



*Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago*

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*OFFICE OF  
THE PRIME MINISTER*

*Administrative Report*

*Oct 2009 – Sept 2010*

## VISION

*A responsive, results oriented organization, governed by integrity and justice; committed to continuously exceeding all established performance standards.*

## MISSION

*To champion and support governance of Trinidad and Tobago, via efficient, effective and transparent service delivery.*

## CORE VALUES

The core values to which the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) considers to be the foundation of beliefs with which the organization operates from are:-

1. **Results oriented:** “Results Oriented” is holistically defined as having a clear focus and practice of following through and achieving established goals.
2. **Integrity:** “Integrity” depicts a sense of positive values as exhibited by traits such as honesty and consistency of character.
3. **Professionalism:** “Professionalism” involves utilizing skill, good judgment, polite behaviour and expediency in performing a job or task.
4. **Creativity/Innovation:** “Creativity” is the act of turning new and imaginative ideas into reality. Creativity involves two processes: thinking and producing. “Innovation” is the production or implementation of a new idea. If you have ideas, but don't act on them, you are imaginative but not creative.

5. **Commitment to Service:** “Commitment to Service” is the nucleus of almost all successful organizations. Commitment ignites action. To commit is to pledge one’s self to a specific purpose or line of conduct. It also entails practicing your beliefs consistently.

6. **Caring:** “Caring” is a feeling exhibiting concern and empathy for others. Caring is the act of respecting and acknowledging the feelings of others.

# INTRODUCTION

During part of the period covered by this Administrative Report (October 2009 to May 2010), the OPM was guided by the Pillars of Vision 2020 as enunciated by the then Government of Trinidad and Tobago. With the advent of the General Elections of May 24, 2010, and the subsequent change in administration, the OPM was then guided by the Policy Framework of the [new] Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for Sustainable Development whereby this office pursued the Government's goals to restore and develop Trinidad and Tobago into a more developed and safe environment, where the people are more innovative and the society becomes a more caring one.

Seven (7) Pillars were proposed by the new administration to facilitate the sustained development of Trinidad and Tobago, with the OPM taking the lead role. The goals of the OPM were focused on five (5) of these pillars, namely:

**PILLAR 1:** People-Centered Development – We need everyone and all can contribute.

**PILLAR 4:** Information and Communication Technologies – Connecting Trinidad and Tobago and building the New Economy.

**PILLAR 5:** A More Diversified, Knowledge Intensive Economy – Building on the native genius of our People.

**PILLAR 6:** Good Governance – People Participation.

**PILLAR 7:** Foreign Policy – Securing our place in the World.

**PILLAR 1: People-Centered Development – We need everyone and all can contribute.**

The central focus is on human development through the education system and through the creation of infrastructure to support lifelong learning, skill building, institutional strengthening, and the building of a competitive economy.

**PILLAR 4: Information and Communication Technologies – Connecting Trinidad and Tobago and building the New Economy.**

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are essential in the rapidly changing global environment. A more technologically advanced environment increases the education level of society in terms of communication, information sharing and knowledge management. It would also develop the society in other ways, as citizens would now become more innovative and advanced in their methods of thinking and understanding and this will impact positively on society and its development.

**PILLAR 5: A More Diversified, Knowledge Intensive Economy- Building on the native genius of our people.**

Education and knowledge are key areas to achieving competitive advantage in today's society. Having great human creativity and innovation is what adds value to a nation and sets that society apart from the rest of the world. This is the outcome that the Government seeks to achieve by investing in training programs and providing the technology and expertise to groom citizens to think more creatively and to be more innovative in all areas in order to develop Trinidad and Tobago.

**PILLAR 6: Good Governance – People Participation**

In trying to achieve good governance in Trinidad and Tobago, the government will enhance new institutions or appropriate infrastructure to support accountability, transparency, consultation, participation and consensus-building and more meaningful representation. New mechanisms would be put into place to adhere to the needs of the people and society as the government understands that they were chosen to serve the people and attend to their needs and issues of society to make Trinidad and Tobago into a more developed and safer nation.

**PILLAR 7: Foreign Policy: Securing a place in the World**

As the world becomes an increasingly connected and interdependent world, Trinidad and Tobago must secure its place in that economy to grasp all opportunities to further develop and enhance our society.

## **DIVISIONS/ UNITS**

This report on the administration of the OPM is in respect of the period October 2009 to September 2010 and presents information on the work of the following Divisions/Units of the OPM:

- Cabinet Secretariat
- Corporate Services Division
- Management Information Systems Unit
- Information Division
- Communications and Media Relations Unit
- International Relations and Protocol Unit
- Central Administrative Services, Tobago (CAST)
- National AIDS Coordinating Committee (NACC) Secretariat
- Divine Echoes
- National Security Council (NSC) Secretariat
- National Strategic Management Group (NSMG)



# *Cabinet Secretariat*



## **CABINET SECRETARIAT**

Section 75(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago provides that “there shall be a Cabinet for Trinidad and Tobago which shall have the general direction and control of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and shall be collectively responsible therefore to Parliament”.

The Cabinet meets in regular session on the Thursday of every week. However, Special Cabinet Meetings may be convened by the Prime Minister at any time at short notice. To assist in the exercise of its function, Cabinet may appoint Sub-Committees and Advisory Committees which make recommendations to Cabinet.

The Cabinet Secretariat, headed by the Secretary to Cabinet, provides specialized administrative support to the Cabinet and also provides secretariat support to the following Sub-Committees which meet on the Monday of every week at the Office of the Prime Minister:

- The Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGPC)
- The Parliamentary Questions Committee (PQC)
- The Delegated Matters Committee (DMC)

It is to be noted that the DMC ceased to function in May 2010, consequent on the assumption of the office of the new Administration.

The Secretariat is also the traditional communication link between Ministries/Departments and the Cabinet, as well as between the Public Service and the President and Parliament.

The main functions of the Secretariat are as indicated hereunder:

- The preparation of the Cabinet Agenda for the approval of the Prime Minister and circulation thereof to Ministers of Cabinet.
- The preparation of the respective Agenda for the Meetings of the FGPC, the PQC and the DMC and circulation to members.
- The preparation of the recommendations of the FGPC and the PQC which are included in the Cabinet Agenda.
- The recording of the decisions of Cabinet which involves the preparation of the relevant Cabinet Minutes.
- The preparation of the Minutes of the DMC.
- The dissemination of the Cabinet Minutes and DMC Minutes to the relevant Ministries/Departments for implementation/information.
- The implementation of certain decisions of Cabinet that require the signing of legal documents by the President or the Secretary to Cabinet.
- The storage and management of the Cabinet records which date back to 1956.
- Responding to queries and providing guidance to Ministers/Permanent Secretaries and other senior public officers with respect to Cabinet Notes and procedures and policies of Cabinet and Government.
- The provision of advice to Ministries/Departments on established guidelines relating to the preparation and/or submission of Notes for Cabinet.

In order to fulfill its mandate, the Cabinet Secretariat is divided into the following Sections:

- **The Dispatch/Registry Section** – responsible for the receipt of Cabinet Notes, collation and dispatch of the Cabinet Agenda as well as the FGPC and the PQC and dissemination of Cabinet Minutes to Ministries/Departments.
- **The Minutes Section** – responsible for recording the decisions of Cabinet and the preparation of Minutes for confirmation by Cabinet and for signature by the Secretary to Cabinet. This section is also responsible for the preparation of the recommendations of the FGPC and the PQC.
- **The Implementation Section** – responsible for pursuing implementation of certain decisions of Cabinet, in particular, those requiring the preparation of legal documents by the Ministry of the Attorney General for signature by the President or the Secretary to Cabinet. This section also provides secretariat support services to the FGPC and the PQC.
- **The Records Section** – responsible for the management of the Cabinet records dating back to 1956. This involves the electronic capture and storage of all the documents in the Electronic Document Management System and retrieval of same under the said System. The documents are also stored in Bound Volumes and on microfilm.

In the year under review:

- The Cabinet held 46 Meetings and made 3,021 decisions.
- The FGPC held 50 Meetings and made 534 recommendations to Cabinet.
- The PQC held 23 Meetings and made 114 recommendations to Cabinet in respect of Parliamentary Questions/Statements to Parliament.
- In respect of the period October 1, 2009 to May 2010, the DMC held 24 Meetings and made 199 decisions regarding:
  - The continued lease/rental of properties for Government office accommodation.
  - Continued grant of Standard Agricultural Leases.
  - Continued employment, on contract of persons in the Public Service.
- The Implementation Section pursued with the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Local Government the implementation of those decisions of Cabinet which required the preparation of legal documents for the signature and/or Seal of the President, or the signature of the Secretary to Cabinet. In that regard:
  - Documents vetted and transmitted to the President for his signature and/or Seal included:
    - Instruments of Appointment to Statutory Boards.
    - Alteration of Instruments of Appointment with respect to the Commission of Enquiry into the Construction Sector of Trinidad and Tobago.

○ Proclamations in respect of:

- the call out of the Trinidad and Tobago Volunteer Defence Force in aid of the civil power in the maintenance of peace and security over the period November 17, 2009 to February 28, 2010:
  - Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) from November 27 to 29, 2009.
  - Christmas 2009 and Carnival 2010.
- The Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Act, 2009.
- The Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment) Act, 2007.
- The Evidence (Amendment) Act, 2009.
- The Prorogation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the 9<sup>th</sup> Parliament.
- The Commencement of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Session of the 9<sup>th</sup> Parliament.
- Certain Sections of the Tobacco Control Act, 2009.
- The Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago Act, 2009.
- Dissolution of the 9<sup>th</sup> Parliament (April 8, 2010).
- The Commencement of Electoral Registration (April 12, 2010).

- The Termination of Electoral Registration (June 18, 2010).
- The Commencement of the 1<sup>st</sup> Session of the 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament (June 18, 2010).
- The Commencement of Electoral Registration (Local Government Elections) (June 18, 2010).
- The Termination of Electoral Registration (Local Government Elections) (August 13, 2010).
- Notification in respect of the festivals of Divali (October 18, 2009) and Eid-ul-Fitr (September 10, 2010).
- Consents of the President:
  - For the lease of land in the City of Port of Spain.
  - For the Minister of Finance, as corporation sole, to acquire, hold and enjoy the trademark rights in the logo of the CHOGM 2009.
- Documents signed by the Secretary to Cabinet included:
  - Notices for publication in the Gazette with respect to the extension of the time for the report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Construction Sector.
  - Notices/Orders in respect of the compulsory acquisition of lands for public purposes.

- Orders in respect of Special Events in Trinidad and Tobago under the Liquor Licences Act, Chap. 84:10 regarding, inter alia, Carnival, Borough Day Celebrations, Indian Arrival Day, Labour Day, Tobago Heritage Festival, Emancipation Day, Great Race Weekend, Independence Day and Republic Day.
  - Notification of Pensionable Offices.
  - Orders in respect of the Variation of Duty on certain Goods.
  - Other Miscellaneous Orders/Regulations.
- The Implementation Section also pursued with the Government Printer the publication of all legal documents which were required to be gazetted.
  - The Records Section:
    - Digitized all Cabinet Notes received and Minutes generated, and maintained same in electronic storage for reference/retrieval.
    - Processed 221 requests from Ministries/Departments for copies of Cabinet Minutes from previous years (processed within 24 hours of receipt of request).
    - Bound 410 Volumes of Cabinet Notes.

Section 81 of the Constitution provides as follows:

**“The Prime Minister shall keep the President fully informed concerning the general conduct of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and shall furnish the President with such information as he may request with respect to any particular matter relating to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago”.**

During 2009/2010, the Secretary to Cabinet furnished the President on a weekly basis with copies of the Notes considered by the Cabinet at its Meetings and copies of the relevant confirmed Cabinet Minutes.





# *Corporate Services Division*

## **CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION**

The Corporate Services Division is responsible for providing human capacity as well as institutional and administrative support services to the Office of the Prime Minister. The Division treats with accommodation, procurement, record management, inventory management, internal security and access to information under the Freedom of Information Act. The Division also has supervisory oversight for the Human Resource Unit, the Information Technology Unit, and the Executive Security Service.

In order to undertake these responsibilities, the Corporate Services Division was responsible for, inter alia:

- General Administration
- Human Resources

A new structure for the OPM was approved by Cabinet in January 2010. This new structure provided a mix of public service and contract positions with a view to strengthening the human capacity within most Units.

Subsequently, because of the realignment of Ministries and Departments in June 2010 the Division's structure was again expanded to include 84 public service positions and 50 contract positions from the former Ministry of Information. As a consequence most Units were able to realize a full complement of staff with the exception of Information Technology and Security.

Despite some challenges, the Division was able to deliver on its mandate of providing support services to the OPM, the Permanent Secretary and to respond to its external clients.

## **GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

The General Administration Unit is responsible for:

- Providing administrative support in the preparation of:
  - Cabinet Notes.
  - Notes for the Prime Minister.
  - Responses to questions posed in the House of Representatives and the Senate.
  - Responses to requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act.
  
- Providing secretariat support to:
  - The Ministerial Tenders Committee.
  - The Sport and Culture Board of Management.
  
- Taking follow-up action and responding to concerns and enquiries from citizens.

## **HUMAN RESOURCE**

The core function of the Human Resource Unit is to adopt, implement and maintain strategic human resource management principles and practices in the Office of the Prime Minister.

The Unit has the responsibility of not only continuously improving and developing the capacity and capabilities of the human resources in the Office of the Prime Minister but also for implementing human resource management policies and the performance management system in the Office of the Prime Minister.

In January 2010, Cabinet agreed to a revision of the organizational structure of the Office of the Prime Minister by the authority of Minute No. 65 of January 14, 2010. This therefore gave rise to the following additional offices in the Human Resource Unit:

- One (1) Senior Human Resource Officer
- Two (2) Human Resource Officers II
- Two (2) Human Resource Officers I
- Two (2) Human Resource Assistants {on contract }
- One (1) Business Office Assistant

By the authority of Gazette No. 74A dated June 16, 2010, the Honourable Prime Minister assumed responsibility for the Information Division. Cabinet by Minute No. 433 (2<sup>nd</sup> Session) of August 5, 2010 agreed to the transfer of established and contract positions to the Office of the Prime Minister from June 16, 2010. The Human Resource Unit inherited the following positions:

- One (1) Clerk II
- One (1) Human Resource Officer II
- One (1) Management Specialist (on contract)

The Unit was also responsible for the transfer of twenty one (21) contract positions from the former Ministry of Information to the Office of the Prime Minister.

During the period under review the Human Resource Unit recruited the following:

- Six (6) On-the-Job Trainees
- Twenty (20) Short Term employees
- Forty-six (46) contract employees

The selection and recruitment of persons under Short Term and contract employment, involved the preparation of Cabinet Notes, advertisements, development of job descriptions, interviews, determination/negotiation of terms and conditions of employment with the Chief Personnel Officer.

The Human Resource Unit continues to arrange and source training programmes and workshops for selected members of staff in the following areas:

- Advanced training in Development Evaluation.
- Managing HIV in the Workplace.
- Developing Job Descriptions.
- National Workshop on Implementation of the Inter-American Convention against corruption in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Human Resource Leaders Network – Staff from the Human Resource Unit.
- IHRIS – Modules in Workplace Administration and Absent Management.
- Three day Research Training Workshop.
- Training – Public Sector Investment Programme.
- Orientation training (Training for Trainers Programme).
- Training – Public Sector Investment Programme PSIP Implementation.
- Financial Management Non-Accounting Officers.
- Workshop on Designing and Implementing an Effective Employee Recognition Programme.
- Training course: Project Management.
- Proposal Writing Training Programme.
- Advance training in Development Evaluation.
- Record Management.
- Protocol for Public Officers.
- Cabinet Note Writing.
- Preparing the Training Plan.
- Induction to the Public Service.

- Fundamentals of Public Procurement.
- Policy Development.
- Ethics, Accountability and Good Governance.
- Preparation of Terms and References and Request for Proposal.
- Business Process Re-engineering for Competitive Advantage.
- Programme Management.
- Project Evaluation.
- Project Management.
- Project Monitoring and Project Formulation, Analysis and planning using Software Tools.
- Microsoft Office Levels 1 & 2.

During 2009/2010, the Pension and Leave Unit continued the process of research, preparation and processing of Pension and Leave records prior to the finalization by Treasury, of officers who were due to retire. Nonetheless, priority had to be given to:

- The mandate of Cabinet Minute No. 390 dated February 25, 2010 which required the preparation of Pension and Leave records for thirty-eight (38) officers of the Office of the Prime Minister who were due to retire between 2010 to 2015.
- The Ministry of Finance Circular dated March 23, 2010 whereby Pension and Leave records were requested for fourteen (14) officers employed at the Customs Division and the Inland Revenue Department who were formerly employed at the Office of the Prime Minister.
- Preparation for the payment of gratuities to persons whose term of engagement ended, including forty-four (44) persons from the Security Unit Executive Security Service (ESS) and eight (8) from the National Strategic Management Group (NSMG).



*Management Information Systems*  
*Unit*

## **MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS UNIT**

The Management Information Systems (MIS) Unit continues to maintain and support the network and information resources of the OPM. The head office continued to be connected to GovNett (backbone) which provides e-mail and internet connectivity. The staff complement initially remained at the same level which included 1 MIS Manager, 2 Network Technicians and 3 OJT's. In mid 2010, 1 Network technician resigned and 2 OJT's left the program.

With the change in government administration in 2010, the Ministry of Information (MOI) ceased to exist as a Ministry and some of its functions and assets were transferred to OPM. The MIS department then assumed responsibility for IT resources and functions now located in Levels 5, 6 and 7 in Nicholas Towers and GISD/GISL at Park Plaza. The department did not inherit any of MOI's IT contract staff; however, 2 OJT's were transferred to OPM. They continue to provide IT support at that location.

The major project for 2009/2010 was the upgrade of the data centre. Most servers were past warranty and needed to be changed. Items were purchased in the third quarter of the financial year.

In 2010 there was a flooding of the Communications room in the basement and subsequently, malfunctioning of the equipment prompted a decision to relocate the Communications room to the ground floor and use the opportunity to change the existing telephone system at OPM head office to a VoIP system. The MIS department was given the responsibility to recommend a system and manage the project to its implementation. A Cisco VoIP solution from TSTT was recommended and procurement took place at the end of the 2010 financial year.



Preparation work included, documenting of all the telephone lines (direct and indirect), extensions numbers, feature requirement and projecting growth of OPM. This was a lengthy and time consuming process and continued into the next financial year along with the implementation.

Another activity for the MIS Unit was to provide IT and telecommunication support to the Double Secretariat which included the procurement and installation of equipment. Technical support was provided up to the hosting CHOGM in November 2009. In 2010 the Secretariat was dissolved and MIS department helped in the inventorying of and distribution of IT assets.

General IT support was also provided to Projects under the OPM. These included the National Aids Co-ordinating Committee (NACC) and the Divine Echoes.

The process of extending access of Cabinet Information via the Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) application OnBase to external Ministries continues to be an ongoing process.



# *Information Division*

## **INFORMATION DIVISION**

As a result of the policy decision by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to replace the Information Division (formerly the Government Information Service Division) with the Government Information Services Limited (GISL), the responsibilities of the Information Division, Technical Units have been downgraded over the past three years.

The staff of the Technical Units comprising Radio, Television, Photographic and Print and Publications, continued to support government's goals and objectives and provide technical support to the GISL and other agencies upon request.

### **Radio Unit**

A number of programmes were produced and broadcasted using studio facilities at GISD located at Park Plaza, Port of Spain. These programmes focused on government's activities, arts and culture, health and wellness programmes and special assignments.

Some of the special assignments included:

- Production of audio books for visually impaired clients of the Ministry of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development.
- Series on Junior Panorama, Champs and Trinidad and Tobago's representatives to the Junior International Youth Festival, Mexico - St Margaret's Boys Steel Orchestra.
- Programmes relating to international and regional commemorative occasions such as World Aids Day, International Day against Violence against Women and religious festivals of Trinidad and Tobago.

- Calypso History Month – a comprehensive series with TUCO executive outlining plans for the growth and development of the art form and the organization.
- Legal advice especially for senior citizens and tips for accessing state services and benefits.

### **Radio Coverage**

During the period 2009-2010, the Radio Unit covered two hundred and fifteen (215) assignments relating to government's activities and programmes including assignments directly associated with the Honourable Prime Minister. The Unit also covered requests from public and private organizations.

### **Post-Cabinet technical support**

Additionally, Radio Unit personnel provided weekly post-cabinet technical support services at the Diplomatic Centre and at press conferences at the Office of the Prime Minister at 13-15 St. Clair Avenue.

### **Other**

As part of its mandate, the Radio Unit fulfilled approximately three hundred (350) requests for copies of the national anthem and school songs from the public namely schools and Trinidad and Tobago's overseas missions.

### **Television Unit**

The Television Unit's mandate has been progressively taken over by the GISL, but during the period October 2009- September 2010, the unit continued to provide weekly support to the GISL through delivery of programmes to be aired on all

television stations.

The Unit also provided the following services:

- External public requests for video dubs and transfer of video material.
- Digitization of archival video library footage to DVD.
- Support to the Tobago Information Division in the scheduling and delivery of the following programmes to television stations:
  - Let's Talk Tobago.
  - Tobago House of Assembly (THA) Media Briefings.
  - THA Plenary Sittings.
- Caribbean Broadcast Media Partnership on HIV/AIDS.
  - Live Up Series
- Tape Maintenance System:
  - 204 tapes cleaned.
  - 1,760 tapes transferred from umatic to minidv.

### **Photographic Unit**

The unit provided photographic services to traditional external clients. These included schools, ministries, NGOs, consulates and state enterprises. During the reporting period, the Unit covered over two hundred (200) photographic assignments and granted numerous photo requests in CD, DVD and hard copy formats.

### **Print and Publications**

The main work output focused solely on Media releases on behalf of the President and the Prime Minister.

### **Board of Film Censors**

Administrative functions for the Board of Film Censors fall under the purview of the Information Division. The administrative secretary is responsible for scheduling films to be censored, attending board meetings and preparing the monthly pay sheet for the Board.

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*Communications and Media Relations*  
*Unit*

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA RELATIONS UNIT**

The year 2009-2010 saw the full utilization of the Media Briefing Rooms at both the Office of the Prime Minister and the Diplomatic Centre.

The Media Briefing Room at the Diplomatic Centre continues to be serviced by a fibre optic connection to the Caribbean New Media Group (CNMG) while the Briefing Room in the Office of the Prime Minister is serviced by micro-wave links from any television station. From its inception both media facilities have had a 100% successful operation.

Other activities carried out during the period 2009-2010 included:

- Management of the weekly Post Cabinet News Conference.
- Management of all other media conferences in both the Diplomatic Centre and the Office of the Prime Minister.
- Introduction of a fibre optic connectivity between the Diplomatic Centre and CNMG to facilitate “live” broadcasts.
- Provision of media releases to both the Print and Electronic Media Communications Unit enhanced by addition of two (2) new members of staff, one (1) Communications Specialist and one (1) Communications Assistant.
- Production of speeches for the Honourable Prime Minister’s delivery. Supply of the Prime Minister’s speeches to the Print and Electronic Media.
- Maintenance and servicing of the website of the Office of the Prime Minister.
- Management of all photo opportunities by the Print and Electronic Media.



- Management of Recording and Distribution of the Prime Minister's Addresses to the Nation to the Print and Electronic Media.
- Management of all Internal photo opportunities and distribution to the Print Media.
- Attendance at all speaking engagements of the Prime Minister to facilitate adequate media coverage.
- Assistance in all official engagements at the Diplomatic Center.
- Provision of support services in respect of speech preparation for the Honourable Prime Minister.
- Coverage of the Prime Minister's overseas assignments, as necessary.
- Monitoring of Television, Radio and Print with specific reference to the official activities of the Honourable Prime Minister.



*International Relations and  
Protocol Unit*

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PROTOCOL UNIT**

The International Relations and Protocol Unit (IRU) in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) monitors relations with States and with international, hemispheric, regional and sub-regional organizations in close collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trinidad and Tobago's Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates. The Unit also provides guidance and support for the Office of the Prime Minister in matters relating to protocol. There are also synergies between the Unit and a number of Ministries and their departments.

The achievements of the IRU for the period October 2009 to September 2010 were collated based on the activity/work of the Unit in the following areas:

- Drafting of Cabinet Notes.
- Preparation of Letters to Heads of State/Government, Heads of International Organizations, private and public sector entities and Diplomatic representatives for signature in response to correspondence received.
- Preparations for Official and State Visits to Trinidad and Tobago.
- Facilitating the official overseas travel of the Prime Minister.
- Provision of Protocol Support required by the Prime Minister and the OPM.
- Preparation of memoranda for dispatch.

## **PREPARATION OF CABINET NOTES**

In the period under review, the IRU prepared approximately twelve (12) Cabinet Notes largely involving the travel of the Honourable Prime Minister to participate in international meetings; reports on these meetings; and other official visits overseas. These were as follows:

- Trinidad and Tobago's Participation in the Convocation on the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) Barbados - October 09 - 10, 2009.
- Visit of the Prime Minister to London, United Kingdom to meet with the Secretary General of the Commonwealth and Officials of the Commonwealth Secretariat to discuss matters related to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2009 - November 04-08, 2009.
- Travel of the Honourable Prime Minister to Havana, Cuba for medical attention - December 06 - 08, 2009.
- Participation by Trinidad and Tobago at the CARICOM Summit on Youth and Development and other activities and meetings held in Paramaribo, Suriname - January 26-30, 2010.
- Participation by Trinidad and Tobago in the First CARICOM - Mexico Summit, Twenty-First Summit of the Rio Group, Second Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean on Integration and Development (CALC) and Meetings held in Cancun, Mexico - February 17-23, 2010.
- Donation by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago of Two (2) Vehicles to the Government of Grenada - March 24, 2010.

- Participation by Trinidad and Tobago in the Twenty-First Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Roseau, Dominica - March 11- 13, 2010.
- Special Meeting of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on Crime and Security - Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago - April 13, 2010.
- Policy on Privileges and Facilities to be extended to Former Heads of States and Heads of Government - June 22, 2010.
- Participation of Trinidad and Tobago in the Twenty-First Meeting of the Prime-Ministerial Sub-Committee on External Trade Negotiations; Sixth Meeting of the Prime-Ministerial Sub-Committee on the CARICOM Single Market and Economy; and the Thirty-First Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community July 4 - 7, 2010 - Montego Bay, Jamaica; and Official visit by the Honourable Prime Minister, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to Jamaica - July 08, 2010.
- Visit of the Prime Minister to New York, United States of America, to attend the 30<sup>TH</sup> India Day Parade and other Events - August 13-22, 2010.
- Trinidad and Tobago's Participation in the United Nations Summit on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the 65<sup>TH</sup> Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly, and other Meetings held in New York, United States of America - September 20 - 28, 2010.

**PREPARATION OF LETTERS TO HEADS OF STATE/GOVERNMENT, HEADS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS, PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR ENTITIES AND DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES FOR SIGNATURE IN RESPONSE TO CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED.**

The Unit prepared approximately one hundred and fifty-five (155) letters for the signature of the Honourable Prime Minister and the Permanent Secretary largely for dispatch to Heads of State/Government, Heads of International Organizations, private and public sector entities and Diplomatic representatives resident in Port of Spain and overseas.

**FACILITATING THE OFFICIAL OVERSEAS TRAVEL OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

The Unit facilitated the official overseas travel of the Prime Minister for his/her participation in international meetings and conferences and official overseas visits by making flight and hotel arrangements, completion of requisite forms for participation at Conferences, liaising with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trinidad and Tobago's overseas Missions as required regarding requests for airport courtesies, visas, etc.

**PROVISION OF PROTOCOL REQUIRED BY THE PRIME MINISTER**

The IRU provided the protocol support at the Office of the Prime Minister and at the Diplomatic Centre with respect to meetings and courtesy calls on the Prime Minister from diplomats, other dignitaries, and international and local entities. Protocol was also provided to the Prime Minister during overseas travel, at official receptions and functions as well as at meetings and events associated with Official and State visits to Trinidad and Tobago.

## **PREPARATION OF MEMORANDA FOR DISPATCH**

The IRU dispatched approximately one hundred and forty (140) memoranda to various Ministries and Trinidad and Tobago's Overseas Missions on matters relating to facilitating the travel of the Honourable Prime Minister, bilateral and multilateral issues on the international agenda and Trinidad and Tobago's participation at International Conferences.



*Central Administrative Services,  
Tobago (CAST)*



## **CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES, TOBAGO (CAST)**

Central Administrative Services, Tobago (CAST) was created by virtue of the Tobago House of Assembly **Act No. 37 of 1980**, to carry out functions in Tobago, which did not fall within the purview of the Tobago House of Assembly.

The **Act (No. 37 of 1980)**, in dealing “with the creation of an entity to carry out the functions which *fell* outside the purview of the Tobago House of Assembly stated at Section **59** thereof:-

"functions relating to the public administration of Tobago and not by this Act made the responsibility of the Assembly remain to be exercised by the Government and shall be so exercised through a department the most senior post in which shall be in rank and status not less than that of Permanent Secretary and the holder of that post shall be responsible to a member of the Cabinet."

The Department referred to above was later named Central Administrative Services, Tobago as authorized by Cabinet Minute **No. 5158** dated **31<sup>st</sup> December, 1980**.

Following the **1995** General Elections in Trinidad and Tobago, CAST became the Responsibility of the Office of the Prime Minister and the functions of Accounting Officer were shared with the Permanent Secretary to the Prime Minister.

As a result of the assignment of Ministerial portfolios as published in the Trinidad and Tobago Gazette **No. 74A** dated **Wednesday June 16, 2010** following the **2010** General Elections, the Minister of Tobago Development was assigned the responsibility for CAST and the Permanent Secretary in this Ministry has assumed the functions of Accounting Officer.

The Tobago House of Assembly **Act No. 40 of 1996** repealed and replaced the former Act (**No. 37 of 1980**), and **Act No. 40 of 1996**, in addition to setting out at the Fifth Schedule thereof, the functions and responsibilities of the Tobago House of Assembly, it also clarified the other areas in which services were to be delivered in Tobago and which did not *fall* within the purview of the Tobago House of Assembly. CAST has continued to administer those services as detailed in the Sixth Schedule to **Act No. 37 of 1980**.

The Department has articulated its mandate in the following terms:

### **Mission**

Central Administrative Services, Tobago shall have jurisdiction for the effective and efficient discharge of its responsibilities under the Sixth Schedule of the Tobago House of Assembly **Act No.40 of 1996**.

### **Vision**

The institution responsible for the functions of Central Government in Tobago by facilitating collaboration and co-ordination of the various agencies in order to provide effective delivery of services to the people of Tobago.

In keeping with Item II of the Sixth Schedule of the **Act (No. 40 of 1996)**, certain functions of the Public Service Commissions are performed in Tobago. These functions, which include the power to recruit persons from outside the Civil Service in a temporary capacity to an office in a Ministry/Department located in Tobago, were delegated under **Section 127** of the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, **Chapter 1:01**. The services associated with these delegated powers were provided to the following Agencies:-

- Office of the Ombudsman
- Magistracy I
- Elections and Boundaries Commission
- Fire Services Department-
- Tobago House of Assembly

CAST comprises the following Divisions/Units:-

- General Administration
- Finance (Audit)
- Treasury
- Trade and Industry (Prides, Weights & Measures Inspectorate)
- Meteorological Services
- Registrar General

## **GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **Personnel**

This Section is responsible for, inter alia:-

- The provision of application forms for employment in the Public Service;
- Administering the delegated functions of the Public Service Commission to which reference was made earlier;
- Identifying and arranging for staff of the various Divisions/Sections of CAST to attend both in-house and external training courses; and
- Ensuring that Officers were awarded all outstanding increments.

The Personnel Section is also responsible for the implementation and continued overseeing of the Integrated Human Resource System Project (Project IHRIS). A considerable amount of relevant data has been captured but a significant amount of information still remains to be entered. It has been recognized that the maintenance of Project IHRIS is of an ongoing nature and efforts are to be made to have the post of IHRIS Data Transaction Clerk made a permanent position on the establishment of CAST.

Personnel Section was largely able to fulfill its mandate especially in the provision of staff to Departments/Ministries in Tobago in a timely manner on request.

### **Services**

The Section is responsible for the following:

- Maintenance of Office Buildings, Equipment and Furniture.
- Security of Property.
- Procurement of stationery, materials and supplies.
- Registry Services.
- Processing of applications for official visits to Trinidad.
- Control and maintenance of official vehicles.
- Processing applications for refund of airfare for visits to Trinidad for medical services not available in Tobago.
- Supervision of manipulative staff.
- Provision of uniforms for eligible officers.

During the period under review the Section ensured that the physical and material requirements of the Department were met.

## **FINANCE (AUDIT)**

This Section is charged with the internal auditing functions of the Department. In addition to the examination of Pension and Leave Records, the Auditor and Stock Verifier ensured that the Department complied with policies, procedures and practices stipulated by either management or statute.

## **TREASURY**

The Treasury Division is the Accounting Unit for the Department and it carries out Sub-Accounting functions for General Administration and the Weights & Measures Inspectorate. The Division is also responsible for, inter alia:

- The Collection of Revenue on behalf of other Ministries/Agencies.
- The encashment of Old Age Pensions and other cheques drawn on the Central Bank.
- Issuing cheques to the Tobago House of Assembly in respect of funds disbursed by the Ministry of Finance for Release of Funds in accordance with The Tobago House of Assembly **Act No. 40 of 1996**.

Computerization of the Unit is yet to be implemented.

## **TRADE AND INDUSTRY**

### **Prices, Weights and Measures Inspectorate**

This Unit was established for the following purposes:

- To ensure that all businesses or vendors where goods are displayed for sale have just weighing and /or measuring instruments.

- To verify that all instruments are checked and stamped.
- To ensure that all instruments are accurate and in good working condition.

Inspectors paid field visits throughout the country to ensure that the above were adhered to, and, at the same time, to increase the awareness of business proprietors, as well as the general public, of the need to maintain just, accurate and stamped instruments.

Over four hundred and fifty (450) instruments were checked throughout the country with approximately two hundred (200) of these being stamped.

Constraints were faced through the fact that about one hundred and twenty (120) scales, namely Electronic Scales, Platform Scales and Counter Dial Scales with pan attached, could not be stamped because stamping involved removal of the pan in order for indentation to be made of date and number for identification.

### **METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES**

The Division is responsible for providing the following information with respect to weather forecasting in Trinidad and Tobago and the wider Caribbean:

- Hourly synoptic reports.
- Special improvement and deterioration weather reports.
- Climatological reports based on satellite imaging for oceanography and hydrology.

The Division is also involved in the presentation of scientific data to the wider community, including schools, by way of outreach lectures, open house sessions and workshops. In some instances, the information so provided has influenced decision making at certain levels, particularly in the case of environmental and regulating agencies.

## **REGISTRAR GENERAL**

The Registrar General's Department in Tobago is a sub-office of the Registrar General's Department in Trinidad and it falls under CAST for administrative purposes.

The Department continued to fulfill its responsibility to process and issue computer generated birth certificates, as well as marriage and death certificates. The Department also carried out functions that are normally undertaken by the Companies and Land Registries in the Registrar General's Department in Trinidad. These functions include the registration of companies and businesses as well as the registration of deeds, bills of sale, and estates.



*National AIDS Co-ordinating  
Committee (NACC) Secretariat*



## **NATIONAL AIDS CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE (NACC) SECRETARIAT**

In 2003, the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago embarked on the development of a strategic framework for effective coordination of activities directed towards the reduction in the incidence of HIV. The negative effects of the epidemic were to be mitigated through the establishment of the National AIDS Coordinating Committee (NACC) under the aegis of the Office of the Prime Minister.

The NACC is a policy-advising body with representation from public and private sectors, civil society organizations, faith based organizations, and persons living with HIV (PLHIV). Sub-committees of the NACC were established to support activities directed at ensuring that each of the five (5) priority areas were addressed utilizing a comprehensive range of strategies articulated under the National Strategic Plan (NSP) to reverse the trend of the epidemic. In Tobago, the organizational structure for the expanded response includes coordination with the Tobago House of Assembly (THA), which works through the Tobago HIV and AIDS Coordinating Committee (THACC) in responding to the needs in the island.

This report focuses on activities that have been undertaken in the five (5) priority areas in accordance with the current National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan (NSP): Prevention; Treatment, Care and Support; Advocacy and Human Rights; Surveillance and Research; Programme Management Coordination and Evaluation. All sectors and stakeholders who have participated and reported on activities/programmes undertaken during the period of review are included in this report.

Overall, the national response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic realized a significant number of tangential benefits to the overall national healthcare system.

The combination of World Bank and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) funds sponsored projects in National Blood Safety- Communicable Disease diagnosis (Multiple testing labs across Trinidad and Tobago) and numerous other clinical and social projects. The CELLMA infectious disease pilot, partially funded through the NACC provides data collection and analysis for all infectious diseases.

- While tremendous progress has been made in developing a system-wide coordinated response to HIV and AIDS, it is critical that the prevention component be strengthened to meet the challenge of an ever evolving virus. It is imperative to provide both coordinating as well as, sustainability mechanisms to slow the spread of the virus. An increased focus on measurement; data gathering and reporting is necessary to more precisely ascertain the prevalence rate of HIV and AIDS in the populations of Trinidad and Tobago. These interventions are crucial inputs to National Healthcare planning and budgeting initiatives needed to manage future cost of care and to better understand the dynamics of the spread of HIV and AIDS.

### **Prevention of HIV**

It has been a difficult period with respect to funding for Priority 1, of the NSP under the objective of Prevention. Total expenditure by government on prevention fell to TT\$25m from a high of TT\$40m in 2008. This has negatively impacted communications campaigns aimed at increasing knowledge of the benefits of HIV testing and collateral material offered to stakeholders and civil society organizations including information, educational and communication materials. With the exception of World AIDS Day in December 2010 which saw the development of a Knowledge Fair covering the whole of the Brian Lara Promenade there has been little sustained interventions by Ministries and Civil Society for the year.

Nevertheless, the civil society sector continued working, albeit at a lower level than in previous years in ensuring the availability of prevention activities using a community based approach. With the reduced availability of funding, civil society proposals changed focus to short term activities centered on the observance of internationally recognized days which acknowledge the issue of HIV and AIDS and which include World AIDS Day and the Candlelight Memorial.

### **Treatment, Care and Support**

With a combination of reduced expenditure on prevention and an increased awareness that the newly diagnosed infection rate of 1,400 per year has remained steady since 2003 attention became more focused on Treatment, Care and Support. Overall, total expenditure on treatment increased rapidly in 2010 to over TT\$50m and following the success of the anti-Retroviral programme is predicted to increase significantly in future years. In addition, HIV prevalence is estimated to increase to 2.5% of the population by 2015.

The key achievement under the treatment programme is that approximately six thousand six hundred and forty six **(6,646)** persons are now accessing treatment and treatment sites have now totaled seven **(7)** with an increased core of health personnel trained in the care of PLHIV. Challenges remain however, in that there is an increasing cohort of PLHIV who are not adhering to all aspects of the treatment regime. Solutions to this problem have resulted in the NACC working with the Ministry of Health in the development of policies looking at the integration and decentralization of HIV services from vertical provision to hospital and community based services.

### **Advocacy & Human Rights**

Under this priority area, a draft legislative framework was developed based on the legislative assessment of the law affecting people living with HIV and AIDS. Whilst this was submitted to Cabinet it was requested that a National HIV policy be prepared prior to the introduction of draft legislation to Parliament. As such, the Advocacy & Human Rights Sub-Committee convened a series of meetings which resulted in the development of the National HIV Policy. This document was ready for submission by October 2010.

The NACC collaborated with Ministry of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development in the development of the HIV& AIDS Sustainability Centre which has been set up to facilitate the implementation of the National Workplace Policy on HIV and AIDS into workplaces.

### **Surveillance & Research**

The NACC, in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, met the country's HIV reporting requirements to the United Nations in respect to the UNGASS (United Nations Special Session on HIV & AIDS) and Universal Access reports. With funding support from both UNAIDS and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), consultants were contracted to collate data and prepare the report in order that the reporting obligations of end March 2010 could be met.

Routine data collection within the public healthcare system remains a challenge and there are a number of critical gaps in data especially in terms of key populations at risk of contracting HIV and access to care from within the private sector.

## **Programme Management Coordination and Management**

The NACC was extended beyond September 2010 by a further six (6) months to the end of March 2011. In the process of the extension several vacant positions were lost – which included the key positions associated with Strategic Planning and Monitoring & Evaluation. The capacity of the Secretariat was further constrained following the resignation of the Technical Director in October 2010 and the early termination of the contract for the Procurement Specialist in November 2010.

A significant achievement under this priority area was the successful completion of the Draft National HIV Strategic Plan 2011- 2016 (NSP). Following a series of setbacks, work finally got under way in the development of the NSP in March 2010 when three (3) consultants were contracted with donor funding from the World Bank. Following a consultative process with key stakeholders during the year a draft NSP was completed in October 2010. This document was further revised with key input from the Caribbean Health Research Council in terms of the M&E indicators together with the costing of the plan provided by the ABT Associates. In all, a total of four (4) development agencies provided donor support on the project which included the World Bank, AIDS Strategic Planning Team; UNAIDS; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and USAID.

The NACC also collaborated with HIV coordinators in line ministries in the development of work plans and sector based policies and strategies. These ministries included: The Ministry of Education, The Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, The Ministry of National Security, The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, The Ministry of The People and Social Development and the Ministry of Local Government.



# *Divine Echoes*

## **DIVINE ECHOES**

The Divine Echoes Band is an initiative of the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. It was launched on October 13<sup>th</sup> 2007 after having been formed on August of the same year, with the intent of rekindling the spirit of the dance and “Big Band Music” in the hearts and minds of the population. The concept is to use music and dance as a means of conveying virtues of nationalism and patriotism while encouraging young men and women to foster a culture of performance and excellence.

All hands on activities are tailored to educate, rejuvenate and re-introduce music and dance as a positive alternative to the growing trends that continue to dismantle cultural and social values of our nation. It was expected that through the Band’s programmes and performances, young audiences would develop a higher standard for music appreciation that would create positive impressions and attitudes of a superior cultural aesthetic, unique to Trinidad and Tobago’s multicultural society.

### **Mission Statement:**

***To assist in the creation and nurturing of an ensemble which delivers world-class musical products and services which inspire emotions, create positive impressions, attitudes and cultural aesthetics that are unique to our environment.***

### **Objectives:**

- To increase the number of persons involved in creative industries.
- To gain regional and international exposure for the Band.
- To establish Community Outreach Programmes for the youth of Trinidad and Tobago.
- To create a unique identity synonymous with a high standard that bridges cultural and religious boundaries.

- To present a musical genre that is unique to our Caribbean culture
- To serve as a friendly flagship of communication between the Office of the Prime Minister and the Population

Interviews for the Filling of Vacant Positions :

The month of October 2009 commenced with interviews for the filling of vacant positions in the band. Experienced professionals in specific disciplines of the music industry were invited to assist in this process.

The average yearly agenda of the band consists of the following :

- Government and Private Company Performances
- In-House School Concert/Clinic Performances
- Educational Programmes and Exchanges
- On-Going Research, Practice, Study and Documentation of Various Genres of Music.



*National Security Council Secretariat*  
*(NSC)*



## **NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL (NSC) SECRETARIAT**

The National Security Council is responsible for co-ordinating policy on national issues and advising on matters relating to national security. The Council is chaired by the Prime Minister and the NSC Secretariat provides the necessary administrative support.

For this reporting period, the administrative support to the NSC comprised, inter alia, the following:

- Preparing the agenda and documentation for meetings of the Joint Intelligence Group (JIG).
- Disseminating Minutes of all meetings for information and appropriate action.
- Entering data into analytical databases for record keeping, analysis, and presentation.

One key set of activities of the Secretariat during this period pertained to the security arrangements for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in November 2009. In respect of this, the Secretariat was engaged in the following:

- Hosting meetings on security operations planning.
- Researching best practices in operations planning.
- Preparing an Operations Manual.
- Making presentations on security and operations planning.
- Conducting administrative functions for the JIG.

## **Projects**

Some major IT projects conducted during this period were as follows:

- Upgrade of Internet Connection bandwidth.
  - connectivity with the second site office and the seamless document access via VPN, a greater bandwidth was required.
- Implementation of Office Remote Connectivity.
  - The ability to access documents from remote locations at home and abroad is provided for members of senior staff.
- Development of a Software Application (In-House)
  - To optimize some of the paper based functions of the NSCS, an application was developed to electronically capture information related to Mail Registry, Library Request, Classified Correspondence, File Movement, etc.
- Upgrade of Internal security Video System and Access Control.
  - Modification of the NSCS Office Space required the relocation and installation of security devices.
- The Acquisition of Subscriptions to Online Magazines & Journals with Full Text Print.
  - This feature facilitates the ability to print partial or entire articles from online magazines and journals.

- The Upgrade of the Cable Television System from Analogue to Digital.
  - To enable the recording of electronic news programs and bulletins the conversion was required.
- The Creation of an Electronic News Media Library.
  - The recording of electronic news programs for situation reports reference.
- Delivered Training to New Staff Members.
  - Training in the use and operations of office equipment, application software manipulation was conducted. Instruction on office procedure, security and policies were also delivered.



*National Strategic Management  
Group (NSMG)*

## **NATIONAL STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GROUP**

The National Strategic Management Group (NSMG) was established by Cabinet Minute No. 2066 dated July 24, 2008. The NSMG replaced the Divestment Secretariat in the Investments Division, Ministry of Finance, and fell under the remit of the Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, working with a small cadre of professional and technical staff.

The NSMG was structured and staffed in a manner aimed at developing and designing policy and effecting implementation relating to the major projects under the remit of the Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister as well as any other project assigned to the Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister.

Ministerial Committees were established which required strategic management oversight at the policy and implementation levels if they were to function optimally. Many of these Committees fell under the responsibility of the Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister and for which technical and policy support was required.

Some of these Committees included, inter alia:

- Procurement of Military Assets
- Restructuring of Caroni (1975) Limited
- Trinidad and Tobago Health Sciences Initiative
- Infrastructural Works including Trinidad Rapid Rail Transit System
- Food Prices and Inflation
- Construction Oversight

- BWIA/Caribbean Airlines Limited: Provision of Oversight and Guidance
- GORTT/Cable & Wireless Relationship with TSTT

Following the General Elections of May 24, 2010, the operations of the NSMG were wound up by the new incoming administration.

## CONCLUSION

In the period covered by this Report, the Office of the Prime Minister continued to provide the best administrative and professional support to the Prime Minister. It is to be noted that this support resulted in the successful planning and hosting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in November, 2009.

In the process of fulfilling its Vision and Mission, and even with the change in administration following the General Elections of May, 2010, the staff of Office of the Prime Minister, maintained its professionalism, support and dedication and continues to work assiduously – in keeping with international best practices – in fulfilling its mandate and providing the best possible support to the Prime Minister as Head of Government.