



The Government of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago
PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

Office of the Chief Personnel Officer

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#3 Alexandra Street, St. Clair

PD(HRP): 4/1/15 Vol. I

January 20, 2022

Mr. Brian Caesar
Clerk of the House (Ag)
Office of the Parliament
Parliamentary Complex
Cabildo Building
St. Vincent Street
PORT OF SPAIN

Dear Mr. Caesar,

The Third Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee on the implementation of the recommendations of the Twenty Fourth Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee on the examination into the Processing of the payment of Pensions and Gratuities of Retired Public Officers and Contracted Employees

Reference is made to your letter Ref: Parl: 5/6/05 dated November 30, 2021 in which you requested a progress update on the Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee (PAAC) that highlighted recommendations specific to the Personnel Department on the Processing of Payment of Pensions and Gratuities of Retired Public Officers and Contracted Employees.

In this regard, a progress update on the recommendations is attached.

Yours respectfully,

Chief Personnel Officer (Ag.)

Response to the Recommendations in the Third Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee on the Implementation of the Twenty-Fourth Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee on the examination into the Processing of Payment of Pensions and Gratuities of Retired Public Officers and Contracted Employees

The Third Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee (PAAC) highlighted recommendations specific to the Personnel Department on the Processing of Payment of Pensions and Gratuities to Retired Public Officers and Contracted Employees. The specific recommendations and the respective responses from the Personnel Department are as follows:

Recommendation No 1: Collaboration with the AGD to facilitate training sessions for fiscal 2021.

- **The PD should submit a statement of the following to Parliament by January 31, 2022:**
 - training programmes conducted in fiscal 2021;
 - the number of persons trained;
 - the subject matter of the training; and
 - findings on the evaluation of the training.

Response:

No training programme was conducted to date. PD was constrained to complete this matter on a timely basis due to the unprecedented challenges inclusive of human resource constraints, brought on by the current pandemic. Notwithstanding, contact was made with the Auditor General's Department and a meeting is arranged for January 24, 2022. Discussions have commenced with the Comptroller of Accounts as well as the Ministry of Public Administration on the facilitation of training using an online platform. There is currently a training programme facilitated by the Ministry of Public Administration comprising areas on pensions and leave processing along with determination of incremental dates which is conducted manually on a yearly basis. It is envisioned that the said training programme would be updated utilizing the inputs of the Auditor General where applicable and executed using an online platform commencing June 2022.

- **The PD should submit a training schedule with proposed dates, entities and the subject matter to Parliament by January 31, 2022.**

Response:

A training schedule will be developed supported by discussions with the relevant stakeholders mentioned above. It is anticipated that the schedule should be drafted within a three-month period provided all parties provide responses within a reasonable timeframe, and executed in June 2022.

- **The PD and AGD should work together to develop a Communication Plan geared towards improving collaboration on conducting training sessions. A status update should be submitted to Parliament by January 31, 2022.**

Response:

The Communication Plan will also be completed by June 2022 subject to consultation with the Auditor General, Comptroller of Accounts and Ministry of Public Administration.

Recommendation No 2: Finalization of the brochure with compliance instructions and guidelines.

- **The PD should provide a status update on the finalisation of the distribution of the brochure and submit to Parliament by January 31, 2022; and**
- **The MOF through the Treasury Division should collaborate with the PD to circulate the brochure regarding FAQs by December 15, 2021.**

Response:

The Personnel Department finalized the brochure and the Comptroller of Accounts circulated the document via email to Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments on January 13, 2022 and uploaded it to the Ministry of Finance's website on January 18, 2022. The document can be accessed at <https://www.finance.gov.tt/divisions/treasury-division>.

Recommendation No 3: The process of the standardization of contract positions by the PD.

- **The PD should ascertain the reason(s) for the delays in the standardization of the terms and conditions and provide a report to Parliament on solutions to immediately remedy the delays and the lessons learnt by January 31, 2022; and**
- **The PD should finalize the details and ensure contract positions are standardized to speed up the process of obtaining approved terms and conditions. A status update should be submitted to Parliament by January 31, 2022.**

Response:

The standardization of the contract positions listed under the Pensions and Leave category was completed and despatched to all Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments by Circular Memorandum No. 1 of 2022 dated January 20, 2022.

Recommendation No 4: The filling of core positions to assist in the process of pensions and gratuities of retired public officers and contracted employees.

- **The PD should submit a status update to Parliament on the filling of outstanding vacancies including the positions of Human Resource Adviser I and III by January 31, 2022.**

Response:

Consequent on the Government's policy regarding the freeze on recruitment for one year which resulted in the position of Human Resource Adviser 1 in the Department not being filled, Cabinet's approval was sought and obtained for the recruitment of two (2) Senior Human Resource Specialists and eight (8) Human Resource Specialists, on contract, for a period of two (2) years. The positions were advertised, applications were shortlisted and interviews are on-going.

In September 2021, two (2) Human Resource Advisers II were promoted to the position of Human Resource Adviser III. Additionally, four (4) Human Resource Advisers III were promoted to the position of Senior Human Resource Adviser.

- **The PD should submit to Parliament an update on the impact and any ongoing challenges of the filling of the positions of the HR Advisor II by January 31, 2022.**

Response:

In 2020, fourteen (14) positions of Human Resource Adviser II were filled. These officers were assigned mainly to the core Divisions of the Department, that is, Benefits Management, Compensation Management and Industrial and Labour Relations. This cadre of officers would serve to build the Department's pool of required technical competencies so as to provide more timely and effective service to all its stakeholders.

Recommendation No 5: Submission of a Note for the Revised Guidelines for Contract Employment to the Minister of Public Administration

- **The PD should provide a status update on the submission and approval of the Note for the Revised Guidelines for Contract Employment to Parliament by January 31, 2022.**

Response:

A draft Note for Cabinet is prepared to accompany the Revised Guidelines for Contract Employment termed the "National Policy for Contract Employment in Government Ministries, Departments, Statutory Authorities subject to the Statutory Authorities' Act, Chapter 24:01 and the Tobago House of Assembly." The document was prepared by the PD and went through discussions with the Permanent Secretaries Board. Amendments are currently being made. The final Note and National Policy document will be submitted to the Honourable Minister of Public Administration for consideration by March 2022.

- **The PD should provide an implementation timeline to the Parliament by January 31, 2022 once the Note for the Revised Guidelines for contract employment is approved.**

Response:

It is envisaged that the Revised Guidelines for Contract Employment/ National Policy for Contract Employment would be submitted to the Minister of Public Administration by March 2022 for onward submission to Cabinet. Upon approval by Cabinet, the Revised Guidelines/National Policy document will be forwarded during March – April, 2022 to all Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Department, the Chief Administrator, Tobago House of Assembly and Heads of Statutory Authorities for implementation.

Personnel Department

January 20, 2022