

PARLIAMENT  
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

TENTH PARLIAMENT  
[2011/2012 SESSION]

# Sixth REPORT

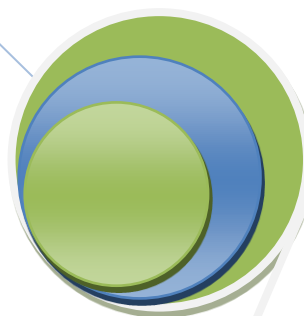
OF THE

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO  
AND REPORT ON MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS AND SERVICE  
COMMISSIONS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE JUDICIAL AND  
LEGAL SERVICE COMMISSION

**Re-evaluation of the  
Efficiency and Effectiveness of  
the Statutory Authorities' Service Commission**

*Together with the Minutes of Proceedings  
and Notes of Evidence*

Ordered to be printed by the Houses





**JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO AND REPORT TO  
PARLIAMENT ON MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS AND SERVICE COMMISSIONS  
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE JUDICIAL AND LEGAL SERVICE COMMISSION**

# SIXTH REPORT

## **Second Evaluation of the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Statutory Authorities' Service Commission**

**Date Laid:** H.O. R. \_\_\_\_\_

Senate \_\_\_\_\_



# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	vi
<b>Chapter 1</b> .....	1
<b>1.1 The Committee</b> .....	1
(a) Mandate .....	1
(b) Powers .....	1
(c) Membership.....	1
(d) Secretariat Support .....	2
1.2 Minister’s Response .....	2
<b>Chapter 2</b> .....	5
Background .....	5
<b>Chapter 3</b> .....	7
3.1 Evidence .....	7
<b>Chapter 4</b> .....	15
4.1 Observations/Findings.....	15
4.2 Recommendations .....	16
4.3 Conclusion.....	17
<b>Appendix 1: Areas of Responsibility</b> .....	21
<b>Appendix 2: Minutes</b> .....	25
<b>Appendix 3: Notes of the Proceedings</b> .....	35



# Executive Summary

This Sixth Report of the Joint Select Committee of Parliament appointed to inquire into and report on Municipal Corporations and Service Commissions with the exception of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission is based on a re-evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Statutory Authorities' Service Commission (SASC).

Chapter 1 of the Report details the mandate and powers of the Committee in accordance with section 66A of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the mode of operations.

Chapter 2 of the Report gives the background of the Statutory Authorities' Service Commission, the reason for the re-evaluation.

Chapter 3 of the Report outlines the evidence submitted by Officials of the SASC to your Committee at the public hearing.

Chapter 4 of the Report details the recommendations proposed by the Committee and the conclusion of the re-evaluation.





# Chapter 1

## 1.1 The Committee

### (a) Mandate

#### Establishment

In accordance with provisions at section 66(A) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, on September 17, 2010 the House of Representatives and October 12, 2010 the Senate, agreed to a motion on the subject of the appointment of a **Joint Select Committee to inquire into and report to Parliament on Municipal Corporations and Service Commissions with the exception of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission on all matters relating 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.**

### (b) Powers

Standing Orders 71B of the Senate and 79B of the House of Representatives delineate the core powers of the Committee which include *inter alia*:

- to send for persons, papers and records;
- to adjourn from place to place;
- 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; and
- to communicate with any other Committee of Parliament on matters of common interest.

### (c) Membership

The membership of the Committee is comprised as follows:

- Mr. Subhas Ramkhelawan - Chairman
- Mr. Elton Prescott, SC - Vice-Chairman
- Brig. John Sandy<sup>1</sup>
- Mr. David Abdulah<sup>2</sup>
- Ms. Shamfa Cudjoe
- Mr. Devant Maharaj
- Mrs. Vernella Alleyne-Toppin, MP
- Mr. Chandresh Sharma, MP
- Mr. Rodger Samuel, MP
- Mr. Prakash Ramadhar, MP
- Ms. Marlene McDonald, MP
- Mrs. Joanne Thomas, MP

#### **(d) Secretariat Support**

Secretarial assistance was provided by the following officers:

- Mrs. Jacqueline Phillip-Stoute - Secretary
- Ms. Candice Skerrette - Assistant Secretary
- Ms. Indira Binda - Graduate Research Assistant

#### **(e) Meetings**

Your Committee held one (1) meeting with the Statutory Authorities' Service Commission on Friday April 27, 2012.

## **1.2 Minister's Response**

This Report is subject to Standing Orders 71(B)(13) of the Senate and 79(B) (13) of the House of Representatives which state:

---

<sup>1</sup> Brig. John Sandy's Ministerial and Senatorial appointments were revoked with effect from June 25, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. David Abdulah's Senatorial appointment was revoked with effect from June 22, 2012.

“(13) The Minister responsible for the Ministry/Body under review shall, not later than sixty days after a report from a Joint Select Committee, relating to the Ministry/Body, has been laid upon the Table, present a paper to the House responding to any recommendations/comments contained in the report which are addressed to it. All such papers presented by the Ministry/Body shall be ordered to be laid upon the Table without question put, and any motion for the printing thereof as a House Paper shall be determined without amendment or debate.

The sixty-day period commences on the date of tabling.



## Chapter 2

### Background

In the First Session of the Tenth Parliament the Committee initially evaluated the efficiency and effectiveness of the Statutory Authorities' Service Commission at a public hearing held on May 27, 2011. During the Second Session the Committee took a decision to undertake a second evaluation of the Statutory Authorities' Service Commission.

As such, your Committee again focused on the efficiency and effectiveness of the SASC and therefore requested written submissions in connection with the under-mentioned areas from the Commission:

- (i) Review of the administrative management from 2010 to 2011;
- (ii) Report on its objectives and goals listed in its 2010 Report;
- (iii) Medium-Term Strategic Plan up to 2015;
- (iv) Planned Areas of Implementation up to 2015; and
- (v) Legislative and Regulatory adjustments that can enhance the effectiveness of the Commission.

After consideration of the submissions made by the SASC, your Committee noted that there were concerns that required clarification and therefore invited officials from the Commission to attend a meeting on Friday April 27, 2012.

### Inquiry Objectives

The objectives of the inquiry were as follows:

- to determine the relevance of the SASC;
- to highlight the operational constraints faced by the SASC;
- to uncover whether Performance Appraisals are submitted on a timely basis; and
- to identify the Human Resource Management issues faced by the SASC.

At that meeting the Commission was represented by the following Officials:

Mr. Steve Alvarez	-	Chairman
Ms. Sharmila Nisha Harry	-	Deputy Chairman
Mr. Ragbir Umraw	-	Member
Mr. Jagdeo Maharaj	-	Member
Ms. Patricia Boyce-Diaz	-	Executive Officer

The **Minutes of the Committee's proceedings** are attached as **Appendix 2** and the **Verbatim Notes** as **Appendix 3**.

In accordance with Standing Orders 75(4)(b) of the Senate and 82(4)(b) of the House of Representatives, the Committee at a meeting held on November 28, 2012 considered and adopted this Sixth Report.

## Chapter 3

### 3.1 Evidence

The Statutory Authorities' Service Commission (SASC) was established by the Statutory Authorities Act Chap: 24:01. The powers of the SASC are<sup>3</sup>:

- to appoint persons to be or act as officers; and
- to transfer, promote, remove and exercise disciplinary control over persons so appointed.

Additionally, while not part of its mandate, the SASC is called upon to guide the understanding of the other key stakeholders with respect to their limits of authority as it relates to members of staff who are governed by the SASC's Regulations and the rules and regulations of the wider public service. The Table hereunder gives details with respect to the entities which fall under the purview of the SASC and the total number of positions.

<b>Statutory Authority Agencies</b>	<b>No. of Positions</b>
Port of Spain City Corporation	420
San Fernando City Corporation	211
Arima Borough Corporation	141
Point Fortin Borough Corporation	106
Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago	4
Cocoa and Coffee Industry Board	25
National Lotteries Control Board	36
St Dominic's Children's Board	102
Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee	75
St. Mary's Children Home	75
St. Jude's School for Girls	25
St. Michael's School for Boys	59
Zoological Society of Trinidad and Tobago	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>1315<sup>4</sup></b>

<sup>3</sup> Statutory Authorities Act Chap: 24:01, Section 5.

<sup>4</sup> "SASC number of positions as at November 2011." The Statutory Authorities' Service Commission Strategic Plan 2012-2015, 4.

Detailed in the Table hereunder is the number of vacancies with respect to each Corporation:

<b>Corporation</b>	<b>No. of Posts</b>	<b>No. of Vacant posts without persons</b>
Port of Spain City Corporation	126	4
San Fernando City Corporation	54	7
Arima Borough Corporation	43	2
Point Fortin Borough Corporation	31	1
<b>Total<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>254</b>	<b>14</b>

The Watchwords, Vision, Mission and objectives to be pursued by the SASC over the 2012-2015 period are aligned to the following strategic imperatives:

- Conducting an entire process re-engineering exercise to guide the implementation of new customer-focused internal processes and systems. These systems will focus on improving the timeliness in the filling of vacancies, quick action with respect to disciplinary matters and faster delivery of services
- Enhancing the public and stakeholder image of the SASC through timely dissemination of information and facilitation of information flows to the Commission from stakeholders, clients and the general public.
- Drawing on the organizational attributes of leadership, positive staff attitudes, team spirit and communication flows as key inputs to ensuring a successful change management process at the SASC.

## Internal Analysis of SASC<sup>6</sup>

<b>No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>1.</b>	Strategies needed for alignment with the Seven Interconnected Pillars for Sustainable Development	Willingness of the SASC to transform itself	SASC has not been able to fully change its internal skills in response to the changed environmental demands
<b>2.</b>	Systems & Processes	Existing systems	The Organization is not au courant with modern human resource strategies and

<sup>5</sup> Breakdown of Municipal Police posts and vacancies as at December 31, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> "Internal Analysis". The Statutory Authorities' Service Commission Strategic Plan 2012-2015, 26.



		practices. No recent re-engineering of the internal processes.
<b>3. Staff</b>	The staff have a positive attitude towards change which will facilitate the move to a new strategic direction.  Existence of qualified staff.	Lack of IT personnel. Current remuneration levels cannot attract and retain the right skills mix of staff at SASC or its Authorities.  Inadequate physical accommodation impacting staff morale. Lack of adequate numbers of competent HR staff. Lack of promotional opportunities.
<b>4. Structure</b>	Management is team-oriented and is willing to make internal adjustments to the organization's structure in response to the transformation exercise.	The organization now needs to be restructured in response to the proposed strategic direction. The present structure is not in alignment with the current transformation efforts.
<b>5. Leadership</b>	Good leadership skills and open door policy that can facilitate changes.	Leadership skills not present at all levels.

### Critical Success Factors of Strategic Plan 2012-2015

1. An aggressive initiative by the Commission to have specific regulations governing the SASC amended to facilitate the speedy resolution of disciplinary issues;
2. The timely acquisition of the required technology for the provision of prompt efficient service to its customers and the Authorities
3. Revision of the organizational structure and a review of job descriptions
4. The support and collaboration of external stakeholders for example, the Public Service Commission
5. The timely provision of other resources: human (recruitment), financial and material (budgets) required for supporting the implementation of the plan

## Summary of deliverables of Strategic Plan 2012-2015

Task No.	Task Description	Output/Deliverables	Start Date	End Date
1.	Submission of Strategic Plan	Agreement	Dec 6, 2011	Jan 6, 2012
2.	Recruitment of IT Staff	IT Specialist/Manager Computer Operations	June 2012	Dec 2012
3.	IT Staff Training	Trained SASC Staff	June 2012	Continuing
4.	Upgrade of Internal Systems/Process redesign		Jan 2012	Dec 2012
5.	Revision of regulations regarding disciplinary matters	Revised regulations	Jan 2012	Dec 2012
6.	Introduction of new skill sets to improve the quality of staff recruited as Care Givers at the Homes	Attainment of standards of performance	Feb 2012	Dec 2012
7.	Restructure Municipal Police to align with the TTPS	Restructured Municipal Police	Dec 2011	Continuing

### Vacancies

One of the early decisions of the SASC was for all senior Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and senior managers to immediately make recommendations to fill all vacant positions.

To date, of the 1315 employees under the purview of the SASC, there are less than 300 vacancies.

### Visits

During the months of August to November 2011, the SASC visited thirteen (13) Authorities under its purview to gather information to guide the development of its Strategic Plan 2012-2015.

The Public Service Commission undertook internal evaluations of the operations of the SASC and concluded that the following six (6) areas require immediate action:

- the development of strategic partnerships with external HR service providers with complementary and supplementary competencies within both the public and private sectors;
- the offering of online facilities in order to meet the expectations of the modern customer;
- the establishment of a sound technological base;
- engaging in a process redesign exercise;
- increase in addressing concerns raised by stakeholders; and
- enhance and increase the flow of information.

### **SASC Relevance**

The SASC remains relevant because it was established to protect employees from undue influence of politics. The SASC has realized increase in the levels of legal action taken by public officers.

There continues to be a need for the SASC to ensure stakeholders are guided in conformity with existing Regulations.

### **Constraints**

- Staffing: such as acquiring IT personnel; the establishment of an Human Resources position through the PMCD and CPO, prolonged acting/temporary periods of SASC staff under the remit of the Public Service Commission;
- Inadequate Accommodation: such as the non-functioning air condition units, flooding due to plumbing malfunction, water seepage through building cracks.
- The need for the development of Regulations for the Municipal Police; and
- The urgent need to develop Regulations to govern the operations of the Homes.

## **Municipal Police Regulations**

A subcommittee of the SASC has been appointed to attend to the needs of the Municipal Police as well as Homes.

As at April 2012, the subcommittee had completed the mapping process. Regulations are expected to be in draft by December 2012.

The major concerns to be addressed in the Municipal Police Regulations are the entrance examinations, promotions and remunerations.

## **Performance Appraisal**

The SASC emphasizes the importance of performance appraisal reports to the Authorities under its purview.

The Commission is now in the process of receiving performance appraisal reports for 2011.

The SASC must be in receipt of performance appraisal reports before appointments or promotions could be made.

There were instances where performance appraisals were not up-dated.

Retirement of the previous Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Port of Spain City Corporation has resulted in the non-submission of performance appraisal reports. The present CEO however is attempting to address this matter through the Ministry.

## **Human Resources Issues**

The SASC in collaboration with the PMCD and the Chief Personnel Officer (CPO) is in the process of establishing a Human Resource position.

SASC can appoint a person to an established position, but it cannot create positions.

The SASC continues to monitor and ensure that the quality of personnel within the Homes meet the basic educational requirements and possess the necessary skills set.

As at April 2012, the Commission had held meetings with the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Local Government, the Commissioner of Police and the Public Management Consulting Division (PMCD) to deal with existing problems.



# Chapter 4

## Observations/Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion

### 4.1 Observations/Findings

Consequent on the written submissions and the oral evidence received from the SASC, your Committee wishes to commend the SASC for recognizing the need to visit all Authorities for the first time since its existence.

Also commendable is SASC's ability to recognize the level of ambiguity of some of its key stakeholders regarding their roles and functions and the parameters of the authority and for undertaking tasks which do not form part of SASC's mandate.

Your Committee has made particular note of the following aspects of SASC's operations:

#### VACANCIES/PROMOTIONS/APPOINTEMENTS

A recurring issue plaguing the Commission is the ability to minimize the number of vacant and acting positions within the Authorities. This issue was identified at the JSC's first meeting with SASC and is again being highlighted.

Additionally, there are employees of the SASC who are under the Public Service Commission who have been acting or in temporary positions for an excessive number of years.

#### REGULATIONS

The Statutory Authorities Act does not separate Municipal Police Officers by place of work. There however are concerns about officers who are employed at Homes. There has been concern about management's ability and the process involved in dismissing or removing officers stationed at these Homes.

## **CONSTRAINTS**

There are a number of operational constraints facing the SASC these include staffing, accommodation, non-functioning air-condition units and defective plumbing system.

## **RESPONSIBILITY FOR DECISION MAKING**

SASC is continuously being faced with human resources issues at the Authorities, for which they have no authority. Although certain Authorities fall under its purview, all that could be done by SASC is to make recommendations to the relevant line Ministry on behalf of the affected Authority.

## **CHAIRMAN'S AUTHORITY**

The Chairman of the SASC has no authority for delegation of functions. This is totally different from all other Service Commissions.

## **4.2 Recommendations**

Your Committee wishes to make the ensuing recommendations with regard to the operations of the SASC:

### **VACANCIES/PROMOTIONS/APPOINTEMENTS**

Urgent stakeholder consultation is needed to find ways to deal with Authorities that continue to function with public officers and non-public officers.

### **REGULATIONS**

The Statutory Authorities Act Chap 24:01 should be amended to give increased powers to the SASC to seek redress with respect to Authorities and/or officers who do not adhere to the instructions of the SASC.



## **CONSTRAINTS**

A new building should be located by December 2013 to allow SASC to overcome the constraints presently experienced.

## **RESPONSIBILITY FOR DECISION MAKING**

Each authority under SASC's purview should to be properly informed about each other's roles and functions and the parameters of each authority and for undertaking tasks.

## **CHAIRMAN'S AUTHORITY**

The Chairman of SASC, just like those of all other Service Commissions, should be given authority for delegation of functions.

## **4.3 Conclusion**

Your Committee is concerned about the relevance of the SASC and the need for process engineering.

During this re-evaluation, your Committee heard about the constraints within which this Commission operated such as dealing with issues of staffing, accommodation, non-functioning air-conditioned units and plumbing malfunctioning.

In order to overcome these challenges, the Commission requires the necessary tools and funding to aid in the continuous execution of its mandate.

Your Committee therefore urges all the relevant Authorities to take a serious, urgent and concerted look at the service needs of this Commission.

The Committee therefore respectfully submits its report for consideration.

Sgd.  
Mr. Subhas Ramkhelawan  
Chairman

Sgd.  
Mr. Elton Prescott, S.C.  
Vice-Chairman

Sgd.  
Mr. Devant Maharaj  
Member

Sgd.  
Mr. Chandresh Sharma  
Member

Sgd.  
Mrs. Vernella Alleyne-Toppin  
Member

Sgd.  
Mrs. Joanne Thomas  
Member

Sgd.  
Mr. Rodger Samuel  
Member

Sgd.  
Ms. Shamfa Cudjoe  
Member

Sgd.  
Mr. Prakash Ramadhar  
Member

Sgd.  
Ms. Marlene McDonald  
Member

Brigadier John Sandy  
Member

Mr. David Abdulah  
Member

# APPENDICES



**THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO AND REPORT  
TO PARLIAMENT ON MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS AND SERVICE COMMISSIONS  
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE JUDICIAL AND LEGAL SERVICE COMMISSION**

# Appendix 1

## Areas of Responsibility



## Areas of responsibility:

- ✚ Police Service Commission
- ✚ Public Service Commission
- ✚ Statutory Authorities' Service Commission
- ✚ Teaching Service Commission
- ✚ Arima Borough Corporation
- ✚ Chaguanas Borough Corporation
- ✚ Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation
- ✚ Diego Martin Regional Corporation
- ✚ Mayaro/Rio Claro Regional Corporation
- ✚ Penal/Debe Regional Corporation
- ✚ Point Fortin Borough Corporation
- ✚ Port of Spain City Corporation
- ✚ Princes Town Regional Corporation
- ✚ San Fernando City Corporation
- ✚ Sangre Grande Regional Corporation
- ✚ San Juan/Laventille Regional Corporation
- ✚ Siparia Regional Corporation
- ✚ Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation





**THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO AND REPORT  
TO PARLIAMENT ON MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS AND SERVICE COMMISSIONS  
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE JUDICIAL AND LEGAL SERVICE COMMISSION**

## Appendix 2

# Minutes



**MINUTES OF THE FOURTEENTH MEETING HELD IN THE J. HAMILTON MAURICE ROOM,  
MEZZANINE FLOOR, OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENT, TOWER D, THE PORT OF SPAIN  
INTERNATIONAL WATERFRONT CENTRE, #1A WRIGHTSON ROAD, PORT OF SPAIN  
ON FRIDAY APRIL 27, 2012 AT 9:30 A.M.**

**Present were:**

Mr. Subhas Ramkhelawan	-	Chairman
Mr. Elton Prescott, S.C.	-	Vice-Chairman
Mr. David Abdulah	-	Member
Mr. Devant Maharaj	-	Member
Mr. Chandresh Sharma	-	Member
Mrs. Vernella Alleyne-Toppin	-	Member
Mrs. Joanne Thomas	-	Member
Mr. Prakash Ramadhar	-	Member
Ms. Shamfa Cudjoe	-	Member
Mr. Rodger Samuel	-	Member
Mrs. Jacqueline Phillip Stoute	-	Secretary
Ms. Candice Skerrette	-	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Indira Binda	-	Graduate Research Assistant

**The following Officials from Statutory Authorities' Service Commission were also available:**

Mr. Steve Alvarez	-	Chairman
Ms. Sharmila Nisha Harry	-	Deputy Chairman
Ms. Patricia Boyce-Diaz	-	Executive Officer
Mr. Ragbir Umraw	-	Member
Mr. Jagdeo Maharaj	-	Member

**Absent/Excused were:**

Brig. John Sandy	-	Member (Excused)
Ms. Marlene McDonald	-	Member

**INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. in the Arnold Thomasos Room East.

**CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

2.1 The following corrections were made to the Minutes:

- Page 1  
Insert "Excused" after "Mr. Prakash Ramadhar-Member"
- Bullet 20 (iii), Page 5

Insert “In response to a question from a Member PSC stated that” before “PMCD has not responded to date.”

2.2 The Minutes of the thirteenth meeting held on March 23, 2012, as amended were confirmed by Mr. Devant Maharaj and seconded by Mr. Chandresh Sharma.

### **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

3.1 The Secretary was directed to:

- (i) inquire on the resources available to the Committee to hold informal discussions on methods to improve the effectiveness of the Committee outside of the Office of the Parliament precincts.
- (ii) communicate with the Public Services Commission (PSC) to give a detailed breakdown with respect to the 50,000 matters dealt with by the Commission during the period 2005-2010. This breakdown should be done by pointing out the number of issues with respect to each category and sub-category.

3.2 The Committee agreed to suspend and reconvene the *in camera* part of the meeting subsequent to the public inquiry.

### **SUSPENSION**

4.1 The meeting was suspended at 9:51 a.m.

*(Members proceeded to the J. Hamilton Maurice Room, Mezzanine Floor)*

### **DISCUSSIONS WITH THE OFFICIALS OF STATUTORY AUTHORITIES’ SERVICE COMMISSION (SASC)**

5.1 The meeting resumed in the J. Hamilton Maurice Room at 10:00 a.m.

5.2 The Chairman welcomed officials of the Statutory Authorities’ Service Commission (SASC). Introductions were exchanged.

5.3 On request of the Committee, the Chairman of the SASC gave a brief update of its activities. Areas touched on were:

- (i) the Statutory Authorities Service Commission was established in 1967 by section 4 of the Statutory Authorities Act, Chap 24:01 of the laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago;
- (ii) this action was seen as a means of allowing for transparency and equity in the employment practices of the then State enterprises;
- (iii) the mandate of the SASC according to section 5 of the Statutory Authorities Act, empowers the commission to appoint persons to be or act as officers and to transfer, promote, remove and exercise disciplinary control over persons so appointed;
- (iv) the SASC has responsibility for 13 Statutory Authorities that fall under the ambit. These are:
  - the Port of Spain City Corporation;
  - the San Fernando City Corporation;

- the Arima Borough Council;
  - the Point Fortin Borough Council;
  - the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago;
  - the Coco and Coffee Industry Board;
  - National Lotteries Board;
  - St Dominic's Children Home;
  - the Sugar Industry, Welfare Committee;
  - the St. Mary's Children Home;
  - the St Judes School for Girls;
  - the St. Michael School for Boys; and
  - the Zoological Society of Trinidad and Tobago
- (v) the Commission regulates its own procedures with the consent of the Prime Minister,
- (vi) the Commission was sworn in on March 14, 2011
- (vii) the SASC was born out of a desire by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to establish a local Government service commission of the calibre, independence and integrity of the Public Service Commission;
- (viii) the SASC is as relevant today as it was when it was established;
- (ix) during the months of August to November 2011, the SASC visited all of the authorities and gathered information to validate its relevance and to guide the development of a strategic plan for 2012-2015;
- (x) there is misunderstanding and/or ambiguity by key stakeholders regarding the role, function and parameters of the Authority;
- (xi) pre-action protocol letters have been issued to the SASC and there is impending legal action by an attorney-at-law acting on behalf of an employee in one of those authorities. This scenario has arisen as a result of a particular authority engaging in action which was in contradiction to the determinations of the SASC and which was, and continues to be a breach of the relevant regulations of the Statutory Authorities Service Commission;
- (xii) the SASC adheres to the acceptable practices and procedures in the recruitment and selection of staff for the authorities, while at the same time being a buffer in providing protection for employees against undue influence during their public service career;
- (xiii) the SASC is now called upon to guide the understanding of other key stakeholders with respect to the limits of their authority as it relates to members of staff who are governed by the regulations of the SASC and also the regulations of the public service;
- (xiv) the Commission has recognized the need to minimize the number of acting and vacant positions within the authorities;
- (xv) the Commission acknowledges that there exists a need to develop regulations that governs the Municipal Police Officers;
- (xvi) the SASC has inherent operations constraints, one area that has to be addressed is staffing, another is accommodation. Inadequate accommodation is having a negative effect on the operations of the SASC; and
- (xvii) there is increasing concern among members of the SASC as to what redress the SASC has when there is a breach of its decisions by non-public officers at the various Authorities.

5.4 The pertinent issues raised by Member of the Committee and responses which emanated from discussions with the Officials of the SASC are detailed hereunder:

**Immediate Concerns**

- transforming the SASC into a modern human resource agency;
- constraints faced by SASC with respect to staffing, acquiring IT personnel and municipal police;
- Regulations necessary for Municipal Police, deadline for completion December 2012;
- in the upcoming months the SASC hopes to make proposals towards revised Regulations for Homes;
- concerns from diverse institutions have widened SASC's priorities.

**SASC Relevance:**

- the SASC is relevant with respect to the increasing levels of legal action being taken by public officers. One of the main reasons for SASC's establishment is to protect employees from undue influence of politics;
- there continues to be a need for an Authority like the SASC to ensure stakeholders are guided in conformity with existing Regulations; and
- there are 1,315 members of staff under the purview of the SASC.

**Order of Priorities:**

- Priorities with respect to the needs of the Homes as well as the Municipal Police are being considered;
- A sub-committee of the Commission was established to look at Municipal Police;
- There is also a sub-committee which was mandated to tend to the needs of the Homes
- SASC has met with and will continue to meet with the Commissioner of Police (CoP) in order to better understand his vision for policing.

**Performance Appraisal:**

- During visits to the various Authorities, the SASC stressed the importance of performance appraisal reports;
- SASC is now receiving performance appraisal reports for 2011;
- The SASC must be in receipt of performance appraisals reports before appointments or promotions of those already in the service can be done;

- There are instances when performance appraisals are not updated. In these occurrences, if the officer is due for promotion, the SASC would examine the file to obtain the officers' history and get recommendations in order to determine whether the officers are fit for promotion;
- SASC has sent letters reminding all officers of the necessity of submitting performance appraisals. In cases of non-submission of these reports, a person could be guilty of misconduct. There has however been no situation of deliberate attempt not to submit performance appraisals;
- Retirement of the previous Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Port of Spain City Corporation has resulted in the non-submission of performance appraisal reports. The present CEO is attempting to address this matter through the Ministry.

#### **Outcome of SASC Visits:**

- The SASC continues to monitor and ensure that personnel that meet the basic educational requirements and the applicable skills set are sent to Authorities;
- There is a need for SASC to pay particular attention to the staff that are sent to these Authorities;

#### **Limitations:**

- The powers of SASC are limited by the Statutory Authorities Act.

#### **Contractual Officers:**

- SASC is not aware that eight (8) Special Reserve Police officers (SRPs) are performing duties on a contractual basis within the Point Fortin Regional Corporation. SRPs hired to perform a duty are not under the control of the SASC;
- Decisions to hire SRPs are made by the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) together with the administration of the Corporation.
- Authorities like the Zoological Society of Trinidad and Tobago and the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago have personnel that are not public officers.
- SASC has met with the Minister of Food Production, Land and Marine Affairs to find a way to deal with this situation.
- SASC is awaiting a meeting with the Minister of Tourism;
- Proposals will be drafted to deal with these issues by December 2012 after meeting with key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, Ministry of Local Government and Public Management Consulting Division (PMCD);

### **Human Resource Management Issues:**

- SASC is attempting to establish a Human Resource position with the assistance of the PMCD and the Chief Personnel Officer (CPO);
- SASC can appoint a person to an established position but it does not create positions.

### **Strategic Plan - Critical Success Factors – Implementation Schedule:**

- With respect to the revision of the Regulations regarding disciplinary matters, a target date of December 2012 has been set, the mapping process has been completed;
- A sub-committee chaired by Mr. Maharaj has been appointed, work has been done;
- The strategic plan has been circulated to all stakeholders and SASC continues to meet to address concerns;
- The Restructuring of the Municipal Police to align it with the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) estimated completion date is December 2012;
- The major concerns with regard to Municipal Police are entrance examinations, promotions and remuneration;
- Revising qualification upon entrance for Municipal Police Officers from three O'Levels to five O'Levels;
- ensuring that the benefits to municipal police are on par with those of the TTPS;

### **Organization and Staffing – Prolonged Acting Periods:**

- SASC was informed that the Public Service Commission is addressing the matter of vacancies;
- performance appraisals for officers at the SASC are current and up-to-date, and have been forwarded to the Public Service Commission;
- Five of the temporary Clerk I's have been in continuous service to the SASC for approximately 20, 13, 13, 8 and 5 years respectively. These employees remain uncertain of permanent appointments. These public servants fall under the remit of the Public Service Commission. Through correspondence and meetings with the SASC these concerns are being addressed;
- The SASC took a decision early in its tenure to deal with vacant positions which exist within the Commission. The Commission ensures that the 300 vacancies under its purview will be filled.



## **REQUESTED INFORMATION**

6.1 SASC officials gave an undertaking to furnish the Committee with a list of recommendations that the Commission thinks it would require to make its remit effective.

## **SUSPENSION**

7.1 The meeting was suspended at 11:20 a.m.

*(Officials exited the J. Hamilton Maurice Room)*

7.2 Meeting reconvened at 11:25 a.m.

## **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES *cont'd***

8.1 The Committee further directed the Secretary to request the following information from the Public Service Commission:

- (i) Of the 50,000 positions in the public service, kindly state the number of these positions that are permanently and temporarily filled as well as contract positions.
- (ii) A breakdown of permanent and temporary positions and vacancies within the Ministry of Tobago Development.
- (iii) A breakdown of permanent and temporary positions and vacancies within the Tobago House of Assembly (THA).
- (iv) A status on whether Public Management Consulting Division has responded to date.
- (v) Role in the discipline of non-performance of Permanent Secretaries in the non-submission of performance appraisals
- (vi) Analysis of whether the job specifications of the positions on the establishment for the Licensing Office are required and the requisite compensation package
- (vii) Rationale for Licensing Office vacancies not being filled and recommendations on ways they can be filled.

8.2 Extract the aspect of the verbatim notes on the HRM Company Limited, inform Mrs. Thomas, and therefore take deal with it.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

9.1 Mr. David Abdulah was given until Monday April 30, 2012 at 4:00 p.m. to submit paragraphs for insertion into the Draft Report of the Committee to the Secretary.

9.2 The Secretary was directed to draft a response to Ms. Bissoondaye Rajkumar in connection with a letter sent to the Chairman under the caption "Complaint to the JSC in the matter of Cherry Ann Rajkumar and the failure of the Ministry of Local Government to appoint me in Sangre Grande Regional Corporation, addition to my complaint dated 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2012".

**ADJOURNMENT**

10.1 There being no other business the Chairman thanked Members for their attendance and adjourned the meeting to Friday May 25, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.

10.2 The adjournment was taken at 12:04 p.m.

I certify that these Minutes are true and correct.

Sgd.  
Chairman

Sgd.  
Secretary

*April 27, 2012*

**NOTES OF MEETING HELD IN THE J. HAMILTON MAURICE ROOM, MEZZANINE FLOOR,  
OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENT, TOWER D, THE PORT OF SPAIN INTERNATIONAL  
WATERFRONT CENTRE, #1A WRIGHTSON ROAD, PORT OF SPAIN  
ON FRIDAY APRIL 27, 2012 AT 9:30 A.M.**

## **Appendix 3**

# **Notes of the Proceedings**



**VERBATIM NOTES OF FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO ENQUIRE INTO AND REPORT TO PARLIAMENT ON MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS AND SERVICE COMMISSIONS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE JUDICIAL AND LEGAL SERVICE COMMISSION HELD IN THE ARNOLD THOMASOS CONFERENCE ROOM, SIXTH FLOOR, AND THE J. HAMILTON MAURICE ROOM, MEZZANINE FLOOR, OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENT, TOWER D, THE PORT OF SPAIN INTERNATIONAL WATERFRONT CENTER, #1A WRIGHTSON ROAD, PORT OF SPAIN, ON FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 2012 AT 9.35 A.M.**

**PRESENT**

Mr. Subhas Ramkhelawan	Chairman
Mr. Elton Prescott SC	Vice-Chairman
Mr. David Abdulah	Member
Mrs. Vernella Alleyne-Toppin	Member
Mr. Chandresh Sharma	Member
Mrs. Joanne Thomas	Member
Mr. Devant Maharaj	Member
Mr. Rodger Samuel	Member
Miss Shamfa Cudjoe	Member
Mr. Prakash Ramadhar	Member
Mrs. Jacqueline Phillip-Stoute	Secretary
Miss Candice Skerrette	Asst. Secretary
Miss Indira Binda	Graduate Research Assistant

**ABSENT**

Miss Marlene McDonald	Member
Brig. John Sandy	Member

**Official from the Statutory Authorities' Service Commission**

Mr. Steve Alvarez	Chairman
Mrs. Patricia Boyce-Diaz	Executive Officer
Ms. Sharmila Nisha Harry	Deputy Chairman
Mr. Jagdeo Maharaj	Member
Mr. Ragbir Umraw	Member

**Mr. Chairman:** Morning ladies and gentlemen and welcome to this the fourteenth meeting of the Joint Select Committee appointed to enquire into and report to Parliament on Municipal Corporations and Service Commissions with the exception of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission. Today I am pleased to welcome Members of the Statutory Authorities Service

Commission led by Chairman, Mr. Steve Alvarez. I want to open today's proceedings by asking you first of all to introduce yourselves and then I think the Members of our committee are self-evident and thereafter, to make a short presentation based on where you have moved from the last time we spoke, so Mr. Alvarez over to you.

**Mr. Alvarez:** Good morning, Chairman, and I must say it is a pleasure to be here once again. My name is Steve Alvarez and I am the Chairman of the Statutory Authority Service Commission. I will ask each member to introduce themselves starting with our Executive Officer.

*[Members of the Statutory Authorities' Service Commission introduced themselves]*

**Mr. Chairman:** Chairman, would you like to give us a brief.

**Mr. Alvarez:** Mr. Chairman, the Statutory Authorities Service Commission was established in 1967 by section 4 of the Statutory Authorities Act, Chap 24:01 of the laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Section four indicates the composition of the commission. This action was seen as a means of allowing for transparency and equity in the employment practices of the then State enterprises. The mandate of the SASC according to section 5 of the Statutory Authorities Act empowers the commission to appoint persons to be or act as officers and to transfer, promote, remove and exercise disciplinary control over persons so appointed.

At present, the SASC has responsibility for 13 Statutory Authorities that fall under the ambit of its authority. These are: The Port of Spain City Corporation, the San Fernando City Corporation, the Arima Borough Council, the Point Fortin Borough Council, the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago, the Coco and Coffee Industry Board, National Lotteries Board, St Dominic's Children Home, the Sugar Industry, Welfare Committee, the St. Mary's Children Home, St Jude's School for Girls, the St. Michael School for Boys and the Zoological Society of Trinidad and Tobago. The commission regulates its own procedures with the consent of the Prime Minister, and this commission was sworn in on March 14 2011.

At our last meeting here, well at another place, but before this joint select committee on May 27, in response to a request from this body, this joint select committee, we had requested some additional time to address some of the concerns that were raised as we thought it was best then to consult with our stakeholders before coming to the determinations. I indicated then, that the SASC was born out of a desire by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to establish a local Government service commission of the caliber, independence and integrity of the Public Service Commission. At that meeting, I also indicated that many of the issues raised would be dealt with after our commission had an opportunity to meet with all of the authorities under its preview.

I am pleased to report that that exercise has now been completed and our commission has concluded that the SASC is as relevant today as it was when the commission was established. The need for an independent body to appoint persons to be or to act as officers and to transfer, promote and exercise disciplinary control over persons so appointed remains relevant and essential.

During the months of August to November 2011, we had this wonderful opportunity to visit all of these authorities and to gather information to validate our relevance and to guide the

development of a strategic plan for our 2012--2015 period. Those visits facilitated the sharing of information by administrative executive and the political arms of those authorities. The relevance of the SASC was made very evident as the information gathered during those visits revealed that generally public officers understood their role and functions as stipulated in their respective job specifications or their job descriptions and those of their colleagues and the rule and regulation governing the public service.

However, in several instances there are some measure of misunderstanding and or ambiguity by some of the key stakeholders regarding their role and function and the parameters of the authority. Unrealistic expectations and some measure of highlighted industrial tension could emanate from not having an understanding of these regulations. This could only work against the best interest of those authorities at present.

Pre-action protocol letters have been issued to the SASC and there is impending legal action by an attorney at law acting on behalf of an employee in one of those authorities. This scenario has arisen as a result of a particular authority engaging in action which was in contradiction to the determinations of the SASC and which was, and continues to be, a breach of the relevant regulations of the Statutory Authorities Service Commission. In such light, there continues to be a critical role for the SASC. The SASC adheres to the acceptable practices and procedures in the recruitment and selection of staff for the authorities, while at the same time being a buffer in providing protection for employees against undue influence during their public service career.

Additionally, while not part of its mandate, the SASC is now called upon to guide the understanding of other key stakeholders with respect to the limits of their authority as it relates to members of staff who are governed by the regulations of the SASC and also the regulations of the public service, especially in today's increasing litigious society. In addition to the information gleaned from these visits, the commission undertook internal evaluation of its operations and concluded that there were six areas for immediate action. The SASC must develop strategic partnerships with external HR service providers to supplement the competencies within both the private and public sectors. It must offer online facilities in order to meet the expectation of a modern customer; it must establish a sound technological base; it must engage in a process redesign exercise; it must continually exercise the speed at which it addresses the concern of its stakeholders and there must be an enhanced and increased information flow from the SASC. The commission recognized the need to minimize the number of acting and vacant positions within their authorities. This is something thing that we brought up at the very first meeting here.

Additionally, we recognized that there exists a need also to develop the regulations that governs the Municipal Police Officers. Apart from the regulations and structured management that governs the authority there is always the human factor. Our visit exposed the commission to the possible conflicts and unwanted scenarios that can arise when the regulations do not allow for immediate removal of persons who can negatively impact the lives of the children at the various homes.

There have been instances where the management has requested the immediate dismissal

or removal of an officer from these homes before doing the requisite investigations and issuing the subsequent warnings. The commission, in these circumstances, may have to weigh the responsibilities to the children against its duty to ensure due process to protect the rights of the officer and the same time, ensure harmony and stability within that Authority. Such instances have highlighted the need to perhaps develop regulations specifically for the homes.

The SASC has inherent operations constraint. At our office on Abercromby Street, staffing is one area that has to be addressed. Another area is that of accommodation. It must be noted that the inadequate accommodation is having a negative effect on the operations of the SASC due to repeated loss in man hours and the conditions that are sometimes really unsuitable for the employees.

It is common to have non-functioning air condition units. As the building does not have windows the heat quickly builds up and it is very uncomfortable for the staff. The situation is exacerbated with period flooding due to plumbing malfunction and water seepage through the cracks when it rains. It is our hope that new premises will be acquired which will definitely boost staff morale.

In concluding, it must be stated here that there is now an increasing concern among members of the SASC as to what redress the SASC has when there is a breach of its decisions by non-public officers at the various Authorities. Within recent times there seem to be a proliferation of legal action by all sector of our society. There is need for a holistic approach to protect the right of officers to ensure that due process is followed and to achieve the desired goals of the Authorities without having to refer these matters to the judicial system.

Now, perhaps more than ever before, there is a definite need for the Statutory Authorities Service Commission. There is perhaps a need for an expansion of the role of this commission. In consideration of all that has been said before, this commission is always aware of the parameters of our mandate. Much of our concerns and recommendations are outside of our mandate to appoint persons to act as officers and to transfer, promote, remove and exercise disciplinary control over persons who are appointed.

At our last meeting here, one of our commissioners who is no longer with us, Darryl Allahar, said: "Mr. Chairman, one of the things I think is useful for us to communicate to you is that for the good or ill we must stick within the four corners of the mandate that has been set out by the Act as we try our best to do so at all times."

It is our hope, Mr. Chairman, that that whatever we say and whatever our concerns are will inspire this Parliament to take the necessary action to address the issues and ultimately determine the fate of the Statutory Authorities Service Commission.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Alvarez, for that very short introduction, and I open it up for questions from Members. Members any questions?

**Mr. Sharma:** Thank you, Chairman. The first thing is that the committee does not have power to add to your resources. So the matters that you may want us for correct may not necessarily lie with us, although we can make recommendations. But I was hoping from what you have said, to guide us, perhaps, or direct us, what are you hoping to achieve at your commission for which is



immediate. That seems to be the planned over the next number of years. What are your immediate concerns that require immediate attention, and what is the way forward in terms of delivery for which your office exists? Do you want to give us an executive summary of that?

**Mr. Alvarez:** One of the immediate problems that we have is how do we deal -- how do we transform this SASC into what we want to be, which is that modern human resource agency. And there we have constraints. We have constraints in terms of staffing, in terms of acquiring IT personnel, and of course there are other concerns with regard to municipal police.

You see, the Statutory Authorities Commission, apart from the fact that we are limited to promote and to appoint and to deal with disciplinary matters, we also find ourselves in a situation where the concerns of those Authorities are addressed to us, so that we have different concerns from different institutions, so our priorities are not singular. For example, the corporations are looking for municipal police to be dealt with while the homes are looking for quality personnel to deal with the children--

**Mr. Sharma:** Through you, chairman, the ones you have identified, have you gone further and said, listen, to achieve the ones you have identified this is what we require: 1, 2, 3, 4. But you seem to be expanding the circle, so we cannot pinpoint the direction that you need, or direct assistance that you require.

We want to be of service, and if you want to achieve those things, having identified what the challenges are, you must also say, this is what we need to move forward.

**Mr. Alvarez:** We identified those in our plan, which I think we would have with us, and those are critical success factors that we talked about. But to be specific, as I said earlier; it is not simply one issue, because of the diverse nature of the Authorities we service. So that what you find is perhaps one of the urgent things are regulations for the municipal police. But how do you contrast such urgency with the urgency from the homes where they are crying out for quality personnel and improved skill sets?

So what we have determined in the short term is to focus on those immediate needs, which is the regulations that govern the homes and the regulations that govern the municipal police. That is something that is ongoing and we are hoping that within the next few months we would be able to make proposals for revised regulations.

**Mr. Chairman:** Chairman, there are a couple questions I want to ask you at this starting point, and that is, you made a case for the relevance of the SASC, that it is more relevant today or just as relevant as it was at the commencement of the SASC. But when you look at the SASC from 1966 coming to now, it is overseeing a rather disparate group of institutions, unlike when you look at the Teaching Services, which we look at, or the public service or the police service, there is a cohesive group of employees; there are a cohesive set of rules that govern all of these employees. I make that statement to really ask you a few related questions. The first is that if you break up the component parts, you have four city corporations which can fall very easily under the Municipal Corporations Act, because you do have 14 other such corporations that fall under there. You can take out most of the Children's homes and put them under the Ministry of Social Welfare or some equivalent Ministry with boards, and these persons can then be subject to

the rules and regulations of those board. You have the Sugar Industry Welfare Committee. Of course, there is no sugar industry again, which we spoke about earlier, and then you have two or three boards: the Cocoa and Coffee Board, the Zoological Society, the agricultural society, which could just as easily fall under the Ministry of Food Production.

So I am trying to, in this statement, really get from you, where is that sense of the heightened level of relevance in the SASC today. So many changes have taken place. I would like to get your views.

**Mr. Alvarez:** Mr. Chairman, when I speak of the relevance of the SASC, I speak of the relevance of the SASC within the context of our mandate. What you are speaking about in terms of those various Authorities going under different bodies, is something that I suppose the Government will have to deal with and have to address. It is not something for us at the SASC to address. What we are saying, though, is that within our mandate, within the structure of the law of Trinidad and Tobago, the SASC is as relevant, in that with the increasing levels of legal action being taken by public officers, we find it very pertinent now for us to act as that Authority, that Commission, that ensures that the stakeholders are guided so that they conform to what the regulations are. At the same time, when the SASC was established, one of the main reasons for establishing the SASC was to protect employees from undue influence of politics and to deal with things like nepotism and cronyism, and stuff like that.

**Mr. Chairman:** How many employees you now have falling under the ambit of the SASC?

**Mr. Alvarez:** We have a total of about 1,315.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay, and compare that with the police service which is 7,000 and the public service which is a lot higher, and the Teaching Service, 16,000. I suppose it is a question that we will have to answer maybe at a different level. But Mr. Ramadhar, you wanted to raise a question?

**Mr. Ramadhar:** In a large part I was preempted by your question, but permit me to recognize the clarity which you articulate your positions. I congratulate that.

**Mr. Alvarez:** Thank you.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** But let me understand, certainly this commission had taken position maybe a year ago?

**Mr. Alvarez:** Yes.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** Had there been any effort before your coming into that office to deal with the issues that you now attend to, and if there is any work product for which you have benefited or now?

**Mr. Alvarez:** Mr. Ramadhar, one of the things that was very surprising to us was that when we started our visits to all the Authorities, most of them, if not all of them, welcome us by saying, this is the very first time that the Statutory Authorities Commission has ever visited their place. They felt, for the first time someone was showing an interest, not only in simply sending staff there, but having an understanding of what their needs are. And this, to me, was very informative for our Commission, especially when it came to the homes.

The Chairman indicated a while ago when he spoke about the numbers, 6,000 police officers

versus, say, 1,300 officers. But I think that there is a quality of staff that one has to look at. When you think of the St. Jude's Home, for example, where you are dealing with young ladies who are placed there in the care of the State, or the St. Michael Home for Boys, where you have a lot of young men who are sometimes belligerent, and you have to find quality staff to deal with those people, and contrast that to St. Dominic's Home where it is like an orphanage, you find that the SASC must continue to monitor and to ensure that the quality of personnel that we send there not only need the basic requirements in terms of education, but that they have some sort of skill set that is applicable to those scenarios and situations.

And that is where we have the issues, because you are now dealing with the homes in one context, and then you have to now transfer--the next week you may have interviews for people at the NLCB or the city corporations. I think that when you look at what is happening today, you need a body like the SASC to take time out to pay particular attention to these Authorities, rather than simply have a large body that is just sending numbers of people to various Authorities.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** Well, let me congratulate that, because for too long we have complaints in society of what we have called, square pegs in round holes. If that is your effort, really to have proper fit, I think that is to be highly commended. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Alvarez:** Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mrs. Thomas, you had a question?

**Mrs. Thomas:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Steve Alvarez, I looked at the work you have done so far and I must congratulate you and your team. And, of course, I heard you, how you expounded with regard to the SASC. But, I heard you talk about setting priorities with regard to the needs of the Homes and that of the Municipal Police. And, of course, I am fully aware having in the past worked in the Regional Corporation, the Municipal Police, I know right now they have some really serious concerns. How do you go about then saying, okay, I would put the needs of the Municipal Police at the back burner and deal with the needs of Homes?

I know in any normal human thinking you would look to dealing with the needs of children first. But, I am also fully aware that the Municipal Police feel less than the average police, I know that for sure. And, of course, they are not privy to or illegible for some of the benefits that the average police get. You can see a situation arising there. As I talk to you, I refer in particular to a couple years back with the URP. And, being a Member of Council, some guys just barged into the chamber and we were held hostage.

The municipal police were just like--of course, at that time they were not armed. And, we were just held there at the mercy of these men who came in concerning their URP. Our environment now is not that. But, I am just showing you the need that they serve as well. I just want to know how you go about determining, okay this is priority and this will go at the back burner. Is it left there or do you take initiatives to meet with the Minister of National Security to try and at least address their issues as well.

**Mr. Alvarez:** Mrs. Thomas, thank you very much for your concern. This commission has not attempted in any way to put anything on the back burner. With regard to Municipal Police we share your concern. Initially, we have a subcommittee of the commission looking after

Municipal Police and we also have a subcommittee working at the same time looking after the needs of the Home.

I want to say to that the commission has already met with the Commissioner of Police because the concerns that you have are the concerns that we have been addressing. And we met with the Commissioner of Police so we have a better understanding of what his vision is for policing in general.

One of the things that was made very clear to us in one of our visits to—I think it was—Arima, is that criminals do not determine that this is a Municipal Police and this is a member of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. They look alike and they wear the same uniforms and they are open to the same level of criminal activity.

So, we have met with the police commissioner, we have also met with the provost and we are at this time awaiting another meeting with members of the Ministry of National Security to have a better understanding of what direction policing is going in and how best can we assist in that area.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Maharaj.

**Mr. D. Maharaj:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Alvarez, I want to add my voice of congratulations for the report presented here for us. You said in your statement that part of the role of the SASC is to protect public officers from nepotism and politicians and so on. Bearing in mind you only came into office about a year ago, have you examined some of the systems you have inherited, where the SASC allowed itself to be used by the political directorate.

I say this having personal experience as a former employee of NLCB, where promotions at particular levels, the SASC sought the concurrence of the Prime Minister before they made appointments. I had to go to court and after then Prime Minister, Mr. Manning, vetoed my appointment and of course, they lost in court for that.

And secondly, where I requested information using the freedom of information and the argument was that the request should have been made through the management structure, who I was claiming was discriminating against me in the first place. Of course, we won against them in that regard as well. So have you examined those practices and traditions that may have grown up in the SASC with a view of culling them out, if they exist at all?

**Mr. Alvarez:** Mr. Maharaj, first of all what I want to say it is very unfortunate that you had to be subjected to any sort of action that would have not been fair to you. But, this commission has—I have been very, very fortunate to have a wonderful group of commissioners, whose very focus is, to uphold the very high standards of integrity that is required of commissioners. And, as a result we have no intention to go backward and look at what other commissioners have done. What I could assure you is that we will work within the mandate of the Act, we take our oath of office very seriously and we would ensure that there is equity, equality, justice and fair play in what we do.

**Mr. D. Maharaj:** In relation to section to 34 and 35 of the SASC Act, what is the present method of appraisals employed by the Commission and when last these appraisals have been reviewed because I suspect most of your legal challenges would arise out of contention over

promotions and so on. Which ultimately have been influenced by the appraisal employed?

**Mr. Alvarez:** I am trying to gather a little more clarity of what you are trying to—do you want to expand a little bit please.

**Mr. D. Maharaj:** The Act that it speaks to, the method of performance appraisals by employees. Could you share with us that method presently used and when was the last time it was updated or reviewed?

**Mr. Maharaj:** Good Morning, I am Mr. Maharaj. Now, when we visited the various authorities one of the things that we stressed is the importance of the staff report. We explained to them how it should be done. They should sit with the subordinate and according to their rules and regulations and so on have timelines, do all their reporting and so on. And we explain to them this is what we want.

This is what they are doing at this point in time because we are not making any appointment or promotion until we get those staff reports. I would like to say at this point in time when we are making appointments now we are getting reports for 2011. When we started we had reports for 2008 and 2009 and we felt that was not good.

So we have done something about it and we are getting staff reports now, since we have explained to them the importance of it. And that it also helps to develop the employee. If it is done in the right way, the employee is going to be developed. If the employee needs training and things like that, this would be done. So we have explained that to them and we are getting very good results.

**Mr. Chairman:** So, is it that you are not going to entertain promotions until you get all the performance appraisals in place.

**Mr. Maharaj:** We are not saying that, depending on the situation. Right, but we are insisting that this is the best way to go. We want to follow, we want to set standards.

**Mr. Chairman:** No, but I am asking how could you make an appointment apart from possibly a temporary appointment unless and until you have appraisals of the performance of all the persons who have been considered?

**Mr. Maharaj:** No, we are actually using those staff reports at this point in time.

**Mr. Chairman:** No, you said that you are insisting on them. But, I am asking you a specific question; absent those performance appraisal reports will you at any point in time make an appointment.

**Mr. Alvarez:** Mr. Chairman, I think, what Mr. Maharaj is trying to ensure that when it comes to promotions and appointments for people who are in the service already that we have asked and we have sent out a note to all of the authorities that they present to us performance appraisals.

There are some instances where for one reason or the other such performance appraisals may not be updated. This we have always held should not be held against the employee who ought to be promoted or so appointed. So we would look at their file and see their history and we would look at the recommendation of the—and you have to recall all of the people that we appoint for appointments are based on recommendations from the offices at the various authorities. And based on their recommendations we would now determine whether they are fit for promotion and

so on.

**Mr. Chairman:** But, let me stay with that a little bit because, in one of the other commissions we had a situation where the Permanent Secretary, in fact would be brought to task if performance appraisals are not in place. The point was, in that case, the officer—that is the Permanent Secretary—could be disciplined for the non-delivery of performance appraisals. Do you have that in your regulations, the ability to discipline the officers?

Because, I find it somewhat inequitable that you can determine promotion without the benefit of performance appraisal. How is it being done? Is it something being plucked from the air? Is something where you do not have a definitive record of achievement or lack of achievement but making a decision without what is part of the whole process of an effective human resource management system?

**Mr. Alvarez:** Mr. Chairman, we have sent out letters reminding all of our officers of how necessary it is to have these performance appraisals—.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am saying failing which, if they do not what is your recourse to discipline those officers?

**Mr. Alvarez:** You have a situation where such a person could be guilty of misconduct. But, I must say within the Statutory Authorities Service Commission and on the 13 authorities that we are looking after. We have not had situations where there has been any deliberate attempt to not send in performance appraisals.

There is a situation at present where some employees at the Port of Spain City Corporation, we have not had performance appraisals from them. That is due to a unique situation where the previous CEO has retired and there is something that we have asked the present CEO to address through her Ministry because there must be a solution as to who can sign off on these appraisals. Apart from that scenario there is none we can point out right now where there has been any effort to get performance appraisals that we have not been able to do so.

**Mr. Samuel:** Chair, through you, Mr. Alvarez, I am not getting the feeling that the Corporations and bodies that are under your purview take you seriously.

I am getting the feeling as if you are a straw in a hat that nobody seems to take on, because, really, you have no teeth to do anything, and that you are hitting and hoping, and writing and try to communicate, hoping that they would be gracious to you all and respond to you all. But, if they did not, really all you can do is write again and write again and write again. Am I getting the right feeling about your body and how those bodies under your purview operate—do they really respect you?

**Mr. Alvarez:** Mr. Samuel, you are correct in that there are limitations, as I indicated, to the power of the Statutory Authority Service Commission. I do not think it is a matter of respect, I think it is a matter of their having the understanding as well of the limitations of the powers of SASC. For example, you have the situation at the zoo where we have written and say, “Well, listen, you have got to pay the person pending an investigation” and it is ignored. I suppose, at the end of it, the legal redress that the officers have taken would deal with instances like that. But, you are correct in that there is so much that we can do and it is limited by the Act.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Maharaj.

**Mr. Maharaj:** Chairman, I am advised that in the San Fernando Corporation, there are eight Special Reserve Police officers performing duties on a contractual basis, and similarly in Point Fortin, there are two SRPs there. What is the justification for having the SRPs performing the duties as oppose to recruiting and training municipal officers?

**Mr. Alvarez:** Mr. Maharaj, whenever, whether it is the San Fernando or—the other you said was Point Fortin?

**Mr. Maharaj:** Yes.

**Mr. Alvarez:** When they hire SRPs to perform a duty that is certainly not anything that the SASC has any control over. This is a decision that would be made by the CEO and the administration of the various authorities. There is very little that we can do about that in terms of who they hire and who they do not hire.

**Mr. Samuel:** Chairman, just to add to the question that I have asked and the statement that I have made and your response, I am waiting for the “therefore”. Because you have said that really you cannot do anything and your back is against the wall so really you are a paper body. If that is the case and you are hoping that people really, really, respond to you, and respect you and reply to you and you are only hoping, then, really do we really see the need for a body of your nature if you have no teeth, if you have nothing to go by, if you cannot enforce the things that—I mean you have a beautiful strategic plan, 2015—2015 and stuff like that, and all that sounds good on paper.

**Mr. Sharma:** What is the question?

**Mr. Samuel:** My question is: What is next? You have no respect.

**Mr. Sharma:** Chairman, before you reply, the first thing that I would want to remind yourself and members of your commission, is that you are a creature of the Constitution with enormous powers and protection.

**Mr. Chairman:** No. Just to help Mr. Sharma. This commission is not set up under the Constitution; it is set up under a 1966 law. The other three commissions which we oversee are embedded in the Constitution. Please, go ahead.

**Mr. Sharma:** As a result, you have powers and you are not a toothless tiger. You are allowed to make provisional reports to us here—this body—and part of our responsibility is to make sure that the areas for which you may require assistance, even on a short-term basis, must be addressed.

Earlier, when you presented your report you indicated how you came into existence and you have a very important role to play. In fact, in an earlier report, you did indicate to us that for a period, you attended to 50,000 matters; it means that you must have capacity. Our responsibility will also mean aiding wherever we can. And rather than wait at the end of the day to submit a report, bring to our attention and to the Chairman’s attention, areas that we can intervene very quickly.

For instance, some Members here and also Ministers, and some of the matters may come under the Ministry for which they can cause the attention of the Permanent Secretary to be guided to

lend assistance because we will not want it to appear that you are a toothless tiger.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Alvarez, could you, before you go to Mr. Sharma, let us not forget the question that you are seeking to answer from Mr. Samuel.

**Mr. Alvarez:** That is exactly what I want to address. We have a unique situation in that some of the authorities, like the National Lottery Control Board and the Port of Spain City Corporation, are heading by public officers, and, as so such, you would find that there is redress in terms of how they conduct themselves, and you would definitely find that you have a lot of respect and a lot of—they would pay attention to what the directors of SASC is.

The problem comes when you have places like the zoological society, or the agricultural society, where these people are not public officers. So what we have done is that I have held a meeting with the Minister of Food Production, Land and Marine Affairs to ask: how do we deal with this scenario? I am sure it has been in the public forum with all the problems in the agricultural society and how do we deal with agricultural society and how do we deal with the zoological society. We are, at this time, awaiting a meeting with the Minister of Tourism to determine what the appropriate action to take with regard to the zoological society?

So, we are not sitting there saying, we should write a letter and what happens, happens; we are going beyond that. Because, at the end of the day, this commission has to ensure that the stakeholders, the people who are looking to us to address their concerns, we have to ensure that at end of the day, those concerns are addressed.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Ramadhar, did you have a question?

**Mr. Ramadhar:** Thank you very much. Now, if we are to have any meaningful dialogue here, it must mean exactly taken from what Mr. Samuel so sharply observed that you have the responsibility without the authority. I would like to hear suggestions as to what you think you would need to ensure that there is no failure without consequences, because, I think that in a large part is the failure that all of us have experienced in public service and in other spheres of life in Trinidad and Tobago. Failure without consequence!

Let us see where we can put some teeth so that those who—we cannot leave it up to respect anymore. The country has gone too far too long without having that meaningful ability to deal with things. So, let us give you the authority for the responsibility that you carry; give us your recommendations.

**Mr. Alvarez:** Mr. Ramadhar, I wish that I could make recommendations that would immediately deal with some of those issues, but the problems that we face is no different from what you see reported in the newspaper every day. As a matter, if I am correct, I saw yesterday that the Minister of Education was taking—I think he is intending to send a pre-action protocol letter to the Teaching Service Commission.

There is a degree of frustration that the political arm of any Government faces when they have to deal with the inherent structure within the public service. I would like to think that the problem is larger than simply saying we need to do “X”, “Y” or “Z”. I think it is a cultural thing. We need to sort of buy into a vision of better governance for Trinidad and Tobago so that there is a partnership at all levels rather than this resistance to change.



I think that is where we are come in, in terms of saying, listen; we have set ourselves to December of this year, to come up with proposals which, of course, would be part of our strategic plan here, to come up with proposals by December 2012 to deal with these issues. In order to do that, we are holding these meetings with the key stakeholders, with the Minister of Tourism, the Minister of Works and Infrastructure, the Minister of Local Government, and with PMCD—all of that to have a better understanding of what appropriate action is necessary and how can we deal with this issue that seem to be stymieing the progress of, not only the SASC, but many over governmental institutions.

**Mr. Chairman:** Do have a follow-up?

**Mr. Ramadhar:** Yes. I appreciate that; that it really is a culture that has descended upon us for some time, and that is why it is necessary now to take the bull by the horn, and if necessary, as know social engineering sometimes come, not just from will but from by the law, and this is the opportunity, really where we set new parameters.

This People's Partnership Government came on the basis of constitutional reform and many other reforms, and that if we do not do it, I do not think it will ever happen, and it is necessary that when we have these exposures that we do not just allow it to pass. But really, as Rodger Samuel pointed out, deal with it. Mr. Chairman, if I may have your indulgence, to ask probably on the next occasion to let us have a list of recommendations of what you think you would require to make your remit effective?

**Mr. Chairman:** Well, if the Chairman is not able to answer with regard to the recommendations on this committee—

**Mr. Ramadhar:** No, I am saying on the next occasion or any other.

**Mr. Chairman:** I would not want us to wait until the next occasion. I think we would want the Chairman to provide us with some of those recommendations within a month's time so that we could have a look because I think that you have had some time to think about what the issues are. Mr. Abdulah, did you have a question?

**Mr. Abdulah:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am supposed it is related to what you have just discussed. On page 9 of your report, Chairman, you indicated that the commission noted with concern an extraordinarily large amount of human resource management issues which were forwarded to its attention and that these matters did not fall within the legal ambit of the commission.

But, you did not identify what was the nature of these issues and why were these matters being referred to your commission when they were not within your legal remit? Certainly, the various bodies which have responsibility for appointments, transfers, promotions, disciplinary and matters of termination and so on, they ought to have known what was within their responsibility and what falls within your responsibility. So, I was wondering why this happened and what were some of these issues that would have been forwarded to you?

In related to that, just above that, on the same page, consumable amount of the commission's time is engaged with disciplinary matters and you attached, of course, as an appendix, the regulations with respect to the disciplinary procedure. I was wondering how long does it really

take for a single matter to be processed all the way through the disciplinary stages in accordance with the regulations?

**Mr. Alvarez:** Good Morning, Mr. Abdulah. First of all, let me address the HR issues. One of the things that we have been trying to have established at the SASC is a HR position, and that is where we said that we do not have the authority to do that. That is being done through PMCD and CPO.

The other issue that we talked about was the disciplinary matters.

**Mr. Abdulah:** Sorry. Through you, Mr. Chairman, I am not so sure Mr. Chairman you understood the point I was making. I was coming to that a little later on, which is the human resource situation within the Commission which I will come to a little later on. But what I was referring to was the fact that you noted that matters which were being referred to you by various authorities and so on, these matters which were being referred to you for determination did not fall within your authority to deal with. So I was wondering, why did those bodies whether it is the Agricultural Society, the Zoological Society and the Municipal Corporations with respect to the constables, why did they apparently refer human resource matters to you for determination, when first of all they knew that was not your responsibility? And secondly, what as the nature of some these HR matters which were being referred to you?

**Mr. Alvarez:** Thank you for the clarity. The issues Mr. Abdulah, that we have coming up are from different institutions. For example, at the homes, I remember it very clearly it is the St. Jude's Home they were concerned about having a cook, and since all their staff fell under the purview of the SASC, they thought the appropriate body to get them a cook would be the SASC, but there is no established position for a cook at that home. So again, we had to refer them to their line Ministry which would deal with their concerns and ensure there is a position. That is why I said earlier there are limitations to what we can do.

Where, for example, we appoint someone in an established position but we do not establish those positions, and that is one of the concerns that many persons have been coming to us and say: "We need, for example, IT personnel" especially in today's world, it is very difficult for any organization to exist without an IT department, with email and everything that is required to operate a modern authority. So, of course, they would come to us and say: "Listen, I need an IT person" again, we have to point them back to their line Ministry and say: "You need to perhaps make your request elsewhere." But we are not leaving it there, we are not pointing you to your line Ministry and leave it at that. What we do, is that we ourselves would also make recommendations on behalf of that home, and that is part of what we are trying to have completed between now and December, to go to all those various authorities and that is why we are meeting with all the Ministers and so on, to come up with this plan which addresses each of the authorities under our purview.

**Mr. Ramadhar:** Mr. Chairman, I just need to take your leave now. Mr. Samuel and I are also part of the Committee of Privileges, and no disrespect whatsoever, but permit us to take our departure now, please? Thank you very much.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Maharaj you had a question?

**Mr. D. Maharaj:** Yes. Mr. Alvarez relating to your strategic plan document here page 32, states one of the critical factors as:

“An aggressive initiative by the Commission to have specific regulations governing the SASC amended to facilitate the speedy resolution of disciplinary issues.”

The SASC virtually has agreed by way of this strategic plan that disciplinary procedures should be reexamined and modernized in the context of our present labour market. Has any draft amendments to the existing legislation been prepared thus far to achieve this modernization? And if not, do you have a time frame for the preparation of these draft amendments to be laid?

**Mr. Alvarez:** We have a time frame for all of these and if you look at our implementation plan—[*Interruption*]

**Mr. D. Maharaj:** Where is that?

**Mr. Alvarez:** On page 34, you will see item number 4:

“Upgrade of Internal Systems/Process redesign.”

That is—sorry, number 5:

“Revision of regulations regarding disciplinary matters.”

We have set a target date of December 12 to complete that.

**Mr. D. Maharaj:** Have you started it?

**Mr. Alvarez:** Yes, we have started. We have completed the mapping of the process and we have a subcommittee headed by Mr. Maharaj who has already done some work on that.

**Mr. D. Maharaj:** Another of the critical success factors stated on that same page 32 is:

“The timely provision of other resources—human (recruitment), financial and material (budgets) required for supporting the implementation of the plan.”

What would be the future of the SASC in the absence of this?

**Mr. Alvarez:** Well, what would be the future of the SASC in the absence of cooperation? I have just been told by two members of this Commission that once we vent our concerns, these things would be looked at. Part of this strategic plan is circulated to all the stakeholders and the relevant personnel, and we continue to meet with them with the hope that the concerns raised would be addressed. But as I said we are not just throwing things out there and hoping that it is going to be addressed, we are dealing with it, we are meeting with the Ministers individually and all the authorities to address all the concerns that you have raised.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Chairman, in your report of 2010—2011 under organization and staffing, I noted particularly the question of persons acting for prolonged periods of time. One area which was of deep concern to me was your statement that five of the temporary Clerk Is have been in continuous service for many years—this in the service of the SASC—and you had in brackets—I am not sure if I quite understand this 20; 13; 13; 8 and five, does that mean they have been in the position of temporary Clerk I for 20 years; 13 years; 13 years; 8 and five, and are uncertain of their prospects for permanent appoint? Is that what this report is saying?

**Mr. Alvarez:** You are correct.

**Mr. Chairman:** Okay.

**Mr. Alvarez:** Those individuals who work for the SASC are public servants and they are under

the Public Service Commission. We have held meetings with the commissioner at the Public Service Commission to address these concerns. The last correspondence I had from them was just within the last month, where they indicated they are addressing these concerns. I want to say it is more than simply saying they are doing that.

We had a very alarming situation—I suppose it was—where one of our Clerk Is was in an acting or temporary position for 20 years, and that person has now being appointed. There is another clerk who has 22 years, a clerk/typist and it is our hope that this would be addressed shortly. I cannot really sit here in all sincerity and say that I am happy with any public officer being temporary or acting for 20 and 22 years.

**Mr. Chairman:** Well, neither can I. [*Laughter*] But Mr. Abdulah had a question.

**Mr. Abdulah:** Well, first of all follow up on what the Chairman commented and asked about. Earlier I asked two questions and you have answered one, but you did not answer the second one, which was with respect to the timelines for the disciplinary process to go through the various stages given the regulations. So that is one unanswered.

But what I wanted to say is that when I looked at the organization on staffing situation, you did say it was alarming and I certainly would agree it is not good to have—not just some persons acting or in a temporary position for so long, but also temporary employees acting in positions above that which they were originally appointed. You have persons who are temporary, who are acting two grades above where they were originally appointed as temporary and so on. It seems as if the entire organizational structure and the complement of your permanent staff and making persons permanent need to be addressed with great urgency. Because if you have to advise others on what should be an appropriate way of dealing with promotions and appointments, and your own house is not in good order, it undermines the way in which you would be viewed and respected in that regard. It is not your fault, because you now depend on somebody else to get that done, but quite clearly, Mr. Chairman, this points to a major weakness in the bureaucracy in terms of the urgency with which matters or priority with which matters of this nature are being dealt with.

**Mr. Alvarez:** Mr. Abdulah, one of the early decisions this Commission took was to deal with vacant positions which exist within the Statutory Authorities, and we have indicated to all the stakeholders, all the senior CEOs and managers to immediately make recommendations to fill all the vacant positions, and we set ourselves as a priority to ensure that all the vacancies are filled. To date in the entire—out of the 1,300 employees of the authorities, there are just under 300 vacancies, but they are all being addressed at this time.

With regards to the SASC staff, we not only raised the concern with the Public Service Commission (PSC) at meetings with them, we have written them, we have made recommendations and I must say that at our meetings we had an undertaking from the commission that these would be immediately addressed, but it would seem that they are addressing this in the wider context of the Public Service in general. I wish I could come to this committee and say these are the constraints that they face, because I really do not know what those constraints are. But I totally agree with you, it is not the sort of thing that we would like to

have, it does not reflect good on the public service in general, but more so it also has a negative impact on the staff.

When we interview persons for permanent positions, and we move them from temporary to permanent positions, one of the things they would often say to us is: “Mr. Chairman, I am so happy to now being made permanent, because now I can access a loan, because now I can get into credit arrangements.” When I think of persons working for the SASC for over 20 years without being able to access loans, I think it is a disservice and it could be demoralizing.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Abdulah?

**Mr. Abdulah:** A follow up. I am assuming that the persons who are temporary and others who are permanent have being appraised, that there is a performance appraisal process for them. Because in same way, Mr. Chairman, through you the point was being made earlier that you fill vacancies on the basis of the performance appraisals being done by the bodies which you are responsible for. One assumes that you are doing those performance appraisals and, therefore, the Public Service Commission ought to on the basis of those performance appraisals be able to simply confirm these persons who you say are doing good work.

**Mr. Alvarez:** Mr. Abdulah, I think my executive officer would be the appropriate person to address that concern.

**Ms. Boyce-Diaz:** With respect to the filling of vacancies. The Public Service Commission informed that they are addressing that matter, but as we know appointments are made on the basis of seniority, so I guess it is where the officers at the SASC, where their seniority falls within the wider public service. However, the performance appraisals for officers at the SASC are current and up-to-date, and they have been forwarded to the Public Service Commission.

I think your other question would go back to the Commission in that yes, we request performance appraisals in order for promotions to be done within the authorities, and they must be current and up-to-date. Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** I have a question with regard to the regulations in two parts: one is the general set of regulations and the other is regulations with regard to Municipal Police Officers.

Now, I noted in your report that the Chairman has no authority for delegation of the functions, which is somewhat different from the other service commissions, and I think that this is something that you might want to look at in the broader sense of adjusting your regulations.

My question is what are the main areas that you see necessary in amending regulations going forward? What is the sort of time frame you have in mind for the amendment to these regulations which you consider to be necessary? Let me add to that. What is the time line for the amendment of regulations with regard to municipal police officers?

**Mr. Alvarez:** Let me answer the last question first, which is the time line. We have set out December 2012 as the deadline for regulations.

**Mr. Chairman:** These are the general regulations or just the police.

**Mr. Alvarez:** If you look at item No. 7 of our proposed implementation plan, on page 34 of the Strategic Report, you will see that the restructure of the municipal police to align it with TTPS, that whole process, although it has an end date continuing, we have targeted December 2012.

The reason why we say it is continuing is because before we could come with formal regulations and recommendations, we have to be aware of what is the direction of policing in general with regard to the State.

Of course, we are now looking at the 21st Century policing and we have to look at what does 21st Century policing entail, and how it relates to the municipal police. We all could have our personnel opinions on this, but I would like to think, from a holistic point of view, the municipal police officers at the city corporations, Point Fortin and Arima, would somehow be linked with that of the municipal corporation and central police to have some sort of direction as to where all of them are going. In my discussion with the Commissioner of Police, he indicated that he would like to have the authority deal with all of them as one body.

**Mr. Chairman:** But you are saying December 2012 for those regulations. As I asked, what are the main concerns you have in your general regulations and when do you expect to put some sort of time line for closure for these amendments?

**Mr. Alvarez:** With regard to the municipal police, the major concerns will be the entrance examinations, promotions and remunerations. So, we are talking specifically about moving from three O levels to five O Levels. We are talking about making sure that the benefits that municipal police get is on par with that of the TTPS and, of course, rather than simply promoting someone based on seniority, we are considering having promotional exams.

**Mr. Chairman:** What about the general regulations for governing the SASC?

**Mr. Alvarez:** As I said, they are different regulations for different things. The Act has allowed for, in the absence of appropriate regulations, that the public service regulations would apply mutatis mutandis and, therefore, we could only talk about specify regulations that we would like to address and those would be regarding municipal police, the quality of staff and the categories of staff.

**Mr. Chairman:** Are there any other questions?

**Mr. Prescott SC:** Mr. Alvarez, Mr. Maharaj raised with you the fact of there being contract appointments at Point Fortin Municipal Police and San Fernando. I wonder why that situation existed. Does it suggests to you that there are vacancies and permanent positions there and, if so, is that not within you authority of the SASC to correct to ensure that they are at, very least, people who have been interviewed and are standing by?

**Mr. Alvarez:** Mr. Prescott SC, wherever there are vacancies at any of the authorities, we have asked that recommendations be made to us to fill those vacancies. So, we are not aware of any vacancies being filled by contract officers within the police service.

My understanding is that there was an agreement at the local government level to allow municipal corporations to hire SRPs and that is where that would have stemmed from. I think it is more to augment the existing police service rather than trying to fill the vacancies.

**Mr. Prescott SC:** Would you not look into it? Minister Maharaj's information may or may not be correct, but if, indeed somebody chose to use contract appointments to make up for the gap for permanent appointments that ought to cause you to become a little concern.

**Mr. Alvarez:** I cannot think of how such a situation would elude us in that we are dealing

specifically with everyone in these corporations and looking to fill all the vacancies. For example, if there were a vacant position as being filled by a contract position, we will be aware of that because, obviously, when we asked why is this position vacant, we must have something to say that it is being filled by someone. I am not aware of any situation that exists at the moment.

**Mr. Chairman:** One last question from Mrs. Toppin.

**Mrs. Alleyne-Toppin:** It is not a question rather a comment. I do want to congratulate the commission on the strategic plan, and I imagine that going forward, a strategic plan would cover all of the needs for you to be more efficient and effective in your future undertakings. I would like to congratulate you for your work but, of course, we need to have more efficacies. I thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Let me just make a few closing comments before we excuse the members of the SASC and that is, notwithstanding your comments with regard to the relevance of the SASC, we have seen a significant shift since 1966, and the question hangs as to whether the SASC is an anachronism in today's world. I am sure we have differences as far as that is concerned, but that seems to be a question that hangs about.

Secondly, with regard to the regulations, we would like to see from the SASC a time line for review of its general regulations in order for it to be more effective, more responsive and more up-to-date in respect of those organizations which is charged with the human resource areas, in particular.

Thirdly, in terms of the operations of SASC and its own 32 staff, we certainly would like to see more progress in terms of the quickness of the filling of these positions, and speaking on behalf of the Committee, we undertake also to correspond with the Chairman of the Public Service Commission about these long outstanding positions that are filled only temporarily, so that we hope that we will be able to assist as far as that is concerned.

Finally, I want to thank the members of the SASC for the service that they provide to the country, the public service, because public service is not always an easy thing to perform.

Thank you very much and the staff of the SASC, and we wish you to continue to produce more effective work in the service of our citizenry.

**Mr. Alvarez:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** We will suspend the sittings for about five minutes and then we will get back to other matters on our agenda.

**11.20 a.m.:** *Meeting suspended.*