementation

Indicator	Details
Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data is compared for consistency over time, ▪ Reviewed by independent entities such as the Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Centre, in the case of the Index of Retail Prices and GDP, as well as evaluated using input and output ratios ▪ Methodologies used follow international best practice and are reviewed regularly
Transparency and accountability	Document controls exist for each stage of editing and processing.
Timeliness	<p>The CSO is adhering to the Enhanced General Data Dissemination Standards (e-GDDS) which is subject to a schedule of release dates that meet timeliness stipulations. Processing times was unique to the survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One-month timeframe for respondents on quarterly or annual surveys ▪ Three-four month timeframe for the undertaking of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey with a two month time frame for processing
Ethical standards	The CSO is an adherent of the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (Appendix)
Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All staff of the CSO signs an oath of secrecy and data has another layer of anonymity as it is presented in aggregate form ▪ Staff only has access to data that they are working on
Peer Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A peer review system of methods is proposed in conjunction with the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians to allow for data cross-referencing and comparison

Institutional Strengthening of the CSO

Staffing

16. A human resource gap analysis and outstanding human resource matters were in the process of being addressed, for example, staff formerly under delegated authority were regularised and increment certificates and arrears computation completed. It was noted however, that few portfolios required a university degree (Statistics,

Economics or Sociology) with extensive experience in statistical work³. The remaining portfolios encompassing statistical duties required between three and five CXC O' Levels, with either experience or considerable experience in statistical work as warranted by the position. A complete overview of the current staff of the CSO is outlined in Appendix IV.

Continuous Professional Development

17. The CSO undertook a collaborative approach to training initiatives via a series of seminars (Appendix V) and partnerships with expert agencies. The following capacity building exercises were noted:

- Statistics Canada administered training on developing a Statistical Business Register under the rubric for a Programme for the Regional Advancement of Statistics in the Caribbean (PRASC);
- The IADB funded training programme for field staff in Labour Force Survey Operations and Continuous Sample Survey of Population (CSSP) Subject Matter Section in Trinidad and Tobago commenced in 2020 with a 2022 completion date;
- Capacity building with Statistics Canada and the IMF Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance (IMF CARTAC) to expand the range of national accounting data sets;
- Training with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to improve the Labour Force survey instrument; and
- Practical training in the use of Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) with the Food and Agricultural Organisation during the Improving Forest and Protected Area Management in Trinidad and Tobago Project.

Enhancement of Product Portfolio

18. Steps were taken to improve the CSO's data output including the application of criteria to meet Open Data Inventory (ODIN) and Enhanced General Data Dissemination System standards (e-GDDS). Based on stakeholders' feedback, the

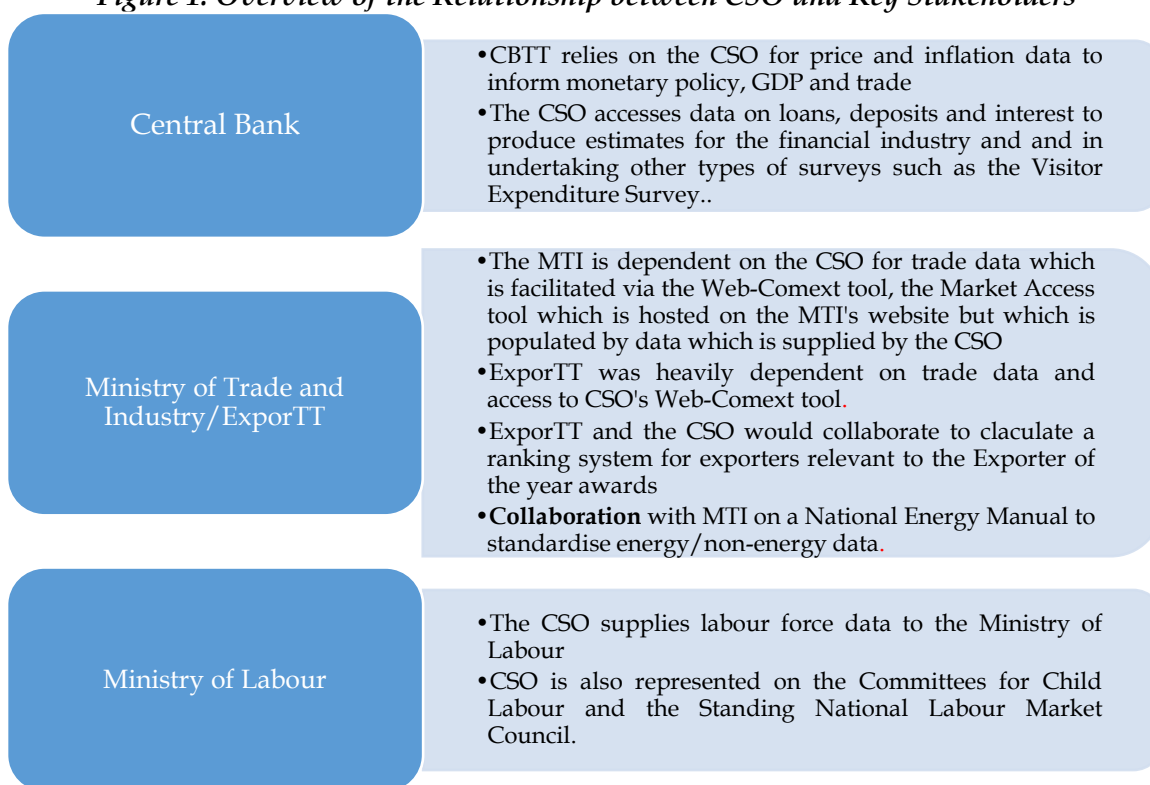
³ Statistician I and II, Senior Statistician, Assistant Director of Statistics, Director of Statistics and the Chief Census and Survey Officer

CSO had identified improved access to data, specifically trade data and higher frequency GDP estimates as being in need of improvement. These were realised in the adjustments made to reporting and metadata standards for GDP, domestic production index and producer prices index as well as the introduction of the Trade Web Comext tool. Other upgrades to data presentation also materialised in relation to the business register and establishment of a schedule of release dates.

Stakeholder Partnerships

19. The CSO was empowered by Section 10 of the Statistics Act, Chap. 19:02 to request data from entities but was heavily reliant on a dialogic approach⁴ to strengthen these stakeholder relationships. Other avenues to obtaining feedback included scheduling of meetings and timelines for data collection as well as reminder notices. An overview of the CSO's relationship with key stakeholders are outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Overview of the Relationship between CSO and Key Stakeholders



⁴ A dialogic approach focuses on building understanding and deepening insight through questioning and dialogue.

FINDINGS

20. Based on the foregoing evidence, the Committee has made the following findings:

- i. The relevance of CSO's data for informing future policy in relation to the Vision 2030 report in particular, is circumspect since the data for debt to GDP ratio in 2016 and poverty statistics in 2011 was outdated;
- ii. The CSO acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic had revealed a need for proactivity in the production of non-core datasets, yet, the collection of COVID-19 specific data was not undertaken due to the fact that no such requests were made by any of CSO's key stakeholders;
- iii. Despite efforts to return the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MIC-S) to its scheduled timeline amidst the delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Planning and Development in conjunction with the CSO had no formal policy to guide the undertaking of the survey by CSO staff and respondents;
- iv. CSO's standards for meeting principles of objectivity, reliability and accountability were duly noted but more explanation is required regarding the organisation's approach to data analysis and survey implementation and design;
- v. The Committee commends the CSO's efforts to institute peer review arrangements with regional and international partners as a means of attaining quality standards in its data analysis designs and approach;
- vi. With regard to the human resource capacity of the CSO, the Committee noted that qualifications required to hold some operational jobs were at the CSEC level.

The Committee also noted that a human resource gap analysis and outstanding human resource matters were in the process of being addressed; and

- vii. The Committee was also pleased to note that the CSO has been making some strides towards meeting the standards and requirements of Open Data Inventory (ODIN) and Enhanced General Data Dissemination System standards (e-GDDS). This will ultimately translate to the greater accessibility and democratisation of data.

RECOMMENDATIONS

21. Based on the foregoing, the Committee submits the following recommendations:

- A. **Whilst the capacity constraints associated with the range of data sets produced by the CSO is noted, this must be balanced against the need to obtain data on prevailing issues or trends which have an impact on society. Due to the lack of 'longitudinal' data over the period, a preliminary overview of COVID-19's effect on the socio-economic landscape of Trinidad and Tobago could not have been accurately determined. It is imperative that the CSO give more consideration to directing resources to future endeavours and finding innovative solutions to overcome these obstacles.**
- B. **The details of the official protocol to guide the collection of data by CSO staff should be communicated to the Committee in the Ministerial Response of the Ministry of Planning and Development which becomes due within sixty (60) days of this report being laid in both Houses of Parliament.**
- C. **There may be need to conduct some type of job evaluation of the operational and technical job positions within the CSO with a view to determining whether the**

current qualifications and skills that are documented for positions are properly aligned to the actual job responsibilities.

- D. The Committee advises that the CSO utilise the leverage of its website to build public trust and awareness of the various initiatives undertaken to improve its operations including:**
- i. Publicising the various methods that inform their use of data and survey design via infographics and other media;**
 - ii. Building appreciation for statistical awareness;**
 - iii. Raising awareness of the various initiatives to improve its operations such as adherence to the Open Data Inventory and Enhanced General Data Dissemination System; and**
 - iv. Creating a public feedback portal on the website where the public can provide feedback on the operations of the CSO. While there exists a means of public engagement on the CSO's website via the 'Contact Us' tab, using an anonymous portal with minimal sections to fill will be more user friendly.**

OBJECTIVE 2: TO DETERMINE THE EXISTING GAPS IN THE CREATION OF A MODERN, RELEVANT AND OBJECTIVE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE

Challenges with Accessing Data

22. Although the CSO had established working relationships, dialogue and persuasion was the norm to engender stakeholder compliance for the timely receipt of data. Memoranda of understanding (MOUs) existed between the Registrar General's Department and Inland Revenue Division (IRD) but improving the efficiency of data collection would require more structural arrangements supported by higher penalties. In the case of data exchange with the IRD, CSO staff would conduct physical collection of high frequency tax data from the offices of the IRD.

23. The challenges associated with accessing data from the public due to their lack of willingness to participate in surveys was further compounded by the cost attached to collecting this data. The general absence of civic duty and appreciation for statistical culture within the society was also offered as an explanation for some of the difficulties incurred, other reasons included:

- Non-cooperating household respondents who were suspicious of data collection by government;
- Low response rates from business establishments upon whose observance of the law the CSO was reliant to generate compliance;
- Untimely response to data requests from business establishments; and
- Untimely response to data requests from some government agencies;

Human Resource Constraints

24. The MPD attributed an obsolete and under-staffed organisational structure, lacking in adequate information technology resources as the main deterrent to the CSO's production of statistical data. Combined with the need to meet deadlines for monthly and quarterly core products, lack of specialist staff was the primary deficit attributed

to the inability to develop additional surveys, provide guidance on sampling queries from external stakeholders and perform more sophisticated data analysis for higher quality estimates. A revised staffing structure with a greater number of statistical professionals would enhance overall research capacity and flexibility.

25. Generally, there was a need for more professional statistical staff (demographers and sampling specialists) within various divisions, three sections were identified in particular:
- a. Population, Social and Vital Statistics Division- staff at all levels were needed to both manage the current work load and expand the range of social statistics produced in relation to gender, child and youth as well as those that will be required under the Sustainable Development indicators;
 - b. Agriculture Division- more staff was required to improve the range and quality of statistical products; and
 - c. Field Staff- to improve the regularity, punctuality and flexibility of data collection additional field staff was required.

Necessity for ICT Upgrades

26. Recognition that the website was in need of improvement had prompted several recent upgrade works and several more scheduled for implementation. The following were undertaken thus far,
- a. A new website provider was in the process of being procured and iPads were provided to staff;
 - b. A project to extend access to time series data from 5-10 year periods to a 20-30 years' period was being pursued through an Inter-American Development Bank consultancy;
 - c. Data storage and search engine optimisation were additional areas identified for improvement; and

- d. Other related initiatives including upgrades to support the conduct of the 2022 Census, the digitisation of records and installation of an ICT data platform funded under the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP).

Need for Improving Survey Implementation

27. The drive to digitalise survey implementation was the CSO's main focus in this arena as the current mode of survey design was the *Paper Assisted Personal Interviewing (PAPI)* method.
28. Concerted efforts were being undertaken to extend the use of *Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI)* to the conduct of the July 2022 Labour Force Survey which would provide for survey data to be uploaded directly onto servers. Further advancements in the use of technology to enhance survey implementation was also envisioned with the phased introduction of telephone and *Computer Assisted Web interviewing (CAWI)*. CAWI was expected to be utilised with the Population and Housing Census, wherein respondents would be able to complete surveys online.

Need for Improving Survey Design

29. In addition to improving survey administration, survey design and an expansion in the number of data sets to be collected were also earmarked for improvement. Whilst preliminary steps were being taken to increase the number of social statistics produced via the *Sustainable Development Indicator framework*, it was envisioned that the transition to the NSITT would facilitate the creation of a Social Sector Unit to provide for the specific collection of social statistics.

Changing Public Perception

30. With respect to public perception of the CSO, whilst it was self-acknowledged that there was generally low public confidence in the work of the agency, entities that were dependent on the organisation for data held the CSO in much higher esteem. To raise its profile, the following initiatives were undertaken:

- a. Adherence to the e-GDDS and improved transparency and access to metadata;
- b. Greater communication with the media and the public regarding the release of data;
- c. Observance of an advanced release calendar and reducing the gap between the reference period of the data and the dissemination date; and
- d. Extension of the range of social and economic indicators.

FINDINGS

31. Based on the forgoing evidence, the Committee has made the following findings:
- i. Although collection of data by CSO staff was an existing practice, the organisation appeared to be in favour of staff from various Ministries, Departments and Agencies being trained to assist in the execution of these duties;
 - ii. CSO's access to high frequency administrative data would circumvent the insufficiency of responses as well as the cost to conduct multiple surveys but could only be made possible upon the transition to the NSITT;
 - iii. The proposed expansion in the use of Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) and Computer Assisted Web interviewing (CAWI) is highly commendable. The CSO must work assiduously to ensure that the established timelines for implementing these progressive changes are fulfilled;
 - iv. Whilst the impact of human resource and funding constraints on the productive output of the CSO is accepted, the reasons that these deficits have been allowed to persist for so long remains unclear;

- v. The recruitment of professional statistical staff is an imminent need, however the existing staff qualification criteria may need to be re-visited to ensure that the relevant competencies are retained; and
- vi. Feedback from international collaborators pinpointed children, youth and gender statistics as being deficient.

RECOMMENDATIONS

31. The Committee makes the following recommendations:

- A. Whilst the collection of data by staff within Ministries, Departments and Agencies would advance the CSO's mandate, this would also result in more persons who are external to the organisation being privy to confidential information. Due to the potential negative impact on citizens' privacy, such arrangements should be pursued with caution.**
- B. Although the human resources and technological deficiencies existing within the CSO requires urgent attention, the Ministry of Planning and Development should:**
 - consider conducting an evaluation of the qualification criteria used to employ staff to ensure that it meets current needs; and
 - provide in the Ministerial Response, an update on all the initiatives taken to improve the human resource capacity and technological infrastructure of the CSO.
- C. Consideration should be given to gaining stakeholder feedback on the most relevant and useful categories of data with respect to the expansion in the data collected relevant to children, youth and gender.**

3: TO EVALUATE THE CHANGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES THAT ARE PROPOSED TO MANAGE THE TRANSITION TO THE NEW PROPOSED NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTE (NSITT)

Benefits of the Transition to the NSITT

Data Collection

32. It was envisioned that the National Statistical Institute of Trinidad and Tobago (NSITT) would better regulate the synchronisation of data collection across agencies through the establishment of a National Statistical Coordinating Committee comprising the Director General, Permanent Secretaries, a representative of the Tobago House of Assembly and one member each from the fields of academia, business community, human resources and civil society.

Training

33. The transition to the NSITT would also facilitate the creation of a board, tasked with the responsibility of providing opportunities for continuing professional development. This would entail a staff in-service training programme targeted toward those without a statistical background, as well as, other opportunities to advance capacity in the areas of big data, data science, price data and non-response data.

Staffing

34. An expanded organisational structure comprising statistical professionals would improve the range and regularity of productivity. Staff were described as being welcoming and enthusiastic of the transition to the NSITT and a survey of attitudes to their career prospects was being undertaken by the IDB.

Implementing Change

35. The Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability and Reinforcement model (ADKAR see **Appendix VIII**) was the preferred model of change management informing the transition to the NSITT. Following the passage of the NSITT Bill, a 24-month

timeframe was anticipated for the transition from the CSO to the new entity. A complete overview of the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders involved is available in **Appendix VI**. To prepare the CSO to enact this transition, the following were considered:

- Change readiness assessments with executive and staff;
- National statistical system members' assessments;
- Media content analyses; and
- Public perception.

36. Whilst current accommodations were described as being sufficient, with the transition to the NSITT and as the finalised organisational structure is optimised, expanded accommodation may be required. A long-term assessment of the NSITT's accommodation needs would be undertaken in 2022.

Barriers to Transitioning to the NSITT

37. Due to the fact that the NSITT would be empowered to collect confidential data from public and private entities, a special majority in Parliament was necessary to pass the legislation. This was identified as the primary barrier to the realisation of the transition from the CSO to the NSITT. Following the lapse of the Bill at the close of the 11th Parliament, the advice of the Attorney General was sought on the matter, following which the decision would be considered by Cabinet.

FINDINGS

38. **Based on the foregoing evidence, the Committee has made the following findings:**

- i. Aside from funding constraints, a critical requirement for the transition to the NSITT was the attainment of a special majority to pass the Bill in Parliament;

- ii. The Ministry of Planning and Development proposed that the special majority requirement be removed to facilitate easier passage of the National Statistical Institute Bill, 2018; and
- iii. Notwithstanding the recent employment of two statisticians, additional personnel were still required to diversify the range and complexity of data analysis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

39. The Committee recommends as follows:

- A. Whilst the Committee is aware of the benefits of the transition to the NSITT, the removal of the special majority, without due consideration for its initial imposition, may be regarded as an arbitrary undertaking which the Ministry must bear in mind.**
- B. The Committee advises that the CSO prioritise the employment of professional statistical staff in the short-term as barring the transition to the NSITT, this would have a significant improvement on the productive capacity of the organisation.**

The Committee respectfully submits the foregoing for the consideration of the Parliament.

Mrs. Hazel Thompson-Ahye
Chairman

Mr. Marvin Gonzales, MP
Vice-Chairman

Ms. Jayanti Lutchmedial
Member

Mr. Keith Scotland, MP
Member

Mr. Saddam Hosein, MP
Member

Mr. Terrence Deyalsingh, MP
Member

Mr. Hassel Bacchus
Member

Mr. Laurence Hislop
Member

September 05, 2022

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Minutes of Proceedings

EXCERPT OF MINUTES OF THE NINTH MEETING
JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS,
12TH PARLIAMENT
HELD ON FRIDAY FEBRUARY 18, 2022

The Meeting was held virtually via Zoom

PRESENT

Mrs. Hazel Thompson-Ahye	Chairman
Mr. Clarence Rambharat	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Hassel Bacchus	Member
Mr. Keith Scotland, MP	Member
Mr. Terrence Deyalsingh, MP	Member
Ms. Jayanti Lutchmedial	Member

ABSENT/EXCUSED

Mr. Marvin Gonzales, MP	Member
Mr. Saddam Hosein, MP	Member

Secretariat

Mr. Brian Lucio	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Terriann Baker	Researcher
Ms. Ria Rampersad	Researcher

PUBLIC HEARING PURSUANT TO AN INQUIRY INTO THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE

9.1 The meeting resumed in public at 10:23 a.m.

9.2 The following persons joined the meeting:

Ministry of Planning and Development

1. Ms. Joanne Deoraj Permanent Secretary
2. Ms. Andrea Julien Senior State Counsel
3. Ms. Cherrie Ann Joseph Change Manager

Central Statistical Office

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1. Mr. Andre Blanchard | Director of Statistics (Ag.) |
| 2. Ms. Satee Boodoo | Assistant Director of Statistics (Ag.) |
| 3. Ms. Ava Mahabir-Dass | Senior Statistician |

Opening Statements

9.3 The following officials gave brief opening remarks:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Ms. Joanne Deoraj | Permanent Secretary |
| 2. Mr. Andre Blanchard | Director of Statistics (Ag.) |

Key Issues Discussed

9.4 The following are the main issues arising from the discussions:

Role of the MPD in the management of the CSO

- i. Although the Central Statistical Office is an independent entity, the Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD), as the line Ministry is responsible for certain aspects of administrative and financial oversight. The Ministry provides technical expertise in the areas of human resources, communication and information technology, as well as financial and regulatory advice;
- ii. The MPD has dual roles with respect to the utilisation of CSO data. Not only is the entity keen to facilitate other agencies' access, but is also reliant on CSO's data to prepare key documents towards the fulfilment of a number of their national reporting requirements including, the National Performance Report and the Voluntary National Review; and
- iii. The data produced by National Statistical Organisations (NSOs) such as the CSO is a core component of the policy research cycle. Each stage within the cycle from problem statement, to policy formulation, budgeting, implementation and monitoring and evaluation has its own unique challenges.

Upgrades to CSO's Information Communications Technology (ICT) capacity

- i. The CSO had its own IT department but liaised quite closely with Information Technology personnel at the MPD. Both entities were aware that the CSO was in need of technological upgrades, the cost of which was yet to be determined. The MPD had been in the process of procuring a new website provider and finalising upgrades;
- ii. Notwithstanding, several projects in receipt of Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) funding had been undertaken to improve the information technology capacity of the CSO. These included upgrades to the website to expand the number of data sets available whilst also improving the capacity to both download and upload data;

- iii. An IDB consultant working alongside the CSO likewise made recommendations on improving access to data, such as the ability to access time series data for a 20-30 as opposed to 5-10 years period;
- iv. Two new methods of data collection, Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) and Computer Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) were proposed for future implementation. CAPI was already utilised and earmarked for household surveys whilst expertise in CAPI was gradually being attained through the assistance of Statistics Canada; and
- v. The move toward digital interviewing techniques had already commenced via the procurement of iPad devices for field staff to conduct CAPI surveys and whilst the use of cloud storage had not been previously considered, this was an avenue that would be explored going forward.

COVID-19 protocols and survey implementation

- i. The COVID-19 pandemic safety measures that were previously implemented had prevented the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MIC-S) survey from being conducted. Since the gradual lifting of the COVID-19 measures, CSO field staff, equipped with the relevant Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) had resumed data collection;
- ii. Whilst the MPD sought the advice of the Chief Medical Officer on the requisite protocols for conducting the MIC-S, no formal policy had been implemented to guide field assistants' interaction with the public. The MPD, however, appeared receptive to the creation of a general policy protocol to guide public interaction and accompanying communication agenda to sensitise citizens regarding same;
- iii. The population census is conducted every decade and is a useful though costly endeavour. The next scheduled census was estimated at TTD 150 million, larger in budget compared to the previous, owing not only to the expansion in the number of the data sets that the MPD wished to access, but increases in the number of staff to collect and analyse the data as well; and
- iv. The Labour Force Survey gives an overview of the state of employment and is conducted quarterly. The CSO was up to date until the 3rd quarter of 2020, with preparations underway to complete the 4th quarter. Whilst no COVID-19 specific data had been collected, these statistics could be integrated as modules in future labour force surveys. Regardless, interim data on the state of unemployment was available through the joint rapid response survey launched between the CSO and United Nations Resident Coordinator.

Necessity of transitioning to the NSITT

- i. The CSO acknowledged several of their limitations in the range and timeliness with which data is produced and indicated that the transition to the National Statistical Institute of

- Trinidad and Tobago (NSITT) would assist in rectifying several of these challenges as a consequence of the expansion in the number and skill set of staff and resources;
- ii. Under resourced staff was a major challenge for productivity and even though two statisticians were recently employed much more was needed to be able to expand the data collected and complexity of analyses performed. It was the intention of the organisation to augment current data tables available for trade indices, national accounting, as well as the labour force survey;
 - iii. Generally, staff of the CSO were optimistic of the transition to the NSITT and there was very little resistance to change. Both staff and external stakeholders expressed the view that the transition to the NSITT would be a beneficial one and would result in its enhanced performance; and
 - iv. Whilst the CSO had no legislative sway over the transition to the NSITT, the MPD as the line Ministry acknowledged that whilst there were funding constraints, the main barrier was the special majority required for the Bill's passage. Subsequent to the Bill's lapse in the 11th Parliament, the MPD sought the advice of the Attorney General and would upon receipt take the decision to Cabinet.

Quality of data

- i. For reasons that could be attributable to lack of resources, no needs assessment surveys had thus far been undertaken by the CSO. However, the quality of data sets produced was periodically reviewed by international organisations such as Statistics Canada and the IDB;
- ii. These reviews not only ensured that the data met threshold standards but assisted in the identification of gaps and areas where the CSO's data collection and analysis could be strengthened:
- iii. NSOs typically concentrate resources on the production of core data sets that serves multiple uses. Notwithstanding, the CSO, through the assistance of their international partners, had determined that social sector statistics pertaining to children, youth and gender were deficient;
- iv. It was envisioned that in the transition to the NSITT, the resources to establish a Social Sector Unit, presently lacking under the current establishment, would provide for the collection of such data. Data on alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was collected and whilst the eventual aim was to expand the number of data sets produced, this would in turn be constrained by the availability of manpower and resources;
- v. Greater use of administrative data would in actuality, decrease the amount of raw data that the CSO would be required to collect and associated costs. Access to certain categories of administrative data would, however, only be permissible upon the transition to the NSITT;
- vi. Though the CSO was heavily reliant on data that was supplied to them, every effort was made to guarantee that validity, through externally reviewed, pilot tested surveys and reliability, through the production of error reports were maintained; and

- vii. As an adherent of the Enhanced General Data Dissemination System (EGDDS), the CSO was committed to the principles of confidentiality and the anonymous publication of data.

The challenges of data collection

- i. Currently two MOUs between the Registrar General’s Department and Inland Revenue Division were established, whilst, Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) were helpful, dialogue and persuasion were still techniques used by the CSO to access data;
- ii. Officers of the CSO would visit the IRD to collect high frequency tax data. Whilst this was an interim arrangement, officials of the CSO were more in favour of staff from various Ministries being trained specifically to collect data. Regardless, a more formal arrangement was required to improve on the efficiency of data collection, this would be facilitated in the transition to the NSITT;
- iii. Though the CSO had established working relationships with the majority of their public and private stakeholders, the authority conferred on the entity under the ambit of the NSITT would engender a greater level of compliance through the imposition of higher penalties;
- iv. One of the issues with the collection of data was the inability to meet deadlines. The CSO was of the view that the implementation of a coordinating committee that would manage the synchronisation of data collection across agencies would assist in the regularity of the receipt of data; and
- v. Whilst the idea of the CSO functioning as a centralised data repository was a novel one, the capability would be contingent on possession of an expanded database, inclusive of a database administrator.

Training and capacity building

- i. The new organisational structure of the NSITT was proposed not only to improve staffing but provide for the creation of a Board which would have the responsibility of providing opportunities for continuous professional development; and
- ii. Several such training opportunities were already proposed with various international organisations such as Statistics Canada, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Centre (CARTAC). An in-service training programme was also earmarked for individuals with a non-statistical background as well as opportunities to advance capacity in the areas of big data, data science, price data and non-response data.

ADJOURNMENT

10.1 The Chairman thanked Members, staff, the viewing/listening public and adjourned the meeting.

10.2 The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

I certify that these Minutes are true and correct.

Chairman

Secretary

March 15, 2022

APPENDIX II

VERBATIM NOTES

VERBATIM NOTES OF THE NINTH VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS HELD (IN PUBLIC) ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2022, AT 10.23 A.M.

PRESENT

Mrs. Hazel Thompson-Ahye	Chairman
Mr. Clarence Rambharat	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Keith Scotland	Member
Ms. Jayanti Lutchmedial	Member
Mr. Terrence Deyalsingh	Member
Mr. Hassel Bacchus	Member
Mr. Julien Ogilvie	Secretary
Mr. Brian Lucio	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Terriann Baker	Graduate Research Assistant
Ms. Ria Rampersad	Graduate Research Assistant

ABSENT

Mr. Marvin Gonzales	Member
Mr. Saddam Hosein	Member

MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Joanne Deoraj	Permanent Secretary
Ms. Andrea Julien	Senior State Counsel
Ms. Cherrie Ann Joseph	Change Manager

CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE

Mr. Andre Blanchard	Acting Director of Statistics
Ms. Satee Boodoo	Acting Assistant Director of Statistics
Mrs. Ava Mahabir-Dass	Senior Statistician

Madam Chairman: Good morning, everyone. I should like to welcome the viewing and listening audience to the Ninth Meeting of the Joint Select Committee on Finance and Legal Affairs. Today, the Committee is convening its first public hearing pursuant to its enquiry into the efficiency and effectiveness of the Central Statistical Office. Members of the listening and viewing audience are invited to post or send their comments via the Parliament's various social media platforms: Facebook page, *ParlView*, the Parliament's YouTube channel and Twitter.

I will now welcome officials of the Ministry of Planning and Development and the Central Statistical Office and I am now going to, before I invite them, to identify the members of their Committee, I will tell you that I am Hazel Thompson-Ahye and I am the Chairman of this Committee and I will first invite the members of the Committee to introduce themselves.

[Introductions made]

Madam Chairman: I now invite officials of the Ministry of Planning and Development to introduce themselves.

[Introductions made]

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Now, the objectives of this enquiry are: one, to assess the effectiveness of the CSO in fulfilling its mandate to provide relevant and current data for national policy development; two, to determine the existing gaps in the creation of a modern, relevant and objective National Statistical Institute and, three, to evaluate the change management systems and procedures that are proposed to manage the transition to the new proposed National Statistical Institute.

I now invite for a maximum of two minutes, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Planning and Development, Ms. Joanne Deoraj to make brief opening remarks.

Mrs. Deoraj: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the Joint Select Committee on Finance and Legal Affairs. Thank you for the invitation into this enquiry on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Central Statistical Office of Trinidad and Tobago. The mandate of the Ministry of Planning and Development is that of developing medium to long-term development plans and the Ministry charts and supports the overall socio-economic development of Trinidad and Tobago, through investigating, proposing and monitoring policy prescriptions which lead to desired outcomes. The Central Statistical Office is therefore an integral partner in the development of the requisite data and information to guide its development process.

The Central Statistical Office of Trinidad and Tobago has been one of the earliest governance institutions created in Trinidad and Tobago even prior to independence. The Central Statistical Office was established as a Department under the Statistics Act, Chap. 19:02, 26 of 1952 and has been an integral institution in Trinidad and Tobago's post-independence governance structure and has attained global recognition as the country's main producer of official statistics. It serves as the primary depository of national statistical data.

The main responsibilities of the CSO lie with that of conducting census statistics in the Republic of Trinidad and collecting, compiling, analysing and publishing statistical information. The CSO collaborates with other Government Departments in the production, publication of statistical records of administration and coordinated schemes of economic and social statistics within Trinidad and Tobago. The CSO also has a responsibility for coordinating the national statistical system to ensure the production and dissemination of high-quality official statistics that meet the physical demands locally and internationally.

Over the years, the Central Statistical Office has been part of the efforts to strengthen and modernize its operations and we at the Ministry of Planning and Development and CSO continue to work assiduously to deliver on its mandate. Madam Chairman, I thank you again for the opportunity to meet with the Committee and my team stands ready to providing information that would assist the Committee on its deliberations. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mrs. Deoraj. Mr. Blanchard please.

Mr. Blanchard: Good morning. The CSO has basically faced a number of challenges in the recent past but I am here to state today that we have maintained the production of our core statistical products and basically maintained the timeliness of our data sets according to our dissemination schedule. We are involved in a number of transition projects as we try to progress to the new institution. We have started producing quarterly GDP which previously we have never done before. We have almost finished a revision of a labour force survey design, a new design and basically, we have tried to be more transparent in our dissemination of data and our methods by adhering to international standards of data dissemination and you know showing our methodologies and how we process our data. So we think we have made great progress. We have a lot more to do and thank you for inviting us here to give an account of what we have done.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Blanchard. We will now commence the questioning by the Committee. I would just like to remind the Committee members and officials to direct their questions and concerns through the Chair, not to each other. Activate the microphone on your device when you are speaking and when you have completed what you had to say, please turn it off when you are finished your contribution. So we begin.

This is a very important enquiry. We know that statistics drive a number of things, not only official things but even in your daily life. You do not know that sometimes a simple question as to “how much potato ah should put in de doubles” is because somebody has looked to see the trend by assessing what is happening out there in the community, how many children you have. A number of things go through because of statistics because people need to know what is happening, the trends, so they will know how to proceed, how to develop.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Madam Chair, I hope we never get to the point where it could be said that any of us contributed to potato being in doubles. *[Laughter]* But I take your point.

Madam Chairman: *[Laughter]* It is just that it is in everyday life and not something esoteric, it drives us in a number of ways.

Ms. Lutchmedial: That will be an affront to, you know—that would not be covered by parliamentary privilege. *[Laughter]*

Madam Chairman: So we begin with the Ministry. What is the role of the Ministry of Planning and Development in relation to the administration of the Central Statistical Office?

Mrs. Deoraj: Thank you, Madam Chair, for that question. The Ministry of Planning and Development serves as the line Ministry to support the work of the Central Statistical Office. As you are aware, the Central Statistical Office is an independent entity but in terms of its operations and statistical data, but it also has administrative functions and the Ministry of Planning and Development serves as that support in terms of administrative oversight for its human resource services, ICT infrastructure, monitoring of performance of the CSO’s Public Sector Investment Programme. The Permanent Secretary serves as the authorising officer for spending limits that exceed that of the Director of Statistics. We will provide advice related to financial and other regulations, guidance with records management and facilitating the stakeholder discussions and support to the organization and advocating for its role within the national development of Trinidad and Tobago.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Now, how is the data generated by the CSO utilized to inform policy development and planning at the Ministry of Planning and Development?

Ms. Deoraj: So Madam Chair, yes. So the Ministry of Planning and Development as I had indicated serves as the agency that drives national development and we have had several products out of the Ministry of Planning and Development including the National Development Strategy *Vision 2030* but also assisting in the development and the strategic outcomes of the road to recovery and the community recovery reports. So our role really is that of ensuring that the development plans are combined not only policy dialogue but also evidence based and the work of the CSO assists us in helping the articulation of these development policies. So we utilize the information that the CSO produces which could range from, of course, population, housing census, agricultural information, the domestic production index, retail sales, et cetera, the broad data sets and core data that the CSO develops. And then depending on the type of products that the Ministry has to produce, we use the data from the Central Statistical Office in collaboration in ensuring that we understand the data and we apply it properly to the analyses that are coming out of the Ministry.

So some of the work that we have done includes of course the National Performance Framework that we have developed by the Ministry of Planning and Development which serves as the monitoring and evaluation tool to support the National Development Framework *Vision 2030*. Now, within that National Development Framework, we have qualitative and quantitative indicators and of course, the CSO would support in strengthening the production of this document to ensure that the data that we use, which is baseline data, would be monitored and measured as we do certain types of interventions that will result in changes in the development outcomes.

The CSO has also been very integral in our voluntary national review under the United Nations for the Sustainable Development Goals. We did our first report to the UN in July of 2020 and we continue to develop all the other tools under the Sustainable Development Goals. As you know, Trinidad and Tobago reported in the 2020 reports on eight development goals and we continue to work on some of the others that we are trying to help our entities serve in terms of gathering data so that we would continue to be very robust in our reporting to the United Nations.

The CSO has also been a very strong advocate in terms of working on other development topics, whether it is migration, whether it is educational data, supporting our other line Ministries so that they can adequately report on the situation as it exists in Trinidad and Tobago. So we serve both as a producer of reports as well as a facilitator to ensure that the stakeholders who need to access the Central Statistical Office, we serve as a conduit and an advocate for the work that the CSO is doing.

Madam Chairman: In policy development, there are certain steps, could you explain the basic steps we move from policy development, this cycle?

Mrs. Deoraj: Yes, so we use the policy cycle throughout the whole— So it will entail, first of all, of course, say what is the problem that we are trying to address, we would get the primary data, we may do some desk research in terms of what is available under the system, what is available existing in the data, all the data hubs throughout Trinidad and Tobago, then we would go towards developing, if we wish to do our own data collection by doing much more robust methodologies, we would go out for more, what do I say, more studies being undertaken, either through the Ministry or through consultancies and that data is collected and we prepare necessary policy documents, it goes out for national consultation and then we formulate that into a policy statement to the Cabinet. Once it is accepted, then we go out for wider national consultation.

In the policy cycle, that then translates into, of course, the budgeting process which is under the *Public Sector Investment Programme* to ensure that the initiatives and strategies that we have identified in the policy are adequately financed and executed and then of course, we go to the next stage of the policy cycle which is the monitoring and evaluation to ensure that we in fact monitor the impacts of both the outputs that we have identified under the strategies and then the collective outcomes that we are seeing as a result of the interventions. So it is a continuous cycle of development from the first concept of what is the problem, problem statement and then going through the different stages of the development process. I hope that answers the question, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: I just want one follow-up question though. Along this cycle, what would you say is the weakest link in making this continuous cycle flow?

Mrs. Deoraj: I think each stage is equally challenged. We have seen that sometimes we do not have the technical expertise in the policy development for certain subject areas and so of course,

we would have to source that and that could be a challenge financially. Implementation is also quite – [Inaudible] – when we look at financing projects and programmes, both are challenged in getting all the financial resources but of course, sometimes the implementation challenge is equally difficult because sometimes there is no capacity at the different Ministries and agencies. And then monitoring and evaluation itself, while it has been with us for some time, the capacity in that area continues to be a challenge from the point of view of agreeing on national indicators and indicators that persons can work towards and agree that they are working towards, and when that is agreed upon, supporting it by the robust programming and projects.

So I do not think that there is only one challenge but there are several challenges and I think the Ministry of Planning and Development has been working with our stakeholders to try to strengthen the number of areas from the policy cycle from the point of view of getting technical support from the Inter-American Development Bank and other international agencies about helping us build the capacity across the public service in policy development. We have also been doing work in the *Public Sector Investment Programme* and helping persons in terms of training, in project management and the recent, when I say recent, about two or three years ago, we had what was called the project screening brief so that Ministries and agencies can develop better projects for submissions under the *Public Sector Investment Programme*. That monitoring and evaluation tie to that project screening brief both from the project planning and reconstruction division, they will look at the monitoring of the outputs and then of course, there is the national transformation unit which looks at how all these collective activities are contributing to national development through the monitoring and evaluation of the National Development Strategy. Each stage of the policy cycle, we have been working towards trying to strengthen the process.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Of course, you will have not much control over how the public, you know, feedback that you get from them?

Mrs. Deoraj: Certainly. In terms of the public feedback, we have been trying to—of course, there are different ways that the public would interact with us, either through public consultations or through surveys and so we might undertake simple surveys but the public will always; we are always open to the contributions of the public because it also helps us to reframe and think about some of the strategies that we need to look at to develop. So it is an on-going process and we have to be available. At the end of the day, we are here to serve the citizens. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Any other questions from members?

Ms. Lutchmedial: Chair, I wanted to ask about the development of a website for the CSO from the Ministry. The response from the Ministry stated that they were facilitating an updating of the website. Can you give us an update on this development or the updating of the CSO website, and do you have a timeline in mind? Because I think that the availability of data to the public via a website is very important and so we would want to hear a little bit more about that CSO website and how the Ministry is driving that updating process.

Mrs. Deoraj: Thank you very much for the question, member. The CSO has its own website and I think Mr. Blanchard could speak a little bit more about that in terms of the data that is available on the website, but the website serves as two layers. One, we have the Ministry of Planning and Development website of which the CSO is—you can click on the Ministry of Planning and Development website and connect to the CSO and then of course you have the CSO website which is really much more directed at data processing and things like that. So we have been working to ensure that the data is always kept up to date. We are looking at a new provider and other systems that will help us in terms of strengthening the website and keeping the website up to date.

It is a project under the whole modernization thrust towards the CSO and we will anticipate through the procurement process that within the next few months that we will have that settled through the Ministry of Planning and Development. Most of the times, attempts are being done to utilize the funds before the end of the fiscal year. So I do not know if Mr. Blanchard wants to speak about the data that is available through the website.

Mr. Blanchard: Yes, the CSO a few years ago had worked with a consultant to update our website. Basically, the updating worked on two ends. It made it easier for us at the office to upload data which is not a trivial matter. If it is easier to upload data, it is far quicker to put on data. But also we worked on the interface of the website and made it easier to access time series-type data, so you know a lot of users want time series data for their uses and the update of the website made it easier to obtain that type of data. But also we have attempted to put more data on the website. In fact, right now we are working with a consultant with the IDB in terms of making our data more open and available and part of the process is putting more data on the website with longer time series for all economic and social indicators of which we have done and we will continue to do so.

The data itself, you know, is up to date, it is easier to access but of course, we can always make improvements and in the future, we will continue to improve it and take feedback from our data users and again, put more data on the website and we have done so. I think it is a big improvement to what we had before but there is still some work to do and we would be making progress on that matter in the future. Thank you.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Thanks, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Scotland. Sorry, you had a follow up? If not, Mr. Scotland.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Yes, one follow-up question.

Madam Chairman: Yes. All right.

Mr. Scotland: Chairman, it is not a follow up. When member Lutchmedial is finished, I have a synergy issue I would like to raise, please.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Thanks. Just a follow up on the data available right now from the CSO, Chair. I was wondering how much historical data is available via the web site. How many years? I know that the process of loading the data onto a website is something but I just wanted to find out about the historical data that may be available via the CSO website currently.

Mr. Blanchard: Yes, so previously on our website and again in working with the IDB consultant who is working on the open data with us, he would have identified that we had sometimes used data but it would only go back five, 10 years so he has recommended that we put longer time series and right now we are in the process of doing that. We are going into basically our paper files and uploading digital data so that we could have 20, 30-year series where available.

And much of that data we do have, it is just making it available to the public so that they can do their statistical analysis and determine trends.

10.50 a.m.

The IDB consultant is going to be working with us until the end of June and part of the process is converting all of that data into non-proprietary formats that can be easily downloaded. We have converted 70 per cent of our data sets to the right format and working with the consultant to increase our time series data and that process is ongoing. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member Bacchus has a follow-up question, if you bear with him please, Mr. Scotland. I will take you after.

Mr. Scotland: Yes, Chair.

Mr. Bacchus: Thank you, Chair. Yes. So as it stands now, the website is not available to the public, right?

Mr. Blanchard: No. The website is available to the public.

Mr. Bacchus: The CSO website?

Mr. Blanchard: The CSO website.

Mr. Bacchus: Interesting. Because the searches I did this morning led me to a website that says, "Upgrading in progress and would be available soon."

Mr. Blanchard: I am not sure if that is something recent but just a few days ago –

Mr. Bacchus: It says – actually I am looking at it now. It says, "Ministry of Planning and Development CSO Office upgrading. Website will be available soon." And a locked pad on it.

Mrs. Deoraj: Member, we will check on that but we know that the website is up. I do not know if one of the other members – *[Interruption]* Yes. Okay. Okay. So we will check into that. But we have been working on that. It is an up and available website. So we will check into that and advise.

Mr. Bacchus: Okay. And the follow up to that obviously is – obviously, the Ministry itself has been providing IT support to the CSO. Could you elaborate a bit on what that is and is this part of that arrangement? Thank you.

Mrs. Deoraj: So the Central Statistical Office – thank you very much, Member. The Central Statistical Office has their own IT unit but we also have an IT unit at the Ministry of Planning and Development. So there is collaboration between the two entities so that we can both – in terms of upgrade of equipment, in terms of harmonization between the Ministry and the CSO. So that – there is that collaboration. The communication department which is also integral as to what should be the content on the website – the CSO does not have a communication department so there is collaboration as well with the communication department.

Over the years when we did the modernization and the issues that were developed through the number of consultancies that we have had with the CSO, the issue of technological upgrade has been a central point. And we have been working over the years – although we have no final decision with respect to the volume of funding available to make this technological upgrade of the CSO – we have been working every year through the *Public Sector Investment Programme* to strengthen the CSO.

The CSO has also been working with its development partners to bring new technology to the CSO and the data collection processes. And, of course, Mr. Blanchard would be much better to be able to describe those things. But it would be the use of what they call the CAPI and the other types of tools that will – as you collect the data, it is uploaded into the system and the officers have been provided with the iPads and the different tools that would be able to collect that data on a regular basis. Some of the data collection sets, particularly that of the Continuous Sample Survey of Population, they are using that and we are hoping that as we move to strengthen the technology of the CSO, all the officers, all the field staff would be using this type of technology in all the data collection processes.

So there is a cooperation between the CSO and the planning Ministry with respect to that agenda.

Mr. Bacchus: Thank you –

Madam Chairman: Member Scotland – sorry.

Mr. Scotland: Chairman, I think my question will flow flawlessly from the last response. Some of your – and it goes – Ministry of Planning and Development, we know, Chairman, that some of their work will involve IT and virtual, but some of their work also involves face-to-face contact with the public. Has there been any policy or any processes implemented between the Ministry

of Planning and Development and the CSO that will cover the protocols that will govern interaction – face-to-face interaction when it is necessary as it relates to the advent of COVID-19? Because there would need to be a protocol. Has there been, or if not, when is it going to be done?

Mrs. Deoraj: Thank you very much for the question, member. What we have been doing is that during the pandemic period, we really did not go into the field in accordance with the Public Health Ordinance and the Public Health Regulations. We have not been able to collect the data because a lot of our technology would have required us to be face to face. Some of the surveys that we had—[*Technical difficulties*]*—*particularly some of them would require—one of them would be the Multiple Indicator Cluster Sample which would require really going into households and taking measurements of children, et cetera.

So during the period of time we have asked the support of Ministry of Health to help us ensure that we adhere to guidelines when that time comes out for us to go into the field again. We have been using the PPE equipment, things like facemask and the staff would be properly provided with this gear so that they can go out and collect the data. We do know though that the public is very – they are still very timid about this face to face to still collect the data. Because the public will not want the face-to-face interaction even under good protocols because they do not want to have that level of interaction. Mr. Blanchard could also speak a little bit more about some of the work that he has been doing with his field staff.

Mr. Blanchard: Yes. So when restrictions were eased, our field staff did return to the field but they are obeying all protocols advised by the Ministry. When interviewing, there is no need to be, you know, very close to the person that you are interviewing. They stay far apart from the person. Also, members could remain in the house while the interviewer is outside. And as the Permanent Secretary has said, using all the personal protection equipment as necessary.

In addition, she has mentioned the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey which is a very interactive survey and we had gotten approval from the Chief Medical Officer on the protocols that we had submitted to him. So he has approved those protocols and once—[*Technical difficulties*]*—*that will happen soon. But the public, yes, there are a few that are, you know, hesitant to supply data but by and large we are making progress. And my field supervisor advises me that yes, the approval from Chief Medical Officer—[*Technical difficulties*]*—*and particularly with the labour force, the data which is a household-based survey and we continue the work.

And, you know, I think for the most, people understand that the data is to be used for decision-making and planning and once they are satisfied that the data will be used in their interest, that they will supply the data. But we are obeying all protocols and with the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, we have gotten CMO approval.

Mr. Scotland: Chairman? Chairman?

Madam Chairman: Yes, please, Mr. Scotland.

Mr. Scotland: Through you, Chairman, maybe if you ask the question, it will be answered. My question is—so we know that there is a pandemic but we know that part of your work is to go face to face, not all can be done virtually. Has the Ministry linked with the CSO to develop a protocol? One, with respect to when your members, when your workforce goes out to interact with the public, and I think, as a suggestion, that that should be developed. And secondly, I think before it is implemented or after, it be communicated to the public so the public is sensitized.

Can you give us—it does not have to be a long answer, an update on one—[*Technical difficulties*]*]* And two: Would then the public be informed of this so that they are sensitized? Because if they are sensitized then they will be more receptive.

Mrs. Deoraj: Member, we had not done it as an overall policy. We have done it as an overall

policy between the Ministry of Planning and Development and the CSO. What has happened is really its policy – [Technical difficulties] – as well as the different types of instruments that going are to be administered as in the case of the mixed survey. But your advice is noted and we will put together with the – [Technical difficulties] – CSO may be one comprehensive policy as well as doing some communication – [Technical difficulties] – public.

That is one of our greatest challenges that when we go out in the field, even pre-pandemic – [Technical difficulties] – public, we have to be doing communication to actually advise that the CSO is out there collecting data in a particular community. And we have developed a communication strategy which is now being considered by the team here because it is a very expensive one, but we are thinking that that is a very vital process for us to be able to get public confidence in the work that we are doing at the CSO.

So thank you very much for the guidance and we will be working on that as our overall policy on your advice. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Before I go to member Lutchmedial, I would like say that while we were speaking, the website has become active and available so you can actually access it. So, member Bacchus, I thank you for that question because, you know, it just takes sometimes a little prodding for the miracles to happen. So that we are able to see a number of things on the website from the last few minutes ago and I hope it will continue. Member Lutchmedial.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Chair, thank you. I was also looking at the website and I thought that is why my question – I thought that the website was actually under review because I also encountered the same issue as member Bacchus. But with respect to use of the website or computer-assisted Web interfacing, I have seen the advertisements going out about a census – I think it is a population census to be conducted this year. How big a role does the Ministry or the CSO – how big a role do you think it will play now, especially given the COVID-19 situation to have the computer – what is it called? – computer-assisted Web interfacing as a means of collecting data for this particular census? And as a follow up to that, cost-wise, will it be a significant increase in the cost of conducting the census if it is that you have to implement more technology as a means of addressing, you know, the health concerns and so on, to minimize the risk to your field staff?

Mrs. Deoraj: I think I will take one part and Mr. Blanchard will speak to the other part. The cost of a national census is always very high but it is part of development. It is done every 10 years and the type of data sets that are collected are used over the 10-year period in terms of how population growth is projected. So it is a very important tool. The last time we did the census, we had quite a large budget and we anticipate that it will be higher this time.

One, not only because the type of data that we want to collect, we always want to improve on the questions that we collect data on and we also want to use a hybrid. We are suggesting that we use a hybrid where we can use technology as well as the face-to-face interaction. Because in some communities, we know that it may be better to go out and to collect the data, versus some persons really can manage to do the answering of the questions themselves. Some of the questions are little bit technical so the guidance of a field officer walking through the question with you is also very helpful when we have to do that.

One of the things that impact the census cost would be, of course, staff, salaries, administrative cost and, of course, you have to go into the field, the recruitment of the staff, it is quite a large number of persons who are hired to do this process and then, of course, there is a data cleaning and development of the reports, et cetera. So it is a very timely but necessary cost associated to national – [Technical difficulties] So Mr. Blanchard can speak much more on that aspect.

Mr. Blanchard: Yes. We have started using computer-assisted personal interviewing where we have a tablet and we collect the data on the tablet and it is uploaded on a number of our smaller surveys and we have developed experience in that. So we envisage going forward actually that for all our household-type surveys, we will be using that methodology and that technology going forward. It will increase certain costs for the census because if you are using the tablets or, you know, the computer device, that is a cost in itself. But once that money is spent on those devices, we will use those devices for future surveys and future generational-type work in terms of data collection.

In terms of the computer-assisted Web interviewing, that is something that we are exploring for the first time. We are working with Statistics Canada very closely – monthly. They are experts in the field in these new technologies. They are actually thinking that, you know, perhaps we have been a little bit too ambitious in implementing these new technologies but we do think with the pandemic that computer-assisted Web interviewing can alleviate or reduce some of that risk. And then those that we do not collect via that method we will try to collect by the computer-assisted personal interviewing.

So those two methods are methods that we propose to use in the future. We also would like to make more use of telephone interviewing to collect data as well. The data will still be uploaded on the devices and on to our servers but, you know, certain restriction in terms of resources but we are working on that.

So these multimodal approaches are what we plan to do in the future and it will involve some short-term cost in terms of devices but we think it is worth it. And it will improve the efficiency in terms of the dissemination processing and then dissemination of data. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Okay. So –

Madam Chairman: Now, Mister – sorry.

Ms. Lutchmedial: I just have one follow up.

Madam Chairman: All right.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Yeah. I mean – and I agree with you. You are saying that this you know the implementation of greater ICT is an investment that will last long into the future. I did not get an answer about the impact on the budget for this upcoming census. So could you – either the Ministry or CSO – say what is the budget? And how much of that budget or how much of an increase in that budget do you foresee if you are particularly using the computer-assisted Web interviewing? Because I am concerned about that because I think that that is very important moving forward in this census. Do you have an estimated cost that would be associated with implementing greater use of the computer-assisted Web interviewing?

Mr. Blanchard: I think – the budget right now, I think, is in the vicinity of 150 million. And it will be surprising to know that the actual technological cost is really a minor part of that overall cost. We still depend on field staff. So it is really the HR cost is the major component of that and still is. Because even if you are using computer-assisted Web interviewing and CAPI, you still need follow up – you still need field officers to follow up on incomplete, you know, survey instrument completions and queries, and such. Still the major cost is still the cost of the human cost of, you know, undertaking a survey. And the technology is actually relatively a very small part of it.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Okay. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Member Rambharat.

Mr. Rambharat: Thank you very much. I just have been following and listening to two categories: the investments being made and the future – what you plan for the future. I just want to ask this

question. In my mind, you are dealing with three versions of the CSO. One is the current version. Two, the National Statistical Institute which is proposed and that could either be an institute created out of special majority legislation or an institute created out of simple majority legislation. How are you managing and planning in the context of having to do the work of the CSO but also in the context of planning for an institution which will likely come but we still cannot determine how far in the future it would come and what it would look like? How are you planning and managing in those circumstances when – I do not want to say you are in limbo because you are actually doing your functions – but something else is expected to emerge at some time in the future.

Mr. Blanchard: Right. So a big part of that transition process really is expanding our product portfolio so to speak and, you know, having a bigger range of statistical products available to the user, improving the timeliness of our data sets, being more transparent. So when you talk about that difference between the old – the CSO in transition to the new national statistical office, basically there is no conflict in terms of that transition.

We are making changes now, under the current CSO, that are necessary for the new organization to come. So working with our international development partners, we are extending the range of national account products that we have used, for instance, the implement of the quarterly GDP which is really in my mind one of the biggest things to happen to the CSO and the country for a while. Still to this day, there are few countries in the Caribbean producing quarterly GDP. Previously we only produced annuals. So that is of the transition process to the new organization where you have higher quality, more frequent economic indicators, and we are doing that. Revising our labour force survey, making sure that it adheres to the standards of, you know, the ILO, the International Labour Organization.

So a lot of the work has basically synchronized in terms of what we need to do and the new organization. And then, of course, there are the other aspects of it in terms of administration. But in terms of the statistical work, it is not a difficult thing because it is something that we need to do whether we move to the new organization or not, and it just happens that the two goals and objectives coincide.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Now, in your submission from the Ministry, you stated that the Ministry provides assistance in the recruitment and selection of CSO staff as well as the management of its staff in terms of promotion, discipline, and so on. Now, does the Ministry think that the current manpower of the CSO staff is adequate?

Mrs. Deoraj: Thank you for the question, Chair. Yes, as the line Ministry, we would work very closely with the CSO. There is, of course, the establishment – figures under the establishment of the CSO. So we work with the DPA through our Human Resource Division to ensure that the vacancies that we do have are indeed filled.

Now – and I guess this will link very closely to the previous question. The organization as we see now and the organization of the future – so the current establishment, if we want to do the kind of work that is being requested of us, does not really meet the requirements that we need. We need a lot more persons with statistical – who are statisticians. Recently, we were able to get from the Public Service Commission the appointment of persons as statisticians but we really do need to get many, many more. And when we talk about the National Statistical Institute, we had in that plan for the transition into the National Statistical Institute, expertise in terms of like a demographer and more statisticians and a broader base, a number of assistant directors in charge of different parts of the portfolio of the National Statistical Institute.

So for the kind of work that the CSO needs to do, we need to be able to try to get into the next stage of its development which we believe is the National Statistical Institute and expand the operations of the CSO. Because the yeoman work that the team now is doing, they really are trying to stretch themselves and do all what needs to be done but they really do need more capacity.

When we look at the census and if we have to have a complete census operation, you are talking about different human resources for the census running parallel to the operations of a statistical office. So it is really quite a lot of skills that you require to be able to do the kind of work that we need to do under a statistical institution.

So to answer, Chair, what we have is not as good as what we would like it to be. So we really would like to get more resources into this year. So over the last few years we have been able to regularize a lot of the staff, persons who were under delegated authority for a number of years and we have been able to sort that out so they found themselves into properly established positions in the CSO. So we have quite a good complement of staff but we do not have the breadth and depth of the numbers that we would like to have.

Madam Chairman: So has the body—the CSO submitted a proposal—a proposed revised organizational structure to the Ministry for its consideration?

Mrs. Deoraj: The proposed organizational structure is within the reports of the National Statistical Institute, what we would like to see. So we have org structures there and we do have that as what we would like to move to once we have the provision of the law to allow us to do that. That document was developed as one of the products coming out of the subcommittees that was developed to look at the Statistics Sweden report as well as the technical reports that were done as a consequence of those consultancies. So we have a number of products developed already waiting for, hopefully, the passage of the legislation.

Madam Chairman: In the interim and even after, are you going to propose improved opportunities for training and continuous professional development for CSO staff?

Mrs. Deoraj: Yes, certainly. Currently we have—and Mr. Blanchard would be able to attest to that as well. We try to access all the development opportunities now and to ensure that we adhere to good statistical practices by being involved in all the international training programmes and conferences, et cetera. We have been working with IMF CARTAC and he would be able to tell you a bit about that intervention in terms of building capacity.

But under the National Statistical Institute, there will be a board—once it is established—a board and that that sort of development processes where there will be capacity building and, of course, I am looking at continuous development and standard development—[*Technical difficulties*]*]*—all that we can through Caricom, through the—of course, Canada, Stats Sweden. Canada, they have a special project with us at the moment and we have been developing the staff in the Ministry. We have also had support from the European Union over the years. So I do not know if Mr. Blanchard will be able to give a little more details of those type of strategic interventions.

Mr. Blanchard: Yes. So again, the CSO has been working with our international development partners IDB, Statistics Canada and the IMF itself. The IMF has been working with us in terms of our national accounting which is a set of tables where we produce GDP among other things. We are producing some tables now. We would like to do a lot more in terms of different types—capital formation. In fact, the consultant is supposed to work with us in the coming weeks to extend the range of accounts that we produce while continually looking at the quality of the products that is we produce.

Under the IDB funding, we have hired a consultant again to work in developing our labour force survey making sure that the survey instrument aligns with the latest standards by the ILO. And we have been in communication with and having meetings with the experts from the ILO itself to improve that labour force survey.

So these are two areas of capacity development that we are quite proud of. Stats Canada is working with us on—and have been working with us in terms of developing our register of establishments and basically improving certain indices of trade. So there are a number of areas that we are quite pleased that we are making progress in terms of capacity development.

Madam Chairman: Member Bacchus.

Mr. Bacchus: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a couple things. So obviously, Central Statistical Office is a data-driven environment. So your analysis, your outputs, really depends specifically on the quality of the data that you have. How are you ensuring that the quality of the data that you have described that it is—[*Technical difficulties*]—and, of course, how are you securing that data? So one is to collect it, which you are working on different ways of doing that.

11.20 a.m.

But when you collect it, how do you validate that this data is in fact correct and that it is applicable to what you are doing? And then more than that, how do you protect it to ensure that a lot of the data—I am sure a lot of people would like to get their hands on because it includes competitive data—how would you secure that to make sure that it does not fall into the wrong hands?

Mr. Blanchard: Right. So I am happy that he did mention one particular point, that is, that the CSO depends on other—depends on acquiring data in order to produce, you know, so I have mentioned previously that the CSO is like a manufacturing company, we depend on raw materials and that raw material is the data that people supply to us. So, you know, I just want to emphasize that point, yes. So the surveys that we have, that we undertake, and the survey instruments that we have implemented, have all been well developed in conjunction with working with our international development partners. They review the questionnaire and much of it has already been tested, you know, externally. So, in terms of the logical flow and the objectivity of it all and so that—in terms of the data collection and invalidity of the survey that is of high standard, once that data is collected, we undergo processes where we validate the data—if certain expected data sets exceed certain boundary arrangements they are flagged. In all of those household surveys, we produce a number of error reports and it undergoes an editing process whereby, for instance, in households, we query the data, households may be called back, field officers may return to the field, you know. So it undergoes a multi-layer approach by different supervisors, whether it is from editing, coding and ensuring that there are certain consistencies in the data sets.

In terms of, you know, the confidentiality of the data, that is extremely important to us. As long as I have been working at the CSO, I know the staff has always paid, you know, great attention to our obligation to keep that data in confidence. The staff has only had access to data sets that they are working on. All members of the CSO had to take an oath of secrecy and there are severe penalties, you know, I think including jail time for revealing data sets. We disseminate data only in aggregate, and try to remove any identifying data whenever we give out data. So we take this very seriously. All the criticism that might be directed at the CSO, I think that is the one that has least weight. We have always taken great concern about keeping data in confidence. So I think in those measures—and again, we maintain that our data sets limited to only those who have access on a need to know basis. So I am quite confident that our data sets and the sensitive

information are kept in confidence. And we need to do that because keeping data in confidence builds trust and people not want to give us data if they find out that their data is out there and so, it is in our interest to ensure that the data is secure. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Now, I started off by saying we would look at the Ministry, we would have the questioning of the Ministry first and then go to CSO but actually, what has happened is that it is being integrated. But I would like to focus more on CSO at this point and so we will take it from here now. Members.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Chair, well I could get started if it is okay with you.

Madam Chairman: Please proceed.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Thank you, Chair. Through you I wanted to ask about the CSO submission that no – that a needs assessment survey has not been completed for some time, why – could you tell us a little bit more about why this has not been done and what is really the purpose of the needs assessment survey and how is that necessary to drive the work of the CSO?

Mr. Blanchard: Yes, so when I said a needs assessment survey has not been done recently, it means one undertaken specifically by the CSO. But, of course, we have had our datasets assessed by various international organizations, including Stats Canada they – certain data sets. In terms of the IMF, in terms of our economic data particularly, output and prices. So they ensure that the variables that we need – that the public needs to make economic planning decisions and influence labour force data as well with the IDB, and that those data sets meet certain requirements. Could you just repeat the question again, in terms of –

Ms. Lutchmedial: The reasons why you really need to do the needs assessment survey and why one has not really been done?

Mr. Blanchard: So those, again, so in terms of – basically a national statistical office has a number of core outputs that basically meet most of the users' needs. That is why they are core data sets, they meet all the requirements for social and economic planning. But yes, in terms of undertaking a specific needs assessment survey, we have not done that, probably in terms of resources we would need to undertake one in the future. But we have enough feedback from international organizations about the datasets that we produce, and how it aligns to what data sets are produced internationally. So they have already identified certain data gaps, particularly in terms of social indicators, you know, we need to do more in terms of gender, child and youth. And, those are areas that are well, you know, you can compare your data gaps by aligning yourself with what other NSOs who are top line NSOs produce. And so these data sets really are consistent with what users need and by aligning ourselves and being assessed by international organizations, we can easily identify our data gaps.

Another thing, the CSO has basically been fairly strong in terms of our economic output but you know, we still have a lot to do in terms of our social statistical output and that is basically just from the tradition of how CSO was created. But we are working with our international development partners, in particular with the sustainable level development goals where we need to increase our data sets.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Right, so you have identified – let us drill down there a little bit, because you have identified the social side as opposed to the economic side as being where most of the data gaps exist. Do you have now – because you have mentioned a number of international bodies that would have assisted you with what has taken place really of a needs assessment survey to assess your outputs and –

Mr. Blanchard: Yes.

Ms. Lutchmedial – you have identified those gaps, do you have a list or can you produce for us a list of the major gaps that have been identified let us say on the social side and you know, what steps you plan to take to fill those gaps and to close those gaps and the timeframe for doing so?

Mr. Blanchard: All right. So I had mentioned child statistics, youth statistics, gender statistics in all meetings I have gone to – gender statistics is the biggest issue that is – and it is not just about identifying data by male and female, going way beyond that. So those are areas that you know, you – for instance in gender statistics and you may have a manual that is very thick in and of itself, we have just been producing mere minimum really, and partly because of staff restrictions in terms of available resources that when we talk about moving to the new organization and having an enhanced staffing structure that allow us to really develop a particular social sector unit that can collect data, because CSO does not produce all of the data. A lot of this social indicator data exist outside of the CSO so, it needs to be coordinated. You need staff to coordinate that data collection. So the statistical aspect of it is the social sector is where we need to work at and you know, once we acquire the resources we will be able to focus on that and start to produce.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Blanchard?

[Technical difficulties]

Ms. Lutchmedial: Okay, if you cannot answer now, could you provide the list of the –

Mr. Blanchard: Yes, in terms of –

Ms. Lutchmedial: – things and the time frame if possible?

Mr. Blanchard: – the specification of social indicators, we can provide that list.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Yeah, thank you.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Blanchard, do you get statistics from the court? You mentioned child abuse, but what about child justice? If I wanted to find out how many children have been charged before the court or brought before the court who are under 12 years of age, will you be able to provide that information? Is there any way that you can get that information?

Mr. Blanchard: No, currently, we are not able to provide that data but we need to ensure that whatever statistical framework we have for social indicators, that it aligns itself with meeting the commitments of the Sustainable Development Goals. The CSO would be unable to really to collect all datasets because that will be almost infinite. So we have to identify the traditional indicators that will be able to meet most of the assessments of the welfare of children, of youth, of women, but these are things that we can explore. Those are things that could form part of the conversation in terms of meeting with stakeholders and engaging with stakeholders and to the extent that that data is available, we can explore it in the future.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, I hope you are not suggesting that the issue of child offenders do not come within the Sustainable Development Goals, because if you look you will see it will come under more than one goal eh, because you are talking about children and their treatment. Yes?

Mr. Blanchard: Yes, so basically, the CSO I have mentioned before, you know, in terms of social statistics, basically, maybe even the majority of the data that relates to the indicators come from outside of the CSO so, we really need to have a strong coordinating function and that move to the new organization is going to increase that capacity for CSO to coordinate the collection of data and once we have that enhanced authority, we can therefore get the sort of data that you are talking about from industrial courts on a much more timely and consistent basis. And so once we can satisfy our core data sets, and then even if there is need for special commitments because of national concerns, you know, outside of the international community, there may be localized national concerns, and the Ministries or Departments communicate to the CSO that these data sets are important to us, of course, we will look at it. But, again, it all boils down in the end, you

know, sorry to say this, but it all boils down to having enough resources to undertake this massive task.

Madam Chairman: Thank you.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Well, Chair, I think coming out of our analysis of the submission, but we have done some – we have done a lot – we have touched on this a lot but with respect to data collection practices in light of the pandemic, is there any other further information by way of policy development and, you know, practices and so on, or may be perhaps identifying alternative sources of data and alternative methods of collection that the CSO would have considered over this two-year period that we have been essentially under restrictions and that you think would help going forward with improving your data collection?

Specifically, I want to ask you about labour statistics. We have been hearing a lot about that and a lot of people have been questioning the accuracy of the different statistics being quoted by different people with respect to how many persons have become unemployed, how many persons have lost their jobs, how many businesses have been closed. Has CSO focused at all on the impact and have you deployed different methods of collecting data, in the pandemic specifically with respect to the impact on the labour market of the pandemic?

Mr. Blanchard: All right, so alternative sources of data – and again, I am glad you asked that again, because in the pandemic, for instance, I had mentioned previously that we have worked in terms of a price data. For instance, we had to be innovative in terms of being forced to collect alternative sources of data, using digital data available in organizations' databases. And particularly too as well, one of the major trends of national statistical offices such as the CSO, is the greater use of administrative data that is readily available. And you know, when you can use data that is readily available, you reduce cost, you avoid respondent burden. And of course, if it is administrative data available it removes the need to undertake, you know, certain types of surveys, which apart from reducing costs, if it is a household type survey that is necessary it could reduce certain risk of in terms of a pandemic.

So that desire for administrative data can also be enhanced by the move to the new organization and having greater authority to collect administrative data. And in terms of the labour force survey, yes – in terms of – that is a major survey and that is assessing the impacts of COVID-19. And so the survey in of itself is pandemic related. The labour force survey will tell you what happens to certain occupations and in certain industries during times of the pandemic and we are taking great steps to try and improve the timeliness of that labour force survey.

There is a possibility in the future going forward where we can, you know, attach certain modules to the labour force survey, because it is a sample survey and we can ask particular questions on any issue, including COVID-19. But right now, we are making a priority to make that labour force data up to date so that we can move to the revised labour force survey which we want to undertake in July. In the meantime, though, if we can work with an international development partner in having some sort of rapid assessment survey, which we are doing currently with the UN Resident Coordinator's office we will do that. So we can have a rapid assessment survey as just a first guide as to what is happening, but in terms of having feedback on the effects of COVID-19 on the labour force, the labour force survey as it exists, would be extremely useful in of itself. And we can also, in addition to that moving forward, if we feel the need in terms of, we can attach certain COVID-19 modules to the survey going forward but just to know that all these things come with a cost and the longer you have your survey, the greater the respondent would not – on people who have to respond. And so, we feel if you focus on your

core data sets, you would answer many of the questions that you have as to how the COVID-19 has affected the population as a whole. Thank you.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Could you just for clarification for the listening public, tell us when was the last labour force survey conducted?

Mr. Blanchard: Well, the labour force survey is conducted quarterly. In terms of what is the latest that we have published data for, we just recently finished the third quarter of 2020 and soon thereafter, we will have the fourth quarter of 2020. We understand that, you know that this data set, the timeliness needs to be improved and, you know, working with our Ministry and our Permanent Secretary, they have been quickly assisting, hiring more staff, field staff, and in the process now of catching up. So we really do intend by the middle of this year to have our labour force survey up to date by the end of June and which means we will have first quarter 2022 data by the end of June and that is a commitment on the part of CSO and our Ministry.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Okay, thank you, Chair.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Blanchard, is it possible, the question is being asked of us, that a national registry can be established where all the data gathering agencies can come together, probably under your head and have that posted so that people doing whatever – a variety of research – can actually go to that head source and get whatever data they need. It would mean you all liaising with different agencies, and some of them will probably keep close to their hearts and chest certain information but you may find ways of getting around that. You look at what is happening in other jurisdictions, you know, sometimes it is much easier to find out information from other parts of the world in a particular area than you can find out from your own country.

Mr. Blanchard: All right, so I mean, you pointed out – of course, it would be useful at the CSO as the main coordinator of the national statistical system, to collect all of the data sets that we need, socio economic data sets and be able to disseminate that data. But then that is really focusing on another more important point. Does the CSO have the authority to enforce that coordinating role which is our mandate, which is our responsibility? But do we have the structure in place and the authority in place to make us enforce that mandate? So of course, it is a very good idea and, you know, that is one of the benefits of moving to the new organization. It does have an enhanced authority to coordinate, gives the NSO an enhanced authority to coordinate. In fact, one of the versions of the Bill, there was a National Statistical Coordinating Committee, with all the Permanent Secretaries, the THA, members of businesses, and you know, the director general of that new organization would liaise with them in ensuring that you collect the datasets from these Ministries and external stakeholders. And you know, the positions I have just mentioned, the permanent secretaries you are dealing with high level people who have the power to ensure that their Ministries supply the CSO with that data.

So I really do think that the move to the new organization is going to enhance our coordinating role, and bring to fruition what you have just suggested, and which is part of our mandate in and of itself. To coordinate the collection of data, have that data readily available and be able to disseminate data to researchers and academics and have it in one place as you said, you know, that requires having a database administrator and all these positions that CSO does not have right now. So, I keep repeating that we must make that transition to the new organization and, you know, the sooner it happens, the better and I look forward to having that extra authority and to meet the commitments demanded of the NSO. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Bacchus: Chair, if I may?

Madam Chairman: You may.

Mr. Bacchus: Thank you. Just to follow up on where you left off Mr. Blanchard, how is the cooperation with the entities to which you are trying to retrieve this information from? Is it that you meet with resistance or is it that it is normally cordial and you get what you ask for and is it that you need to – [*Inaudible*] What is situation with that?

Mr. Blanchard: All right, so for most of the organizations and Ministries, for instance, the Ministry of Labour, they – what they have requested is what is being requested over many, many years. So we have an established working relationship, we know what they want and they know what we have and but still, there is room to have more formal agreements in place. I think what is being put – for instance, there is a National Labour Market Information System and what is being proposed is developing an MOU between the various departments of government and the Ministry including the CSO and that is one way to go. We have developed an MOU with the Registrar General's office to collect vital statistics, births and deaths. The MOUs can act as an intermediate step in terms of enforcing that. So there is a lot of data that we collect routinely that we have established good relationships with but there is still sometimes a need for persuasion and dialogue and meeting – especially in terms of meeting deadlines and these are areas that we still have to work on. MOUs can help but, I think that something to be more permanent, more structured in terms of the relationship between the NSO, the CSO that is, and the various data providers.

Mr. Bacchus: What of the private sector, specifically?

Mr. Blanchard: Well, we collect data from the private sector in terms of the individual establishments. Our economic surveys would survey the establishments and to that extent, we depend on the law and the ability of the private sector establishments to agree to obey the law and supply the CSO with data. That exists in the current Act but we do need to have, you know, greater penalties in terms of enforcing that demand for data from private sector organizations.

We do relate to private sector organizations beyond the individual organization. Chambers of Commerce, for instance, and other organizations, where they help us a lot where they have societies. They have lists of organizations which we use to update our register of establishments and so, for many of these, you know, like Chambers of Commerce, we do have a working relationship with them in terms of supplying us with lists of organizations and developing our database.

Mr. Bacchus: [*Inaudible*]

Madam Chairman: Change is always painful – sorry.

Mr. Bacchus: No Chair, I am saying thank you.

Madam Chairman: Change is always, very often, I would say painful and disruptive. So in your proposed change, the proposed change of the CSO to the National Statistical Institute, have you encountered any form of resistance to the proposed change and how are you managing that if it is so?

Mr. Blanchard: Internally or externally?

Madam Chairman: Both.

Mr. Blanchard: Okay. Internally, I think – and the public might be surprised to know, that as much as the public might be hard on us, the staff of the CSO are harder on themselves. They know that we can do better and they want to do better and we are aware of whatever shortcomings we have and we feel we have done enough and that we, you know, we produce and what we produce we have gotten acknowledged for, but we do know that we can do better. And so the staff are generally optimistic, in my opinion. In terms of having a better CSO they do not like the constant bringing down of the organization, it reflects on them. So, you know, I am there are one or two

individuals, of course, who are resistant, mostly – so that you will have that in any organization, and they probably thinking of their own personal needs as I do. But I do think that the vast majority of staff are looking forward to a better organization, not to mention better pay as well but – and so they are optimistic about it. Externally, of course, there is very little resistance, even from people who admire the work that the CSO does and we have a great reputation.

CSO is dependent – once you want to carry out a major household survey, any large scale survey, there is only one organization can do that and that is the CSO and for all the talk, they rely on our expertise. We are invited the numerous committees for our expertise and so externally, but they do want to see the organization improve even better, have greater independence, have greater control in terms of governance issues.

And in terms of the change management plan for the CSO, we have been working in terms of improving the skill sets and have plans to improve the skill sets of employees and they are grateful for that, building better feedback in terms of how we access our data. In fact, right now, we are in the process of undertaking employee survey working with the International Development Bank again – Inter American Development Bank. They have hired someone who is asking employees questions about what they think of their career prospects, what they think of their management and that is ongoing, so we shortly should get feedback on that. So, but externally, there is no resistance and internally quite a few of the staff are willing to see a better organization and a better reputation for the organization that they work for. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Rambharat – member Rambharat.

Mr. Rambharat: Thank you very much. I wanted to ask, while you work on the CSO and the future, what steps have been taken to improve the data collection and transmission from the Ministries in particular, and do you see a time when the CSO will actually place its own staff in the Ministries to ensure that the data is collected in a particular manner and it is transmitted to the CSO in a timely manner?

11.50 a.m.

Mr. Blanchard: Well, placing staff in organizations, you know, many of the Ministries and Departments have their own statistical units: Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, for instance and the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, and they work closely with the CSO. And how we prioritize collecting data is really developing that relationship on a personal level and working with the staff. And for the regular type data sets, we do get them. We have sometimes the issue of timeliness of collecting the data. But, you know, for the large part, we do get cooperation and our focus is more on dialogue, in terms of working with the Ministries. I do feel that, you know, if we do have a coordinating committee it will enhance that role for us to collect data from Ministries on a timely basis.

We do have an MOU with the Board of Inland Revenue to collect high-frequency related tax data which will help with our GDP estimates, and part of that MOU does provide for staff going to the Inland Revenue to collect data, and to be used in our estimates of GDP. You know, it is generally, it might be impractical to have staff going individually. It might be better to have better trained staff within the Ministry that understand the role of the CSO, and to establish a structural relationship where that data flows on a regular basis to the CSO rather than staff going there. If you do have the need, as in the case with the taxation data for staff to go there, then that should be more of an exception than the rule, in my opinion.

Mr. Rambharat: One further question. How would you describe the quality of the data from the Ministries now and the state of the relationship between Ministries and CSO?

Mr. Blanchard: All right. I mean, like everything in life, it varies, different Ministries are different

from others. You know, I have to be frank here as the director, you know, not that I want to put down anyone, but we can have a better relationship with the Registrar General's office in terms of getting data on vital statistics. We have worked with them in the past, but I do think the relationship can be better. So it does vary from Ministry to Ministry but, basically, you know, I do think, my personal opinion is that we should have something more structured in place via a new organization and a new Act that gives that coordinating role and power to the CSO to – [Technical difficulties] And we need that data. Without the data, the CSO cannot produce. So, it is extremely important that Ministries understand this. We have tried to convey that to them and, you know, they depend on us in turn from the data that we prepare. So there is a self-interest involved. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Now, you mentioned that two major barriers to the transition to the National Statistical Institute were failure for the Bill to be approved and inability to fund the transition. Now, have you made any representation to Cabinet to have the legislation prioritized? Any feedback if that was so, please? And tell us what is the estimated dollar value of the proposed overhaul of the CSO and the establishment of the National Statistical Institution, and given Government's financial constraints can this project be realistically prioritized, at this time?

Mr. Blanchard: All right. So, I mean, we are in constant communication with the Ministry and the Ministry is working with us. They are very well aware of the needs of the CSO in terms of moving to the new organization. We at the CSO have invested a lot of time and commitment in terms of putting our input into the Bill itself. In terms of funding issues for the CSO and, you know, the legislative agenda, those are some things outside, and, you know, the power of the CSO itself. But our Ministry of Planning and Development is very well aware of the importance of the organization, and the need for funding, but there are certain things outside of the control of, you know, my power itself and I do not know if, you know, Deoraj may want to add.

Mrs. Deoraj: Thank you, thank you, Chair, for the question. And with respect to the priority, the last challenge really was when the matter lapsed with respect to the joint select committee at the time, and we continue to work with the Office of the Attorney General as we move forward to try to resolve the issue with respect to the special majority clause. We put several options forward. The Ministry has written to the Attorney General and awaits the guidance as to how the Bill should be put forward. Once we get that guidance, we will return to Cabinet, if it is necessary, to ask for it to be a priority.

With respect to the financial transition, the cost of transitioning to the National Statistical Institute will be quite large because it, of course, the organization, the new organization, talks about the eventual closure of the Central Statistical Office to the NSITT, and that will have implications in terms of staff movement, et cetera, but the law outlines all the different modes in which that could happen. So there will be a human capacity cost associated in terms of employment, new technology and equipment. So, we do anticipate that it will be costly. We do not have a current value for this transition. That would be based, of course, on the model that is eventually decided by the law and by the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago. But we do anticipate that will be a very costly exercise.

But I want to reiterate what Mr. Blanchard has been saying, that if we want to get all the data sets and the kind of quality of data and the constant development of new data sets with our national statistical system and, of course, the demands of the public as it relates to responding to social and economic issues would require that the organization be properly financed, developed into getting the organization that we want and I think, as I said earlier, the Central Statistical Office, in general, is really critical to the governments of any country. So a strong, robust

organization would be vital for us to be able to do all that we need to do. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Members, any further questions?

Ms. Lutchmedial: We have one question from the public specifically that came up on the chats. With respect to the Freedom of Information Act statement by the CSO, when last has one been published? Because, of course, those statements, that are required by law, give a lot of information to the public, with respect to what is available and the work of the CSO. Can you just tell us, for the benefit of the public, when last that statement has been published?

Mr. Blanchard: Just excuse me, one minute. Right. So, I do not know when the last one was published. I will be honest with you, but we are currently working on providing that last statement on the freedom of information. So, that is my answer in a nutshell. But, you know, to the extent, we have our website that would list the type of data that we have available and the type of data sets that can be obtained from the CSO. We have, you know, the adhering to the enhanced general data dissemination standards from the IMF in terms of what data sets – concerning core data sets and how it is produced and prepared. And so that is an issue that they are working on and, you know, if need be, we can provide you with further information later.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Yes. Well, I think yes since the question came from the public, you could provide it later.

Madam Chairman: Before you go on, and I just want to say that, you know, maybe the information can be provided in writing to us, and we will deal with it then. Thank you.

Mr. Blanchard: Yes.

Mrs. Deoraj: And if I may do so, Madam Chair, I will also say that the Ministry of Planning and Development, as CSO is not a public authority, they would fall under the Ministry of Planning and Development freedom of information report. So, on that, as I said, we have not published for a while, but we are in the process of preparing that for publication within the next month.

Madam Chairman: Madam Permanent Secretary? Sorry.

Ms. Lutchmedial: I just have one further question, Chair, but you can go ahead and then I will ask my question.

Madam Chairman: Member Lutchmedial, go ahead.

Ms. Lutchmedial: Thank you. With respect to training, we were provided with some information. Particularly, if there is this drive for ICT and so on, do you foresee a greater need or a different type of training that would be necessary? And, again, what impact would this have on your budget for staff training, because I think that is always a concern with the training of your staff going forward if you are looking at new methods of data collection and data processing and so on? Have you all done an analysis of what are going to be the training needs?

Mr. Blanchard: Yes. So, basically, our training needs would be determined by, you know, our plan and product development. For instance, there are different levels of training, for instance, for nonprofessional staff, meaning staff not having statistical degrees or degrees with statistics in it. We do plan to work with the IDB in terms of developing an in-service training programme that will train the staff in terms of the basic concepts of national statistical offices, the basic measures, how it is completed and why.

In terms of our economic output data, our GDP, et cetera, you know, I talk about wanting to extend the number of national accounts that we produce and that drives then, in turn, the training requirements. So, we are working with the IMF CARTAC and they are constantly undertaking training courses in terms of developing our statistical capacity development in national accounts development.

The same IMF CARTAC deals with prices and, to the extent that, you know, when we do revise our index of retail prices, which we use to calculate inflation, that, again, will drive the need for training in that area. There is also the need, you know, just generally, in terms of making estimates for non-response data, imputation for non-response. That is a major aspect of large data sets that, you know, that we can undertake training in. As the Permanent Secretary has mentioned, we have acquired staff recently, highly qualified staff, many of them with post-graduate degrees or pursuing post-graduate degrees in statistics or statistics-related work and that will enhance our capacity to lead them into the training for some of the higher-end areas. There is the talk of, you know, using big data and making utilizing big data and how it can help. That does require training in data science. So that will impact, again, on our training needs.

In terms of the ICT, there is the need for ICT staff, especially, in the area of database administration. The CSO is constantly having to produce more and more data sets. If we are going to be the coordinator of the national statistical system, we need to have a database plan and action and that requires, you know, training in database management. And so, those are areas we are focused on in terms of our training needs. They are driven by the need to produce certain products and that in turn drives the training.

Mr. Bacchus: Madam Chair, if I may?

Madam Chairman: Yes, please, Mr. Scotland.

Mr. Bacchus: No, Bacchus.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Bacchus?

Mr. Bacchus: Just following up on the last answer, and this relates really to the technical infrastructure. I get the feeling that you are managing your data, you are bringing it into your own data storage and then manipulating it, hence the reason why you need database administrators, a lot of that. Is the CSO and, of course, through the Ministry of Planning and Development, looking at putting all of this into a cloud where your focus is not on the technology itself, but really on the manipulation and utilization of the technologies so that you get the benefits of scalability, you get the benefits of the protection, you get the benefits of the enhanced security of living within a cloud environment, a global cloud environment, and all you are really concerned about are the applications that you are running and the manipulation of the data itself? Is that part your road map or is it that the intent is to remain standalone there living within your netback?

Mr. Blanchard: All right. The issue with – and, again, I am not an IT expert – with cloud storage, et cetera, is just ensuring that the confidentiality and the security of the data exist. Now, I know there are ways to do that but, you know, for right now in the short term, we will concentrate on managing that data in-house that way, you know, we are pretty sure of the security of the data sets and that, you know, there is much more control of it in storing it on servers, you know – [*Technical difficulties*] – especially with the use of technology can be explored. And the CSO wanting to produce the very best and have the very best organization for the future in, you know, in whatever format it takes, you know, is quite willing to take these recommendations and, you know, see if we can implement some of them, but there is that issue of data security that might be an issue.

Mr. Bacchus: Again, Chair, through you, I would implore you to re-examine that position. Have you IT expertise – and I know you are using international organizations like the IDB and so on – look into that concept. I can all but assure you that anything you have in-house could not be as secure as the things that would have been in other places.

Mr. Blanchard: All right. As I said, you know, we are quite willing to explore those opportunities

or those ideas.

Mr. Bacchus: Yeah, certainly. So, I suggest you do as well. Thank you, Chair.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. Now, Madam Permanent Secretary, she wrote about the staff and competency shortages, and we have heard here today a lot about technical expertise, and the need for a particular type of staff, especially, moving into the new organization. I have looked at the qualifications of staff—university degrees and so on, statistical work—and even with lower levels, you ask for in there five O Levels that they have English Language and Mathematics throughout.

I have also noted that the CSO liaises and people from these various entities get information from the Central Statistical Office. So you are liaising with government Ministries, Departments and agencies—Ministry of Planning and Development, Ministry of Finance, labour, trade, national committees and you have a list here: inter-ministerial child labour organizations created by statute, Central Bank, Caricom Secretariat, academic institutions, particularly, University of the West Indies, international organizations, including the United Nations and other development partners, such as the Inter-American Development Bank, IMF and international rated agencies and on so. So, you are out there and you are communicating with a number of agencies and you have communicated with the Parliament and you have submitted a report to the Parliament, and it does not give me any great pleasure to so say so, but I really must make the point that the report has been extremely deficient. And so see that something is submitted to the Parliament of this country that has so many points of deficiencies, I am very, very wary of your competency, you know, of staff, because I have noted several errors in this report, basic errors of writing that it really saddens me. And I do not know what is going on out there, because whenever you communicate you are really communicating on behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and certain standards must be maintained.

As I say, it does not give me any joy, but please be very careful and make sure that what is written is always grammatically correct. There are too many errors in this report. So, please look at what you have. If you need to get in some proof readers or somebody competent, please do it. But I shudder to think that what we were faced with that that is also going out there. Data plural, noun, can take a singular verb and there are so much of that. Wrong prepositions and all of those things.

In this 2022, with all the money spent on education and training, we cannot. I have to be making this point all the time, and this is not at all acceptable. Something needs to be done and done urgently if this is what is going out there in the name of Trinidad and Tobago in other areas. It really has to be dealt with as a matter of urgency. It is happening in other agencies, but I have never seen it in a joint select committee report before today to that extent. I will now invite closing remarks from the Ministry and the CSO.

Mrs. Deoraj: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. On behalf of the Ministry of Planning and Development, I thank you for the opportunity to present today. The meeting has been very informative and we take your guidance, certainly in terms of the commentary with respect to the submission and we will review and ensure that it meets to the standard that is expected of the Ministry.

With respect to the follow-up work that was requested, we will undertake to do a number of the bits of advice that was given by the membership, certainly in terms of the policy for interacting with the public with respect to how we collect data in a pandemic environment. We will undertake to provide more details with respect to the data on the training and some of the other data sets that have been recommended and, certainly, in terms of the new technology and

methodology that we have been exposed to today.

The Ministry of Planning and Development wants to reiterate that the move to the National Statistical Institute is really a priority for us. We are challenged by the constraints of the special majority, and we do hope that this is a very important part of us achieving where we want to go, because the National Statistical Institute will help us to improve our efficiency and effectiveness in terms of data collection and data dissemination. So thank you for the advice and the guidance today, Madam Chair.

Mr. Blanchard: The CSO would, you know, like to thank the Committee for inviting us to give our side of the story, so to speak, to present some of the good things that we have done. I know there is a lot more work that needs to be done in terms of extending the range of products that we used, particularly in the social sector side. I do think that we are making some great progress on our economic indicator side in terms of our quarterly GDP, and extending the range of accounts that are going to be produced. The labour force aspect of it, I think, you know, we are going to have a revised labour force and we are going to meet the timeliness required of the nation, of the CSO, in terms of that data set.

We have, you know, in recent times adhered to an enhanced general data dissemination system of the IMF where we have an Advance Release Calendar. I think that is, in my time that is one of the more noteworthy things, that you have an Advance Release Calendar for the core statistical products of the CSO, stating when it is going to be released and the timeliness. So, these are important progress points that we have taken into account. And, as I said, we do acknowledge that we need to improve. We will improve and, you know, we look forward to the future with optimism and to implement the new technologies that we have spoken about today that would be used in future generation, including the computer assisted personal interviewing, personal assisted Web interviewing. And given a revised organization with an enhanced staff, we can undertake more of the research demands, you know, to improve our products and improve the quality of our products and extend the range of our products. So, again, thank you for giving us this opportunity to tell our side of the story.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for your contribution to today's proceedings. We have certainly learnt a lot about your operations, and I think together we have been able to identify what needs to be done to take you on the way forward to where you want to go, all for the good of the country.

We thank members who participated remotely in this virtual hearing. Again, as always, we thank the staff of the Office of the Parliament for procedural and logistical support. We do not know how you did it. We know what happened, you know, on Wednesday would have impacted severely on you, so the time frame was shortened somewhat and you did come through with all that you had to do to assist us in this very, very important exercise. We thank the viewing and listening audience, and we look forward to whatever submissions you have to make to us or you wish to make to our meeting, our Committee, in writing. We certainly will include them in our report, at the end the day.

And it is left for me to say, we are now at the end of our meeting and enjoy your launch. The reason I spoke about potato earlier—Mr. Bacchus is smiling—because I cooked curried channa and potato this morning to eat with my roti, my frozen roti that I thawed out. So, I am going to have a lovely curried lunch. So, it is not only potato, but the channa as well. So enjoy your lunch all of you, and do have a good weekend and we see you next month with another exercise. So, I know I may not be able to escape RD, but we will deal with it when the time comes. Mr. Bacchus, you know what RD is, eh? Have a good weekend everyone.

12.19 p.m.: *Meeting adjourned.*

APPENDIX III

AREAS OF SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT TO THE CSO



AREAS OF SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT TO THE CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE

- Provisions of Human Resource services- the CSO's organisational structure does not include a Human Resources Department/Unit. To this end, the Ministry provides assistance in the recruitment and selection of CSO's staff as well as the management of its staff in terms of promotion, discipline, etc.;
- Provision of Information Technology (IT) technical expertise and support;
- Monitoring the performance of CSO's Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) projects;
- Approval by Permanent Secretary, MPD to exceed Director's spending limit for goods and services;
- Provision of advice and assistance relating to financial matters/regulations;
- Provision of advice and assistance relating to records management;
- Facilitate high level stakeholder meetings; and
- Establishment of the National Statistical Institute of Trinidad and Tobago- the Change Management Unit of the MPD is working with the CSO towards the creation of the NSITT.

APPENDIX IV
STAFF OF THE CSO

Division	Description	Number of staff
Director of Statistics	Overall Management of the CSO	1
Assistant Director of Statistics	Assist in the overall management of the CSO	1
Accounts	Salaries	17
Administration	Administration, Messenger, Drivers	25
National Accounts Division	Gross Domestic Product per economic activity (Current and Constant prices), Capital Formation	24
Economics Statistics Division	Business Statistics, Trade (Imports and Exports), Travel, Tourism, Retail Price Index, Producer Price Index, Domestic Price Index, Index of Retail Sales	21
Agriculture Division	Production statistics relating to Agro chemicals and Feed Milling, Food crops and Livestock, Poultry and Milk, Forestry and Fishing	7
Continuous Sample Survey of Population (Labour force)	Employment, Unemployment, Labour Force Participation Rates by Sex, Industry	11
Population, Social and Vital Statistics Division	Population characteristics (Sex, Religion, Ethnicity), Age Structure, Births, Deaths, Marriages and Divorces. Education, Crime, Traffic	14
GIS and Mapping	Spatial data on population, buildings, households and businesses	5
Computer Division	IT support for Statistical Operations	27
Tobago Office	Support to CSO head office in terms of field work and compilation of tables	19
Printer and Publications	Printing of publications, Survey Instruments	10
Field	Collection of Data	50

APPENDIX V TRAINING SEMINARS CONDUCTED BY THE CSO

TRAINING SEMINARS CONDUCTED BY THE CSO

- The Power of Data to meet the Challenges of the 2030 Development Agenda Forum held in conjunction with the IDB;
- Seminar on Vital Statistics (Births and Deaths) held by the CSO;
- Seminar on the Dictionary of Occupational Classification of Trinidad and Tobago (DOTT) held by the CSO;
- Seminar on the International Standard Industrial Classification Revision 4- in collaboration with the Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Services Industry (TTCSI);
- Seminar on the International Standard Industrial Classification Revision 4- in collaboration with the Tobago House of Assembly (THA); and
- Training on Reporting Requirements for Travel Statistics and Tourism Satellite Accounts held by the CSO.

APPENDIX VI CSO'S CHANGE MANAGEMENT TEAM



Role	Responsibilities	Participant(s)
Project Sponsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultimate decision-maker and tie-breaker • Provide project oversight and guidance • Review/ approve some project elements 	Joanne Deoraj, Permanent Secretary
Change Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages programme in accordance to the plan • Escalates issues to Project Sponsor • Communicates status • Supervises consultants • Provide overall direction • Direct/lead team members toward programme and project objectives • Escalates development issues to Technical Lead • Handle problem resolution • Assess the overall organization and the organizational units affected by the change • Implement the change management strategy • Monitor and evaluate the organization’s performance once the change has been implemented 	Cherrie Ann Joseph, Change Manager
Technical Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commits department resources • Provides technical expertise • Point of contact for technical issues that arise during implementation • Facilitates bringing the right resources together to develop/resolve technical solutions • Approves major funding and resource allocation strategies, and significant changes to funding/resource allocation • Ensures cross functional communication occurs between development activities and understands the whole solution – BIG PICTURE • Resolves conflicts and issues • Review project deliverables 	Sean O’Brien, Director, CSO Andre Blanchard – Director Ag., CSO

Role	Responsibilities	Participant(s)
Subject Matter Experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lend expertise and guidance as needed 	Ava Mahabir Dass, Senior Statistician, National Accounts Division, CSO Kene Bryan, IT Director, MPD
Change Management Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides day to day status of issues to Change Manager for quick resolution • Coordinates participation of work groups, individuals and stakeholders • Helps identify and remove barriers • Identify risks and issues and help in resolutions • Assist in assessing the overall organization and the organizational units affected by the change • Implementing the change management strategy • Design, develop, and implement the training and education programs • Monitor and evaluate the organization's performance once the change has been implemented • Execute the programme 	Avaneil Robinson-Adams, Business Operations Assistant II
HR Specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and describe the target jobs and organizational structure 	Charmaine Carmichael, Director, Ag., HR
Other Programme Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the user needs and business processes of their area • Communicate project goals, status and progress throughout the project to personnel in their area • Review and approve project deliverables • Creates or helps create work products 	Jesel Prescod, Training Coordinator, CSO

APPENDIX VII CSO'S STAFF QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

POSITION	QUALIFICATIONS
Director of Statistics	University Degree as for Statistician I with Extensive experience in statistical work
Assistant Director of Statistics	University Degree as for Statistician I with Extensive experience in statistical work
Senior Statistician	University Degree as for Statistician I with Extensive experience in statistical work
Statistician II	University Degree as for Statistician I with Considerable experience in statistical work
Statistician I	University Degree in Statistics, or other university degree with statistics as a significant component
Statistical Training Officer	5 O'Level subjects including English Language and Mathematics with Considerable experience in statistical work
Principal Statistical Officer	5 O'Level subjects including English Language and Mathematics with Considerable experience in statistical work
Statistical Officer III	5 O'Level subjects including English Language and Mathematics with Considerable experience in statistical work
Statistical Officer II	5 O'Level subjects including English Language and Mathematics with experience in statistical work
Statistical Officer I	5 O'Level subjects including English Language and Mathematics with experience in statistical work
Statistical Assistant II	5 O'Level subjects including English Language and Mathematics with experience in statistical work
Statistical Assistant I	5 O'Level subjects including English Language and Mathematics with experience in statistical work
Statistical Aide	3 O'Level subjects including English Language and Mathematics
Chief Census & Survey Officer	University Degree with Extensive experience in statistical work
Statistical Survey Officer	5 O'Level subjects including English Language with Extensive experience in survey interviewing work
Survey Interviewer III	5 O'Level subjects including English Language with Considerable experience in survey interviewing work
Survey Interviewer II	5 O'Level subjects including English Language with Considerable experience in survey interviewing work
Survey Interviewer I	5 O'Level subjects including English Language with Considerable experience in survey interviewing work
Assistant Field Interviewer	5 O'Level subjects
Supervisor Mapping Unit	Considerable experience in cartographic draughting and map production in GIS
Mapping Technician	5 O'Level subjects including English Language and Mathematics with experience in cartographic draughting
Mapping Technician Assistant	5 O'Level subjects including English Language and Mathematics with experience in cartographic draughting
E.D.P Manager	University Degree with Extensive experience in data processing
Systems Analyst I	University Degree with Considerable experience in data processing
E.D.P Programmer II	5 O'Level subjects including English Language and Mathematics with Considerable experience
Programmer I	5 O'Level subjects including English Language and Mathematics with experience in computer programs
E.D.P Operation Supervisor	5 O'Level subjects with Considerable experience in data processing
E.D.P Control Supervisor	5 O'Level subjects with Considerable experience in data processing
Computer Operator III	5 O'Level subjects with Considerable experience in data processing
Computer Operator II	5 O'Level subjects with experience in data processing
Computer Operator I	5 O'Level subjects
E.D.P Data Conv. Supervisor	5 O'Level subjects including English Language and Mathematics with experience in the field of EDP
E.D.P Librarian	5 O'Level subjects including English Language and Mathematics with experience in the field of EDP
E.D.P Control Clerk	5 O'Level subjects including English Language and Mathematics
E.D.P Data Conv. Equip Operator	5 O'Level subjects including English Language and Mathematics
Vari-Typist Supervisor II	3 O'Level subjects including English Language with Considerable experience in cold type composing operations
Vari-Typist Supervisor I	3 O'Level subjects including English Language with experience in cold type composing operations
Vari-Typist I	3 O'Level subjects including English Language with experience in typing 45 words per minute
Printing Supervisor II	City & Guilds Final Certificate with extensive experience in a printery
Printing Supervisor I	City & Guilds Final Certificate with extensive experience in a printery
Printing Operator V	City & Guilds Final Certificate with extensive experience in a printery
Printing Operator IV	City & Guilds Final Certificate with extensive experience in a printery
Printing Operator II	City & Guilds Final Certificate with extensive experience in a printery
Printing Operator I	Experience as an Apprentice in a Printery and training as evidence by a Primary School Leaving Certificate
Illustrator	5 O'Level subjects including English Language and Art with Considerable experience in graphic art
Assistant Illustrator	5 O'Level subjects including English Language and Art with experience in graphic art

APPENDIX VIII ADKAR FRAMEWORK

ADKAR FRAMEWORK

- Building awareness of the impact for current and future systems and change management strategies;
- Enhancing desire to learn more about the new systems and its benefits to both the individual and the national community;
- Providing knowledge about proposed plans of action and impact- areas of change and potential impact on individuals;
- Enhancing the ability of stakeholders to understand and make change through training, coaching, on and off line support; and
- Reinforcing the desired behaviour by ensuring that infrastructure, systems, policies and processes are in place.

ⁱ Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Verbatim notes of the 9th virtual meeting of the Joint Select Committee on Finance and Legal Affairs. February 18, 2022, p.8. Accessed: April 08, 2022

ⁱⁱ UN Statistics. Statistical Systems-Session 3-workshops. Accessed: October 27, 2020. Available:

https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/statorg/Workshops/Yangon/Session3_StatisticalSystems_McLennan.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Macfeely, S. and Bernat, N. (2017). Statistical capacity building for sustainable development: Developing the fundamental plans necessary for modern national statistical systems. *Statistical Journal of the IAOS*, 33, 895-909.

^{iv} Central Statistical Office. 'About us'. Accessed October 23, 2020. Available: <https://cso.gov.tt/about/about-us/>

^v Ibid

^{vi} Ibid

^{vii} Office of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. Bill Essentials of the National Statistical Institute Bill, 2018. Accessed: October 23, 2020. Available: <http://www.ttparliament.org/documents/2790.pdf>

^{viii} Office of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. Bills of the Eleventh Parliament. Accessed: October 23, 2020. Available:

<http://www.ttparliament.org/publications.php?mid=28&id=854>

^{ix} Office of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. Bills of the Eleventh Parliament. Accessed: October 23, 2020. Available:

<http://www.ttparliament.org/publications.php?mid=28&id=854>

^x Office of the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago. Bill Essentials of the National Statistical Institute Bill, 2018. Accessed: October 23, 2020. Available: <http://www.ttparliament.org/documents/2790.pdf>

^x Central Statistical Office. Continuous Sample Survey of Population. Accessed: April 11, 2022. Available: <https://cso.gov.tt/subjects/continuous-sample-survey-of-population/>