

THIRD SESSION OF THE TWELFTH REPUBLICAN PARLIAMENT

NINTH

REPORT
FROM

THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

EXAMINATION
OF

The implementation of the 2021 budget with emphasis on the
“Green Economy”.

Office of the Parliament
Parliamentary Complex
Cabildo Building
St. Vincent Street Port of Spain
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago



Public Administration and Appropriations Committee

The Public Administration and Appropriations Committee (PAAC) is established by Standing Order 102 and 92 of the House of Representatives and the Senate respectively. The Committee is mandated to consider and report to Parliament on:

- (a) *the budgetary expenditure of Government agencies to ensure that expenditure is embarked upon in accordance with parliamentary approval;*
- (b) *the budgetary expenditure of Government agencies as it occurs and keeps Parliament informed of how the budget allocation is being implemented; and*
- (c) *the administration of Government agencies to determine hindrances to their efficiency and to make recommendations to the Government for improvement of public administration.*

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Mrs. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George	Chairman
Dr. Lackram Bodoie	Vice-Chairman
Mrs. Amrita Deonaraine	Member
Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy	Member
Mr. Randall Mitchell	Member
Mr. Symon de Nobriga	Member
Mr. Wade Mark	Member
Mr. Laurence Hislop	Member
Ms. Lisa Morris-Julian	Member
Mr. Hassel Bacchus	Member

Committee Staff

The current staff members serving the Committee are:

Ms. Keiba Jacob	Secretary to the Committee
Ms. Hema Bhagaloo	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Khisha Peterkin	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Rachel Nunes	Graduate Research Assistant
Ms. Anesha James	Administrative Support
Ms. Natoya O'Neil	Administrative Support

Publication

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

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Table of Contents

Members of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
1. INTRODUCTION	6
THE COMMITTEE	6
2. METHODOLOGY	8
3. ISSUES, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	10
CONCLUSION.....	33
APPENDIX I.....	35
The Inquiry Process.....	35
APPENDIX II.....	38
Minutes of Meetings	38
APPENDIX III	46
Additional Information Requested.....	46
Questions to the Ministry of Planning and Development	51
Appendix IV	57
Verbatim.....	57

Members of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee



Mrs. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George
Chairman



Dr. Lackram Bodoe
Vice-Chairman



Mr. Wade Mark
Member



Ms. Amrita Deonarine
Member



Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy
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Mr. Hassel Bacchus
Member



Ms. Lisa Morris-Julian
Member



Mr. Symon de Nobriga
Member



Mr. Laurence Hislop
Member



Mr. Randall Mitchell
Member

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report of the PAAC for the Twelfth Parliament contains the details of the examination into the implementation of the 2021 budget with emphasis on the “Green Economy”.

The Committee, in undertaking this examination employed two (2) mechanisms:

- Written Submissions; and
- A Public Hearing.

Subsequently, the Committee conducted a Public Hearing with the following Ministries and Departments based on the written submissions:

- Ministry of Finance;
- Ministry of Planning and Development; and
- Environmental Management Authority.

A request for written responses was also sent and received from the following Ministries:

- Ministry of Trade and Industry;
- Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries;
- Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation;
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts; and
- Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries.

It is however noted, that subsequent to the inquiry but prior to this report the MPADT was separated on July 19, 2021 to form the MPA and the MDT¹.

The Committee made recommendations related to the issues identified. Observations and recommendations are presented in **Chapter 3**.

¹Trinidad and Tobago Gazette No. 111, Vol.60. Accessed on August 16, 2022: <http://news.gov.tt/sites/default/files/E-Gazette/Gazette%202021/Gazettes/Gazette%20No.%20111%20of%202021.pdf>

1. INTRODUCTION

THE COMMITTEE

The PAAC of the Twelfth Republican Parliament was established by the revised Standing Orders to:

- examine the current public expenditure, thereby capturing the full budget cycle by providing Parliamentary oversight of the implementation of the budget; and
- conduct a real-time examination of the expenditure of Ministries and Departments.

Change in Membership

1. In the Twelfth Parliament, the Members of the Committee were appointed by resolutions of the House of Representatives and the Senate at sittings held on Friday November 9, 2020 and Tuesday November 17, 2020 respectively.
2. Senator Clarence Rambharat's seat in the Senate was declared vacant on March 16, 2022 as such he ceased to be a Member of the Committee.
3. Senator Yokymma Bethelmy's seat in the Senate was declared vacant on March 16, 2022 as such she ceased to be a Member of the Committee.
4. By resolution of the House of Representatives at a sitting held on June 13, 2022, Mr. Symon de Nobriga, MP was appointed a Member of the Committee in lieu of Mr. Stephen Mc Clashie, MP.
5. By resolution of the Senate at a sitting held on June 14, 2022, Senator Laurence Hislop was appointed a Member of the Committee in lieu of Senator Yokymma Bethelmy and Senator Randall Mitchell in lieu of Senator Clarence Rambharat.

Chairman & Vice-Chairman

By virtue of S.O. 109(6) and 99(6) of the House of Representatives and the Senate respectively, the Chairman of the Committee is the Speaker and at its First Meeting held on November 25, 2020, Dr. Lackram Bodoie was elected as the Vice-Chairman.

Quorum

Additionally, in order to exercise the powers granted to it by the House, the Committee was required by the Standing Orders to have a quorum. The Committee at its First Meeting agreed to a quorum of three (3) Members, inclusive of the Chairman or Vice-Chairman, with representatives from both Houses.

2. METHODOLOGY

Determination of the Committee’s Work Programme

At an in-camera meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday, November 25, 2020, the Committee agreed to conduct an examination into the implementation of the 2021 budget with emphasis on the “Green Economy”.

Review of Documents

The Committee deliberated on the following documents, namely:

- i. Written Submissions; and
- ii. Public Hearing.

The Inquiry Process

The Inquiry Process outlines steps to be taken by the Committee when conducting an inquiry into an entity or issue. The following steps outline the Inquiry process followed by the PAAC for its examination into the implementation of the 2021 budget with emphasis on the “Green Economy”:

- i. Identification of entities to be examined:
 - o Ministry of Finance (MOF);
 - o Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD);
 - o Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI);
 - o Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries (MEEI);
 - o Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation (MPADT);
 - o Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts (MTCA);
 - o Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF); and
 - o Environmental Management Authority (EMA).
- ii. Preparation of Inquiry Proposal for the above listed entities.
- iii. Request for written response were forwarded to the following entities on:
 - o Ministry of Finance (MOF) – February 26, 2021;
 - o Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD) – February 26, 2021;
 - o Environmental Management Authority (EMA) February 26, 2021.
 - o Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) – March 3, 2021;

- Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries (MEEI) – March 3, 2021;
- Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation (MPADT) – May 21, 2021;
- Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts (MTCA) - May 21, 2021; and
- Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) – May 12, 2021.

Responses were received on March 9, 2021, June 16, 2021 and July 16, 2021 respectively.

- iv. Preparation of an Issues Paper which identified and summarised matters of concern in the recommendations presented in the Reports;
 - Based on the recommendations and the issues identified, the Committee agreed to have a Public Hearing. The following witnesses were invited to attend and provide evidence on **March 10, 2021**:
 - a. Ministry of Finance (MOF);
 - b. Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD);
 - c. Environmental Management Authority (EMA)
- v. Following the Public Hearing, a request for further details was sent to the MPD, MOF and the EMA on **March 16, 2021** and was received on **March 31, 2021**.
- vi. Report Committee’s findings and recommendations to Parliament upon conclusion of the inquiry.
- vii. Request for Ministerial Responses.
- viii. Review responses.
- ix. Engage in follow-up

3. ISSUES, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ministry of Finance (MOF)

1. National Performance Framework (NPF) hindrances

To ensure the successful implementation of government policy and regulatory and institutional frameworks, the National Performance Framework (NPF) 2017-2020 was developed. The Ministry of Finance stated that this would contribute to the achievement of national goals. The NPF 2017-2020 is a tool that was aimed at providing a consistent approach for monitoring, measuring and reporting on the implementation of Vision 2030. The NPF 2017-2020, outlined two (2) National Outcomes and six (6) relevant National Outputs to be achieved by 2020 (*See Table 1 below*).

TABLE 1

Vision 2030 Goals	National Outcomes	National Outputs
Carbon Footprint will be Reduced	Reduced Fossil Fuel use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase use of Alternative Fuels in the Transportation Sector • Increase use of Clean and Renewable Energy Technologies
	Improved Energy Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy Efficiency Measures implemented
Climate Vulnerability will be assessed	Increase Resilience of Climate Vulnerable Sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change Vulnerability and Risk Assessment developed • Adaptation Actions for Vulnerable Sectors implemented • Improved Integrated Disaster Risk Management

Source: National Performance Framework 2017-2020, Ministry of Planning and Development, pg. 74.

The MOF informed the Committee that the MPD was responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the framework. The MPD described the NPF as a “sister document” to the Vision 2030 which will support its short, medium and long-term goals. At the time of the public hearing in March 2021, the MOF was undertaking consultations to review the NPF to determine any necessary improvements. However, the MPD stated that data collection was an issue, and as a result through its National Transformation Unit, was collaborating with Ministries to determine how the data collected thus far could be streamlined. Additionally, due to COVID-19 there was a readjustment of the NPF, which the MPD indicated would be addressed in the Public Sector Investment Programme 2021.

Recommendations:

- ***The MOF should provide the following to Parliament by May 31, 2023:***
 - *a status update outlining the benefits of using the tools aimed at providing a consistent approach for monitoring, measuring and reporting on the implementation of Vision 2030; and*
 - *a status update on the consultations taken by the MOF to review the NPF and the actions to be taken post consultations.*
- ***The MPD should provide the following to Parliament by May 31, 2023:***
 - *the achievement of the National Outputs and Outcomes as stated in the table above;*
 - *a status update on the Monitoring and Evaluation of the NPF and the findings;*
 - *a status update on data collection issue and challenges experienced in streamlining available data; and*
 - *the readjustments made to the NPF in fiscal 2021 and the benefits derived from those readjustments.*

Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD)

1. Strategies implemented to ensure economic activity begins with an environmentally sustainable lens

In March 2021, the Government was working assiduously towards the implementation of Vision 2030 Theme V: Placing the Environment at the Centre of Social and Economic Development. This was based on its recognition that the key to the effective harmonisation of economic development and environmental management was the development of a comprehensive and well-coordinated system. This system would address the many interconnected environmental issues, including:

- Natural Resource Management;
- Waste;
- Pollution and Chemicals Management; and
- Built Environment Management and Climate Change.

In order to achieve this, several strategies were employed in line with both Vision 2030 and the COVID-19 Recovery Plan, given the ongoing effects of the global pandemic. These strategies included:

- Establishment of blueprints for green growth;
- Promotion of the circular economy;
- Building Climate and Environment Resilience;
- Utilisation of nature-based solutions to mitigate against climate change;
- Implementation and enforcement of policy and legislation which include the following:
 - Implementation and Expansion of the Green Government Policy
 - Revision of the National Environmental Policy
 - National Carbon Reduction Strategy
 - Climate Change Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment for Trinidad and Tobago
 - Beverage Container Deposit Refund Policy
 - National Cooling Strategy for Trinidad and Tobago
 - National Guidelines for the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Sector in Trinidad and Tobago
- Development and implementation of behavioural interventions;
- Establishment of green growth indicators; and

- Expansion of coastal and marine tourism.

Recommendations:

- *The MPD should provide a status update to Parliament by May 31, 2023 on the successes and failures of the strategies employed to address the interconnected environmental issues and the actions to be taken by the Ministry to remedy any failures that may be identified; and*
- *The MPD in collaboration with the MOF should craft a Green Budgeting Framework with specific plans and measurable to encourage MDAs to simultaneously gather evidence on how budget measures impact environmental and climate objectives and submit a copy to Parliament by May 31, 2023.*

2. Challenges faced during implementation of the MPD’s strategic goals under Vision 2030 Theme V: Placing the Environment at the Centre of Social and Economic Development

Written response received from the MPD stated that the two main implementation setbacks experienced over the past five (5) years were the economic downturn in 2016/2017 and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the collapse of energy prices, the country’s revenue streams, public expenditure and public debt were negatively impacted. These two external shocks have had deleterious effects on programme/project implementation due to limited financial resources and COVID-19 lockdown disruptions.

Specifically, as it relates to Theme V, the following challenges identified were:

- Sluggish advancement in the conservation and management of the environment particularly reducing the threat of invasive species such as the lionfish and Sargassum seaweed, while rebuilding our fish stock;
- Slow progress in mainstreaming climate change into all developmental activities;
- Engendering environmentally conscious behaviour among the populace;
- Lack of a comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Policy;

- Delay in formulating, adopting and implementing a Feed in Tariff policy to allow for greater small-scale deployment of renewable energy; and
- Inertia in many ministries and agencies to integrate national policy into sectoral policies and strategies.

With regard to project implementation under this theme, the challenges were:

- Limited and untimely release of funds from MOF: outstanding bills have not been settled in a timely manner and materials necessary for progress could not be purchased, leading to a delays;
- Certain activities are challenging to implement due to COVID-19 restrictions; and
- Shipping delays have affected the availability of items due to COVID-19.

The challenges in relation to monitoring and evaluation of this theme were:

- Lack of performance indicators to measure several national outcomes and national outputs as stated in the NPF 2017-2020;
- Inability of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to identify baselines and set targets to monitor the progress of national development goals;
- Absence of or existence of weak data collection systems to collect reliable and credible data to track performance in MDAs; and
- Inability to obtain agreement from MDAs on shared responsibilities for the achievement of several national outcomes (e.g. Reduced Fossil Fuel Use and Improved Energy Efficiency), including the selection of performance indicators and creating targets to monitor progress.

Recommendations:

- ***The MPD should submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023 the steps taken to overcome the challenges faced in the implementation of projects and monitoring and evaluation of Theme V;***
- ***The MPD should provide a status update on measures taken to deal with the weak data collection systems to collect reliable and credible data to track performance in MDAs as it relates to Theme V; and***

- *The MPD should liaise with the MOF to address the untimely release of funding to pay outstanding bills and purchase materials and submit an update to Parliament by May 31, 2023.*

Environmental Management Authority (EMA)

1. National Environmental Policy

Trinidad and Tobago's National Environmental Policy (NEP) was approved by Parliament in November 2018 in accordance with Section 31 of the Environmental Management Act, Chapter 35:05. The EMA is vested with the responsibility for coordinating the mainstreaming of the NEP across all sectoral activity. To this end, the EMA held two (2) workshops in November and December 2019 - one (1) in Trinidad and one (1) in Tobago respectively. These workshops were targeted towards key Government stakeholders, with forty-two (42) Government organisations participating, including representatives from the MOF and InvestTT.

The objectives of the workshops were to:

1. Increase awareness of and familiarity with the 2018 NEP content, with a focus on the six (6) Environmental Priority Areas (PA) and twenty-four (24) Thematic Areas (TA); and
2. Help participants to connect current and future work to the PAs and TAs in the NEP.

Workshops to discuss the linkages between the NEP and operations of the private and financial sectors were scheduled for 2020. These sessions would have focused on PA 4 - Evolving a Greener Economy, and other crosscutting PAs. Because of the restrictions that were put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the workshops were cancelled. Consequently, the EMA was planning to engage the private and financial sectors in 2021.

Recommendations:

- *The EMA should submit a status update to Parliament by May 31, 2023 on:*
 - *the benefits derived from the workshops held in Trinidad and Tobago in November and December 2019 and the actions to be taken going forward;*
 - *the results of the workshops scheduled for 2021 and the timeline for future workshops in Trinidad and Tobago; and*

- *the engagement of the private and financial sectors in 2021 and the way forward post engagement.*

Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI)

1. The strategy implemented to ensure environmental sustainability was integrated in trading activity

The Ministry stated that Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) was a signatory to a number of environmentally conscious international and regional convention and treaties such as:

- environmental pollution;
- damaging of natural resources through dumping of toxic industrial waste materials;
- preservation of biodiversity;
- protection of flora and fauna; and
- limiting of ozone depleting materials and substances that cause global warming and climate change.

Observation:

- *The Committee recognizes the efforts made by the MTI to ensure T&T's trading activity is environmentally sustainable.*

Recommendations:

- *The MTI should submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023:*
 - *the specific policies implemented in compliance with the abovementioned regional and international instruments;*
 - *the impact observed from those policies, including the general outcome indicators and the specific benchmarks based on those indicators, which were used to measure the impact; and*
 - *the measures to be implemented to ensure that these impacts are sustained.*

2. Policy Support and Implementation

In its written response, the MTI indicated that the Ministry was in support of T&T becoming a Green Economy. The Ministry stated that this was evident in the various policies and documents created such as:

i. Trinidad and Tobago Trade Policy(TTTP) 2019-2023 –

Towards Sustainable Economic Growth and Diversification. The TTTP was formulated with the guidance of T&T's National Development Strategy (NDS) - Vision 2030 to build environmental sustainability within the framework of commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The MTI was pursuing the development of Green Industries given the potential it affords for not only achieving sustainable growth but also employment creation. One of the activities under this strategy is to engage in environment-friendly trade practices that protect and conserve the country's environment.

The challenges the MTI may encounter when aligning trade activity with a Green Economy as highlighted in the TTTP include - but are not limited to - the following:

- An inadequate legal framework and institutional capacity to monitor the impact of trade on the environment and to enforce compliance with the requirements of environmental treaties and conventions.
- A general lack of awareness of environmentally friendly practices.
- Low public and business stakeholder appreciation of the environmental issues raised by trade.
- May not be financially prudent to undertake environmentally friendly projects as the cost of these initiatives sometimes outweigh a positive financial return.

Because of the above, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago's (GORTT's) primary challenges will be to build stakeholder awareness and ensure adequate compliance with domestic laws and international treaties and conventions and the associated regulations.

ii. The Yachting Policy of T&T 2017-2021 –

In June 2017, the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago approved the Yachting Policy of Trinidad and Tobago 2017 – 2021. The overarching goal of the policy was to optimise the economic contribution of the Yachting Sector towards the sustainable development of T&T. One specific objective of the Policy was to improve the environmental and social sustainability of the Yachting Sector. In fulfillment of this objective, a Guidebook on Sustainable and Environmental Practices for Boatyards and

Marinas in T&T was developed as a collaborative effort between the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA), Environmental Management Authority (EMA) and the MTI. The Guidebook seeks to promote good environmental stewardship while contributing to the development of the Sector and encourages marinas and boatyards to achieve excellence in environmental management, disaster risk reduction, environmental education and safety.

iii. Development of a National Maritime Policy and Strategy for T&T –

On February 1, 2021, the MTI in partnership with the Ministry of Works and Transport (MOWT) launched a project to develop a National Maritime Policy and Strategy for T&T. The Policy will have a specific focus on maximizing the sustainable use of T&T's ocean and sea resources, while enabling growth of the maritime economy through improving the competitiveness of the shipping industry and balancing safety and sector interest.

iv. National Quality Policy (NQP)

The NQP aims to facilitate the achievement by T&T's firms of a higher level of productivity, innovation, competitiveness and meeting of international requirements. The policy also supports consumers' health and environmental protection. One of the projects listed in the NQP's Implementation Plan was to create and implement an awareness programme to promote the realization of Green Economy Strategies. This project seeks to integrate the National Quality Policy with sustainability practices, which may include a more sustainable form of production such as renewable energies with the goal of defining and achieving established sustainability concerns. For example, the development of more efficient energy usage or eco-friendlier operational processes and sustainability standards is an area of focus.

Recommendations:

- ***The MTI should submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023:***
 - ***a list of the initiatives implemented to achieve sustainable growth, environment-friendly trade practices and data on the sectors in which employment was created;***

- *the status of the development of a National Maritime Policy and Strategy for T&T and the ways this policy, when implemented, would support T&T becoming a Green Economy; and*
 - *a detailed update on all projects and programmes implemented by the MTI in fiscal year 2022 as well as those planned for fiscal year 2023, as part of the fulfillment of the policies stated above.*
- *The MTI should submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023, the activities undertaken to ensure stakeholder awareness and adequate compliance with domestic laws, international treaties and conventions and the associated regulations.*

3. Achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

The SDG#9 seeks to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation. The Committee queried the plans of the MTI in leading T&T on the path to achieving this goal. The MTI indicated that the GORTT intends to modernize transport infrastructure by improving both the air and sea bridges and the bus rapid transit system. As part of this, the GORTT intends to embark on completing several mega infrastructural projects throughout the country within the next two (2) years. These projects include:

- the completion of the extension of the Solomon Hochoy Highway;
- the redevelopment of Skinner Park and San Fernando Waterfront;
- the implementation of Port of Spain Re-development Programme;
- the Churchill Roosevelt Highway extension; and
- the Valencia to Toco Expansion Project and the Tobago Airport Expansion Project.

The MTI stated that resilient infrastructure was necessary to facilitate trade, enable business, connect workers to industry, create new opportunities for innovation and the taking into account of environmental sustainability.

Recommendations:

- *Regarding the aim of achieving SDG#9, the MTI should submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023:*

- *the progress made in modernising the transport infrastructure via both the air and sea bridges and bus transit system in T&T;*
 - *the current status of each infrastructural project listed above;*
 - *the MTI's plans, programs and projects intended to foster innovation and support research and domestic technological development to make progress towards achieving SDG#9; and*
 - *the future steps that will be undertaken to ensure the achievement of each target under SDG#9.*
- *The MTI should also submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023 the role of the Ministry of Works and Transport and other Ministries in making progress towards achieving SDG#9.*

Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries (MEEI)

1. The strategies implemented to ensure environmental sustainability are integrated in the energy sector

The MEEI stated that the following strategies had been implemented to ensure environmental sustainability within T&T's energy sector:

- i. The mainstreaming of climate change mitigation into the energy mix was implemented through greater deployment of renewable energy generation. For example:
 - a. Utility Scale Solar;
 - b. Solar Park at Piarco²;
 - c. Solar Chargers for Electrical Vehicles; and
 - d. Small scale solar on selected public buildings e.g. Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA) +/- UNDP initiative. The GCCA is a European Union Initiative designed to assist the world's most vulnerable countries in climate change abatement.

² Loop News Article. *Sod turned for \$12M solar park at Piarco Int'l Airport*. Accessed on August 15, 2022: <https://tt.loopnews.com/content/sod-turned-12m-solar-park-piarco-intl-airport>

- ii. Developing the requisite enabling environment to facilitate and implement relevant actions through the development of the administrative, institutional, policy and legislative framework (e.g. FIT Policy, amendment of the T&TEC/RIC Acts, Licensing procedures for RE feed into the national power grid :- these are at various stages of advancement, but need to be accelerated);
- iii. Deploying demonstration projects for solar RE (GCCA+/ UNDP project) included in the NDC Implementation Plan;
- iv. Energy efficient power generation at the utility scale and energy conservation at domestic level;
- v. Public awareness through demonstration projects and public educational programmes.

Recommendations:

- ***The MEEI should submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023:***
 - ***a status update on the implementation of the strategies listed above;***
 - ***the timeline of its implementation and their findings; and***
 - ***the benefits derived since the implementation of these strategies.***

2. Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal #7 – Affordable and Clean Energy

Sustainable Development Goal #7 addresses the world making progress towards affordable and clean energy. The Committee questioned the steps taken by the MEEI to ensure T&T will fulfill this goal. The Government in its commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals has engaged in Technical Studies and the development of Projects through the MEEI. These are as follows:

i. Integrated Resource and Resilience Plans (IRRP)

The CARICOM Secretariat, in partnership with the Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (CCREEE), Caribbean Institute for Meteorology and Hydrology (CIMH) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), committed to the development of Integrated Resource and Resilience Plans (IRRP) for Barbados, Belize, Jamaica, and T&T. The IRRP is a comprehensive Utility planning exercise that integrates supply-side and demand-side options to develop a long-term preferred Resource Plan. The Resource Plan would act as a road

map to guide the Utility's strategy for meeting its long-term resource needs such as future customer and peak demands, and reserve margin, while minimizing future costs of meeting its energy requirement, considering the impact on the Utility, Government and society. The IRRP will also consider and embed climate and climate related disaster risks as a key component of the Model.

ii. Renewable Energy Utility Scale Project – Project Lara

The MEEI was in negotiations with the Consortia consisting of Shell, BP and BP Lightsource towards the development of a Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Farm at Trincity (20 Megawatts [M W]) and Brechin Castle (92.2M W), which when combined will amount to one 12.2MW. The Tariff, which the Consortium had proposed in its Bid package, is competitive with subsidized Natural Gas generated electricity.

Recommendation:

- ***The MEEI should submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023 a status update on the projects stated above including the plans implemented for FY 2022 and the plans scheduled for FY 2023; and***
- ***The MEEI should submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023 details on the intended natural gas savings to be derived from its renewable energy project and reducing natural gas consumption for electricity generation in Trinidad and Tobago.***

Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF)

1. Vision 2030

The MALF in its efforts to uphold its commitments under Vision 2030 conducted research to improve the utilisation of fertilizers and irrigation water, as well as, the solar irrigation of Cocoa. Research on *in vitro* propagation techniques, with regard to selected root and fruit crops to develop skills in mass propagation and the provision of disease-free planting material, was also being conducted.

Recommendation:

- *The Ministry should provide a status update to Parliament by May 31, 2023 on the research conducted and its findings regarding its commitments under Vision 2030.*

2. Significance of the Agricultural Incentive Programme (AIP)

In 2020³, the then Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, stated that the Agro Incentive Programme was significant and very much needed in order to assist farmers in acquiring the necessary resources for new techniques, equipment and technology. The Minister expressed that during the first eighteen (18) months of his tenure, he visited two hundred and fifty (250) farms and observed first-hand, the many gaps in the agricultural support offered to farmers, which did not adequately treat with some of the infrastructural, technological and environmental needs.

The AIP is a tangible fiscal and non-fiscal package of rebates and exemption on goods and services offered to the farming community. It serves as an indication of the Ministry's commitment to the fostering of growth and development of various agricultural sub-sectors in a liberalized trading environment. The AIP seeks to encourage farmers to:

- increase production;
- promote good agricultural practices;
- encourage the preservation of the environment;
- the conservation of natural resources; and
- promote youth in agriculture.

Incentives are offered for:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| - land preparation; | - irrigation; |
| - machinery and equipment; | - pasture management for livestock; |
| - soil conservation; | - post-harvest and marketing; |
| - vehicles; | - security; |
| - specific tree crops; | - waste management and more. |

³ Loop News, *Ministry gives out \$500,000 in agro-incentive grants*. Accessed on July 15, 2022: <https://tt.loopnews.com/content/ministry-gives-out-500000-agro-incentive-grants>

The AIP had recently undergone a few major changes and in addition to new incentives, the programme also focused on promoting conservation of the environment and good agricultural practices.

Observation:

- ***The Committee notes the significance of the AIP for the farmers of T&T***

Recommendations:

- ***The MALF should submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023:***
 - ***the benefits derived from the AIP by the farming community; and***
 - ***details including data on the benefits derived from the AIP thus far especially with regard to:***
 - ***increasing production;***
 - ***promoting good agricultural practices;***
 - ***encouraging the preservation of the environment;***
 - ***the conservation of natural resources;***
 - ***the number of youth in agriculture; and***
 - ***the number of farmers who benefitted from the Programme.***

3. Agricultural opportunities to avoid shortage in food supply

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, it had become even more critical that the agricultural sector be developed to ensure that T&T's ability to become a Food and Nutrition Secure Nation was not compromised. As such, the MALF reviewed and examined potential opportunities, which could be pursued to avoid a food shortage. In an effort to provide additional support to existing Farmers and Agricultural entrepreneurs interested in investing in the establishment of new technologies, the MALF seeks to train its staff in these new technologies.

The Ministry was exploring partnerships with organizations such as the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture and the National Institute of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (NIHERST) in an attempt to identify technologies, which were most suited to the local conditions and cost effective. Recommendations were made for the

technical focus to be placed on crop production with an emphasis on home gardening and the promotion of higher yielding varieties.

The MALF reviewed and examined some of the opportunities, which could be pursued, to avoid a food shortage and continued its operation as an essential service during the COVID-19 pandemic. In conducting this assessment, steps were taken to alleviate some of the concerns with regard to future agricultural opportunities. These were supported by:

- Collaboration with various agricultural agencies and institutions with respect to food production and security;
- Faster acquisition of state land tenure;
- The provision of rebates for machinery and equipment to assist farmers in the mechanization of farms through the AIP;
- Training of youths in agriculture to promote farming as a career option. Rebates for start-up costs not covered under the AIP such as infrastructural work, planting material and breeding stock, are also offered;
- Duty free concessions for agricultural inputs, as new technologies can be introduced into farms at a reasonable cost to the farmer with these concessions; and
- The introduction of a new Agro-Incentive Grant funded in the first year out of an allocation of TT\$20Mn targeting agro-producers with the aim of encouraging rational, efficient and methodical applications to agriculture.

Additionally, to further alleviate the concerns with regard to the future agricultural opportunities, the MALF continues to implement measures, which will promote and further develop the agricultural sector. Some of these include:

- Provision of extension services such as:
 - Training;
 - Outreach;
 - Youth development; and
 - Linking of stakeholders and farmers' organizations.
- Provision of regulatory services which include:
 - Agricultural Incentive Programme (AIP);

- FRP Programme;
- Natural Disaster Assistance;
- Timely provision of funds;
- Land tenure Issues;
- Promotion of Eat local.

Observations:

- *The Committee notes the agricultural opportunities being leveraged to avoid a food shortage in T&T; and*
- *The Committee notes the steps taken to alleviate concerns with regard to future agricultural opportunities.*

Recommendations:

- *The MALF should submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023:*
 - *an update on the provision of training for its staff in new technologies;*
 - *its pursuits of partnership with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture and the NIHERST in an attempt to identify which of these technologies are most suited to the local conditions and its cost effectiveness;*
 - *an update on the implementation of the recommendations made regarding the technical focus on crop production and the benefits derived, and;*
 - *a report on new opportunities, initiatives and strategies identified and implemented to alleviate concerns of future food shortages.*

4. Sustainability of the Agricultural Sector

Sustainable agriculture is more than a collection of practices. It also consists of several layers of negotiations - a 'push' and 'pull' between competing interests of an individual farmer or persons in a community, as they work together to solve challenges, about how food is grown. The Ministry explained that it was cognizant of the critical role that it played in ensuring that T&T becomes a food secure nation and its responsibility to encourage nationals, to consume locally

produced food. Additionally, sustainability of the agricultural sector is important. Some of the ways in which the Ministry planned to sustain the agricultural sector include:

- Promotion and development of identified staples and other commodities with large earning potential and sustainability. For example, the Moruga Hill rice, cassava and other root crops, tropical fruits and vegetables, Trinidad Select Hybrid cocoa, small ruminants and rabbits, among others;
- Identification of production constraints and implementation of systems to reduce the production gap in the above commodities through method demonstrations, training programmes and production models;
- Provision of supporting infrastructure to the MALF offices through the Development Programme (DP) projects under the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP), to facilitate farmers and other stakeholders;
- Development of specific programmes for crops and livestock in alignment with the objectives and strategies of the MALF for a changing food and agriculture system;
- Providing technical advice;
- Providing infrastructure for example, access roads and offer incentives that will encourage the use of new or improved technologies on farms such as agro-processing through the AIP;
- Increased monitoring by the Land Management Division for the optimal use of state land; and
- Provision of diagnostic services in soil and analytical services, land capability and land use, available to farmers. These services allow for decreasing cost and improving yields on farms while decreasing the deleterious effects on the environments because of the indiscriminate use of fertilizers.

Recommendations:

- ***The MALF should provide a progress report to Parliament by May 31, 2023 highlighting the benefits of the implementation of each measure to sustain the agricultural sector listed above, including the respective dates of implementation; and***

- *The MALF should also indicate the monitoring mechanisms that will be implemented to ensure that T&T becomes a food secure nation identifying the benchmarks referred to and submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023.*

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts (MTCA)

1. Revision of the National Tourism Policy

In 2019, the Ministry commenced the revision of the National Tourism Policy (2010). The policy was revised to ensure it aligned with Government Policy and prevailing local, regional and international trends in the tourism sector. The revised policy covered the period 2021-2030 and recommended a cluster approach to tourism development. The cluster approach advocated for the sustainable development and promotion of niche-based tourism, as part of the broader national effort to diversify the economy and to improve tourism's contribution to national GDP. At the time of the hearing in March 2021, the revised policy was being finalised and to be submitted for the consideration of Cabinet.

Recommendations:

- ***The MTCA should submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023 an update on:***
 - ***The status of the National Tourism Policy; and***
 - ***The implementation of the National Tourism Policy and the benefits derived.***

2. Ecotourism Policy

The MTCA developed a draft Ecotourism Policy in recognition of the need to adopt environmental management practices within the tourism sector. It was envisaged that Ecotourism would be used as a tool for balancing the need for economic development, while protecting and preserving the assets of the communities and promoting environmental conservation. This would be done through the implementation of activities and practices that are environmentally friendly and culturally sensitive. The draft Ecotourism Policy identifies key considerations, which include:

- environmental practices and restrictions;
- community relationships built on a participatory approach;

- opportunities for co-management of environmental assets;
- marketing practices;
- investment;
- health;
- safety and security; as well as
- climate change adaptation.

The draft Ecotourism Policy stated that the GORTT should:

- i. Support the implementation of existing management plans and enforcement of legislation and regulation where necessary for protected areas (terrestrial and marine ecosystems);
- ii. Encourage the implementation of sustainable tourism practices such as energy, water, and waste conservation;
- iii. Disposal and use of biodegradable products at ecotourism sites and attractions; and
- iv. Collaborate with the EMA and Forestry Division, the MALF and similar agencies to enforce fines and penalties on activities that negatively affect the environment and natural resources.

Recommendations:

- *The MTCA should submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023 a timeline for the development and implementation of a formal Eco-Tourism Policy; and*
- *The MTCA should indicate to Parliament by May 31, 2023 whether the Government has undertaken any of the actions stated above and provide its assessment of the results observed thus far.*

3. Blue Flag Certification Programme

The Tourism Trinidad Limited (TTL) proposes to re-introduce the Blue Flag Certification Programme in fiscal 2022. Blue Flag is an international award given to beaches, boats and marinas that meet excellence in the areas of safety, amenities, cleanliness, and environmental standards. The Blue Flag programme promotes sustainable development of marine areas and refers to the existence of good water quality, environmental education and information, environmental management safety and services, which includes presence of adequate parking and lifeguard facilities. Blue Flag certification gives T&T's local and foreign visitors the much needed assurance that its beaches adhere to international safety and other tourist standards.

The ultimate benefit of Blue Flag certification was an improved visitor experience as this certification is evidence of sound ecological practices, community involvement in tourism development and coastal protection. The Las Cuevas Beach Facility was awarded Blue Flag certification in 2014, but this certification was lost in 2017. The MTCA stated that it was TTL's intention to re-start the Blue Flag Certification process for Las Cuevas and extend to other popular beaches such as Vessigny Beach, Maracas and Chaguaramas. An important aspect of the Blue Flag certification process is its enhancement of the stakeholder inclusion process as host communities must be involved and this will only redound to a more sustainable and environmentally conscious community.

Observation:

- ***The Committee recognises the TTL's intention to re-start the Blue Flag Certification process.***

Recommendations:

- ***The TTL should submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023:***
 - ***the status of the recertification of Las Cuevas and the certification of Vessigny Beach, Maracas and Chaguaramas; and***
 - ***The future plans of the TTL to ensure ongoing compliance with the Blue Flag Programme.***

4. Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Accommodation Upgrade Project (TAUP)

Another initiative, the TAUP covers a period of three (3) years from October 01, 2020, to December 31, 2023. This tourism incentive was developed to assist T&T's tourism accommodation property owners/operators to upgrade its facilities to a first-class level that is expected to meet and/or exceed the T&T's standard requirements for tourist accommodation.

Under the TAUP project, eligible upgrade work was specifically extended to include a focus on initiatives that enhance environmental sustainability and property attributes including upgrade work aimed at promoting environmentally friendly practices, reducing the carbon footprint, and achieving sustainability and drainage and sewerage.

Recommendations:

- ***The MTCA should submit a report to Parliament by May 31, 2023 on the following:***

- *The number of property owners/operators assisted;*
 - *The sum disbursed to property owners/operators;*
 - *The criteria/standards that must be met before reimbursements are made;*
and
 - *The oversight mechanisms in place to ensure accountability and transparency in the use of funds.*
- *The MTCA should compile the list of environmentally sustainable initiatives that accommodation property owners/operators under the TAUP project should comply with while participating in this project and submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023.*

Ministry of Public Administration (MPA) and Ministry of Digital Transformation (MDT)

1. Technological Practices being promoted within the Public Service

In July 2021, the MPADT indicated that the following three practices were being promoted within the public service:

1. **Development of E-Services:** GoRTT continues to develop e-services, which utilises shared information across Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). This allows for an enhanced Ease of Doing Business (EODB), eliminates the need for the public to use paper-based documents, as they conduct business with Government, and reduces the carbon footprint of citizens having to travel to Government offices. Additionally, the movement to e-payments/digital payments also enables the reduced use of paper as well as more environmentally friendly practices in the Public Service. Example: Courtpay, GovPay
2. **Development of Internal Solutions:** Within the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) email and messaging are provided and encouraged to reduce printing and the reliance on consumables. The Digitization of Records is a major thrust towards a greener economy. Examples of the Digitization projects in the public service are:
 - The Ministry of Planning and Development digitization of over 100,000 records.

- The movement to Digitization of Notes for Cabinet. This system allows for Notes to be sent by email as opposed to the traditional practice of printing hard-copies
- The digitization of files at the Property and Real Estate Services Division (PRESD). A Property Management Information System (PMIS) was implemented to house all property records.

The implementation of intranets in MDAs for e.g. the then MPA, allows for the reduction of and reliance on printing for easy retrieval of documents as well as facilitates collaboration.

- 3. Adoption of Green ICT into operations:** the ICT industry actually provides equipment with the environment in mind. As such, newer laptops, printers and other such devices include power savings features. When put into operation in MDAs, these devices will contribute to the reduction of energy consumption. Additionally, simple practices such as changing Default Printer Settings to print on both sides and Grey printing contribute to reduced consumption of consumables. It should be noted that updates to the Electronic Transactions Act also create a regulatory framework for the functional equivalence of electronic documents, as this would allow an electronic transaction to be accepted as valid with electronic documents in place of paper-based documents for a wide variety of applications.

Recommendations:

- ***The MPA and the MDT should submit a status report to Parliament by May 31, 2023 identifying:***
 - *the benefits derived since the implementation of these practices;*
 - *the challenges faced during its implementation; and*
 - *the successes since its implementation.*
- ***The MPA should indicate the steps to be taken in the future to ensure the successful promotion of the technological practices in the public sector and submit to Parliament by May 31, 2023.***

CONCLUSION

Over the years, the concept of the green economy has emerged as a strategic priority for many Governments. By transforming economies into drivers of sustainability, countries will be primed to take on the major challenges of the 21st century from urbanization and resource scarcity to climate change and economic volatility.

During the First Session of the Twelfth Parliament, the PAAC conducted an examination into the implementation of the 2021 budget with emphasis on the “Green Economy”. During the course of the examination, which consisted of written submissions and a Public Hearing, the Committee followed up on several issues from the written responses received from a number of Ministries and Departments, which would contribute to T&T’s transition to a “Green Economy”.

The Committee is of the view that the adoption of its proposed recommendations will lead to contribute to improved efficiency in the use of public funds by Ministries and Departments. Moreover, the Committee intends to monitor the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations proposed in this Report.

This Committee respectfully submits this Report for the consideration of the Parliament.

Sgd.
Mrs. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George
Chairman

Sgd.
Dr. Lackram Bodoë
Vice-Chairman

Sgd.
Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy
Member

Sgd.
Mrs. Lisa Morris-Julian
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Hassel Bacchus
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Wade Mark
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Randall Mitchell
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Symon de Nobriga
Member

Sgd.
Mr. Laurence Hislop
Member

Sgd.
Mrs. Amrita Deonarine
Member

APPENDIX I

The Inquiry Process

The Inquiry Process

The Inquiry Process outlines steps to be taken by the Committee when conducting an inquiry into an entity or issue. The following steps outlines the Inquiry process followed by the PAAC:

1. Identification of entity to be examined;
2. Preparation of Inquiry Proposal for the selected entity. The Inquiry Proposal outlines:
 - Description
 - Background;
 - Overview of Expenditure
 - Rationale/Objective of Inquiry; and
 - Proposed Questions.
3. Consideration and approval of Inquiry Proposals by the Committee and when approved, questions are forwarded to the entity for written responses;
4. Issue of requests for written comment from the public were made via Parliament's website, social media accounts, newspaper and advertisements;
5. Preparation of an Issues Paper by the Secretariat for the Committee's consideration, based on written responses received from the entities. The Issues Paper identifies and summarises any matters of concern in the responses provided by the entity or received from stakeholders and the general public;
6. Review of the responses provided and the Issues Paper by the Committee;
7. Conduct of a site visit to obtain a first-hand perspective of the implementation of a project (optional);
8. Determination of the need for a Public Hearing based on the analysis of written submissions and the site visit (if required). If there is need for a public hearing, the relevant witnesses will be invited to attend and provide evidence. There is usually no need to examine the entity in public if the Committee believes the issues have little public interest or the Committee believes that the written responses provided are sufficient and no further explanation is necessary.
9. Issue of written request to the entity for further details should the Committee require any additional information after the public hearing.

10. Report Committee's findings and recommendations to Parliament upon conclusion of the inquiry.
11. Engage in follow-up.

APPENDIX II

Minutes of Meetings

THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
FIRST SESSION, TWELFTH PARLIAMENT
MINUTES OF THE FOURTH MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY ON
WEDNESDAY MARCH 10, 2021 AT 1:39 P.M.

Present were:

Mrs. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George	-	Chairman
Dr. Lackram Bodoë	-	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Hassel Bacchus	-	Member
Mr. Wade Mark	-	Member
Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy	-	Member
Mrs. Lisa Morris-Julian	-	Member
Ms. Yokymma Bethelmy	-	Member
Mr. Stephen Mc Clashie	-	Member
Ms. Keiba Jacob	-	Secretary
Ms. Hema Bhagaloo	-	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Khisha Peterkin	-	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Rachel Nunes	-	Graduate Research Assistant
Ms. Kelly Cipriani	-	Parliamentary Intern
Mr. Marcus Moses	-	Procedural Officer Intern

Excused were:

Mr. Clarence Rambharat	-	Member
Ms. Amrita Deonarine	-	Member

COMMENCEMENT

1.1 At 1:39 p.m. the Chairman called the meeting to order and welcomed those present.

EXAMINATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE THIRD MEETING

2.1 The Committee examined the Minutes of the Third (3rd) Meeting held on February 10, 2021.

2.2 There being no omissions or corrections, the Minutes were confirmed on a motion moved by Mr. Stephen McClashie and seconded by Dr. Lackram Bodoë.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE THIRD MEETING

- 3.1 As per item 3.2, the Chairman informed Members that the responses to the request for additional information from the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services with regard to the response of public authorities to the COVID-19 pandemic in Trinidad and Tobago were received by the Secretariat on March 3, 2021 and uploaded to the rotunda (erepository).
- 3.2 As per item 9.2, the Chairman informed Members that additional questions were sent to the Ministry of Health with a deadline of March 4, 2021. The Ministry requested an extension to March 12, 2021. The extension was granted.
- 3.3 The Chairman informed Members that the written responses from the Tobago Regional Health Authority were received by the Secretariat and uploaded to the rotunda (erepository).

OTHER BUSINESS

- 4.1 The Chairman advised Members that in keeping with the Committee's mandate and Work Programme for the remainder of the First Session, Twelfth Parliament that Members volunteer to champion the follow-up inquiries. A discussion ensued.
- 4.2 The Committee agreed to the following:
- Mr. Wade Mark - the follow-up inquiry into the Processing of Payment of Pension and Gratuity to Retired Public Officers and Contracted Employees;
 - Ms. Yokymma Bethelmy - the follow-up inquiry into the response of public authorities to the COVID-19 pandemic in Trinidad and Tobago;
 - Dr. Lackram Bodoë – follow-up inquiry into Health and Regional Health Authorities; and
 - There were no volunteers for the championing of the Quarterly Statement of Expenditure inquiry.

PRE-HEARING DISCUSSION: AN EXAMINATION INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2021 BUDGET WITH EMPHASIS ON THE “GREEN ECONOMY”

- 5.1 The Chairman reminded Members that this meeting would be an examination into the implementation of the 2021 Budget with emphasis on the “Green Economy”.

5.2 The Chairman invited Members to review the Issues Paper based on the written submission received from stakeholders.

5.3 The Chairman invited Members to raise any issues or questions on the examination into the implementation of the 2021 Budget with emphasis on the “Green Economy”.

5.4 The Chairman also invited Members to identify any specific areas they wished to focus on. A discussion ensued.

SUSPENSION

6.1 There being no further business for discussion in camera, the Chairman suspended the meeting at 2:23 p.m., to reconvene in public.

AN EXAMINATION INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2021 BUDGET WITH EMPHASIS ON THE “GREEN ECONOMY”

7.1 The Chairman called the public meeting to order at 2:40 p.m

7.2 The following officials joined the meeting:

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Ms. Yvonne Neemacharan	-	Deputy Permanent Secretary
Ms. Enid Zephyrine	-	Director
Mr. Hayden Manzano	-	Economic Advisor
Ms. Sandre Rambert	-	Budget Analyst

MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (MDP)

Mr. Ric Ali	-	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Ms. Meera Ramesar	-	Director (Ag.) Socio Economic Policy
		Planning Division
Dr. Marissa Gowrie	-	Deputy Environmental Manager
		Environmental Policy Planning Division
Mr. Kishan Kumarsingh	-	Head, Multilateral Environmental Policy Planning Division

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (EMA)

Mr. Hayden Romano	-	Managing Director
Ms. Nisha Ramsahai	-	Coordinator
Ms. Xiomara Chin	-	Coordinator

7.3 The Chairman welcomed the officials.

7.4 The Chairman outlined the mandate of the Committee and the purpose of the hearing. Introductions were exchanged.

7.5 **Key Issues Discussed:**

1. The implementation of the National Environmental Policy (NEP);
2. The strategies implemented to encourage economic activity;
3. The incentives offered to encourage entities to shift to greening products;
4. The implementation of the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC);
5. The timeframe for the completion of draft legislation with regard to the NDC;
6. The challenges faced as a result of the EMA's limited financial resources;
7. The lack of resources to develop an implementation plan to address its policy statements;
8. The objectives of the NEP;
9. The need for the alignment of all Government Ministries, Agencies and Departments to implement the NEP;
10. The challenges in implementing the NEP in the year 2020;
11. The status of the approval of the recommendations submitted by the National Council of Sustainable Development to the MPD;
12. The status of the workshops with Government stakeholders and organisations with regard to coordinating the mainstreaming of the National Environmental Policy;
13. The monitoring and evaluation process conducted by the EMA;

14. The status of the establishment of a baseline to measure performance by the EMA;
15. The pilot project designed to identify technical capacity gaps for the full operationalization of the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System;
16. The status of the Monitoring and Verification System;
17. The status of the training provided to the EMA by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);
18. The status of resourcing and funding the Green Fund Executing Unit;
19. The role of the Green Fund Executing Unit;
20. The operationalisation of the iCARE TT initiative to include the recycling of electronics and tyres;
21. The development of key performance indicators for thematic and priority areas;
22. The status of the Beverage Container Recycling System and the Beverage Container Depository Fund and the collaboration with stakeholders;
23. The status of the permanent collection sites for recyclables;
24. The timeline for the achievement of the NEP goals in Vision 2030;
25. Trinidad and Tobago's rank on the Environmental Performance Index;
26. The challenges faced by the MPD as it relates to Theme-V of the Vision 2030;
27. The status of the project screening brief and its role in the development of projects and programme with regard to the 'Green Economy';
28. The lack of coordination among stakeholders with the alignment of the objectives of the NEP;
29. The lack of comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Policy;
30. The policies and initiatives to address the environmental issues or foster economic prosperity;
31. The status of the National Performance Framework (NPF) contribution to the achievement of the National Development goals in Vision 2030;
32. An example of the ways the NFP framework monitors and measure the implementation of the Vision 2030;

33. The role of the Ministry in becoming a 'Green Economy';
34. The role of the Ministry in promoting the 'Circular Economy';
35. The lack of interconnectivity with stakeholders in the promotion of the 'Circular Economy';
36. The status of the consultations and the overall cost analysis of the implementation of the environment, climate change and the 'Green Economy'; and
37. The status of a Comprehensive Plan on the overall cost analysis.

7.6 The Chairman thanked officials for attending and they were excused.

SUSPENSION

8.1 At 5:30 p.m., the Chairman suspended the public meeting to resume in camera for a post-hearing discussion with Members only.

RESUMPTION

9.1 At 5:34 p.m. the Chairman resumed the meeting.

POST-HEARING DISCUSSION

10.1 The Chairman sought Members' views on the public hearing.

10.2 The Committee agreed that additional questions would be sent to the Ministry of Finance, MPD and the EMA.

[Please see Appendix 1]

ADJOURNMENT

11.1 The Chairman thanked Members for their attendance and the meeting was adjourned to **Wednesday March 24, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.**

11.2 The adjournment was taken at 5:53 p.m.

We certify that these Minutes are true and correct.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY

March 10, 2021

APPENDIX III

Additional Information

Requested

Questions to the Ministry of Finance

Provide in writing

1. The sum of funds released for each project listed in the table below:

MINISTRY	PROJECT	ALLOCATION Fiscal Year 2020/ 2021
Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries	400900506G001 Acquisition of Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) for the Detection of Oil Spills	270,000
Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries	770900301E013 Reforestation of Denuded Northern Range Hillside	750,000
Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries	770900301E014 Commercial Repository	2000,000
Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries	770900301E015 Improvement of Forest Fire Protection Capability	1000,000
Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries	770900301E017 Improved Management to the Natural Forest of South East Conservancy	600,000
Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries	770900301E021 Wetlands Management Project	300,000
Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries	770900301E023 Forestry Access Roads	2000,000

Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries	770900301E025 National Parks and Watershed Management Project	1000,000
Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries	770900301E033 Outreach, Community Empowerment and Mobilization	304,000
Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries	770900301E038	150,000
MINISTRY	PROJECT	ALLOCATION Fiscal Year 2020/ 2021
	Sustainable Management of Wildlife Resources in Trinidad and Tobago	
CAST	160900506G003 Equipment for the Meteorological Services Division	10942,000
Ministry of Planning and Development	670900517B007 Establishment of an Ambient Air Quality Management Programme	1700,000
Ministry of Planning and Development	670900506A090 Development of Ambient Water Quality Standards	700,000
Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government	420900509T289 Environment Enhancement and Preservation	50,000
Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government	420900509D151 Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation – Point Fortin Borough	200,000
Ministry of Public Utilities	390900517G013 Upgrade of Recovery and Recycling Facilities	3200,000

Ministry of Public Utilities	397000517G006 Establishment of an Engineered Sanitary Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Landfill, Forres Park	500,000
Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries	770900506A032 Production of Nautical Charts of the Gulf of Paria	300,000
TOTAL		25,966,000

Question 1 and 2 Pgs. 1-2

1. Describe the coordinating arrangements the Ministry of Finance (MoF) has with the Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD).
2. What is the role of the MoF in the drafting of the Comprehensive Plan on the overall cost analysis?

Question 3 - Pgs. 3-4

The National Performance Framework (NPF) 2017-2020 is a tool that provides a consistent approach for monitoring, measuring and reporting on the implementation of Vision 2030.

1. How has the NPF contributed to the achievement of the National Development goals in Vision 2030?
2. Provide an example of how the NPF monitors and measure the implementation of the Vision 2030?
3. In reference to **Table 1** of the submission which outlines national outcomes and outputs to be achieved by 2020.
 - i. Have the highlighted outcomes and outputs been achieved?
 - if yes, provide brief details; and
 - if no, what are the reasons for the delay in the achievement of the national outcomes and outputs?

Question 5 - Pgs. 4- 5

1. What is the status of the Electric Vehicle Policy?

2. Given the new importation tax levied on vehicle importers, does the Ministry see this as a feasible incentive?
3. Is the MPD properly resourced to address all projects/initiatives to drive the transition to a 'Green Economy'?
4. What is the status of option one 'to convert 0.1% of the .3% criteria of the Green Fund to a Carbon Tax to push Green Growth'?
5. What is the status of 'determining a price on the level of carbon reduction leading to a rebate'?
6. Has there being any consultation with vehicle importers to adopt a phasing out strategy of those vehicles utilising fossil fuels and increasing their quota of imported electric vehicles?

Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) Implementation Plan Pgs. 6-18

Questions:

1. What does 'green growth' entail?
2. In what ways were, the initiatives for 'Green Growth' included in the annual budgetary consultation process?
3. With regard to the financial negotiation with local and international financial institutions, what specific projects were undertaken relating to the environment and the thrust towards the green economy?
4. Provide details on the Ministry's Climate Finance Plan.
5. Has the MOF approached multilateral donors and institutions such as the Green Climate Fund and the private sector through Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) to improve its financing capacity? If yes, provide details.
6. When will the following initiatives be completed:
 - setting up of a carbon budget line in the National Fiscal Budget; and
 - reforming the Green Fund to include a carbon tax component.
7. How often do Technical and Ministerial Committees meet?
 - i. When was the last meeting date?

- ii. What is the status of the approval of the NDC Implementation Plan? iii.
When was the NDC implementation plan last updated?

Questions to the Ministry of Planning and Development

Provide in writing

1. The Ministry's role in the promotion of the Circular Economy;
2. Whether there was any form of communication with the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT) Trinidad and Tobago with regard to the promotion of the Circular Economy;
3. The list of projects that were prioritized due to the effects of COVID-19; and
4. The status of releases provided for the Green Fund Executing Unit.

In a response provided by the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry stated that the MPD was engaging stakeholders both in public and private sectors and envisaged a comprehensive plan will be developed on the overall cost analysis on the implementation of the 'green economy' following these consultations.

Questions:

1. What is the status of the consultations with the public and private sectors?
2. Are there any plans to draft a comprehensive plan on the overall cost analysis?
 - i. If yes, when will this plan be completed and implemented?

The MOF also stated that it will ensure that the Green Fund Executing Unit (GFEU) of the MDP is properly resourced to address all projects/initiatives to drive the 'Green Economy' implementation.

Questions:

1. What resources were provided by the MOF?
 - i. Were the resources received on time?
 - ii. If not, how does the untimely release of funds affect the GFEU?
2. How are these resources managed by the MPD?

3. Who at the MPD is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of these resources?

General Questions Pgs. 1-8

Question:

1. How does the MPD promote the Circular Economy?
2. How does the MPD build climate and environment resilience?
3. What nature based solutions are being used to mitigate against climate change?
4. What behavioural interventions have been developed and implemented?
5. What are some of the Green growth initiatives established by the Ministry?
6. How will the Ministry's plan to expand Coastal and Marine Tourism create harmony between economic development and environmental management?
 - i. Is the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts involved in this expansion?

National Environmental Policy of Trinidad and Tobago 2018

1. What is the status of the development of the recommendations for 'legislation to formalize implementation under the multilateral environmental agreements (MEA)'?
2. Who are the other members of the National Coordination Committee as established by Cabinet?
3. When will the second annual report be completed and submitted to Cabinet?
4. What is the status of the Third National Communication and First Biennial Update Report under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change?
 - i. When will this report completed?
5. When will the measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) system be completed?

Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)

The MPD expects a rate of 15% in cumulative emissions from the power generation, transportation, and industrial sectors relative to a business-as-usual baseline by 2030 as indicated in the NDC, assuming full implementation and achievement.

Questions:

1. Given the expected 15% rate of emissions by 2030, what is the MPD doing to ensure this is achieved?
2. When was the training in greenhouse gas inventorying and quality control and assurance conducted?
3. Is the Ministry considering any other methods to educate, and spread awareness on climate action as a means to promote the reduction of carbon emissions besides training?

Projects – pgs. 12-14

Solar Project

1. Who is the contractor chosen for the Solar Farm at the Piarco International Airport?

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Conducive Policy and Regulatory Framework

1. When can confirmation from the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries (MEEI) be expected?
2. Has the MPD followed up with the MEEI to receive its confirmation?

Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System

1. When will the filling of the technical gaps for the operationalisation of the system be filled?
2. When will the consultant complete the review on the framework?
3. Is there an expected timeline to bring the MRV System into law? If yes, when?

Strategic Goals

1. In reference to Goal 1, why were the majority of strategic initiatives incomplete?
2. In reference to Goal 4, what were the reasons for several ‘ongoing initiatives’ under the Goal of creating comprehensive waste and pollution management systems.
 - i. Why did this goal have the highest amount of both ‘ongoing and completed’ projects/programmes?

Questions to the Environmental Management Authority

Provide in writing:

1. The total cost of the installation of the PET washline system at the Solid Waste Management Company Limited (SWMCOL); and
2. Whether funding is available under the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) to assist Trinidad and Tobago in the transition to a “Green Economy”.

Question 1: Pgs. 1-2

1. What measures were used to assist participants in connecting its current and future work to the PAs and TAs in the NEP?
 - i. Did the EMA conduct follow-up to ensure that current and future work of participants were connected post workshop?
2. Has the EMA engaged the private and financial sectors?
 - i. If not, when?
 - ii. What is the expected outcome of the engagement of the private and financial sectors?
3. When last was the Environmental Act updated?
 - i. Given the constant environmental changes locally and abroad, has consideration been given to review the Act taking into account the current environmental challenges?
 - a. If yes, briefly explain.
4. Are there other entities being assisted in the execution of its policies and or/action plans? If yes, briefly explain.
5. Briefly state the specific recommendations on ‘Evolving a Greener Economy/Economic Transformation’ that was submitted as part of EMA’s contributions to the 2020-2021 National Budget and how these recommendations will assist the EMA in transitioning to a ‘Greener Economy’?

Question 2: Pgs. 2-3

1. Briefly state the ‘strategic approach’ for the implementation of the NEP Action Plan?

2. What is the timeline for the completion of the “Implementation Plan”?
 - i. Who are the “key interest groups” needed to develop the “Implementation Plan”?
 - ii. Describe the level of collaboration needed for the development stage of the “Implementation Plan”.
 - iii. Has the Authority communicated with the “key interest groups” about their participation?
 - a. if yes, when? and
 - b. if no, why not?
3. What challenges have been experienced in the development of the implementation plan?
4. What criteria was used in the selection of thematic areas and policy statements to be prioritised?
5. In reference to policy statement 2.18 (j), how does the Authority plan to uphold this given its “limited resources”?

Question 3 Pgs. 3- 4

1. When will the Authority establish permanent collection sites across Trinidad and Tobago?
2. What infrastructure is needed to effectively recover and process the collection of recyclables?
3. What was the cost of the installation of the PET wash line?
4. When will the follow-up on research and development regarding the formulation of composite materials using recyclables be completed?
 - i. Explain the reasons why this is a constraint to downstream recycling.
5. Who are the key stakeholders in collaboration with the Authority for Beverage Container Deposit Refund System?
6. When will the Waste Rules be completed?
 - i. Briefly explain the benefits of Waste Rules to Trinidad and Tobago.

Question 4 Pgs. 4-5

1. What is the status of the Green Fund National Restoration, Carbon Sequestration Wildlife and Livelihoods Project (NRCSWLP)?

- i When will the next National Wildlife Survey be conducted?
 - ii What were the findings?
- 2. What is the role of the EMA as part of the National Integrated Coastal Zone Management Committee and the Maritime Sector Standing Committee?
- 3. What is the status of the National Maritime Policy and Strategy?
- 4. How does the EMA ensure that its contributions to policies are being considered?
 - i Did the EMA conduct any follow up on the policies they are a part of?
 - ii If no, why not?
- 5. In what ways has the Ministry advocated for development of local legislation to enable the Baseline Convention on the Control of Trans-Boundary Movement of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal?

Appendix IV

Verbatim

**VERBATIM NOTES OF THE FOURTH VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE HELD, (IN PUBLIC),
ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021 AT 2.40 P.M.**

PRESENT

Mrs. Bridgid Annisette-George	Chairman
Mrs. Ayanna Webster-Roy	Member
Mr. Stephen Mc Clashie	Member
Mrs. Lisa Morris-Julian	Member
Dr. Lackram Bodoie	Member
Ms. Yokymma Bethelmy	Member
Mr. Hassell Bacchus	Member
Mr. Wade Mark	Member
Ms. Keiba Jacob-Mottley	Secretary
Ms. Khisha Peterkin	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Hema Bhagaloo	Assistant Secretary
Ms. Rachel Nunes	Graduate Research Assistant

ABSENT

Mr. Clarence Rambharat	Member [<i>Excused</i>]
Ms. Amrita Deonarine	Member [<i>Excused</i>]

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Ms. Yvonne Neemacharan	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
Ms. Enid Zephyrine	Director
Mr. Hayden Manzano	Economic Advisor
Ms. Sandre Rambert	Budget Analyst

MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Ric Ali	Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)
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Ms. Meera Ramesar	Director (Ag.) Socio Economic Policy Planning Division
Dr. Marissa Gowrie	Deputy Environmental Manager Environmental Policy Planning Division
Mr. Kishan Kumarsingh	Head, Multilateral Environmental Agreements Unit, Environmental Policy Planning Division

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (EMA)

Mr. Hayden Romano	Managing Director
Ms. Nisha Ramsahai	Coordinator
Ms. Xiomara Chin	Coordinator

Madam Chairman: Good afternoon to the members of the public and the members of the media. Today the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee of the Parliament shall embark upon an examination into the implementation of the 2021 budget with emphasis on the green economy. We shall be joined with officials from the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning and Development and the Environmental Management Authority.

I am Bridgid Annisette-George and I am the Chairman of this Committee. The Committee on Public Administration and Appropriations, the PAAC, has the mandate to consider and report to the House on the budgetary expenditure of government agencies to ensure that expenditure is embarked upon in accordance with parliamentary approval.

B, the budgetary expenditure of government agencies as it occurs and keeps the Parliament informed of how the budget allocation is being implemented.

And C, the administration of government agencies to determine hindrances to their efficiency and to make recommendations to the Government for improvement of public administration.

The purpose of this meeting is to examine the implementation of the 2021 budget with emphasis on the green economy. The role of this Committee is to assist the stakeholders in achieving their efficient delivery of services while ensuring that expenditure is embarked upon

in accordance with parliamentary approval, and to determine the challenges being faced and possible solutions to these challenges.

This meeting is being broadcast live on Parliament's Channel 11 and radio 105.5 FM and the Parliament's YouTube Channel *ParlView*. Participants are advised that their microphones should remain muted until recognized by the Chair.

I will therefore now ask the members of the Committee to introduce themselves, and then I will ask in this order the members of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning and Development and the Environmental Management Authority to introduce themselves. So if we can start with the members of Committee here present. [*Introductions made*]

Madam Chairman: So thank you everyone. And therefore I will invite the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance to make a brief opening statement if she so wishes.

Ms. Neemacharan: Good afternoon. Good afternoon, Madam Chair, members of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee, my colleagues at the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning and Development and all others sitting in the meeting this afternoon.

Madam Chair, the Ministry of Finance recognizes its role as an integral stakeholder in the drive for Trinidad and Tobago to achieve green economy status. As such the Ministry of Finance remains supportive of all the initiatives within the remit of Ministry of Planning and Development in the trust that we achieve the *Vision 2030* objectives in general and specifically those strategies and initiatives to combat climate change, reducing the country's carbon footprint and adopting greening technologies in our production and service sector.

The Ministry of Finance continues to maintain a continuous collaborative arrangement with the Ministry of Planning and Development on all aspects related to the environment, climate change and the green economy. We are also very committed and focused in dedicating adequate resources in order to fulfil our obligation in this area. In this regard, the Ministry of Finance will continue to ensure that the Green Fund Executing Unit of the Ministry of Planning and Development is properly resourced to address all projects and initiatives to drive the green economy implementation.

Further, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has already started the process of addressing climate change, as well as reducing this country's carbon footprint by initiating a number of incentives in this area. Some of these incentives are geared toward achieving energy efficiency in households and industries, harnessing of renewable energy, solar energy towards a

cleaner electricity sector, reduction in the use of fossil fuel coupled with market pricing and the reduction in fuel subsidies to reduce the country's the carbon footprint and measures introduced by the reduction in the use of Styrofoam and plastic towards a cleaner, healthier environment.

Also, the Green Fund provides a mechanism to financially assist organizations and community groups that are engaged in activities related to the remediation, reforestation, environmental education and public awareness of environmental issues and conservation of the environment.

The Ministry of Finance has made a concerted effort to provide appropriate response to the issues outlined in your correspondence and we hope that the information submitted would assist the Committee in its deliberation.

The team present here this afternoon is also willing to assist the Committee with its further deliberation, and it is hoped that the contribution of the Ministry of Finance as an important stakeholder will contribute to achieving the goals of the Trinidad and Tobago in addressing the present issues related to climate change, as well as achieving green economy status. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Permanent Secretary. And I therefore now invite the Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Planning and Development to make a brief opening statement if he so wishes. **Mr. Ali:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And good afternoon to all members of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee, as well as to my colleagues present virtually. It gives me great pleasure to be present here today on behalf of the Ministry of Planning and Development to engage in discussions with your Committee about the implementation of the 2021 budget with emphasis on the green economy.

In the Ministry of Planning and Development we recognize the importance of our environment and we acknowledge that the interaction between the land, the air, the water and the biodiversity inclusive of us human beings needs to be sustainably managed to preserve the respective individual ecosystems that collectively comprise our environment.

Accordingly, we have conscientiously attempted to do our part in implementing theme five of our National Development Strategy *Vision 2030* which places the environment at the centre of social and economic development. Together with the recommendations contained in the COVID recovery plan, we have attempted through several individual strategies to ensure

that economic activity is appropriately considerate of the environment and a sustainable development without environmental degradation is achievable.

Madam Chair, the Ministry of Planning and Development's team looks forward to participating in today's discourse as we recognize that greening the economy is a means to strengthen our country's economic performance through the introduction of new value-added economic activities, increased efficiency across all sectors, reduction of waste and the generation of green jobs. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Permanent Secretary. And now invite the Managing Director of the EMA to make his opening statement. **Mr. Romano:** Good afternoon again and thank you, Madam Chairman, and the Committee for your invitation. Trinidad and Tobago's National Environmental Policy articulates the priorities determined by the people of Trinidad and Tobago as critical to achieving environmental sustainability and ultimately sustainable development. This policy was approved by Parliament in November 2018, and the policy has six priority areas which are, human health through pollution control, sustainably managing natural resources, improving the local environment, and priority area four, which is the area that we are focusing on today, is evolving a greener economy. Number five is fostering an environmentally responsible society, and number six is addressing climate change and environmental and natural disasters.

All these priority areas are interconnected and very critical towards the development of Trinidad and Tobago. We at the EMA hope that at the end of these deliberations we will see definitive steps towards a sustainable development and the greening of our economy. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. And I think to start off the conversation, I would like to begin where the Managing Director of the EMA, at least, jump off from where he started, and this is with the National Environmental Policy as regards evolving a greener economy and your responsibility in that regard.

Now I have seen in your submission, one, I want to commend the policy document and particularly in terms of it being broken up in—with respect to a strategic approach and an implementation plan. And for me I must commend the strategic approach. I guess what I am really interested in is the implementation plan. And therefore I am concerned about the point made in your submission where you spoke about your limited resources to develop an implementation plan. And would like you a bit to develop on that and therefore, once you do that

I will turn to the Ministry of Finance which in her opening statement the Deputy Permanent Secretary spoke about their commitment to provide adequate resources to ensure that the, her words are the green economy status is achieved. So maybe you can share a bit about the limited resources and how this has impacted on your developing this implementation plan to address the policy statements in the National Environmental Policy.

Mr. Romano: And Chair, thank you for that. But, Chair, I think I need to remind all that the National Environmental Policy is not the EMA's National Environmental Policy. It is Trinidad and Tobago's National Environmental Policy. And the EMA Act section 31 as states, all government entities shall conduct—shall conduct their operations and programmes in accordance with the National Environmental Policy. And therefore everything that all of us do in Government must be aligned to the National Environmental Policy; one.

Two, with respect to implementation of the National Environmental Policy, that is the remit of the National Council for Sustainable Development. At this point in time I am the Chairman of the National Council for Sustainable Development, and the council in accordance with its terms of reference have laid out recommendations to the Minister with respect to the implementation of the National Environmental Policy. This was done in December of last year, so I think, I mean, it is still early times and we are awaiting the response from the Ministry whether or not the recommendations with respect to the priority areas, the thematic areas and the policy statements are approved and we can move forward with that.

Once that happens, we need to establish working groups because all need to be involved in this process for it to be successful. And resources are constrained, yes, because the EMA is doing this with its existing resources. I mean, we have not put in place a unit to deal with the National Environmental Policy, so we are doing it in-house at this point in time. But once the work starts, I mean, we would need more resources in terms a monitoring and an evaluation section to ensure that the various government Ministries and agencies who are responsible for the policy statements are actually achieving the objectives.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So that basically if I understand, the actual execution of anything is a long way off?

Mr. Romano: It is not fair to say because if you go through some of the policy statements, a number of things are actually happening. So we have at this point in time in terms of the priority

area dealing with waste which is priority area one, protecting environmental and human health. We have things like I-Care project. We are looking in terms of the deposit refund system. The EMA waste rules are with the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and we expect those rules to be law, I mean, before the end of the—before the middle of year. So a lot is happening, and therefore implementation is taking place.

With respect to climate change and the Ministry of Planning and Development can tell you, the multilateral environmental unit of the Ministry of Planning and Development is doing quite a lot of work with respect to climate change, so it is happening. I mean, and maybe what we do have at this point in time is a unit to say, aye, this is what is going on with respect to the National Environmental Policy, this is what is going on and this is the gap, because we at this point in time cannot identify the gaps to you.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Let me ask this: When you said that this is everybody's own and all Ministries and Departments have to ensure that they are aligned with the objectives of the National Environmental Policy, would it be your authority that is in charge of that? Ensuring that that alignment takes place. Who is in charge of that?

Mr. Romano: Correct. And since the policy was approved in December, we have done a number of mainstreaming exercises. So we did a mainstreaming exercise with public agencies in Trinidad which would have included all the Ministries, a lot of the agencies, and we also did one in Tobago. Of course, COVID-19 came along because the next sector that we wanted to look at, which aligns very much with what we are talking about here in terms of greening the economy was the financial sector to bring them and to align with the National Environmental Policy and we hope that we can do that before the end of this year. So EMA is mainstreaming the National Environmental Policy.

Madam Chairman: Right. So it is really your responsibility to ensure that there is alignment?

Mr. Romano: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Yes? Okay. So, and just picking up on something that you said that you have done certain strategies to ensure mainstreaming. These strategies would have been like what? Training? What are these strategies?

Mr. Romano: We invited, I mean, in terms of both sessions that we did, we brought all the agencies to a one-day session where we went through every aspect of the NEP and we requested

from them what are their projects that fit into the NEP, so we also have a listing of those projects. What we do not have is what the status of projects is.

We have also in terms of the annual state of the environment report which is the EMA's annual reports, we have included the policy, the priority areas in that report and we want to be able to report on the NEP in the annual reports of the EMA which is the state of the environment report.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So that those workshops that you are talking about is what were held in November and December of 2019.

Mr. Romano: Yes. Yes.

Madam Chairman: Has there been any follow up with that to ensure that people are still in tune, because these were one-day workshops.

Mr. Romano: They were one-day workshops.

Madam Chairman: Is that satisfactory?

Mr. Romano: And no, of course not. But we have had requests from agencies that—questions following up on the workshops. We also have environmental officers in each of these agencies who work with us to make sure that they are our eyes and ears in these agencies to assist with respect to our NEP and the other work of the EMA.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And therefore, in terms of not status—so that is 2019, we are now a year later.

Mr. Romano: Yeah. 2020 was a challenge for us. I mean, 2020 was a difficult year. 2020 with respect to the NEP.

Madam Chairman: With respect to—?

Mr. Romano: With respect to the NEP.

Madam Chairman: What? The EMA you mean?

Mr. Romano: No. No. With respect to the National Environmental Policy and the mainstreaming in the implementation of the National Environmental Policy, 2020 I think was a challenge.

Madam Chairman: May I ask why? Why 2020 was a challenge?

Mr. Romano: I think for one reason it was the length of time it took in terms of the appointment of the National Council for Sustainable Development.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And I see here that 2020 would have affected your workshops.

Mr. Romano: Yes.

Madam Chairman: And I am curious to understand why.

Mr. Romano: You know, the NEP is part of the work of the EMA and really at this point in time, you know, the EMA is doing NEP as an addendum to its primary work. 2020 required all hands on board in terms of the pure work of the EMA in terms of all of our regulatory functions especially as we were working from home and working remotely. So 2020, I mean, was a challenge and therefore, you know, something like the NEP, we did not focus on— **Madam Chairman:** Okay.

Mr. Romano:—until later on in 2020.

Madam Chairman: All right. So having said that, because I think the challenge you would have identified would have been a challenge that all entities— **Mr. Romano:** Yes.

Madam Chairman:—would have experienced— **Mr. Romano:**
Yes.

Madam Chairman:—in 2020. But most entities were able to quickly recalibrate, and it seems that you have not been able.

Mr. Romano: Well, that is—

Madam Chairman: Just now. These workshops you are telling me, telling us about that are going to take place sometime in 2021, were these workshops planned in 2020?

Mr. Romano: They were planned in 2020 so, yes.

Madam Chairman: And therefore a year later, when are they going to take place? **Mr. Romano:**
We are looking at the second quarter of 2021 which is between April to June, between April and June 2021.

Madam Chairman: Have you engaged anybody as yet and so? Because as far as I am concerned, we are at the end of the first quarter.

Mr. Romano: Yeah.

Madam Chairman: So if you are talking about the second quarter that is next month.

Mr. Romano: No. No. April, May, June.

Madam Chairman: April, May, June.

Mr. Romano: Between April and June.

Madam Chairman: All right. Okay. So I will take another turn. I want to invite any member of the Committee who would wish to ask some questions. Yes, member Bacchus.

Mr. Bacchus: Yes. Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair, and good day to the managing director. In reviewing the information I have in front of me, one of the prime responsibilities of the EMA is monitoring and evaluation. And monitoring and evaluation is actually key because even though we plan the strategy and we have worked out the—whether we have worked out the implementation, having a base that identifies where we sit in terms of things that we want to measure in the NEP, and I speaking specifically about having a measurement framework whether it be the inputs, the production, whatever you want to—the outputs, however you want to define it, consumption, there are number of models that you use. Has the EMA been able to establish a baseline as it relates to the pieces within the NEP and the PAs that are associated with it? And if so, are we in alignment with where we need to go? And if not, why not and how do we get there?

Mr. Romano: Chair, through you. In accordance with the terms of reference of the National Council for Sustainable Development, the EMA is awaiting the approval of the recommendations of what will be the thematic areas and the policy statements so that we could move forward, because that has to be approved for us to move forward with respect to the NEP. So we are waiting on the approval from the line Minister and I suspect—yeah. So we cannot move forward until we get approval.

Madam Chairman: Yes, member Bacchus.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. Bacchus: Madam Chairman, through you, again, maybe I am not interpreting this one. The information I have is this—and I do not think you would disagree with me that you are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation. It also says that there are contributions specific to the SOE as it relates, though limited, in terms of monitoring initiatives products and so that are conducted nationally, to set—so, you cannot be monitoring something without any KPIs or the measurement factors to provide a context to which you are going to measure it. So all I am asking is, regardless of the approvals of what has to happen in terms of how you go forward, you must be setting a baseline to measure it against. If not, how do you evaluate how the policy is effective—the efficacy of the policies that will be approved to try to implement? That is where I am going with this. Sorry, maybe I am not sure if I said it plainly before to you, Sir.

Mr. Romano: So, Madam Chair, if I may. So, in terms of priority area—and we call it four, but it is not number four in terms of—there is no hierarchy in terms of the priorities, which is greening of the economy. The thematic area is economic transformation. The policy statement that we have recommended that we move forward with is j) which is to:

“Support entrepreneurial efforts aimed to address environmental issues, or foster economic prosperity in an environmentally responsible manner.”

The KPIs or the measures for that versus when we look at Priority 5, which is “Fostering an Environmentally Responsible Society”. The thematic area that we have chosen is 2.19, which is the “Availability of & Public Access to Information” and the policy statement that we are looking at here is policy statement “a”, which is to:

“Increase the capacity of government and non-government entities to maintain and provide accurate and legible environmental information of interest to the public via physical and digital media;”

All I am trying to say is that depending on the priority area, the KPI will be different, and therefore there is no one KPI for any of the policy statements that have been recommended, and the working groups will have to work with the primary agencies to see what work is happening and what will be the best KPIs to use in terms of the measures. So, it is a long process and we are at the start of the process.

Madam Chairman: Member Bacchus.

Mr. Bacchus: Madam Chair, again, through you—and thanks for the response and the clarity, but it does leave us in somewhat of a lurch. What we are saying is we have recommendations for the policy. Because we do not have approvals for the policy and because of the myriadness and the vastness of the KPIs and measurements that we are dealing with, we are not measuring because they are assigned to the policy, and therefore we have to wait until that is done before we figure out where we are. So, the question that would easily be asked: Is where are we? Do we not have to report to this for any international agency? Do we not have to report to this even—I mean, what is in the SOE?

Mr. Romano: In the State of the Environment reports, we have identified indicators, as they are right now, and they are all included, and it shows where we are doing with respect to the indicators. With respect to the SOEs—I mean, all are with the Ministry up to 2019. We expect 2020 will be completed on time because it is due in April of each year, and the EMA tries to

submit its annual reports on time, and we are on track to submit the annual report for 2020, by April of 2021. And once they are laid in Parliament, they are available on the website.

Mr. Bacchus: Okay. I just find it to be roundabout. Chair, again, through you, I just find that the standard measurements, as it relates to green things under any framework, are clear. And I am sure you understand that while they may be eye level and the policies would make them into more granular pieces, I am sure and I would expect that we would at least have these things measured under other inputs easily. Some level of production outputs, the consumption and more economic impact would be the global way in which I expect this would be done, unless you have a different view of it.

Mr. Romano: No, not at all. I mean, we thank you for your comments, we will take them on board. And surely—I mean, we will make sure that when we are closer in terms of developing the monitoring framework, we will surely ask for your comments.

Mr. Bacchus: Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam Chairman: Okay, so what is missing for me, Mr. Executive Director, is this: What is the objective of the National Environmental Policy, and if there is an objective, what is the time frame by which one expects that this objective will be achieved? Because I would expect that the environment is a certainly very dynamic one. Okay? And when I am talking about the environment, I am not just talking about the physical natural environment. That too is dynamic. And if it is anything that COVID-19 showed to us is how very, you know, temporary things are. So if we have a plan, I would expect the plan is also grounded in a time frame. From what I just heard you say that this is going to be a very long, long time, and you did not have to say that. Just from what you are actually laying out, it seems to me that I might not even see this plan in my lifetime, just hearing you speak.

So, one, what is the time frame that was envisaged for this plan? And by the time all these various approvals of area “a” and one and two and five and six which, according to you, is not a hierarchal thing. To me, they all relate to sustainable development, and talking about green economy is not in isolation. All right? That is the foundation for sustainable development. When are we getting there in terms of the plan as it was envisaged?

Mr. Romano: Madam Chair—I mean, wow. The last National Environmental Policy was in 2006, and we feel, I mean, that any environmental policy, any national policy should really be reviewed between every five or seven years. But it took us 15 years to get this new NEP, which

is, I mean, it is really not acceptable. This new NEP—this 2018 NEP, one of the significant changes with this NEP is this monitoring and evaluation section, and is it for the exact reason that you have mentioned and Mr. Bacchus has mentioned, that there was no monitoring and evaluation. So we had no idea what we had achieved in the 2006 NEP, and therefore the significant change for the 2018 NEP is monitoring and evaluation.

I think sustainable development is not a destination. I feel it is a process. As you have said, it is going to be very dynamic. It is very complex. And maybe five years from now, we will need to relook everything that we have done in this policy, including the policy statements, and make significant changes because, you know, it is not working for us. So, in terms of timelines, I wish I could tell you that in 2023, we would have achieved 50 per cent of the over 250 policy statements that are in the NEP but, of course, that would depend on the resources available and the buy-in from the various agencies. Because we need all hands on deck from all the various— Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture to get these policy statements and these thematic areas accomplished in the NEP. **Madam Chairman:** Okay. So that, you have no targets set up front? And I think that is the same sort of question that member Bacchus is asking.

Mr. Romano: Yes.

Madam Chairman: For your agency, which is charged with the monitoring and evaluation, and which is charged with the whole success of this buy-in, you have, as we speak today, no target that you are expecting by, let us say your same year, 2023? So that in 2023, you could look at it and say, “Boy, we did not do too badly, or we failed, or we exceeded our expectations”. Is that what I am understanding? **Mr. Romano:** What you are understanding is that the agencies, who have prime responsibility for the area, need to tell us what are their targets. And therefore, in our monitoring, we will be able to say whether or not they are on target or they are off target.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, these targets have not been got as yet?

Mr. Romano: No.

Madam Chairman: Because I think I am getting very confused. Because I thought you had told me before that based on these workshops you had in 2019, where you tried to get from Ministries how they were aligned, that certain information was gathered. I thought that is what I understood.

Mr. Romano: No, and you are correct. We got information in terms of projects that may fit into the NEP from the various agencies and we are looking at those projects. Whether or not those projects are aligned to the policy statements that we have now selected, that the National Council has recommended to Parliament, they might not be, because we are not looking at all 250-plus policy statements at the same time. We do not have resources to do that. So we have selected policy statements that we will focus on, because we want to come and say, “We have achieved. This is what we have accomplished.”

Madam Chairman: So that, if a Ministry has a project that is not aligned with one of the targets then that you have identified, but it is within the context of the overall NEP, what happens with that?

Mr. Romano: Then that is icing on the cake because they would be doing something that is within the NEP, aligned to a policy statement, and we could also report on that.

Madam Chairman: Okay. All right. So let me ask this: The Ministry of Planning and Development in its response has said to us that they had two major setbacks in implementing over the past five years, the Theme V of the *Vision 2030* which deals with “...the Environment at the Centre of Social and Economic Development”, and the Ministry of Planning and Development has listed certain challenges, which are:

- sluggish advancement in the conservation and management of the environment;
- slow progress in mainstreaming climate change;
- engendering environmentally-conscious behaviour among the populist;
- lack of comprehensive disaster risk management policy;
- delay in formulating, adopting and implementing of feed in tariff policy; and
- inertia in many Ministries and agencies.

Are you within the remit of your authority? Would the responsibility of any of these challenges lie with you? **Mr. Romano:** No. Off the bat, no.

Madam Chairman: All right. So, I turn to the Ministry of Planning and Development, and this is page 7 of your submission. Okay? So, I would ask then, if the responsibility for ensuring or “Placing the Environment at the Centre of Social and Economic Development”, is that yours in terms of the roles of the different Ministries?

Mr. Ali: Madam Chair, whilst I acknowledge that some of that responsibility would definitely be with the Ministry of Planning and Development, it is required of each various stakeholder to accept their individual responsibilities. So, for example, when reference was made to engendering environmentally-conscious behaviour among the population, we at the Ministry of Planning and Development are going to require that collaborative effort from the respective stakeholder agencies to ensure that this is eventually achieved.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, who takes the lead? Let us take, for instance, inertia in many Ministries and agencies to integrate national policy into sectoral policies and strategies. Who takes the lead for that? Who is at fault for this inertia?

Mr. Ali: Ms. Ramesar, I do not know if you want to interject in—

Madam Chairman: No, I am asking you as the Deputy PS. Is that a function for the Ministry of Planning and Development? You see, we would have had you all here before, and I hear things about screening brief, if I remember well, and all of that kind of thing. My understanding—my limited understanding is that a Ministry just do not get funding for a project or go off on a project. They have to come to you all first. And you have this Project Scanning Brief and all of this to ensure that all these things about the project before a Ministry could even get a budgetary allocation. That is my understanding, I might be wrong. And therefore, if I am wrong, I will be glad if you correct it for me. All right. But for the Ministry of Planning and Development to tell me that Ministries have—there is an inertia to integrate national policy into sectoral policies and strategies, I really cannot understand that. For the Ministry of Planning and Development to tell me lack of comprehensive disaster risk management policy, I really need to know who is responsible. Somebody has to be in charge. Somebody has to be the point to which everybody is accountable. And, as I said, I might be wrong that it is the Ministry of Planning and Development. I will be happy if you could tell the Committee who it is.

Mr. Ali: Sure.

Madam Chairman: Who is the point?

Mr. Ali: Sure, and I accept. And your memory—your recollection is correct. There is something called the “Project Screening Brief”, and that actually—when Ministries make proposals for consideration for funding under the Public Sector Investment Programme, they do have to meet those requirements contained in the Project Screening Brief, and there is that continuous dialogue between Ministries and the Ministry of Planning with respect to follow up on their

projects. In fact, that process for the current fiscal, going into the next fiscal year, is currently underway. But unfortunately, in reference to the inertia that many Ministries and agencies may have experienced, in calendar 2020, in particular, given the global scenario of the pandemic and several other factors that have been referenced by various Ministries, the most popular, the most recurring factor being the situation regarding the release of funding to therefore progress these projects, that seems to be a recurrent reason why many of these projects which were proposed in the individual Ministry's Project Screening Briefs have not had the traction that is necessary to carry them forward.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, where were we before 2020 with that? Where were we? Let us say, we adopt the approach like everybody—like I have heard a lot of laypeople say, “2020 did not happen for them”. Where were we before 2020? **Mr. Ali:** We very much were very similar to where we are now. We have not made—

Madam Chairman: So we cannot blame 2020. Okay? Let me take another one, “Lack of a comprehensive disaster risk management policy”. What does that mean?

Mr. Ali: Madam Chair, I believe that similar to what Mr. Romano was referring to in his responses, for example, the National Environmental Policy which provides for the establishment of the National Council for Sustainable Development, it comprises several stakeholders and those various stakeholders need to be coordinated and need to be on the same wave length in order for us to make progress. So, this reference of the disaster risk management policy is to a similar scenario.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, here what is missing for me. Okay. I have a home. All right? A fire warden could come and tell me a number of things that are wrong. So until the fire warden comes, I sit and I wait for the fire to occur. That is what is coming over to me. Okay? With all due respect to everybody and, you know, I would love to contain myself, I see—everything I have seen here is like a shifting of the sand. I think that is the best way I could put it. When I hear about disaster risk management policy—so one is saying without a policy agreed by some—I do not know which entity because you have not told me that—nothing happens? So we sit and we wait till everything is destroyed. Do we look at something like the Sendai Framework? Do we look at that? Is that factored into anything that we do? I think that is international best practice to help guide us until we create a policy. Do we look at anything like that?

Mrs. Morris-Julian: Through you, Madam Chair, like yourself, I have some concerns when I heard about entities and coordination. So to the PS, exactly who is expected to coordinate? If it is not the Ministry, if it is not the EMATT, exactly who is supposed to coordinate? Because as the Chairman pointed out, this is quite scary.

Madam Chairman: I wonder if it is—is it the Ministry of Finance?

Mr. Ali: Apologies, Chair, my mute was on. Member, I acknowledge that the responsibility for coordinating will lie partially with the Ministry of Planning and Development. However, I must continue to make reference to the fact that the Sustainable Development Council comprises several stakeholders, and the Environmental Management Authority who chairs it and is co-chaired by the Ministry of Planning and Development, we would try to work hand in hand together towards achieving that task.

Madam Chairman: Member Mark, might I ask you to join the conversation at this stage, please?

[Chairman confers with Secretary]

Okay. So I appreciate that some members are having a difficulty with joining the conversation and therefore I would like to ask, in terms of the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System that is supposed to be set up. If I understand the conversation then, to the EMA, it means that this has not been set up at all? **Mr. Romano:** Chair, the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification System is for greenhouse gases with respect to climate change, and that has been set up and that is operational. I mean, the expert on that I think is on this call, Mr. Kumarsingh, I mean, and he can tell you that, listen, that is a success. You know, it is not like these agencies are doing nothing. We are doing a lot in terms of fruition, in terms of seeing the fruits of our labour, that is happening and this project is one of the projects where we are seeing that. And the EMA is very happy to have been the repository of this information, and I also want to put a plug that what we need is really a central depository for data, because there is so much data in all these agencies, and we have been pushing this to—what do you call it—the Recovery Committee, and this committee and that committee; we have been pushing it to all these committees, but that is what is necessary in this country. It will make monitoring and evaluation so much easier if there is a central repository for data because then we can continue for information we can to all the analyses and then we can move forward. But the MRB, with respect to climate change, is happening, and I do not know if Mr. Kumarsingh wants to say some more. I mean, he surely is the authority of this.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, is Mr. Kumarsingh—can he join us? Because I got the impression—thanks for the good news, but I got the impression that there was certain technical gaps for the operationalization of the system. There was a need for some sort of consultant review, so I do not know if those things have since been done. Mr. Kumarsingh, good afternoon. Thank you.

Mr. Kumarsingh: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon, members. Good afternoon, colleagues. Maybe it might be useful if I contextualize more broadly and then zero in on the MRB system and perhaps, in some of the bullet points that were submitted regarding some of the challenges that we had, and I could speak maybe using the climate change policy and the MRB systems specifically as examples that could be used as a typical kind of example on some of the things that we need to address. So, the climate change policy expressly provides that the Ministry of Planning—the Multilateral Environment Agreements Unit, of which I am the head, is to coordinate the implementation of the policy. Now to do this, we have developed what is called a “Climate Change Focal Point Network”, which we have representatives from all agencies, Ministries, private sector, CSOs that we liaise with, and we basically get feedback from them and exchange ideas on how we can build capacity. Because capacity issues is really one of the main, if not the main challenge and barrier to getting things done across Ministries and across agencies.

And part of that capacity issue is really also understanding the context and the roles in which these agencies and Ministries have in the broader policy framework. To that end, what we have done is basically look at some of the issues that need to be implemented. We have mapped the roles and responsibilities of the Ministries and agencies, and we are now trying to engender an understanding of what is required. So, for example, in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, we have, with these agencies and stakeholders, developed a monitoring and evaluation template which they are now filling out and completing and returning to us every so often, highlighting what they have achieved in the context of the NBSAP and in the context of their roles and responsibilities, and more than that, what challenges that they have that we can address or make recommendations for redress.

In terms of the climate change policy specifically, a lot of the enabling environment is not present, both from an administrative and institutional policy, and a legislative framework. So, some of the basic things we are now trying to address— and permit me to highlight, in particular, the issue related to the MRB. Now, measurement reporting and verification—we cannot manage

what we cannot measure and specifically, in this regard, we are speaking of greenhouse gas emissions. And if we are talking about greenhouse gas emissions, we have to be able to demonstrate that we are reducing them or the measures that we are taking to reduce them being effective.

3.40 p.m.

And therefore, to do that we have to set up the enabling environment. And the measurement reporting and verification system is really that enabling environment. It is the first time that we as a country have done this and so you would appreciate that there would have been some teething problems and this is really what we designed and conceptualized and with the support of some multilateral organizations, the UNDP, for example, the GEF and the EU. We specifically designed the MRV which is now housed at the EMA as Mr. Romano would have said, and we engaged with what we are calling now the emitters. We have engaged with the emitters including Ministries, Government Ministries and agencies and in particular the private sector to conduct a pilot project in which they submitted their data, we train them; we conducted training sessions with all stakeholders on how to collect the data, how to calculate their emissions using international standard methodologies and how to submit them into a quarter, a secure quarter that the EMA can now receive the data.

We also trained members of staff of the EMA on quality assurance and quality control and data checks to make sure that they are in line and it is good quality data that they can stand by. So the pilot project basically tested this system where emitters submitted their data but the EMA will perform the quality assurance, quality control checks and so on, and that pilot as with all pilots was aimed at tweaking or testing where there may be gaps, where the “t’s” needed to be crossed and “i’s” need to be dotted. That has been completed. We have gotten the report back and we are now addressing the constraints and the gaps that would have been identified. And a huge part of that is really the need for enhanced capacity and training and which we are now working with the UNDP to enhance the training of members of staff of the EMA and other stakeholders.

But in order to institutionalize, to create that enabling environment and the legislative enabling environment, we are now looking at the legislative review of how the MRV system can now be entrenched into law and how greenhouse gas inventorying and emissions can now be made mandatory. So that is ongoing.

We have hired a consultant under a separate project. As you would appreciate, Madam Chair, the finance is always an issue so we have basically looked to external financing and grant funding to do much of this work and we are thankful to those who have provided. So we are using grant funding to do this, but the aim really is to institutionalize, to make this redundant in a sense and make it routine. So that when it comes to international reporting on climate change, because we now have a commitment under the Paris Agreement to reduce our emissions and in order to report on whether we are doing good or bad we have to measure it and this MRV system now is really geared towards doing that.

So a lot of things are happening in tandem and simultaneously to create that enabling environment so that once it becomes operationalized in law, then the capacity would already be there and the EMA and with the stakeholders who need to support and provide data and to do that.

What we are also doing is—since we are talking about greening the economy, is enhancing that MRV system now through incorporating the requirements under the Paris Agreement and decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties of the Paris Agreement regarding transparency and reporting. So we are now expanding the scope of the MRV to incorporate those reporting requirements and to build a capacity.

So the aim is—and hopefully very soon once the recommendations for the legislation is complete and submitted, then we can have a fully operational system. And based on that we can track not only our international reporting requirements but we could also track national policy objectives, including under the National Environmental Policy of whether we are achieving the low carbon development trajectory that is expressly stated in various policy documents including the National Climate Change Policy and the National Environmental Policy.

So public awareness as well is not only for the public at large but it is also Government Ministries and trying to convey their roles and responsibilities in the broader context of the national policy, is something that is ongoing, but as I said, many Ministries, many agencies lack the capacity both in terms of human resource, both in terms of financial resources to really put the systems in place for that full incorporation. But it is a work in progress.

We have advanced fairly well in terms of getting that coordination done and bringing the policy framework closer. We have adopted a motto if you want, of

“one agenda and many leaders”. And so the many leaders really is in the various Ministries and agencies. We are trying to build champions so that they themselves can understand through the public awareness and education programme that we have ongoing and the training, of what really is required within their own Ministries and within their agencies, and therefore we champion that as well internally. So that it is both a top-down and a bottom-up and a lateral process that we are trying to achieve and that is the approach that we have taken. I hope that this has added some context and clarity to what we have been doing. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. So let me ask you something. So right now you have the capacity to do some monitoring and it is a pilot and I guess it is because people are voluntarily complying. The legislation I expect is something that you all would not have control over. Is there the possibility of increasing the pilot, is there a plan to increase the pilot as a plan B in the event that the legislation making it compulsory does not take place in the time frame that you might consider reasonable?

Mr. Kumarsingh: Chair, thank you for the question. Indeed, because we have encouraged stakeholders to continue submitting data to the EMA through the MRV system. So the pilot did not really mark the end of the process but really the pilot was designed to, you know, identify gaps and fix them. But we have encouraged stakeholders who volunteered and indeed other stakeholders, and I must say that we had a resounding response from the private sector and industry, in particular, to this effort. And we have encouraged them and we are encouraging them to get engaged with the MRV system through the EMA and to continue to provide the data that is required under the MRV system.

A large part of the inertia, I guess, in that aspect is really the confidence that the stakeholders need to know that the data that they are submitting is for what it is going to be used and to a large part we have secured the confidence of the private sector. In fact, they are now approaching us, industries are now approaching us to see how they can get engaged. So the pilot has not stopped in a sense, it has only come to an end insofar as identifying the gaps as was intended, but certainly entities are still voluntarily providing the data intended under the MRV, because a large part of the reporting framework and obligations under the Climate Change Convention with the Paris Agreement requires that we do national inventories. And invariably we have to hire a consultant who goes out and it is like pulling teeth, as you would imagine, in the absence of any mandatory requirement and invariably the result is that we have huge gaps in

the data because we just do not get it or the quality is questionable and therefore the usefulness of the report then is only as good as the uncertainty within the report and the data that is reported.

So it was bearing that in mind that the legislation is now being drafted to make it mandatory. We have signaled that to the stakeholders. It has been welcomed. There was no push back so we hope that with the understanding and the hands-on sort of experience that they would have had, that that confidence that I have alluded to has been built on a voluntary basis and they would continue to provide data to the EMA and certainly by that example inspire other stakeholders as we are encouraging to also get involved and provide the data under the MRV system. I hope I have answered the questions. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: So based on the pilot and so on, do you think it looks hopeful that as far as the nationally determined contribution in terms of emissions, that we are on track for the 15 per cent by 2030?

Mr. Kumarsingh: Very good question. Part of the MRV system is designed to actually do that, to track the NDC and overachievement because it is an international commitment and it is a target that we have committed to. But also I neglected to say that in another project we are now looking at developing KPIs for the NDCs. Bearing in mind that this is something that the whole world is new to, really, and we should credit ourselves because we are fairly far advanced and have been recognized in leading the way in this aspect of “MRVing”, if I could make it a verb, emissions.

So we are developing in tandem the development of key performance indicators for NDC achievement and the MRV system now being enhanced to incorporate the provisions of the Paris Agreement will be able to track the NDC achievement along the trajectory to 2030 because it is relative to a business as usual baseline.

But more than that, it would also inform whether there may be new intervention options that could be required depending on changing circumstances because it is a trajectory based on some assumptions, socio-economic assumptions and activity industry and transport. So things would change as we go along and emissions might actually drop, it might rise, but the KPIs, the Key Performance Indicators will be geared or designed to track the NDC, and the MRV system is actually designed to do that as well. So as we monitor the achievement of the NDC and the implementation of the NDC we should be able to keep our fingers on the pulse, on what is

required or what needs to be changed or what more interventions need to be put in place to achieve the commitments going forward. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Any likely time frame for when the draft legislation would be ready?

Mr. Kumarsingh: Yes. It should be—the time frame for that is now at the end of May. It is already underway and we have been looking at reviewing some of the drafts that have already been submitted. So at the end of May we hope to finalize that consultancy and make the necessary recommendations where it needs to be made to consider entrenching it into the legislative framework and operationalizing it thereafter.

Madam Chairman: Member Bethelmy, would you like to come in now? You have to unmute.

Ms. Bethelmy: Hi, good afternoon. Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, through you, I would just like to ask the Ministry of Finance a couple of questions. In your response to the question:

What strategies have been implemented to ensure economic activity begins with an environmentally sustainable lens?

In your response you stated:

Developing appropriate policy and initiatives to diversify and transform the economy by encouraging entities both public and private to shift their business and services towards a green transition which will have a positive effect on the environment and climate change leading to greater benefits for the population.

How exactly do you plan on achieving this? And later in your response you did mention financial incentives, but what other incentives do you plan on offering businesses or entities?

Ms. Neemacharan: Good afternoon. Thank you for the question and I will ask Mr. Hayden to answer.

Mr. Manzano: Good afternoon. Through you, Chair, thanks for the question, member. If I look at the response, as you see the response, the response is based on two pillars. We are looking at policies and initiatives on the one hand and then we are looking at direct action with the other through fiscal incentives, okay? If I can take the first part first and then I will go back to the policy after. There are already some fiscal incentives that are already in place, that over the years we have been building out a range of policies across the different kinds of activities, okay? We have incentives with respect to solar, with respect to energy efficiency. We have fiscal incentives that are geared towards reducing carbon emissions. We also have measures to reduce the subsidy

on one hand. There is a drive that has started initially with respect to the movement towards the use of electrics, specifically electric vehicles. So that is basically on the fiscal framework.

On the policy side, discussions are still taking place with respect to developing certain types of policies that would encourage certain sectors to adopt certain types of activities that they will take advantage of the specific fiscal incentives that have been put in place.

So, for example, if we look at the idea of an electric vehicle policy which is now being a form of discussion of how we can develop a type of policy that can engage those who—well, I have to say the importers because we do not manufacture vehicles here. But some kind of policy that will encourage them to shift from the usage of the fossil fuel type of vehicles towards electric vehicles. Now, this would be a discussion in the first stage but it is also a drive that would take place over a certain period of time. Because as you are aware our vehicle population, it is highly fossil fuel. So it would mean that the policy would have to be a transitional kind of transformation over a certain period that we could set some targets in line with what producers abroad, the international producers, they have already set their targets. So we have to align our policy in line with the targets that they have set with respect to vehicles.

With respect to greening, there is some discussion taking place right now with the use of operators within the agriculture sector to move towards solar harnessing, all right, or to change the operation to reduce some of the fossil fuels that they will have and try to harness a solar within, especially within the agro-processing side.

I am answering all this because these are still discussions that are taking place. Collaboration has been held together with the Ministry of Planning and Development on all these kinds of activities. There is also some consideration being—taking place as you would see in one of our responses with respect to how best to utilize the levy under the Green Fund to not only make it as a fund but to also make it as an attraction for operators to be able to measure the kind of reduction that they are having in their operations and be able to, through that measurement, they can be able to access some kind of rebate on the payment they are making to the levy. So it is, as I say, these things are still at the discussion stage.

Ms. Bethelmy: So you said that some of these things are still at a discussion stage, right? So is it safe for me to assume that the electric vehicle policy committee has not yet been set up to start these discussions?

Mr. Manzano: No. There is not a “committee-ing” set up, but these are areas, initiatives that we are looking at and once we can get a certain kind of sign off for the collaboration, then we will be able to move to the next stage.

Ms. Bethelmy: And you also spoke in your response about a phasing out strategy for vehicles utilizing fossil fuels.

Mr. Manzano: Well, as I said earlier and through you, Chair, member, the idea is we have to move in step with what is happening internationally. Some companies have already signaled that as early as 2025, some of the major manufacturers are shifting their production of vehicles to either hybrid or full electric. What will happen is that our local players will eventually have to fall in line with that kind of operation. So we are looking at it from that standpoint.

Ms. Bethelmy: Okay. And this question goes out to anybody or anyone who may be responsible for the communicating of this transition because we are not only talking about businesses but the general public has to also understand the importance of the electric vehicle policy. Who or which entity will be in charge of the communications for this to the general public. Could be anyone, I am not too sure—

Mr. Manzano: Well, I would like to think that some kind of communication strategy will have to be developed among the major stakeholders who will be the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planning and Development and also the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries. Because there will be—since the shift will be moved from fossil fuels we will have to have an engagement with the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries also.

Ms. Bethelmy: And just one more question. You spoke about a:

National Performance Framework which is a tool that provides a consistent approach for monitoring, measuring and reporting on the implementation of *Vision 2030*.

Can you tell us a bit about this tool?

Mr. Manzano: Well, actually I—through the Chair, we responded in that regard with our assistance for the response through the Ministry of Planning and Development who are actually responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the plan. So our response was guided by the response that we got through the Ministry of Planning and Development who can speak better about this monitoring and evaluation.

Ms. Bethelmy: Mr. Ali, would you be able to assist in just talking a bit about the National Performance Framework, the tool that you are using to measure the implementation of *Vision 2030*?

Mr. Ali: Sure, member. Ministry of Planning and Development did put forward as part of its response a portion of that question that you have asked there in terms of the National Performance Framework being the tool to provide the consistent approach for monitoring and measuring and reporting on the implementation of the goals within the *Vision 2030*.

Ms. Bethelmy: Okay.

Mr. Ali: Obviously—

Ms. Bethelmy: So provide me with an example of how the NFP framework monitors and measures the implementation of *Vision 2030*.

Mr. Ali: May I ask Ms. Ramesar to respond on this one for me.

Ms. Ramesar: Thank you, DPS; thank you, member. I will try to answer that question. The National Performance Framework was prepared as a sort of a sister document to the *Vision 2030*. So *Vision 2030* would have several goals, short, medium and long term goals in respect to the five development themes that are contained therein. So we would have—the Ministry, through the National Transformation Unit, would have defined what the goals were in terms of how it could be measured. They would have also—we would have also incorporated indicators and targets.

I cannot go into the specific examples but it is contained in the National Performance Framework and it can be found on the Internet. And in addition to that, the response that we would have sent as well also indicated that while the document is from 2017 to 2020, in 2021, the PSIP would have contained some additional indicators and targets.

I would also mention that the Ministry is also working on revealing the *Vision 2030* document, particularly in light of COVID and also to undertake the strategic planning for the next five-year horizon, which is '21—'25. And the Ministry would also at that same time—not at the same time but would also do a new performance framework to coincide with the next planning horizon of '21—'25.

I also want to mention at this time too that the Ministry is undertaking a consultancy to review the National Performance Framework to see how it could be improved. As you would

know—as you would have been told several times data is an issue. So the Ministry again through the National Transformation Unit is working with the Ministries to see how they can streamline the collection of data and that is being worked on.

So there are several things that are going on at the same time but, as you would appreciate the data is proving to be a challenge and it is something that we are working on. I hope that answered, member, some of your concerns.

Ms. Bethelmy: Okay. Thank you very much. Madam Chair, thank you very much. **Madam**

Chairman: Okay. Thank you. I just wanted just to follow-up on this conversion with the National Performance Framework.

Ms. Bethelmy: Framework.

Madam Chairman: And in terms of this, I heard Ms. Ramesar say that there is supposed to be a review and that is for some time next year. But would I be correct in thinking that in fact there has already been a sort of readjustment of the National Performance Framework as a result of COVID?

Ms. Ramesar: Yes, to an extent I would say yes. In the PSIP actually, PSIP 2021, particularly in reference to development theme five, in relation to the environment, on page 196, we would have some new performance indicators and targets for 2021. So in a sense, yes, COVID would have been taken into consideration in this aspect.

Madam Chairman: If you could take out a sample of that, of what you just talked about on page 196 and say how that, how did COVID or why that was a consequence of COVID, okay? Because I am tying that back to your answer that where you said and it supports:

However, with the emergence of COVID-19 global pandemic, government through the PSIP 2021 made the pivotal—“the” not “a”—the pivotal shift to refocus several short terms goals in response to the pandemic which would ultimately contribute to their achievement of the National Development Goals in the long term as well.

I am not sure if that statement is telling me we adjusted and therefore we slowed down, or if there was a leapfrog and therefore these goals would be achieved in a shorter time or they will ensure the attainment of these goals. So that was my concern and it appears that what you were saying about on page 196 ties with this. So if you could just maybe give us some examples that the words could become real for me.

4.10 p.m.

Ms. Ramesar: Okay. Thank you, Chair. What I will do is explain what we meant by shifting. During COVID-19, certain sectors would have come up to the top of the list, for example, digitalization, agriculture in respect of food security, the need to build resilience within the economy. So it was in that sense certain sectors and certain areas shot to the top of the list. It does not mean to say that the *Vision 2030* did not contain it. It might have just been a different priority. So that is what was meant by that general statement that there was a shift, and that needed to be done because of the limited resources in the PSIP. We needed to have a framework to target the resources. So we would have looked and see what COVID would have thrown up as priorities and try to target the resources there.

So if I have to read one of the examples on page 196, one of the shifts that we would have had—and it is not really a shift. It is just a reprioritization—is building climate and environmental resilience. And there we would have made reference to the circular economy so if we have to build resilience after we realized that COVID probably had an impact that really shocked us in terms of our inability to withstand these shocks. So I will just read one of the key performance indicators: the quantity of waste requiring final disposal—so that is one of the indicators that was mentioned—and the target is 50 per cent reduction in waste requiring final disposal. So I am just reading what was written in here.

So again, it speaks to making use of waste and ensuring that it goes towards value added in terms of building resilience in the economy. I do not know if I have explained that.

Madam Chairman: How do we do that?

Ms. Ramesar: This is where—

Madam Chairman: [*Inaudible*] the economy so I want to know how do we do that?

Ms. Ramesar: Right. So this is where we would now have to talk to the various Ministries and come up with certain ideas, and projects, and programmes in order to do this. So at the Ministry, yes, we would just set the broad strategic goals, and the next stage really is to have dialogue with the Ministries to brainstorm and come up with ideas, and projects, and programmes so that we could effect some of these goals.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So might I ask something and maybe the PS could help you out here? This would be for fiscal 2021?

Ms. Ramesar: Yes.

Madam Chairman: What we are talking about—this re-shift, this refocus, this is for 2021?

Ms. Ramesar: Yes.

Madam Chairman: We are into second quarter of fiscal 2021. Am I correct?

Ms. Ramesar: Yes.

Madam Chairman: That is why I asked: How are we going to do this if I am now hearing that conversation would take place?

Ms. Ramesar: No, not now take place. But these are ongoing conversations that we have with Ministries. So I am just speaking in general, but you could also go through some of the PSIP projects to see exactly where we would have done some of these things. I know at some point in time the Ministry of Trade and Industry would have had projects where they would liaise or have projects with businesses to encourage them to green their processes. So it is in that respect that the PSIP and the allocations therein are linked to the goals— **Madam Chairman:** Okay.

Ms. Ramesar:—as to the specific ones at this time

Madam Chairman: That is the difficulty we have. We want specifics. So I will give—PS of Ministry of Planning and Development, I will give you all an opportunity to submit that in writing but along with that, the projects that one would have identified which would have resulted as a result of COVID and this pivotal shift to refocus and so on. And therefore, I expect in your discussion with Ministries projects were identified under the PSIP for that. So what I would want is also for the Ministry—so this has to be done alongside the Ministry of Finance because I would want to get an idea of releases. All right? The status of releases by the second quarter of 2021 to the various Ministries that are aligned with these projects. Okay? Because I think this is laudable, but we want to see that it is measurable. Okay? And therefore, if—so, Mr. Deputy PS when the Secretariat liaises with you all, they would say by what time, et cetera, that we would want that kind of response to you and to the Ministry of Finance. And I think at this stage I believe Mr. Kumarsingh wanted to make an intervention based on the discussion we were having with Mr. Manzano. Mr. Kumarsingh?

Mr. Kumarsingh: Yes. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I just wanted to provide some more context and elaborate on the issue raised by Mr. Manzano regarding the electric vehicles. Building on what he said, we are in the process in collaboration with Demark Technical University to develop an e-mobility policy, and that has already started. It should be finished by the end of June, recommendations for an e-mobility policy. And that is in keeping with the

recognition that climate change has many facets, and transitioning to the green economy may have implications in various other sectors, including transportation, and I think it was clearly articulated by Mr. Manzano.

So the e-mobility policy is also being developed and that could also include the involvement of various stakeholders, the primary one, of course, being the Ministry of Works and Transport and the Ministry of Finance. But also quickly to add as well, that we have already commenced and nearing completion the development of a just transition policy as well, because there is a recognition that in transitioning to the low carbon and green economy that it may have socioeconomic implications, particularly for the workforce in which there are many people employed in the carbon intensive industries that we have are running the economy.

And so, we have been liaising with the Ministry of Labour in developing the just transition policy to ensure that, in keeping with the broad Sustainable Development Goals and including the Government policy of “leaving no one behind”, that any fallout from the greening of the economy, it can be buffered through a policy framework that would provide the guidelines on how to treat with such issues. I just wanted to sort of create—well, close the gap in terms of the holistic approach that is being taken from that perspective. Thank you very much. **Madam Chairman:** Okay. Thank you very much. Just let me ask because my understanding is with greening the economy, of course, some positions or traditional jobs may become redundant, and therefore, I understand therefore that there should be other jobs that will surface. So if I appreciate what you say, Mr. Kumarsingh, it means that with Ministry of Labour these new jobs which will resurface or which will be created, there is supposed to maybe be some sort of training plan so that we retool our labour force for the green economy. Is that what I am appreciating from what you are saying?

Mr. Kumarsingh: That is correct. Because new technologies will have to be employed and deployed, and therefore, to maintain and to operate those new technologies, the workforce will have to be retooled, reskilled or trained from scratch, including catering for the next generation of students and professionals that are now going through the university. So it is a broad multipronged approach that will look at training and development of skills, and redevelopment of skills as well going forward in keeping with some of the technological and paradigm shifts that will be necessary in following the trajectory to low carbon development and the green economy.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Thank you. I just wanted to ask, Mr. Romano, in our earlier discussion you were talking about not having a particular unit as yet—I think it would be for monitoring and so on. Have you all already created a structure for this, identified the job functions and so on, and made the request for the creation of these positions to be able to operationalize the unit?

Mr. Romano: Thank you, Madam Chair, for that question. Yes, we have. We have established what the unit would look like, the monitoring and evaluation unit. We have costed the unit. We have requested funds, as we do every year in our budget and, of course, we understand in no uncertain terms the state of the country's finances, and therefore, we know it is going to be a challenge to get the funding, and therefore, what we have been doing in the interim is trying to use in-house resources to do this work. But we have costed it and we have done the out structure.

Madam Chairman: Okay. And you have no idea of where that is in terms of getting at least approval to begin to resource that structure?

Mr. Romano: It is with the line Ministry, I mean, in terms of getting approvals and, of course, once it is approved by the line Ministry, then it has to go to the Ministry of Finance because the line Ministry could say yes, but Finance would have to say whether or not the funding is available. As I said, we understand, I mean, as everybody else, that the country is in a difficult situation.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So maybe the Deputy PS, Ministry of Planning and Development, could tell us where that is?

Mr. Ali: Madam Chair, those matters are for the consideration of the line Minister. As you are well aware, our Minister was on some sick leave— extended sick leave and she has returned to duties today. So those matters do form part of the priority that will receive her attention in the sooner rather than later.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. Okay. So might I ask member Mc Clashie to join the conversation at this time. He is there?

Mr. Mc Clashie: Yes. Madam Chairman, I have listened intently to the discussion and as I said in the pre-meeting that—and you all have raised all the concerns that I would have had in terms of the how—there are a lot of plans and there are a lot of projections, but based on the discussion we have had so far, I am not convinced that we are quite clear on the how. I still think that getting the idea of the green economy to work and where it goes is in its infancy, and therefore, I would be a bit hesitant to be too hard on our colleagues, but it certainly needs a better

framework from which to launch and to get everyone on board. And I agree that it is a work in progress, but it is a work that has to be fast tracked otherwise we will be speaking the same thing two years from now. So I do not have any particular matter. I do not want to repeat what was said before, but I am in alignment especially with your views, Madam Chairman, in terms of how do we get things done, and that is my input for here.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. I am just going to page 5 of the submission by the Ministry of Planning and Development, and just to ask, Mr. Ali: these projects that were listed here in response to question four—they go from page 5 to page 6— would these have been the projects which occurred because of the pivotal shift or are these separate and apart?

Mr. Ali: No, Madam Chair. These projects are not specifically aligned to that pivotal shift. In fact, these projects [*Inaudible*] reference various projects that are associated with various Ministries that may be all considered to be [*Inaudible*] with the green economy.

Madam Chairman: Thank you very much. And therefore, maybe I could turn to the Ministry of Finance and PS Ministry of Finance, I do not know if you have this information but I still want to know in terms of, let us say the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries, the acquisition of synthetic aperture radar for the detection of oil spills where there was an allocation of 270,000—I think that is dollars—for fiscal 2020/2021, would you have information on whether there have been any request for releases for this project, and if there have been request for releases and if how much has been released?

Ms. Neemacharan: Good afternoon again, Chair. Unfortunately, at this time, we do not have the information, however, that could be provided. I do not have the information with me, but it certainly will reside with our Budget Division and we will provide the information.

Madam Chairman: All right. So thank you very much. And therefore, what I would like to do is that there is a list of projects coming to—some like \$25 million, the Secretariat will forward that list to you to get an idea of request and releases today. Okay? So thank you very much. If maybe then we could just shift the conversation a bit and maybe I could ask a question on behalf of member Mark if he is not here with us, and this is with respect to—we had noted that there is a project for a solar farm at Piarco. And member Mark wanted to know what would be the relationship between that project and the existing solar farm at, I believe it is Brechin Castle. I do not know if the Ministry of Planning and Development is in a position to answer that.

Mr. Ali: Madam Chair, just for some clarity, you would like to know the relationship between the two projects?

Madam Chairman: Yes. So that, if it is that if these projects are related to each other and if they will both—the benefits of the energy, renewable energy, will both eventually go to the grid?

Mr. Ali: I am not able at this point in time to say whether or not the projects are related to each other. They do have similar bases and I am sure Mr. Kumarsingh can give us a little bit of the details regarding the benefits that would redound as a result of the solar farm projects. That is on the provision that, Chair, you are interested in hearing those as part of the response.

Madam Chairman: Okay so, Mr. Kumarsingh, maybe I could ask the question whether these are related, whether one will tie into the other? And therefore, with that, then you could explain to us the benefits of that in terms of reducing emissions and the change to renewable energy.

Mr. Kumarsingh: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Yes, they are related in the context of aiming to achieve the reduction in carbon emissions arising from power generation. The solar park at the Piarco International Airport is being funded by the European Union of its technical assistance through the GCCA+ programme and that has two parts. One, it aims to build that solar park at Piarco to supplement the energy requirements of Piarco International Airport with potential for grid tie in, and therefore, supplementing the overall power requirements of the country. The second part is solar installations on 12 sites that could be identified and that is being managed by the UNDP that will also basically work towards the same end.

The solar utility—these utility-scale solar plant at Brechin Castle is part of the 10 per cent renewable energy target for supplementing power generation nationally, and that is also being led by the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries and I think that is well under way in terms of negotiations. The award has been given, as it is well-known, to Lightsource BP. So they are related insofar as the objective of what they intend to achieve is concerned, which is the reduction of emissions from the power generation sector, and they will contribute to achieving the nationally determined contributions commitment under the Paris Agreement in the power generation sector. I trust I would have answered the question. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So thank you very much. I do not know if member Bacchus would like to join the conversation at this stage?

Mr. Bacchus: Thank you, Chair. Couple things. Anyone who is familiar with me in terms of how I work in these JSCs, I pay patient attention to language and jargon as it relates to what is written

in these reports. I have a measure of concern as it relates to—and not necessarily that it was a bad statement. It is just that it carries with it specific connotations—and it relates to where we were just a while ago, Chair, through you, as it relates to the things that you identified as the issues that would have affected Placing the Environment of the Centre of Social and Economic Development, and you would have read out the bulleted positions between that. But just above it one of the things that was identified is that there were two external shocks that had deleterious effects on the programme of project implementation due to limited financial resources and disruptions in implementation due to lockdown measures, and the word that concerns me in this is “lockdown”.

I am unaware that Trinidad and Tobago is or has been on any lockdown. We have had restrictions as it relates to things that relate to the public ordinance, but I not know that we have been on a lockdown. And the reason I bring it up is that it carries—like I said—it carries with it specific connotations as it relates to a number of things and a number of places, but I say the same things when it comes to technical jargon. I have explained this in terms of digitization and digitalization and a number of other places. I think we must endeavour to be particularly precise when it relates to explanations and adjectives, adverbs, anything that we are using specific to define the things that are affecting the actual processes and procedures, and/or policies that we are trying to implement on where we go. So, Madam Chair, through you, I just wanted to make that point.

Additionally, there are a couple things. Mr. Kumarsingh, I really wanted to compliment you on the success of what you have been able to do insofar, but it simply exemplifies my point that I was making earlier that we have to have a different type of operating model if we want to deal with some of the issues that we have. We cannot use—and they would not always apply—old-school methodologies to address new-school problems. Waterfall-type, cascaded-type ways of doing things have to give way to some of the more modern ways in which we address stuff. The success you have is a good example. You did not wait for the policy to be finished. You did not wait for all of that to be done. You actually knew what the industry required and set about in doing it, and I think that is something that needs to happen throughout all the pieces that we are doing.

It is not about—if you wait until you get all of these pieces in place, there is a level of mutual requirement particularly as it relates to climate issues and/or environmental

sustainability issues that you will find—and you have found it, you said it, a lot of cooperation from places that you may or not necessarily think it would be. So I am saying that is an approach that you need to continue it. The pilot project that you did exemplified it. I mean, as much we are waiting for the policies to rectify the prioritized areas or the industry standard as it relates to how those things are met that are already established. And if we want to progress and be ahead of where we need to be, then we have to take advantage of that and continue to use those pieces of things. As far as a repository for data, my simple suggestion is contact the Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation. We can help you. You want a way to have a repository for your data, check us. You are looking for help? We will give you some help in terms of where that is.

The other thing about the Ministry of Planning and Development—and I am glad that Chair raised these projects because I know these projects—and these were the projects that I have recently spoken about under item 4 on page 6—but these are projects under the Ministry that are either direct or very directly related to the issues around the environment and climate change. The pieces that are actually larger than that are the general projects and not just under PSIP which obviously will come through the Ministry of Planning and Development, but also the number of recurrent projects that you probably would have no purview over that would impact the entire ecosystem of what we are trying to address in a very significant way. And so, even the call circulars that deal with the things as it relates to the budgeting cycle, we need to address this so that this can be addressed and handled all the way down from the base information that is being presented from all the MBAs. Why that is so is that—well, what is going to happen is this, almost every project we have had some level of environmental waste and I mean from the simplest things.

If you say we are replacing computers in any massive Ministry, you are talking about—we have old books. What happens to those? What is the impact of that on what we do? More so, it must be considered that in any submission that is being sent to the screening briefs that we do,

how is it—what is the environmental impact and/or cost? And it must be factored in for evaluation at that time to allow for the project to be approved. Many a project globally has—while very good in nature and very well intended, would have not been given the necessary approval because the environmental cost was too high. And so, part of the things that we are going to have to publish and part of our reckoning as it relates coming out from the Ministry

of Finance in terms—is what is the cost associated with the environmental correctness of the things that we are doing, and that has to be a significant factor where we are at and where we go. Because there is a cost to this and those cost—they are very different. The impacts and so on of it are very different. Well, we are not going to do this, but this is the impact where we talk about the e-mobility and all of that. All of those things have impact and it is not just—the measure is not just the fact that we are going to reduce the carbon footprint. There are a number of socio and other types of cost to that we must, must and have to address.

And lastly, we are talking about the monitoring unit and this one is the one the concerns me also. We had a protracted conversation specifically about where we were and the fact that the policies have to be set there before we can set the PPIs now because of the significant spread of what we were doing and the prioritization of the four areas and that they were not in chronological order, et cetera, et cetera. Unless you are doing what I was saying before, which is understanding the industry place and where you need to go, then it is impossible for you to create a monitoring unit with a structure and a job description because structures are primarily—primarily the vehicle that allows you to fulfil some type of strategic mandate. And if you are saying the policies and so on have not been set yet, it is interesting to figure out how you are going to figure out what that strategic mandate, and therefore, its outcomes and outputs would be without understanding them.

So the answer I can get from that is that you pretty much know, in a very general sense, where you want to go. And so, that piece of what I am saying is the adoption of that type of philosophy in a number of the things that you do. You are already doing it in a number of places and you are seeing the success of it. I am talking about a more global adoption of that type of thinking and way of doing things that will set us where we need to go. Madam Chair, that is I wanted to do. **Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much. I just want to ask something and I do not know if this is to the Ministry of Planning and Development or to EMA. Are we engaged in the MCR 2020? MCR 2020, are we engaged in that? Are we aware of it? M as in “man”.

4.40 p.m.

This comes under—I never get this right but the United Nations part that deals with disaster reduction and preparedness and so it is U-N-C-R-R or something like that?

Mr. Romano: That is under the Sendai Framework. Is it?

Madam Chairman: Yeah. All right.

Mr. Romano: What do they call them? The disaster management and, yeah, they were driving that.

Madam Chairman: Maybe that is something we could look at, there is funding under that and maybe you all could then submit to the committee if this is something that advances us in getting the green economy and if there are possibilities under that for funding.

But more to the submissions that we have. In the submission of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Finance had indicated, and this is on the second page in response to the second question, that it:

...continues to maintain a continuous coordinating arrangement with the Ministry of Planning and Development on aspects related to the environment, climate change and the green economy.

And that:

The Ministry of Planning and Development is engaging stakeholders both in public and private sectors on these issues. In this regard, it is envisaged that a comprehensive plan on the overall cost analysis of the implementation of the green economy will be developed following these consultations.

I read it out because it involves the Ministry of Planning and Development but it is not their submission. All right. So I wanted to know where these consultations are in terms of the costing of the implementation of the green economy. And I guess this will go to the Ministry of Planning and Development.

Mr. Ali: Oh, apologies, Chair. I was confused, I thought you were saying it to the Ministry of Finance. You said it was—

Madam Chairman: No, actually the Ministry of Finance said something about you so that is why I read it and therefore I have taken that as the gospel and therefore I am asking where have these consultations reached because Ministry of Finance needs your input to be able to do the costing of the green economy. **Mr. Ali:** Chair, maybe if the Ministry of Finance could be a little more specific into what consultations you are referring? I am not aware, you see. I mean, I know you have read it out but it does not ring a bell.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So may I ask the Ministry of Finance, this is page 2 of your submission and it is in response to the question:

Has the Ministry—which will be the Ministry of Finance—in collaboration with the Ministry of Planning and Development done a comprehensive plan on the overall cost analysis on the implementation of the green economy in Trinidad and Tobago?

And therefore, the Ministry of Finance put that foundation of that responsibility on the Ministry of Planning and Development. So maybe the Ministry of Finance could therefore speak to us about it so that the Ministry of Planning and Development could hear and then maybe respond to my question.

Mr. Romano: Thank you, Chair. As a member of the team in the Ministry of Finance, I consulted with officials at the Ministry of Planning and Development concerning this comprehensive plan and cost analysis. Right. The information I received from the Ministry of Planning and Development senior officials there, is that at this stage a plan has not been developed as yet but that consultations are taking place with stakeholders in the initial stage, and following these consultations, some plan will be developed and then they will come back to the Ministry of Finance to discuss whether there will be some cost implications involved with respect to the plan.

Now, if you notice on our submission, you will also see in the last page, a number of companies and agencies that the Ministry of Planning and Development has reported to us where discussions have been taking place across all different aspects of the green economy. Okay? So my initial discussion was discussions are taking place with stakeholders and following those discussions, a comprehensive plan would be developed and the Ministry of Finance will be engaged at that stage. **Madam Chairman:** So the comprehensive plan, because what I am concerned about is costing, so that comprehensive plan would have been a costing?

Mr. Romano: Well, it includes a costing.

Madam Chairman: All right. So I am not sure that I understood though what was answered in question 2, to have been related to what was there in 3 on that second to last page there where they are doing draft of the plan and I think that plan is the

NDC implementation plan. I think that is what that response was but you know— **Mr. Romano:** Chair, as you look at the statement again, it says we are of the view or we envisage that when the plan has been developed, then discussion will take place with the Ministry of Finance for the costing aspect.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, I do not know if that sheds any light for Mr. Ali in terms of answering, you know, where these consultations have reached because I think the Ministry of

Finance, to their credit, really are trying to focus on them not being in the usual position of people saying they did not have the money. They are trying to identify upfront what it is going to cost so that they can then look for the money. So you need to tell us where these consultations have reached towards this plan that could be costed.

Mr. Ali: Sure. So, Madam Chair, I mean, further to obviously the costing of all the various projects that form part of the *Public Sector Investment Programme*, that can be summarized as part of our submission—as our submission but in specific reference to the NDC implementation plan, I will defer that question to Mr.

Kumarsingh who will be able to give us some guidance on that.

Madam Chairman: Mr. Kumarsingh.

Mr. Kumarsingh: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. In the context of the NDC, when the NDC was developed which was extracted from our carbon reduction strategy, a cost estimate was done or the target that was arrived at through extensive consultations with stakeholders from across the board and the subsequent commitment or the NDC that was submitted, was estimated to cost around US \$2 billion to achieve the target.

Now, in light of the apparent or at first, at face value, the prohibitive costing, what we did was developed a financial investment plan for the NDC that opted various activities that were identified in the NDC implementation plan but more than that also identified possible sources of financing through multilateral entities such as the Green Climate Fund for example and the Global Environment Facility among others. So the NDC financial investment plan was completed and the NDC is acknowledged to be a mixture of domestic and international financing.

One of the components of the NDC actually is an unconditional component which is state funded and that is through the CNG, NGC fuel switching programme to convert vehicles from liquid fossil fuels to compressed natural gas which is well under way and it is already reducing emissions.

So a financial investment plan was done with the NDC implementation plan in mind solely for the NDC implementation and that has been completed and we are now liaising with the Green Climate Fund to develop projects that will attract funding from them to implement various aspects of the NDC bearing in mind what was identified in the financial investment plan. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. But I just want to say this and if I am wrong, if I will be corrected, I seem to get the impression that when we are talking green economy to some of us, we are thinking only climate change and that sort of thing but, you know, my understanding is that green economy is much more than climate change. And therefore, if the response I am getting to the submission made by the Ministry of Finance on question 2, only relates to climate change, then I think that I was really mistaken with respect to the conversation on the green economy because—and I think the Ministry of Planning and Development in part understands it.

Because when they located the conversation in Theme V of *Vision 2030*, “Placing the Environment at the Centre of Social and Economic Development”, okay, and it talked about:

“...the development of a comprehensive and well-coordinated system to address the many interconnected environmental issues including: natural resource management...waste...pollution and chemicals management...built environment management and climate change.”

I did not see biodiversity and eco-systems but I guess maybe that goes into the blanket natural resource management. Okay? I thought that those are the things we are talking about when we are talking green economy.

So when the Ministry of Finance answers that they will do a cost analysis of a comprehensive plan and they are waiting on the Ministry of Planning and Development, I did not think it was just climate change. So I do not know, Mr. Ali, if I am mistaken.

Mr. Ali: Madam Chair, you are not mistaken, the green economy does refer to that all-encompassing group that you have described. Besides the climate change factors, there are other things that have been in play and ought to be a part of the costing. For example, I know that our glass bottles which are processed at our Carib Glassworks Limited in Trinidad are recycled into new bottles and this is a direct representation of one of the things that allows us to recycle and avoid wastage in the system and this would collectively have to be costed into that overarching plan that you refer. At this point in time, I cannot give you any further detail today.

Madam Chairman: But the conversation will continue in writing.

Mr. Ali: But the conversation will have to continue.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Thank you very much. And to the Ministry of Finance, in your submission, you had spoken about:

...the Green Fund Executing Unit being properly resourced to address all projects, initiatives to drive the green economy implementation.

What does that mean?

Mr. Romano: Chair, we understand that there is a Green Fund Executing Unit under the Ministry of Planning and Development and within the estimates when I enquired, I enquired to find out if the unit is operating, if it is being funded and if there are funds put into the estimates so that this unit can carry on the mandate that it has. My information is that the unit is operating, that their funds have been put in the estimates for the unit to be properly resourced.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So this statement is a reflection of a discussion you have had with the Ministry of Planning and Development or is it just a conclusion you have made based on the funding you provide?

Mr. Romano: It is a combination of both. It is an exaggeration of the estimates as well as a discussion with the Ministry of Planning and Development.

Madam Chairman: Okay, so maybe then I should ask the Ministry of Planning and Development in terms of whether this Green Fund Executing Agency, if in your view, if you are properly resourced, if you get your releases on time, and if not, if and how has this affected the operation of this unit. And maybe you could put it in a context to tell us what the Green Fund Executing Unit does.

Mr. Ali: Madam Chair, yes the Green Fund Executing Unit does form part of the Ministry of Planning and Development. At the moment, I am aware that it operates on very much a limited human resource capacity and that efforts are underway in putting forward for the consideration of the Cabinet recommendations to have the Unit staffing expanded based on the advice of the current leader of that particular Unit. That Note for Cabinet is already prepared and has been forwarded for the attention of the Minister only today, so in that aspect of that particular Unit, it is receiving current attention.

With respect to releases and the funding of the Unit, I do not have that information at hand at the moment.

Madam Chairman: Okay. All right. So that basically, if I understand well, the position of the Ministry of Finance that you are properly resourced, you accept that, okay, because the fact that

your human resource capacity is not what you would like it to be, has nothing to do with the Ministry of Finance, it has to do with you asking for certain posts that you need and so on. Agreed?

Mr. Ali: That is correct.

Madam Chairman: Okay. All right. And then to you, Mr. PS in the Ministry of Planning and Development and you will know where to direct this in your Ministry. I think you have an integral role in promoting the creation of a circular economy, of building climate change and environmental resilience and so on. How and what mechanisms do you all employ in the Ministry of Planning and Development to ensure that programmes, policies, public awareness, private sector buys in to the creation of the circular economy and building climate and environmental resilience?

Mr. Ali: Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Kumarsingh is going to be able to speak to the topic of resilience and that entire correlation and buy-in. Kishan.

Madam Chairman: “Um-hmm.” Who will deal about the circular economy?

Mr. Ali: He will try to tie it into the response, if not, I will try to summarize just in the couple bullet points I have here if he does not get it into his answer.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Mr. Kumarsingh.

Mr. Kumarsingh: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you, DPS Ali. Yes, so that maybe to preface what I am about to say by acknowledging that the green economy is much wider than climate change. The approach that we have taken is that building climate resilience or addressing climate change is a national development issue, therefore integrating all considerations of climate impacts based on a changing climate needs to be integrated into all aspects of national development planning and the national development process.

And to do that, we have conducted for example, a climate risk assessment and the capacity needs for building resilience and we are now in the process of actually rolling out that to the various Ministries and the agencies identified within that study and that assessment including the development of a financial investment plan for rolling out the recommendations coming out of the study. So there is a continuous engagement with Ministries, with agencies, to identify, again, as I said before, their roles and responsibilities in building and integrating that aspect of climate resilience into national development.

And the approach that we are taking is not the traditional approach that seeks to address climate change and climate resilience from a project-based perspective where you fund projects or you develop projects and you implement them in anticipation of impacts that may be, you know, a few years or even decades away. But rather we have adopted what is called the Pathways Approach which is to address issues and the impacts and the risk associated with not only climate change in the long term but also with climate variability in the current climate in terms of extremes; extreme weather events, extremes in temperatures and so on.

So that the impacts and the risks associated with the current variability can be incorporated into management plans in other Ministries and agencies so for example, the water sector and the co-synergy and linkages with water management issues such as agricultural irrigation and crop yields and so on, and as well for public health, for portable water availability, for sanitation and so on.

So the climate risk aspect is being addressed from a resilience perspective by integrating climate risk considerations into the strategies and a strategic development process among all sectors and all agencies so that it comes together in one whole so that you identify linkages, synergies, co-benefits, potential conflicts so that again in keeping with the “one agenda, many leaders” conceptual approach.

In terms of the circular economy, that, of course, deals with the aspects outside of climate change but largely perhaps driven by climate change because it is the most, you know, topical issue and perhaps we can have a more immediate kind of response through emissions, collect emissions from the various sectors. But circular economy also deals with a resource management as you correctly stated, and to do that, taking advantage of some of the available funding under the Basel Convention for example, or the chemicals and waste conventions, we are developing waste management approaches that will seek to minimize waste because then you do not have a linear trajectory between resource use, product development and then product disposal.

So you have now, when you reach to the graveyard of products or even services, that they can be recycled back into the value chain and therefore you minimize demand on raw materials and resources and that is how the approach that has been taken in terms of addressing the circular economy from a waste perspective, for example. Just giving the waste perspective as an example. But that can also be applied to any other aspect.

And one of the most important things that we lack as a country, I think, but has been on the table for years, is how do we factor in natural accounting into the national accounting framework. The value of mangroves for example, the ecosystem services that they provide, the livelihoods that they support, what their real value in monetary terms can represent and what their replacement value may be if it cannot at all be replaced. Because we will have to accept that there might be some permanent loss and permanent damage arising from the impacts of climate change but not only that but also from the development paradigm.

So the development paradigm now has to take into consideration that circular arrangement. Because we live in a small-island state, we have limited natural resources, limited land and therefore we could very easily find ourselves in a very precarious position if that approach is not taken or factored in. So national accounting and natural accounting have to be taken into the natural capital and be accounted for in monetary terms so that the real value could be appreciated and therefore the development paradigm will then have to—or the cost of the development paradigm will then take into consideration what the real cost is for that development including impacts on the natural environment.

And then of course, as data and information comes to hand and a database is built, then you can revisit the approaches because it is an iterative approach in developing and implementing the circular economy. But it has many and myriad facets to be considered in its roll out and its strategy. And I hope I have answered the question. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Okay, so thank you, certainly from the climate change aspect and this is why I keep coming back. I think in the discussion, I am not hearing anything about the circular economy in terms of from production to consumption and waste because even in production, waste is generated and how is that waste created and put back into the production cycle.

And you know, Mr. Kumarsingh raised a very important point and this is natural accounting, and I do not know that that discussion has begun anywhere and it comes back to what is the role then of the Ministry of Planning and Development in bringing about this green economy which has subsets of the blue economy, the silver economy, the circular economy, the climate change, some people are even talking about the caring economy, and I looked and I saw if—the Ministry of Finance who spoke on your behalf, Ministry of Planning and Development, with respect to the stakeholders that you all have engaged and I do not know, having regard to what Mr. Kumarsingh said who is part of your Ministry, I am not seeing that you have engaged

the—what do you call them? ICAT of Trinidad and Tobago. And this is coming from within your own Ministry.

So, you know, I seem to be—in the conversation, while I have heard some really lovely things and read some lovely things, seeing a sort of lack of the interconnectedness of which you all write, I am not saying speak—of which you all write. Okay, so maybe, Mr. Ali, I was a bit precipitous and maybe you could tell me about your role, meaning the Ministry's role, in promoting the circular economy and we would not bother with climate change. Mr. Kumarsingh has dealt very adequately with that.

Mr. Ali: Thank you, Madam Chair, and I would want to agree with you in that it is the Ministry of Planning and Development's role to ensure that there is that level of interconnectedness as you may have said between the various Ministries and between the various agencies to ensure that the national agenda is—that we all work towards the national agenda, towards achieving the national agenda.

So whilst I accept that as our responsibility and I accept that that is what we referred to in our overall planning, our overall submission, at this stage here today, I have limited further information that I could possibly provide to you. So if need be, I would have to submit that as an addendum to our submission.

5.10 p.m.

Madam Chairman: Okay, so just answer me this and I do not know. I guess this is maybe either of Ministry of Planning and Development or the EMA. I read somewhere that we measured in 2016— we were ranked 62nd out of 180 countries by the Yale Environmental Performance Index. Has there been a measurement since then, and if there has been what have we ranked?

Mr. Ali: Hayden?

Madam Chairman: We have more than one Hayden here. So you have to say which Hayden you want. **Mr. Ali:** Sorry, Mr. Romano?

Mr. Romano: I do not remember doing anything in terms of that submission. I do not think that was the EMA's submission, as far as I am aware.

Madam Chairman: No, no, no, I am not saying that is somebody's submission. I said I read somewhere.

Mr. Romano: Yes, and could you repeat please, Madam Chair? Sorry.

Madam Chairman: And my reading it somewhere would have had to have been maybe in the National Environmental Policy. Right, that the Yale Environmental Performance Index in 2016 ranked us as 62 out of 180 countries. I am asking if such a measurement has taken place since, and if so how were we ranked? **Mr. Romano:** Chairman, I am not aware of more recent a measure but we can surely check.

Madam Chairman: But we are aware of the Yale, just so that we sure I am not making things up. You are aware of Yale Environmental Performance Index?

Mr. Romano: Yes, we are.

Madam Chairman: So, if we could check on that. And while I have your ear, Mr. Romano, and I am sure now I am going to get delightful news about the circular economy, with the iCare projects and so.

Mr. Romano: Yeah.

Madam Chairman: And I think this is the point member Bacchus was making, based on certain things that Mr. Kumarsingh said in his neck of the woods. There appears to me to be an appetite for recycling, certainly in the collection of bottles and tins and beverage containers. Okay? There is a bin that I pass every day that is iCare, and I mean, if it is one thing people take pride in putting that form of waste there. Okay?

So in your submission you were talking about establishing permanent collection sites across Trinidad and Tobago and I want to know where we have reached with that, how many sites that you have identified how many, with what you have identified, would that adequately serve Trinidad and Tobago? Or if you are going about on a phased basis, if you can share with us something with respect to that.

Mr. Romano: Again, that is one of the successes. And you are so correct. I mean, the public has really embraced iCare and the bins have been very successful. There are now some 788 collection sites throughout Trinidad. And now we are happy to say that the project is now happening in Tobago in 2021. There were some challenges with Tobago but that has been taken care of, and we are now in Tobago. There are three collection depots where the waste goes to, which is NAMDEVCO in Port of Spain, Forres Park and Guanapo in Arima. And really, we have done, I think we have done a great job with our partners funded by the Green Fund to create the enabling environment for recycling of beverage containers in Trinidad, and now Tobago.

What needs to happen is we now need to move further as we go along into the circular economy. We need to get to things like extended producer responsibility, meaning you have all this packaging, whether it is for whatever it is you are selling, and you are actually selling some items. You need to have some responsibility, with respect to the disposal of that item. So we need to move towards extended producer warranty. We need to move towards deposit refund systems. And we are saying not only deposit refund systems for beverage containers, but deposit refund systems for other items, electronics.

There is something happening with tyres, in terms of you pay money for leaving your tyres at certain depots. We need to look more into that system because we are not sure how it operates. But the country, if we are talking about greening, we need to look at every activity, every sphere of activity. And, Madam Chair, I think you are right. I think the public understands and the public is willing to move forward, but we need to put the systems in place.

Madam Chairman: So, what you are talking about is that what you would have described as the infrastructure to be put in place for effective recovery and process for collection of recyclables. You are talking across the whole gamut.

Mr. Romano: Exactly. So we have done a fairly good job with respect to the beverage containers. And you are right, glass is absolutely no problem because there is a company that will take all the glass, and that has been operating in Trinidad and Tobago for a long time. So the same thing needs to happen with everything else. And the project was supposed to lead to really a whole recycling industry. That is really in its infancy. Because a lot of the plastics are now being exported. There is very little that is being used locally. And again we need to find out why.

Madam Chairman: All right. So the plastics is what? This pet wash line— **Mr. Romano:** Yes.

Madam Chairman: All right, what did that cost?

Mr. Romano: I really, I do not remember. That was a little while ago.

Madam Chairman: Okay, but you could let us know what is the cost of that?

Mr. Romano: Yes, we surely could tell you. I mean, that is an easy fix.

Mrs. Morris-Julian: Through you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairman: Yes.

Mrs. Morris-Julian: In another life, I was lucky enough to be part of this initiative, and I agree with the Chairman, it was extremely successful and the EMA was always very willing to help whatever borough corporation that needed to set up that particular system.

Being from the Arima Borough, we benefited tremendously from the Guanapo Centre. But one thing I always wondered about, the paper aspect. Now the Borough, we did some work with ACE recycling. But I am always wondering why it is we are not pushing that also. Is that something that we are going to move towards? Is that part of this? I can agree with you that the plastic is doing extremely well. Of course, I would like to see more everywhere, but from what I saw, witnessed firsthand personally and the fact that you could send people from the EMA to guide the process through, really made it tremendously easy for anyone to implement once they are interested. But I understand that you all even do it for neighbourhood groups that are interested. So it is not just corporations. It does not matter how small, someone is always willing to guide you. But the paper aspect is something that always bothered me and I am interested in that.

Madam Chairman: Yes. Mr. Romano.

Mr. Romano: Thank you for that, member. Yes, paper was not part of the iCare project. Actually the iCare project was beverage containers, electronics and tyres. We have not done a great job with the electronics and tyres, because we have been concentrating on one, the beverage containers. But we are saying, as we move forward in terms of greening the economy and a circular economy, we need to move into all waste.

We are very optimistic that the EMA's waste rules will be here, we are hoping before June. I mean, as I said, it is with the CPC. So it should happen very quickly. And that should now be law. And that will assist, especially in terms of the larger, because there are thresholds with respect to the waste rules. It is not for litter. It is not for domestics. It is not for residential. It is for really the larger generators of waste.

Madam Chairman: Okay. So, Mr. Romano you said the project included electronics and tyres. You have not done well with either. What are the plans? I want to say as far as tyres, something must be happening with tyres. I do not see tyres, and maybe I have changed my route, I do not see tyres like I used to see before. So I really thought that there was some project that was dealing with tyres. I think at one stage there was an incentive of getting some return on used tyres. So I

do not know if you could shed some light on what your plan will be for tyres, what your plan will be for electronics, and when those plans would be operationalized.

I think must have been in 2000, I had gone, I was then in local government, we had gone to Australia and they did all their walkways, their pavements and roads, they were surfaced with the by-products of tyres and I always, I mean that just amazed me. And it is 21 years later and I cannot see something like that in Trinidad.

Mr. Romano: Tyres are well used in terms of asphaltic concrete mix. I mean, we are not doing it in Trinidad, as far as I am aware. I know SWMCOL had an initiative with respect to the tyres and I am not sure where that went to. But, as far as we know, as I said we are still doing some work on it, there is a \$20 deposit fee on tyres. I do not know if the Ministry of Finance could help us. I mean, if the money goes to the Customs, or where does the money go, and because if you leave, if you go and change your tyres you have to pay \$20 per tyre for disposal. And most of the disposal we know takes place or is supposed to take place at SWMCOL. Whether that is happening or not, again we are not sure. So with tyres, we have some work to do.

With electronics we started on a very small scale with some small entrepreneurs who were requesting used electronics. So we started it on a very small scale with them and we are looking to see how we could broaden that. But we are trying very hard not to overextend ourselves, Madam Chair. I mean nobody likes—everybody thinks a thing should happen quickly and we sometimes agree. But we also have to look at what are the resources that we have.

Madam Chairman: Okay, and can you also just enlighten me on what is happening and you mentioned it, the beverage container deposit refund system? In your submission you had spoken about collaboration with stakeholders, and so on. If you could just shed some light on that and where we are.

Mr. Romano: It is being driven by the Ministry of Public Utilities and there are a number of other agencies involved in terms of the Ministry of Planning, the EMA, SWMCOL. I think what is the thinking right now is that we need to simplify it. It needs to be as easy as possible for the public and for the manufacturers and all the stakeholders involved and the private sector must be involved. Because if we are trying to drive this thing called the green economy, the private sector who is really the driver of the economy, must be involved. And therefore, the discussions are continuing firstly at the public level, in terms of the public sector level, and then it is going to be driven out into the private sector.

Madam Chairman: Okay. Might I ask if any other member wishes to ask any questions at this stage? Mr. Bacchus?

Mr. Bacchus: Just to provide some additional information. I know you had asked about the Yale EPI. I actually had the data before, I just did not bring it up, but there is one for 2020, I think is the one I have, and I can tell you as of that time, yeah 2020, we were ranked, the EPI rank was 69 and they measure it in 10-year variances across whether you were better or not and the 10-year variance was a plus 10 points, meaning that maybe 10 years ago, just from an approximation. It does not mean in between it could not have been higher or lower, but there is a plus 10 where that is concerned, meaning that we are better now than we were, than over the 10-year variance. It could have been higher in between but as of right now we are at 69 and there is a full breakdown for the Trinidad and Tobago piece by 32 different categories, well 47, but 32 different components of those categories.

Madam Chairman: All right.

Mr. Bacchus: It is very interesting reading and I will suggest everyone have a look at it. It is available publicly on the Web.

Madam Chairman: Good. Thank you very much. Might I ask you one other question because you volunteered? From what you read, we ranked 69, would it have been out of the same cohort of 180 or a larger cohort?

Mr. Bacchus: It is out of the same cohort of 180 and it is a downloadable file and it does speak to areas of air quality, sanitization, heavy metals, waste management, and so on and it does include biodiversity and the other aspects of it. It would be interesting to know where this data comes from, which is what I would go back to the EMA to ask. But this is actually how we are ranked in there and there are comparisons to other Caribbean islands, et cetera, et cetera.

Madam Chairman: So I guess EMA and the Ministry of Planning and Development will have a little opportunity to familiarize themselves.

Mr. Bacchus: Yes.

Madam Chairman: Thank you for letting us know that there was a 2020 and therefore they could do some analysis and explain to us.

Mr. Bacchus: Yes.

Madam Chairman: I asked the question, because if I was 62 and I am now 69,

“ah feel ah worse off”.

Mr. Bacchus: Yes, yes.

Madam Chairman: Okay? Because I am better off than 10 years ago, it does not mean that I am not worse off than I was in 2016. So you will need to explain that to me.

Mr. Bacchus: And the major contributors, they can see as well if they want to know, like I said it is set up for everything like that. I think they would find the issues are there. I think they would know where the issues are but all of it is in the report and it is available for anyone to see.

Madam Chairman: And it seems that they could collect our data better than we can.

Mr. Bacchus: Yes, well again it is based on what they have. Yes.

Madam Chairman: The EMA and Ministry of Planning and Development would also tell me whether those conclusions I have come to are wrong or right. All right? So, I want to—is there a hand? Mr. Romano, is that your hand? No? Okay, all right.

So, I want to thank the PS, the Deputy PS, Ministry of Finance and all the officials of the Ministry of Finance, Mr. Manzano. I want to thank the officials of the Ministry of Planning and Development, the Deputy PS, Ms. Ramesar; Mr. Kumarsingh; Dr. Gowrie; and also, I want to thank the Environmental Management Authority and their Managing Director and his support team for this very, very interesting conversation.

I read this, and again just—Mr. Romano, I want to say, this is not part of your submission and it is not part of any submission. Okay? But I read this somewhere, and I found this very interesting. This is an expert from Finland and they said:

“Circularity and sustainable consumption and production are essential to delivery on every single multilateral agreement, from the sustainable development goals to the Paris Agreement and beyond, because it is turning our unsustainable consumption and production around that we can tackle the three planetary crises; climate change crisis, the nature crisis, the pollution and water crisis.”

For me, that sounds very attractive. For me it sounds very hopeful. I am not concerned too much really about the planet, about Trinidad and Tobago. If we succeed, the planet succeeds in part. Okay? I hope we agree with this. If not, you will tell me in the submissions, your written submissions, and I hope this is something that we could really realize for the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

So I want to thank you all. I want to thank the members of the listening public. I want to thank the media for staying with us. I do not have to wish everybody, well maybe yes because some of you all are still in the offices, safe journey home and we continue this conversation on paper. I want to also thank the members of the committee for their participation. I therefore now suspend this part of the meeting and the meeting will continue in camera. Thank you all.

Mrs. Morris-Julian: Thank you, Madam Chair.

5.31 p.m.: *Meeting adjourned.*