



**REPORT  
OF  
THE STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**on the Consideration of Proposals for the Supplementation and  
Variation of Appropriation for the fiscal year 2021**

**FIRST SESSION OF THE TWELFTH PARLIAMENT (2020/2021)**

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## Standing Finance Committee

The Standing Finance Committee was established under House of Representatives Standing Order 82(1) to consider the Estimates and the Appropriation Bill. House of Representatives Standing Order 87(1) also states that, *“The Standing Finance Committee shall consider and report on all proposals for the expenditure from public revenue or other funds which are not included in the Annual Estimates, including proposals for supplementary and unforeseen expenditure.”*

## Publication

An electronic copy of this report can be found on the Parliament website using the following link:  
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**Date Presented in the House of Representatives:** June 9, 2021

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## THE COMMITTEE

### **Mandate of the Committee**

1. The Standing Finance Committee is established by House of Representatives Standing Order 82(1) of the House of Representatives Standing Orders. It is the duty of the Committee to consider the Estimates and the Appropriation Bill. The Committee is also empowered by House of Representatives Standing Order 87(1) to consider and report on all proposals for expenditure which are not included in the Annual Estimates including proposals for supplementary and unforeseen expenditure.

### **Membership**

2. In accordance with the House of Representatives Standing Order 82(1), this Committee is a Committee of the Whole House of Representatives and is chaired by the Speaker.

### **Meeting**

3. The Committee held a public meeting virtually on Monday June 7, 2021 at 1:38 p.m. The Minutes of the Meeting and the Verbatim Notes are attached at Appendices II and III respectively.

4. The purpose of this meeting was to consider proposals for the supplementation and variation of the appropriation provided in the Appropriation (Financial Year 2021) Act, 2020 and varied by the Finance (Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation) (Financial Year 2021) Act, 2021. The Schedule relating to the Supplementation/ Variation of Estimates for fiscal 2021 is at Appendix IV.

## Supplementation

5. The Standing Finance Committee noted the supplementation to the Appropriation for fiscal year 2021 in the sum of Two Thousand, Nine Hundred and Twenty-Seven Million, Six Hundred Thousand and Two Dollars (\$2,927,600,002) required to meet:

- Personnel Expenditure - \$299,605,310
- Goods and Services - \$677,014,375
- Current Transfers and Subsidies - \$1,051,571,017
- Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies - \$730,219,000
- Development Programme - \$169,190,300

6. The Committee noted that it was necessary to have a Supplementation of Appropriation of resources to fund urgent and critical Recurrent and Capital Expenditure to September 30, 2021, in areas where insufficient or no allocation was provided. The source of these additional funds is the Consolidated Fund.

7. The Standing Finance Committee considered and approved the supplementation to the Appropriation for fiscal year 2021 in the sum Two Thousand, Nine Hundred and Twenty - Seven Million, Six Hundred Thousand and Two Dollars (\$2,927,600,002). The details of the Supplementation are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1**

### **Supplementation of Heads of Expenditure for fiscal year 2021**

<b>Head of Expenditure</b>		<b>Amount</b>
		<b>\$</b>
08	Elections and Boundaries Commission	4,196,500
13	Office of the Prime Minister	16,520,000
15	Tobago House of Assembly	80,000,000
18	Ministry of Finance	115,769,472
22	Ministry of National Security	725,608,340
23	Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs	118,961,000
28	Ministry of Health	267,113,637

<b>Head of Expenditure</b>		<b>Amount \$</b>
31	Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation	24,800,000
39	Ministry of Public Utilities	944,577,000
42	Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government	142,216,000
43	Ministry of Works and Transport	294,426,700
61	Ministry of Housing and Urban Development	90,961,000
64	Trinidad and Tobago Police Service	57,722,353
67	Ministry of Planning and Development	44,728,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,927,600,002</b>

### **Recommendation**

### **Supplementation**

8. The Committee recommends the Supplementation of Appropriation for fiscal year 2021 in the sum of Two Thousand, Nine Hundred and Twenty - Seven Million, Six Hundred Thousand and Two Dollars (\$2,927,600,002).

### **Variation**

9. The Committee noted that it was necessary to have a Variation of the Appropriation of resources for fiscal 2021 totalling One Hundred and Seven Million, Three Hundred and Ten Thousand Dollars (\$107,310,000) to fund urgent and critical expenditure associated with the provision of Covid-19 relief to September 30, 2021 for the Heads of Expenditure under Table 2.

10. The Standing Finance Committee considered and approved the variation to the Appropriation for fiscal year 2021 in the sum of One Hundred and Seven Million, Three Hundred and Ten Thousand Dollars (\$107,310,000). The details of Variation are provided in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Variation of Heads of Expenditure for fiscal year 2021**

	<b>Head of Expenditure</b>	<b>Increase \$</b>	<b>Decrease \$</b>
13	Office of the Prime Minister	10,000,000	
18	Ministry of Finance		107,310,000
77	Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries	57,310,000	
78	Ministry of Social Development and Family Services	40,000,000	
	<b>TOTAL ESTIMATES</b>	<b>107,310,000</b>	<b>107,310,000</b>

**Recommendation**

**Variation**

11. The Committee recommends the Variation of Appropriation for fiscal year 2021 in the sum of One Hundred and Seven Million, Three Hundred and Ten Thousand Dollars (\$107,310,000).

12. The Committee respectfully submits this Report for the consideration of the House of Representatives.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sgd.  
Hon. Bridgid Mary Annisette-George, MP  
Chairman

June 7, 2021

# APPENDICES



## APPENDIX I

### Requests for Additional Information from Ministries/Departments

#### Head 08 – Elections and Boundaries Commission

##### **09/005/06/A/005 – Upgrading of the Electronic Voter Registration and Election Management System - \$4,196,500**

1. When was the agreement entered into with De La Rue International Limited?
2. What was the process used to award the contract to De La Rue International Limited?
3. What is the start and end date of the contract with De La Rue International?
4. What support and services were provided to the Elections and Boundaries Commission in relation to the Voter Registration and Election Management System?
5. How much money has been spent on upgrading the Electronic Voter Registration and Election Management System to date?
6. Were there service providers prior to De La Rue International Limited?
  - a. If yes, provide the names of these service providers.
  - b. State the reasons for ending of the previous arrangements with these service providers?
  - c. How were these providers selected?
7. Is De La Rue International Limited contracted with any other Ministry in the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago?
8. How much of the \$4,196,500 will be used for the rollout of the new Identification Card System?
9. Will the upgrading of the Electronic Voter Registration and Election Management System be done in time for any upcoming Tobago House of Assembly Election?
10. Were there consultations between the EBC and any arm of the State prior to the selection of De La Rue International Limited for the upgrading of the Electronic Voter Registration and Election Management System?

#### Head 13 – Office of the Prime Minister

##### **04/007/03 – Children’s Authority - \$16,520,000**

11. For the period October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 to present, how many children required the services of the Children’s Authority?
12. What is the annual cost per child at Children’s Authority facilities across Trinidad and Tobago?
13. What is the Children’s Authority’s standard recruitment policy for staff?
14. How many vacant positions will the Children’s Authority fill using 70% of the allocation?
15. Provide a breakdown of the classification of employees to be hired.
16. What vacant positions will be filled?
17. How many independent service providers are currently engaged with the Children’s Authority?
18. What was the selection criteria for independent service providers?
19. When will the St. Madeleine facility be reopened?

20. Will this allocation be used to assist in operationalizing Children's Authority officers within the Princes Town Area for the continuance of works on weekend?

**04/005/01 - Ecclesiastical Bodies - \$10,000,000 (variation)**

21. Provide the names of the organisations in receipt of funding under this sub-item and the allocation for each.

**Head 15 - Tobago House of Assembly**

**06/001/06 - Tobago House of Assembly - \$50,000,000**

22. What is required to bring the Roxborough Hospital and the Moriah Health Centre to full operational use?
23. Provide a detailed breakdown of how the \$25,000,000 will be spent at both health facilities.
24. How much of the \$15,000,000 will be disaggregated to facilitate the payment of outstanding debts to the National Helicopter Services Limited and the settlement of gratuities and benefits to employees?
25. Who are the other suppliers and creditors that will receive payment from the \$15,000,000?
26. How many employees will receive their gratuities and benefits?
  - a. How much money will be spent on the acquisition of Personal Protective Equipment?
  - b. How much money will be spent on the cost of rental accommodation and outfitting of same to provide for quarantine services?
27. Provide the following:
  - a. The number of buildings rented;
  - b. The cost of each rental;
  - c. The persons the facilities are being rented from; and
  - d. The cost of outfitting these facilities.

**09/003/11/G/019 - Enterprise Assistance Grant Programme - \$5,000,000**

28. Has the Ministry of Finance spoken with the Tobago House of Assembly about addressing the issues flagged in the Report of the Auditor General Report for 2020 regarding the disbursement of these grants?
29. How many entrepreneurs will benefit from these loans and grants?
30. What are the different categories of entrepreneurs that will qualify for the loans and grants?
31. What is the THA's process of determining who is eligible for receipt of the loans and grants?
32. What is the THA's validation procedure for entrepreneurs seeking relief from the loans and grants?

**09/004/08/B/497 - Development of Land for Airport Relocation - \$25,000,000**

33. How many residential plots will be located at Cove and Shirvan Estates respectively?
34. What is the total cost of this project?

**Head 18- Ministry of Finance**

**04/009/11 - Infrastructure Development Fund - \$115,769,472**

35. What is the total amount owed to VAMED for works done in Trinidad and Tobago?
36. Why is the reimbursement to the IDB Wastewater Project necessary?
  - a. When did the debt occur?
  - b. What was the purpose of the debt?

**Head 22 - Ministry of National Security**

**01/001/05 - Government's Contribution to NIS - \$20,240,060**

37. How many persons were recruited by each Division of the Ministry of National Security in fiscal 2021?

**02/001/13 - Maintenance of Vehicles - \$44,772,610**

38. How many vehicles belonging to the Fire Service, Prison Service, Coast Guard and Life Guard are currently non-functioning and require maintenance?
39. Who are the service providers that provide the maintenance services for these vehicles?

**02/001/21 - Repairs and Maintenance - Buildings - \$18,162,310**

40. Provide in detail the repair works to be conducted in the Prison Service.

**02/001/36 - Extraordinary Expenditure - \$30,000,000**

41. Which unit of the Ministry of National Security will be undertaking covert operations?
42. What will this allocation be used for?

**02/001/61 - Insurance - \$11,693,780**

43. Why did the Ministry of Finance not facilitate the Ministry of National Security's request for an allocation for insurance coverage for fiscal 2021?

**04/005/02 - Vision on Mission - \$4,000,000**

44. What is the reason(s) for the additional request of \$4,000,000?

**04/007/13 - Criminal Injuries Compensation - \$1,000,000**

45. What was the period for which there was no Board in place at the Criminal Injuries Compensation?
46. What was the reason for the absence of the Board during this period?

**04/009/02 - Strategic Services Agency - \$188,500,000**

47. What operational expenses does this include over the next three months?

**Head 28 - Ministry of Health**

**02/004/39 - Drugs and Other Related Materials and Supplies - \$69,458,101**

48. What is the projected annual cost for the rollout of the National Health Card System?

**04/007/01 - Medical Treatment of Nationals in Institutions - \$6,300,000**

49. How much money was spent on renal dialysis under the Development Programme in fiscal 2021?

**04/009/01 - Regional Health Authority - \$86,529,506**

50. Is there a maximum response time clause in the GMRTT's contract?

**04/009/02 - North West Regional Health Authority - \$16,767,927**

**04/009/03 - Eastern Regional Health Authority - \$14,000,000**

**04/009/04 - North Central Regional Health Authority - \$34,602,235**

**04/009/05 - South West Regional Health Authority - \$13,129,838**

51. How many persons were assigned to the Couva Hospital?

52. Provide a breakdown of the classification of persons that were hired and the duration of their engagement with each respective Regional Health Authority.

53. Provide a breakdown of the following:

- a. The advertisements that were made by each Regional Health Authority; and
- b. The dates and places of those advertisements.

54. Provide details of the Senior Medical Officers hired across the Regional Health Authorities.

**04/011/10 - UDeCOTT - TT\$46.9Mn Port of Spain General Hospital Central Block**

**04/011/11 - UDeCOTT - US\$8.3Mn Port of Spain General Hospital Central Block**

55. What was the value of the Ministry of Health's request to the Ministry of Finance for these two-line items?

56. Can the Ministry of Finance provide the repayment schedules for these two loans?

**Head 39 - Ministry of Public Utilities - \$944,577,000**

**02/001/42 - Street Lighting - \$152,673,000**

57. Provide a breakdown of the sum of money spent on street lighting in the forty-one constituencies across Trinidad and Tobago.

**04/007/08 - Refunds to T&TEC Re: Rebate on Electricity Bills - \$72,000,000**

**04/009/18 - Principal on T&TEC \$812.6Mn. Fixed Rate Bond - \$48,085,800**

**04/009/19 - Interest on T&TEC \$812.6Mn. Fixed Rate Bond - \$12,320,700**

**04/009/20 - Principal on T&TEC \$800Mn. Fixed Rate Bond - \$22,555,100**

**04/009/21 - Interest on T&TEC \$800Mn. Fixed Rate Bond - \$18,238,700**

58. Can the Ministry of Finance indicate why only half of the allocations needed to pay the loans facilities due before September 30, 2021 was given at the beginning of the fiscal year?

59. When were these bonds negotiated and signed?

60. What is the status of these bonds?

61. Why was the information related to the bonds not factored into the Budget 2021 preparation documents?

62. Why were these loans not included in the Budget 2021 presentation?

**03/05/A/585 - Production and Delivery of Bulk Power - \$3,604,000**

63. Provide a breakdown of how much will be used for upgrades, payment of compensation and facilitation of expansion with regard to this project.

**05/06/A/061 - Community Water Improvement Programme - \$16,000,000**

64. Provide a breakdown of how this allocation will be spent in each constituency.

**Head 42 - Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government**

**04/009/04 - Community Based Environment Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP) - \$43,497,000**

65. Will any of the funds be used to settle outstanding payments to contractors?

66. How much is still outstanding to contractors?

67. How many contractors are currently employed by CEPEP?

68. How many CEPEP teams and employees are assigned to each of the forty-one constituencies?

69. Provide a list of the contractors that operate in each constituency.

**04/011/09 - R.D.C. - National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme (NRWRP) - \$2,100,000**

70. Provide a list of the contractors that operated in each constituency during fiscal 2021.

**06/005/23 - Port of Spain City Corporation - \$14,730,000**

**06/005/24 - San Fernando City Corporation - \$5,850,000**

**06/005/25 - Arima Borough Corporation - \$4,035,000**

**06/005/26 - Point Fortin Borough Corporation - \$4,727,000**

**06/005/27 - Chaguanas Borough Corporation - \$12,862,000**

**06/005/28 - Diego Martin Regional Corporation - \$4,601,000**

**06/005/29 - San Juan/Laventille Regional Corporation - \$3,857,000**

**06/005/30 - Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation - \$18,944,000**

**06/005/31 - Sangre Grande Regional Corporation - \$3,338,000**

**06/005/32 - Couva / Tabaquite / Talparo Regional Corporation - \$4,087,000**

**06/005/33 - Mayaro /Rio Claro Regional Corporation - \$1,759,000**

**06/005/34 - Siparia Regional Corporation - \$5,267,000**

**06/005/35 - Penal/Debe Regional Corporation - \$6,360,000**

**06/005/36 - Princes Town Regional Corporation - \$3,902,000**

71. Provide a detailed breakdown of the sums allocated to each Corporation towards the payment of wages and COLA owed and for the provision of various goods and services respectively.

**Head 43 - Ministry of Works and Transport - \$294,426,700**

**01/002/30 - Allowances - Daily - Rated Workers - \$7,849,000**

72. How many staff will benefit from this allocation?

**02/002/28 - Other Contracted Services - \$24,869,900**

**02/003/28 - Other Contracted Services - \$26,200,000**

73. Which companies received payment from these line items in fiscal 2021?

**04/011/28 - NIDCO - Operation and Maintenance of the M.V. Galleons Passage - \$160,196,300**

74. Provide a breakdown of how the \$160,196,300 allocation will be spent up to the end of fiscal 2021.

75. What is the monthly cost to maintain the A.P.T. James and Bucco Reef?

76. How much staff is required by both vessels?

**003/15/H/789 - Upgrading and Modernization of Navigational Aids - \$5,247,380**

77. Provide an updated report on the upgrade and modernization of the navigational aids.

78. Which companies were awarded the contracts?

**003/15/H/822 - Empty Container Yard Paving/Repair to Container Terminal - \$1,000,000**

**003/15/H/824 - Removal and Disposal of Wrecks and Derelict Vessels - \$5,756,942**

79. Which companies were awarded the contracts to remove the wrecks?

80. Provide a report of the wrecks removed in fiscal 2021.

**Head 61 - Ministry of Housing and Urban Development**

**004/08/D/075 - Rehabilitation and Maintenance of HDC Rental Apartments and Housing Units - \$39,709,000**

**004/08/E/232 - Housing Grants - \$2,210,000**

81. What criteria is needed to access this grant?

82. Provide a breakdown of applicants by constituency.

**004/08/E/235 - Housing and Village Improvement Programme - \$8,576,000**

83. What criteria is needed to access this programme?

84. Provide a breakdown of applicants by constituency.

85. Provide a list of the contractors monies are owed to from this programme.

**004/08/E/237 - Regularisation of Squatter Communities - \$19,213,000**

86. Which squatter communities currently have the on-going civil works needed to acquire final approvals?

**004/08/E/241 - Development of Residential Lots - Petrotrin - \$3,583,000**

87. Provide the following:

a. The identity of the sites selected;

- b. The number of residential lots to be developed;
- c. The estimated total cost of land development of all the residential lots for former Petrotrin employees; and
- d. The list of all Petrotrin employees that have been approved for the residential lots

**Head 67 – Ministry of Planning and Development**

**01/004/01 – Salaries and COLA - \$5,340,000**

- 88. On what date was the staff of the Central Statistical Office upgraded from short term status to monthly paid officers?

**04/007/03 – Settlement to Cane Farmers re-2007 transition - \$1,403,000**

- 89. How many cane farmers will benefit from this allocation in fiscal 2021?

**Head 77 – Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries**

**04/005/01 – Ecclesiastical Bodies - \$10,000,000**

- 90. Which organizations will receive disbursements from this allocation?
- 91. How much funds will each organization receive?

**Head 77 – Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries**

**04/007/07 – Emergency Food Support Measure – Covid-19 - \$57,310,000**

- 92. What policy exists for the distribution of hampers issued under this line item?

**APPENDIX II**  
**Minutes of Meeting**

**STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**FIRST SESSION (2020/2021), TWELFTH PARLIAMENT**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY ON**  
**MONDAY JUNE 7, 2021 AT 1:38 P.M.**

**Members of the Standing Finance Committee**

**Present**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Hon. Bridgid Annisette-George, MP        | - | Chairman  |
| 2. Hon. Dr. Keith Rowley, MP                | - | Prime Minister<br><i>(Member for Diego Martin West)</i>   |
| 3. Hon. Camille Robinson-Regis, MP          | - | Minister of Planning and Development<br><i>(Member for Arouca/Maloney)</i>  |
| 4. Hon. Faris Al-Rawi, MP<br>Affairs        | - | Attorney General and Minister of Legal<br><i>(Member for San Fernando West)</i>   |
| 5. Hon. Colm Imbert, MP                     | - | Minister of Finance<br><i>(Member for Diego Martin North/East)</i>  |
| 6. Hon. Stuart Young, MP<br>and<br>Minister | - | Minister of Energy & Energy Industries<br><br>Minister in the Office of the Prime<br><i>(Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's<br/>West)</i> |
| 7. Hon. Penelope Beckles, MP<br>Development | - | Minister of Housing and Urban<br><i>(Member for Arima)</i>  |
| 8. Hon. Fitzgerald Hinds, MP                | - | Minister of National Security<br><i>(Member for Laventille West)</i>  |
| 9. Hon. Terrence Deyalsingh, MP             | - | Minister of Health<br><i>(Member for St. Joseph)</i>  |
| 10. Hon. Shamfa Cudjoe, MP<br>Development   | - | Minister of Sport and Community<br><br><i>(Member for Tobago West)</i>  |
| 11. Hon. Dr. Nyan Gadsby-Dolly, MP          | - | Minister of Education<br><i>(Member for St. Ann's East)</i>   |
| 12. Hon. Marvin Gonzales, MP                | - | Minister of Public Utilities<br><i>(Member for Lopinot/Bon Air West)</i>  |
| 13. Hon. Stephen Mc Clashie, MP             | - | Minister of Labour<br><i>(Member for La Brea)</i>   |



- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 14. Hon. Ayanna Webster-Roy, MP<br>Minister | - | Minister in the Office of the Prime<br><br><i>(Member for Tobago East)</i>                                  |
| 15. Hon. Foster Cummings, MP<br>National    | - | Minister of Youth Development and<br><br>Service<br><i>(Member for La Horquetta/Talparo)</i>                |
| 16. Mr. Esmond Forde, MP                    | - | Deputy Speaker<br><i>(Member for Tunapuna)</i>  |
| 17. Mr. Kennedy Richards                    | - | Member for Point Fortin, MP   |
| 18. Hon. Brian Manning, MP                  | - | Minister in the Ministry of Finance<br><i>(Member for San Fernando East)</i>                                |
| 19. Hon. Adrian Leonce, MP                  | - | Minister in the Ministry of Housing<br>And Urban Development<br><i>(Member for Laventille East/Morvant)</i> |
| 20. Hon. Lisa Morris-Julian, MP             | - | Minister in the Ministry of Education<br><i>(Member for D'Abadie/O'Meara)</i>                               |
| 21. Hon. Symon De Nobriga, MP<br>Minister   | - | Minister in the Office of the Prime<br><br><i>(Member for Diego Martin Central)</i>                         |
| 22. Mr. Keith Scotland, MP                  | - | Member for Port of Spain South  |
| 23. Mr. Roger Monroe, MP                    | - | Member for Toco/Sangre Grande   |
| 24. Mr. David Lee, MP                       | - | Member for Pointe-a-Pierre  |
| 25. Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, SC         | - | Leader of the Opposition<br><i>(Member for Siparia)</i>   |
| 26. Ms. Khadijah Ameen, MP                  | - | Member for St. Augustine  |
| 27. Mr. Rodney Charles, MP                  | - | Member for Naparima   |
| 28. Ms. Vandana Mohit, MP                   | - | Member for Chaguanas East   |
| 29. Dr. Roodal Moonilal, MP                 | - | Member for Oropouche East   |
| 30. Ms. Michelle Benjamin, MP               | - | Member for Moruga/Tableland   |
| 31. Mr. Rushton Paray, MP                   | - | Member for Mayaro   |
| 32. Mr. Rudranath Indarsingh, MP            | - | Member for Couva South  |
| 33. Dr. Lackram Bodoie, MP                  | - | Member for Fyzabad  |
| 34. Mr. Saddam Hosein, MP                   | - | Member for Barataria/San Juan   |
| 35. Mr. Barry Padarath, MP                  | - | Member for Princes Town   |
| 36. Ms. Anita Haynes, MP                    | - | Member for Tabaquite  |
| 37. Mr. Davendranath Tancoo, MP             | - | Member for Oropouche West   |
| 38. Mr. Dinesh Rambally, MP                 | - | Member for Chaguanas West   |
| 39. Dr. Rai Ragbir, MP                      | - | Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla  |
| 40. Mr. Arnold Ram, MP                      | - | Member for Caroni Central   |
| 41. Dr. Rishad Seecheran, MP                | - | Member for Caroni East  |
| 42. Mr. Ravi Ratiram, MP                    | - | Member for Couva North  |

**EXCUSED**

**ABSENT**

## **ALSO PRESENT**

1. Sen. the Hon. Allyson West - Minister of Public Administration and Digital Transformation
2. Sen. the Hon. Donna Cox - Minister of Social Development and Family Services
3. Sen. the Hon. Kazim Hosein - Minister of Rural Development and Local Government
4. Sen. the Hon. Rohan Sinanan - Minister of Works and Transport
5. Sen. the Hon. Clarence Rambharat - Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries

## **COMMENCEMENT**

- 1.1 The meeting was called to order at 1:38 p.m.
- 1.2 The Chairman indicated that in accordance with Standing Order 82 (6) and 87, a meeting of the Standing Finance Committee was convened to consider proposals for the Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation for the fiscal year 2021.
- 1.3 Members were advised that in accordance with Standing Order 45(1) the speaking time in Standing Finance Committee shall not exceed five (5) minutes on each intervention.
- 1.4 The procedure for the consideration of the Heads of Expenditure was outlined.

## **PROPOSALS FOR THE SUPPLEMENTATION OF APPROPRIATION FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2021**

### **Head 08: Elections and Boundaries Commission**

- 2.1 The Chairman announced Head 08, Elections and Boundaries Commission a supplementation of \$4,196,500.00.
- 2.2 The Minister of Finance was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.3 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 08: Elections and Boundaries Commission be supplemented by the sum of \$4,196,500.00.
- 2.4 The Members for Chaguanas West, Barataria/San-Juan, Pointe-a-Pierre, Couva South and Princes Town sought clarification from the Minister of Finance. Thereafter the Minister of Finance provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.5 The question was put and agreed that Head 08: Elections and Boundaries Commission be supplemented by the sum of \$4,196,500.00.

### **Head 13: Office of the Prime Minister**

- 2.6 The Chairman announced Head 13: Office of the Prime Minister, a supplementation of \$16,520,000.00.

- 2.7 The Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.8 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 13: Office of the Prime Minister be supplemented by the sum of \$16,520,000.00.
- 2.9 The Members for Chaguanas East, Princes Town, Couva South, Oropouche West and Naparima sought clarification from the Minister. The Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.10 The question was put and agreed that Head 13: Office of the Prime Minister be supplemented by the sum of \$16,520,000.00.

**Head 15: Tobago House of Assembly**

- 2.11 The Chairman announced Head 15: Tobago House of Assembly, a supplementation of \$80,000,000.00.
- 2.12 The Minister of Finance was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.13 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 15: Tobago House of Assembly be supplemented by the sum of \$80,000,000.00.
- 2.14 The Members for Chaguanas East, Fyzabad, Barataria/ San-Juan, Tabaquite and Couva South sought clarification from the Minister. The Minister of Finance provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.15 The question was put and agreed that Head 15: Tobago House of Assembly be supplemented by the sum of \$80,000,000.00.

**Head 18: Ministry of Finance**

- 2.16 The Chairman announced Head 18: Ministry of Finance, a supplementation of \$115,769,472.00.
- 2.17 The Minister of Finance was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.18 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 18: Ministry of Finance be supplemented by the sum of \$115,769,472.00.
- 2.19 The Member for Oropouche West sought clarification from the Minister. The Minister of Finance provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.20 The question was put and agreed that Head 18: Ministry of Finance be supplemented by the sum of \$115,769,472.00.

**Head 22: Ministry of National Security**

- 2.21 The Chairman announced Head 22: Ministry of National Security, a supplementation of \$725,608,340.00
- 2.22 The Minister of National Security was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.23 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 22: Ministry of National Security be supplemented by the sum of \$725,608,340.00.
- 2.24 The Members for Naparima, Couva South, Oropouche West, Pointe-a-Pierre, Couva North, Chaguanas West, Barataria/San Juan and Oropouche East sought clarification from the Ministers. The Minister of National Security, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Planning and Development provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.25 The question was put and agreed that Head 22: Ministry of National Security be supplemented by the sum of \$725,608,340.00.

### **Head 23: Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs**

- 2.26 The Chairman announced Head 23: Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs, a supplementation of \$118,961,000.00.
- 2.27 The Attorney General was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.28 The Chairman proposed the question Head 23: Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs be supplemented by the sum of \$118,961,000.00.
- 2.29 The Members for Barataria/ San Juan, Couva South, Couva North, Chaguanas West, Caroni Central and Oropouche West sought clarification from the Ministers. The Attorney General and the Minister of Finance provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.30 The question was put and agreed that Head 23: Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs be supplemented by the sum of \$118,961,000.00.

### **Head 28: Ministry of Health**

- 2.31 The Chairman announced Head 28: Ministry of Health, a supplementation of \$267,113,637.00.
- 2.32 The Minister of Health was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.33 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 28: Ministry of Health be supplemented by the sum of \$267,113,637.00.
- 2.34 The Members for Fyzabad, Siparia, Oropouche West, Caroni East, Cumuto/Manzanilla, Couva South and Barataria/San Juan sought clarification from the Ministers. The Minister of Health and the Minister of Finance provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.35 The question was put and agreed that Head 28: Ministry of Health be supplemented by the sum of \$267,113,637.00.

### **Head 31: Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation**

- 2.36 The Chairman announced Head 31: Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation, a supplementation of \$24,800,000.00.
- 2.37 The Minister of Public Administration and Digital Transformation was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.38 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 31: Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation be supplemented by the sum of \$24,800,000.00.
- 2.39 The Member for Oropouche West sought clarification from the Minister. Thereafter the Minister of Public Administration and Digital Transformation provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.40 The question was put and agreed that Head 31: Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation be supplemented by the sum of \$24,800,000.00.

### **Head 39: Ministry of Public Utilities**

- 2.41 The Chairman announced Head 39: Ministry of Public Utilities, a supplementation of \$944,577,000.00.
- 2.42 The Minister of Public Utilities was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.43 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 39: Ministry of Public Utilities be supplemented by the sum of \$944,577,000.00.
- 2.44 The Members for Caroni Central, Oropouche West, Couva South, St. Augustine, Couva North and Cumuto/Manzanilla sought clarification from the Ministers. The Minister of Public Utilities and the Minister of Finance provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.45 The question was put and agreed that Head 39: Ministry of Public Utilities be supplemented by the sum of \$944,577,000.00.

### **Head 42: Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government**

- 2.46 The Chairman announced Head 42: Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, a supplementation of \$142,216,000.00.
- 2.47 The Minister of Rural Development and Local Government was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 2.48 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 42: Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government be supplemented by the sum of \$142,216,000.00.
- 2.49 The Members for St. Augustine, Oropouche West, Couva South, Oropouche East and Baratavia/San Juan sought clarification from the Minister. The Minister of Rural Development and Local Government provided an explanation for the supplementation.

2.50 The question was put and agreed that Head 42: Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government be supplemented by the sum of \$142,216,000.00.

**Head 43: Ministry of Works and Transport**

2.51 The Chairman announced Head 43: Ministry of Works and Transport, a supplementation of \$294,426,700.00.

2.52 The Minister of Works and Transport was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.

2.53 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 43: Ministry of Works and Transport be supplemented by the sum of \$294,426,700.00.

2.54 The Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, Couva North and Barataria/San Juan sought clarification from the Minister. The Minister of Works and Transport provided an explanation for the supplementation.

2.55 The question was put and agreed that Head 43: Ministry of Works and Transport be supplemented by the sum of \$294,426,700.00.

**Head 61: Ministry of Housing and Urban Development**

2.56 The Chairman announced Head 61: Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, a supplementation of \$90,961,000.00.

2.57 The Minister of Housing and Urban Development was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.

2.58 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 61: Ministry of Housing and Urban Development be supplemented by the sum of \$90,961,000.00.

2.59 The Members for Oropouche East and Barataria/San Juan sought clarification from the Minister. The Minister of Housing and Urban Development provided an explanation for the supplementation.

2.60 The question was put and agreed that Head 61: Ministry of Housing and Urban Development be supplemented by the sum of \$90,961,000.00.

**Head 64: Trinidad and Tobago Police Service**

2.61 The Chairman announced Head 64: Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, a supplementation of \$57,722,353.00.

2.62 The Minister of National Security was invited to make a brief opening statement for less than five (5) minutes.

2.63 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 64: Trinidad and Tobago Police Service be supplemented by the sum of \$57,722,353.00.

- 2.64 The Members for Oropouche East and Oropouche West sought clarification from the Ministers. The Minister of National Security and the Minister of Finance provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.65 The question was put and agreed that Head 64: Trinidad and Tobago Police Service be supplemented by the sum of \$57,722,353.00.

#### **Head 67: Ministry of Planning and Development**

- 2.66 The Chairman announced Head 67: Ministry of Planning and Development, a supplementation of \$44,728,000.00.
- 2.67 The Minister of Planning and Development was invited to make a brief opening statement for less than five (5) minutes.
- 2.68 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 67: Ministry of Planning and Development be supplemented by the sum of \$44,728,000.00.
- 2.69 The Members for Oropouche East, Couva South, Oropouche West and Moruga/Tableland sought clarification from the Minister. The Minister of Planning and Development provided an explanation for the supplementation.
- 2.70 The question was put and agreed that Head 67: Ministry of Planning and Development be supplemented by the sum of \$44,728,000.00.

#### **Total Supplementation**

- 2.71 The question was put and agreed that the Appropriation for fiscal year 2021 be supplemented by a total of \$2,927,600,002.00

### **PROPOSALS FOR THE VARIATION OF APPROPRIATION FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2021**

#### **Head 18: Ministry of Finance - Decrease**

- 3.1 The Chairman announced Head 18, Ministry of Finance, a decrease in the sum of \$107,310,000.00.
- 3.2 The Minister of Finance was invited to make a brief opening statement for less than five (5) minutes.
- 3.3 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 18, Ministry of Finance be varied by a decrease in the sum of \$107,310,000.00.
- 3.4 The Members for Oropouche West and Couva North sought clarification from the Minister. Thereafter the Minister of Finance provided an explanation for the decrease.
- 3.5 The question was put and agreed that Head 18, Ministry of Finance be varied by a decrease in the sum of \$107,310,000.00.

#### **Total Decreases**

- 3.6 The question was put and agreed that the Appropriation for fiscal year 2021 be varied by a total decrease of \$107,310,000.00.

**Head 13: Office of the Prime Minister – Increase**

- 3.7 The Chairman announced Head 13, Office of the Prime Minister, an increase in the sum of \$10,000,000.00.
- 3.8 The Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister was invited to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five (5) minutes.
- 3.9 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 13, Office of the Prime Minister be varied by an increase in the sum of \$10,000,000.00.
- 3.10 The Member for Chaguanas East sought clarification from the Minister. Thereafter the Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister provided an explanation for the increase.
- 3.11 The question was put and agreed that Head 13, Office of the Prime Minister be varied by an increase in the sum of \$10,000,000.00.

**Head 77: Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries – Increase**

- 3.12 The Chairman announced Head 77, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries, an increase in the sum of \$57,310,000.00.
- 3.13 The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries was invited to make a brief opening statement for less than five (5) minutes.
- 3.14 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 77, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries be varied by an increase in the sum of \$57,310,000.00.
- 3.15 The Members for Couva North and Oropouche West sought clarification from the Minister. The Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries provided an explanation for the increase.
- 3.16 The question was put and agreed that Head 77, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries be varied by an increase in the sum of \$57,310,000.00.

**Head 78: Ministry of Social Development and Family Services – Increase**

- 3.17 The Chairman announced Head 78, Ministry of Social Development and Family Services to be varied by an increase in the sum of \$40,000,000.00.
- 3.18 The Minister of Social Development and Family Services was invited to make a brief opening statement for less than five (5) minutes.
- 3.19 The Members for Chaguanas East and Moruga/Tableland sought clarification from the Minister. Thereafter the Minister of Social Development and Family Services provided an explanation for the increase.
- 3.20 The Chairman proposed the question that Head 78, Ministry of Social Development and Family Services to be varied by an increase in the sum of \$40,000,000.00.



- 3.21 The question was put and agreed that Head 78, Ministry of Social Development and Family Services to be varied by an increase in the sum of \$40,000,000.00.

**Total Increases**

- 3.22 The question was put and agreed that the Appropriation for fiscal year 2021 be varied by a total increase of \$107,310,000.

**REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- 4.1 Requests for additional information to Ministries/Departments are listed in Appendix I of the Report.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

- 5.1 The Chairman informed Members that the debate for the adoption of the Committee's Report will take place on Wednesday June 9, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.
- 5.2 The adjournment was taken at 8:15 p.m.

**We certify that these Minutes are true and correct.**

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY

*Monday June 7, 2021*

## APPENDIX III Verbatim Notes

### VERBATIM NOTES OF THE STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HELD VIRTUALLY ON MONDAY, JUNE 7, 2021 AT 1.38 P.M.

**Madam Chairman:** Good afternoon, Members, and welcome to this Standing Finance Committee. I am advised that we have 12 members so we do have a quorum. I want to thank all Members from attending this virtual committee meeting and I want to remind Members if they can keep their devices, their microphones, on silent until recognized by me when it is time to make their contribution.

Hon. Members, in accordance with Standing Order 82(6) and Standing Order 87, this meeting of the Standing Finance Committee was convened to consider proposals for the supplementation and variation of appropriations for fiscal year 2021.

Speaking Time: Hon. Members, in accordance with Standing Order 45(1), the speaking time in Standing Finance Committee shall not exceed five minutes on each intervention.

Our procedure will be as follows: Item number one, we will do the supplementation. As Chairman, I will announce, one, the Head and the amount to be supplemented; two, the Minister with responsibility will then be invited to provide an explanation for the supplementation. I will then propose the question that the Head be supplemented. Four, members may then seek clarification from the Minister; five, once this is concluded I will then put the question that the sum to be supplemented be approved, and finally the procedure will be repeated for each Head.

We will now begin with item number one, which is the supplementation. Hon. Members, we shall now consider the proposals for Supplementation of Appropriation for fiscal year 2021.

*Head 08:* Elections and Boundaries Commission, \$4,196,500.

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of Finance to make a brief opening statement of a maximum of five minutes. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Imbert:** Thank you. Is everyone hearing me properly?

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, we are.

**Hon. Imbert:** Yes. Okay, great. The Elections and Boundaries Commission has entered into an arrangement with De La Rue, which is an entity that they are using for some time now to improve and upgrade their ID card system and their voter registration election management system. There is a contract already enforced and this is simply to provide it with supplemental funds to continue with that contractual arrangement.

*Question proposed:* That Head 08 be supplemented by the sum of \$4,196,500.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Chaguanas West.

**Mr. Rambally:** Madam Chair – Madam Chair, are you hearing me?

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, Member for Chaguanas West, I am hearing you.

**Mr. Rambally:** Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, to the hon. Minister of Finance: I know he said that this arrangement was entered for some time now. Can you tell us exactly when was the agreement entered with De La Rue to provide services?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Imbert:** I will get the precise details and this information will be provided by Wednesday.

**Mr. Rambally:** Madam Chair, I may ask a few further questions with your permission, please. Hon. Minister, what I would like to know exactly is, what support and services were provided to the EBC in relation to the notes that we have? It is really voter registration and election management system, so if we could get some more detail as to exactly what support and services were provided by the company. Exactly when was the contract entered into? What is the duration of the contract? If possible, hon. Minister, when the services would have commenced and when it is due to end which would tie in with the duration of the contract? Also, hon. Minister, are you able to tell us how much money has been spent already on upgrading the electronic voter registration and the election management system to date?

**Hon. Imbert:** Yeah. I have my staff here with me, we will get those details from the EBC and provide a summary and further details/particulars that have been requested by Wednesday.

**Mr. Rambally:** Thank you, hon. Minister. Just a couple of other questions, if your staff might be able to address as well in the response: Were there service providers before De La Rue? And if there were, maybe we can have the name or names of those providers. And also, if there were providers before De La Rue, what was the reason or reasons for ending any arrangements that may have existed with those providers? And as best as possible, hon. Minister, how were these companies selected, and this is pre-De La Rue? And also, we would like to know what process was followed for them, as well as now we have De La Rue, we are dealing with this Head of Expenditure. So those are some of the details if we can have that, hon. Minister, we would be grateful.

**Hon. Imbert:** Certainly. We will get that information for you by Wednesday.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Mr. Hosein:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. To the hon. Minister: Minister, can you indicate whether or not this company called De La Rue International Limited, now ID Global Solutions Limited, is contracted with any other Ministry with the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago?

**1.45 p.m.**

**Hon. Imbert:** I can get that information for you, but I seem to recall that they are involved in the printing of our bank notes.

**Mr. Hosein:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, through you, I would like to ask the Minister why his response is not available now, given that these appropriations were sent to us and it came out of his Ministry of Finance, and he would have been well aware that these are extra funds that the EBC is asking for? It is a little bit disingenuous to not be able to have that answer here today at this SFC. I would like to ask the Minister why he is not able to respond to the questions posed by our Members now?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Imbert:** I am not a psychic. I would have no idea of the number and type of questions asked, and rather than talk out of turn, I am undertaking to provide detailed particulars by Wednesday, which is standard, as the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre fully well knows. Quite often we can answer some questions immediately, others that require in-depth research that we would not have at the Ministry of Finance are answered on the day of the debate itself by a submission to the Parliament which is circulated to all Members. You are very well aware of that. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Pointe-a-Pierre, are you finished?

**Mr. Lee:** Just a follow-up, Madam Chair, to the Minister's response. I did not hear him clearly. Would we be getting these responses before the debate on Wednesday?

**Hon. Imbert:** I think my audio is functioning well. I said that, yes.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva South. You need to unmute your microphone.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you. Madam Chair, are you hearing me?

**Madam Chairman:** We are hearing you loud and clear now.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Minister, in relation to the sum of \$4,196,500 in relation to Voter Registration and Election Management System, any of this percentage of this sum is being utilized to roll out the new ID card system which you had indicated to the Parliament during the presentation of your last fiscal package?

**Hon. Imbert:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. This is one of the details where I would prefer to get proper information from the EBC rather than speak out of turn. But that is my recollection, that this contract does include the roll out of new form of ID card. But let me get specific confirmation from the EBC with respect to that matter, and that information will be provided before the debate commences at 1.30 on Wednesday.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Mr. Hosein:** To the Minister of Finance: Minister, can you indicate whether or not this voter registration exercise that is being undertaken by this company, is it specific to any particular constituencies and, secondly, whether or not this is an exercise that is being undertaken, the election management system, for any upcoming THA elections?

**Hon. Imbert:** Again, I doubt it is specific to any particular constituency. I am reasonably certain that it is for the entire country, and that country would be Trinidad and Tobago. With respect to whether it would be in time for an upcoming THA election, I would have to get that confirmation from the EBC. I am not exactly certain what their roll-out completion date is, but I will get that information.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Princes Town. Could unmute your mike? Thank you very much.

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Could the hon. Minister indicate whether or not there was any consultation between the EBC and any arm of the State with respect to De La Rue being used specifically for the Electronic Voter Registration and Election Management System, in light of the Ministry of Finance in particular using this particular company? Was there any consultation between the EBC and the State – any arm of the State – in terms of the selection of this company?

**Hon. Imbert:** My understanding is that this was done through a very transparent procurement exercise. I might point out as well that in the past, I am aware, that De La Rue has done passports for Trinidad and Tobago. It has been doing currency for a very, very long time, and it has also been working for the EBC for a very long time through successive administrations. So I am not aware of any contact with any arms of the State, but I see no conflict. I will check and see if that is so, but I can certainly say that I see no conflict and I am not aware of any specific consultation with other arms of the State. The EBC tends to jealously guard its independence, and quite rightly so. It is a fully autonomous independent body, but I will check and see if I can answer any further with respect to your questions.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Princes Town, do you have any further questions?

**Mr. Padarath:** No Madam, not at this time.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 08 supplemented by the sum of \$4,196,500.*

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you, Minister of Finance.

*Head 13: Office of the Prime Minister, \$16,520,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes. Minister.

**The Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Hon. Ayanna Webster-Roy):** Thank you, Madam Chair. The Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago has responsibility for the care

and protection of children, especially those who are at risk or have been victims of abuse and neglect.

In 2019 and 2020, the Children's Authority expanded its operations to meet the needs of the children, and continues the expansion given its current and projected case load. The additional funding in the sum of \$16,520,000 is required to continue the upgrade and enhancement of its services. An estimated 70 per cent of this allocation will go towards human resources required to care for the children in the following service areas: intake; placement; counselling; monitoring and emergency services, which now operate from three regional officers; assessment services for children, which now operates from five regional assessment centres; child care services, which now operates from three child support centres; and operationalized nurseries and have the relevant section of the Community Residences, Foster Care and Nurseries Act proclaimed.

These facilities and the services they provide must be resourced from the professional care and support staff to satisfy the critical needs of children. The balance of the funding is required to support the upgrade of the Child Protection Case and Records Information Management System, which is funded through private sector donations and UNICEF, and meet the accumulated financial commitments in fiscal 2020, which had to be liquidated in fiscal 2021. These comprise gratuities for contract officers and security services.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**1.55 p.m.**

*Question proposed:* That Head 13 be supplemented by the sum of \$16,520,000.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Chaguanas East.

**Ms. Mohit:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, can the Minister indicate for the period October 1<sup>st</sup> to present, how many additional children require the services of the Children's Authority?

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** Madam Chair, that information will be submitted in writing.

**Ms. Mohit:** Madam Chair, if I may continue? Can the Minister, Madam Chair, indicate the annual costing per child at the Children's Authority facilities within Trinidad and Tobago?

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** Madam Chair, we have a payment-per-child system, a complete breakdown will be submitted in writing.

**Ms. Mohit:** Madam Chair, if I may continue. Can the Minister indicate if the sum of \$16,520,000 caters for new case for the remainder of the fiscal year?

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** Madam Chair, the full sum requested will be utilized to provide services for children. In these stringent times we will make do with what is allocated. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Chaguanas East, are you completed?

**Ms. Mohit:** Yes, Madam Chair. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, for years under this administration, Government has denied that the Children's Authority has been under-resourced and understaffed. The Minister has indicated that 70 per cent of this allocation will be utilized with respect to recruiting staff for the Children's Authority. Could the hon. Minister indicate what will be the process? Have they identified these persons? Or are they already operating? Or is it that these are persons to be hired? And is it an admission today that really the Children's Authority has been under-resourced and understaffed for years under this administration?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister.

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I reject the notion that the Children's Authority has been under-resourced and understaffed. The Children's Authority over the period would have been expanded, and because we expand, we would be required to recruit. And, Madam Chair, the funding will be utilized to pay current staff, and as we expand and we continue to improve our services, to pay those who will be coming on board. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To the hon. Minister: Minister, can you indicate with respect to the last part of my earlier question, whether these persons have been identified? Are they operating, already in the positions? Or are these persons to be hired? And what will be the process utilized for the hiring?

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** As I would have indicated in my response earlier, some persons would have already been hired. For persons to come on board, the normal recruitment process will follow.

**Mr. Padarath:** Could the hon. Minister – Madam, through you, may I continue?

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, you may.

**Mr. Padarath:** Could the hon. Minister indicate those persons who have already been hired and functioning in some of these positions, whether these positions were advertised prior. And did they go through a selection process in terms of an open, transparent selection process? Or were these persons just recruited by the Children's Authority on their own?

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** The Children's Authority has a standard policy in place for recruitment. That process could be shared with the Member in writing.

**Madam Chairman:** So, Member for Couva South.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, you indicated in your opening statement that approximately 70 per cent of this allocation will be utilized from a human resource point of view. Could you say, how many vacant positions that you intend to fill with this 70 per cent of your allocation and give a breakdown of the classifications? For example, will there be fixed-term

contract officers, independent service providers and so on?

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** Thank you. That information will be submitted in writing.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** In addition – a follow up, Madam Chair. Minister, I do not know in terms of your \$16,520,000 which is being sought through this meeting, if any will be expended to improve, for example, the whole question of security and surveillance? Because we know in terms of these existing homes and so on, children's homes, we know, for example, earlier on this year five teenage boys escaped from a safe house in Valsayn. Two unfortunately were murdered in tragic circumstances in Laventille. Three, we do not know – well, I do not have all the information as it relates to their current status, but could you say if the Ministry intends to utilize any percentage of this allocation to improve surveillance and security services at the children's homes throughout the country under your watch?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister.

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Apart from going towards improving security and surveillance, the bulk of the money, as I would have indicated 70 per cent would go towards human resource. By improving our human resource capacity, we would be able to ensure that those children are properly cared for, that their safety and their well-being will be always considered. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** And one final question, Madam Chair. Could you inform this meeting how many independent service providers have currently been engaged by the Children's Authority? And what is the criteria to engage the independent service providers?

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** That information will be submitted in writing. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Chaguanas East and then I will take Member for Oropouche West.

**Ms. Mohit:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And, Madam Chair, I would just like to enquire if the responses to these questions will be submitted prior to Wednesday?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister.

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** We can endeavour to get them submitted before Wednesday, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just for completeness, I would like to find out if the Minister can advise us if there are current vacant posts at the Children's Authority? And if so, what those posts are? And what measures are being taken to fill those vacancies?

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We indeed have vacant positions. We will be advertising. The normal recruitment process will follow. In terms of the exact positions, that information will be submitted in writing. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva South.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, there was an article in yesterday's *Newsday*



of the 6<sup>th</sup>—well, the 6<sup>th</sup> of June which has headlined: “Children’s Authority: Increase in reports of emotional abuse” and so on, and it gives a wide range breakdown of statistics and so on. In the context of the allocation and I say, for example, your Ministry would have expended \$67,816,000 before this appropriation which is being sought here. Does the Children’s Authority have any plans to open any new children’s homes to deal with this issue of emotional abuse and the fallout and so on, that is occurring within our society?

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** Thank you for the question. Madam Chair, the Children’s Authority is a protection arm of the State. The intervention required to treat with emotional abuse, et cetera, would require other agencies of the State to step in. That is where the Office of the Prime Minister through our public education and sensitization, our interaction with communities, that is where the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services will come in. And I can guarantee the Member that there is an all of government approach towards treating with issues of child abuse, so the matter is being addressed.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Princes Town.

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, in light of the 70 per cent increase of staff that you envisage with this allocation—hello. Are you hearing me?

**Madam Chairman:** Perfectly.

**Mr. Padarath:** Yes. Hon. Minister, in light of 70 the—well, some of this 70 per cent that you will utilize for bringing on new staff, could you indicate whether currently there are legal officers at the Children’s Authority that provide advice to the board and the staff members especially in light of challenges that we have seen in the public domain involving the conduct of officers within the Children’s Authority?

**2.05 p.m.**

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** Thank you, Madam Chair. We have legal expertise on the Board of Directors of the Children’s Authority. We also have legal officers at the executive level of the Children’s Authority.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West?

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a follow up question based on the Minister’s answer just now. Is it that members of the Board of Directors provide legal advice to the Children’s Authority at this point?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister?

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** The legal representatives on the board, they provide governance. That governance would then be trickled down into how the authority operates. In terms of the actual work—the legal work of the authority, they have officers recruited for that purpose.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. Member for Couva South and then Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister, could you inform this meaning, given the strategic plan and direction of the Children's Authority, and again, the number of or the increases of abuse and all these issues from a social point of view, does the Children's Authority, under your watch and the Government, have any plans to open any home or facility for special needs children given the sums of moneys that is being expended by the Authority?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister?

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** The Children's Authority does not open homes. The Children's Authority would monitor, regulate homes. The homes that are currently operating are run through either the State or through NGOs or faith-based organizations. If there is a need for an additional home to cater to the specific needs of a group of children, the Government will consider that. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Naparima. Member for Naparima, could you kindly unmute your mike, please?

*[Device goes off]*

**Mr. Charles:** Are you hearing me now?

**Madam Chairman:** Perfectly.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Can the Minister state whether the 16.5 million allocated under this Head will lead to the reopening of the St. Madeline Children's Authority facility which he opened some time ago?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister?

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** Madam Chair, the facility had some structural issues. However, the staff have been operating from another location. However, during this COVID period, we have been encouraging persons to reach out to us through our hotline and other assessment centres and between our offices.

**Madam Chairman:** Are you finished Member for Naparima?

**Mr. Charles:** A follow up question. Could the Minister indicate – give us some idea when the facility will be opened?

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** That information would be provided to the Member in writing.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Princes Town?

**Mr. Padarath:** Thank you, Madam. Minister, a few weeks – a few months ago, sorry, there was a newspaper report that there were some children in the Princes Town area that required assistance from the Children's Authority and when contacted, the Children's Authority indicated that they did not have officers working on the weekend. Can you indicate whether or not this was in fact so or whether or not this allocation will be able to assist in getting officers working on the weekend?

**Hon. Webster-Roy:** Madam Chair, I would have to investigate that because the Children's Authority operates—some arms of the Children's Authority operate 24/7. So, I will have to investigate that.

**Mr. Padarath:** I did find it a bit odd, Minister, so I would appreciate it.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West, is it that your hand is up?

**Mr. Young:** No. No, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I am just sitting here in some level of amazement. But my colleagues is handling the—answering the questions very, very well. I was wondering—as I heard you reference some newspaper articles, I remember a few months ago, newspaper articles as well, but I would not bring them to the floor at this stage.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 13 supplemented by the sum of \$16,520,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** I thank the Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister.

*Head 15: Tobago House of Assembly, \$80,000,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of Finance to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Imbert:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. In this appropriation, the \$80 million is split into 50 million for Recurrent Expenditure and 30 million for the Public Sector Investment Programme. The 50 million is broken down into three areas. As you would be aware, the Roxborough Hospital was commissioned recently and the Moriah Health Centre is ready. And for the balance of the fiscal year, we are appropriating \$25 million to allow the full operationalization of those facilities. The THA has also found itself in quite a lot of debt, with respect to the air ambulance service and other creditors and suppliers—the National Helicopter Service, apologies, not air ambulance. And we are allocating \$15 million towards the clearing off some of the debt owned by the THA to various suppliers.

With respect to COVID-19 measures, to enable the acquisition of PPE, medical equipment, supplies, et cetera, we are allocating \$10 million to THA for the balance of the fiscal year.

With respect their Development Programme, they have a programme very similar to the NEDCO grant in Trinidad, grant to entrepreneurs, small entrepreneurs, micro entrepreneurs and so on, and we are allocating \$5 million for the balance of the fiscal year to the THA for what they call their enterprise assistance grant programme, which is a grant programme for small businesses.

And then, the THA has developed some lots on the Shirvan Road area and at Cove for persons who are affected by the work on the new terminal building in Tobago. And this \$25 million is to go towards defraying some of the cost of development of those service lots, both for business and for residences.

*Question proposed:* That Head 15 be supplemented by the sum of \$80,000,000.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Tabaquite?

**Ms. Haynes:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To the Minister of Finance, could you tell us what is required to bring both the Roxborough and Moriah Health Centre to full operational use, given that they are allocating this \$25 million with what is required?

**Hon. Imbert:** Twenty five million should be adequate for the balance of the fiscal year. Remember, this is a supplementation to the 2021 appropriation. So this should be more than adequate or certainly would be adequate for June, July, August, September.

**2.15 p.m.**

**Ms. Haynes:** Thank you, Minister, but I am asking basically what is the detailed breakdown on how this would be spent in terms of bringing the —

**Hon. Imbert:** I will get that information for you. We did receive some details for the THA last week and I do not want again to talk out of turn, so I would provide that information by 1.30 p.m. on Wednesday.

**Ms. Haynes:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Fyzabad.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Through you, Madam Chair, can the Minister indicate when the Roxborough Hospital will be in a position to accept patients? Is that information available currently, at this time?

**Hon. Imbert:** Well, I am surprised that the Member for Fyzabad as a distinguished medical practitioner is not aware that the Roxborough Hospital is providing primary health care services at this time and is dealing with patients.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Sorry, is that primary health care services you said Minister?

**Hon. Imbert:** And primary health care visitors, patients—or are you distinguishing between different types of patients?

**Dr. Bodoë:** No, no. I am just clarifying whether it is a secondary or primary facility.

**Hon. Imbert:** You did not ask secondary. So that they are currently providing primary health care and the 25 million is to allow them to offer secondary health care.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Thank you for that clarification, Minister.

**Hon. Imbert:** You are welcome.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Mr. Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, I am seeing that out of this \$15 million in this line item regarding the THA that some moneys will be paid to the National Helicopter Services and suppliers and creditors to enable the settlement of gratuities and benefits to employees. Minister, can you give us a disaggregation how much money is going to be spent on the NHSL

and how much is going towards gratuities and benefits to employees? Also, I want to ask about the amount of money going to be spent on PPE. Also, I am seeing that this entails the cost of rental accommodation for quarantine services. Can you let us know how many buildings are being rented and the cost of the rental and the persons who they are renting from? And also, can you give us the cost of the outfitting of these facilities?

**Hon. Imbert:** That is a tall order, but I will try my best to do so by Wednesday. I cannot guarantee that all of the detailed information that you have asked for can be provided in that short space of time, but I will try my best.

**Mr. Hosein:** But Minister, these questions that I am asking do not require very much research because this should be information that is already available to the Ministry and also the THA. So, I do not see the difficulty that we would not be able to have the answer by Wednesday. It should have been provided by today.

**Hon. Imbert:** Noted.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

**Mr. Lee:** Madam Chair, the question was asked. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Tabaguite.

**Ms. Haynes:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, in your opening statement you referenced the air ambulance service in that \$15 million to clear off outstanding debts, but you also referenced other suppliers and creditors. Could we be told who these other suppliers and creditors are, please?

**Hon. Imbert:** I will try my best.

**Ms. Haynes:** Okay. And of this \$15 million, how much specifically is going to NHSL?

**Hon. Imbert:** I think I could get that breakdown for you. I should be able to provide that by Wednesday.

**Ms. Haynes:** Okay, and just one more. It references the gratuities and benefits, how many employees will receive the gratuity and benefits as well?

**Hon. Imbert:** I will try my best to get that information for you by Wednesday.

**Ms. Haynes:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Mr. Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, I want to ask a question regarding the grant programme. I know in the Auditor General Report, the latest Auditor General Report, there were some issues being flagged with respect to the disbursements of these grants. Can you tell us whether or not the Ministry has in fact spoken to the THA to address these issues? That is one. And two, with respect to the development of land for the airport relocation programme, Minister, can you tell us how many lot or plots are being developed in this particular area? And what is the

total cost of this project?

**Hon. Imbert:** With respect to the first issue that you raised, I am not sure that I can operate based on hearsay, but I will investigate it. With respect to the second point, I will get the information from the THA.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Tabaquite.

**Ms. Haynes:** Thank you again, Madam Chair. With reference to the Enterprise Assistance Grant Programme, Minister, do you have available the number of persons who would benefit from these loans and grants?

**Hon. Imbert:** I will try my best to get as much information as I can from the Tobago House of Assembly. We are taking note of all your questions.

**Ms. Haynes:** Okay. And so I would also then like the categories of – that qualified for these loans and grants, as well as the process that the THA is using to determine who is eligible for the loans and grants.

**Hon. Imbert:** I will ask them and try my best to get it by Wednesday.

**Ms. Haynes:** Well, I am confident that you would be able to get the answers.

**Hon. Imbert:** I am glad that you are more confident than your Member for “Barataria/Saria”.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva South.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Madam Chair, Minister, based on the fact or according to the Auditor General’s Report of 2020, there were a number of discrepancies in the processing of assistance cheques without proper documentation of approvals and so on. Could you guarantee or find out from the Tobago House of Assembly, what is the procedure of a validation in terms of persons who are seeking relief through the loans and grants to entrepreneurs under this Head?

**Hon. Imbert:** Certainly.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Member, I know as a Minister of your experience you can have the moral suasion to get this information.

**Hon. Imbert:** Sure. As I said before – by the way, I am being heard because I was told just now that my volume might have been down. Is it better now?

**Madam Chairman:** We are hearing you very well.

**Hon. Imbert:** Okay, thank you very much. Again, as I told your colleague I cannot act on hearsay, but I am taking note of what you are alleging with respect to the Auditor General’s queries with respect to the THA. I will investigate and provide whatever information I can.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 15 supplemented by the sum of \$80,000,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you, Minister of Finance.

*Head 18: Ministry of Finance, \$115,769,472.*

**Madam Chairman:** I would now invite the Minister of Finance to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes. Minister.

**Hon. Imbert:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman, I think I need to clarify that the infrastructure development appropriation is within the Ministry of Finance and it is then distributed among the Ministries. So that in this appropriation of \$115,769,472 you will see that we are making arrangements so that we can disburse \$65,769,472 to health to pay for money owed to VARMED which is the contractor/consultant on the Point Fortin Hospital and also on the Sangre Grande Hospital. And we are also appropriating 50 million, that is an accounting exercise, this money has already been spent and it is simply to bring the expenditure to account. That is money already spent under the IDB Waste Water Project. Thank you.

*Question proposed:* That Head 18 be supplemented by the sum of \$115,769,472.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Madam Chairman, I would like to find out from the hon. Minister, over what period of time has this debt been accumulated? When was the Minister aware of this debt and why was it not factored in the appropriation done in the September 2020 budget? I would also like—just to continue the questions to find out from the Minister, what is the amount of the outstanding debt by the Ministry of Health to the existing suppliers of goods and services?

**2.25 p.m.**

**Hon. Imbert:** I would like to get some clarity on exactly who asked that question just now.

**Madam Chairman:** The Member for Oropouche West.

**Hon. Imbert:** Oropouche West. This is Head 18, Ministry of Finance. This is not Head 28, Ministry of Health. Hold your fire on debts owed to suppliers to the health sector for that Head. With respect to this matter, we are making arrangements to make available to the Ministry of Health \$65 million to pay VAMED for work done on those two hospitals.

**Mr. Tancoo:** If I may continue, Ma'am? Can the Minister indicate what other debts are available—what other debts to VAMED are outstanding that may come to his attention for reimbursement?

**Hon. Imbert:** As I indicated, this is a supplementation for the Infrastructure Development Fund, and the Infrastructure Development Fund was created many years ago, 2007 I believe, and it provides funding for state enterprises. State enterprises are the only entities that are funded via the Infrastructure Development Fund. The Development Programme is funded otherwise from the Consolidated Fund directly through various Ministries. The allocation for Infrastructure Development Fund is contained within the overall allocation of the Ministry of Finance. This is the amount that we have determined is appropriate to clear off amounts owed to VAMED, but I will certainly speak to the Ministry of Health and by Wednesday I shall be in a position to indicate what

is the total amount owed to VAMED for work done in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Minister. Just to continue. The Minister has indicated that a further sum of \$15 million will be spent to bring to the account amounts previously disbursed under the IDB wastewater project. Can the Minister indicate why this reimbursement is necessary, when was this debt actually incurred and for what purpose?

**Hon. Imbert:** Just excuse me one second, I have my staff here. I am just getting some detail for Members.

**Madam Chairman:** Minister? Minister of Finance? Your – that is okay.

**Hon. Imbert:** I am terribly sorry. I had turned it off to talk to my staff. This wastewater project has been in progress for a very long time. It transcends various administrations. Apparently, this reconciliation is being done over a period of years, but I will get all of the relevant details and provide a proper explanation before 1.30 on Wednesday. But it is an accounting exercise that has been in progress for several years.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you again, Madam Chair, and Minister. Minister, just out of completeness can you kindly provide an overall breakdown of outstanding debts by Ministries which are now engaging your attention and which may be required to be addressed?

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West, under this Head I could not allow that type of question.

**Hon. Imbert:** I would not be able to answer it either.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 18 supplemented by the sum of \$115,769,472.*

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you, Minister of Finance.

*Head 22: Ministry of National Security, \$725,608,340.*

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of National Security to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes. Minister. [*Pause*] Is the Minister of National Security – Minister of Finance, are you deputed to answer these questions?

**Mr. Imbert:** Not as far as I know. Are you all seeing the Minister of National Security on your system?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Nobody is seeing him.

**Mr. Imbert:** I am sorry. I should have directed that question to Madam Chairman. Madam Chairman, is the Minister of National Security not on the system?

**Madam Chairman:** There is no Minister of National Security and that is why I referred to the Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Imbert:** That is a bit of unfortunate.



**Mr. Young:** No, Madam Chair, maybe I could assist here. The Minister of National Security – I just saw them coming out of the conference room from the Permanent Secretary’s office. So it looks as though he is coming on now and he called me a short while ago.

**Mr. Imbert:** Okay then, great.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. So Members, may I suggest in the interest of time we move on to another Head and then revert to the Ministry of National Security as soon as the Minister joins the meeting? Is that agreed? Okay.

So I will now call Head 23, Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs. I have been advised that Attorney General is on.

*Head 23: Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs, \$118,961,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Attorney General to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes. Attorney General.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon to all honourable colleagues on a very historic occasion of doing this Standing Finance Committee virtually. Congratulations to the Parliament staff, Madam Chair, for arranging this momentous event.

Madam Chair, the Supplemental Appropriation of Head 23, the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs, is provided for hon. Members across nine separate different categories. We are seeking supplementation to treat with salaries and COLA, materials and supplies, contract employment, short-term employment, legal fees at the Office of the Attorney General, legal fees at the DPP’s Division insofar as there is a separate Sub-Item Head for the Director of Public Prosecutions, arrangements with respect to the Legal Aid and Advisory Authority, gratuities to contract officers, Police Complaints Authority.

The Officer of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs has supervision of 17 respective bodies and we also have indirect employment of 199 people across the direct units that the Attorney General’s Office manages. We have crossed into several thousand if you were to add the number of supervisory, functionary employment positions that we fall to manage be it Equal Opportunity Commission and several other tribunals, et cetera, in certain coordination factors which we arrange for the Judiciary, the Industrial Court, et cetera.

I make myself available to answer the questions from hon. colleagues and I thank you for this short opening statement.

*Question proposed:* That Head 23 be supplemented by the sum of \$118,961.000.

2.35 p.m.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Barataria/San Juan. Could you unmute, please? Thank you.

**Mr. Hosein:** Sorry. With respect to the line Item, Contract Employment, Attorney General, it is for the payment of arrears due to a result of revised terms and conditions of employment. Can you indicate how many contract officers that this will affect and what are the posts of these officers?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Sure, I will be very pleased to provide that information, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, we are looking specifically at 46 contract officers: 14 of which are renewal, 32 of which are new hire. They include at the Solicitor General's Department, three officers. They include at the Criminal Law, DPP's Department, four officers. They include at the Attorney General's Human Resource Department, nine officers; at the Corporate Communications Department, two officers; at the Equal Opportunity Commission, three officers; at the Chief State Solicitor's Department, four officers; at the Ministry of the Attorney General, six officers; at the Registrar General, three officers; at the Law Revision Commission, four officers; at the Finance and Accounts Department, one; at the Legislative Drafting Department, one; at the Central Authority, one; at the Information Technology Unit, one, and at the Criminal Justice Unit, three and in the Procurement Unit, one.

**Mr. Hosein:** AG, just for clarification, these are just the officers whose contracts have been revised – their terms and conditions have been revised?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** These are the contract positions filled for the particular fiscal period which fall under the heading that we are looking at which is the Contract Employment. The sum is to facilitate the payment of salaries to contract officers and their related contributions to NIS to the end of fiscal 2021. What happened was that there was a shortfall in the original allocation and this is intended to supplement that.

**Mr. Hosein:** Okay, moving on, Attorney General, to the line Item relating to Fees at Number 23 so this is Fees relating to civil matters. Attorney General, can you give us a breakdown of how many local and foreign attorneys, the disaggregation between the local and foreign attorneys?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Sure. I note for the record that I have received freedom of information request coming from your office, hon. Member, in which this information was also provided to you in writing. So, I will break that out for you again.

**Mr. Hosein:** You may have to send that request to me.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Oh, but it was done by your campaign manager and brought forward so quite surprised to hear you say that you do not know about it.

**Mr. Hosein:** I do not believe that my campaign manager would do that.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** All right, I will send you a copy of it, Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Mr. Hosein:** You have a duty to now account to the Committee.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** I am fully aware of my duty. I am just turning pages. I do not know why you are

getting excited over it.

**Mr. Hosein:** I am not.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** So, your question is the breakdown of legal fees across the local attorneys and the foreign attorneys. Madam Chair, I would like to place on the record that the request for this supplementation is driven by the fact that we are still in the course of settling \$141,378,925.54 of arrears left from the period 2010 to 2015 where the Ministry spent a total of some \$444,444,197.16. In the period that we last ended, the Attorney General's Office was able to meet most of the arrears but there is still a continuing arrears for some that are taxed under the bills of costs, et cetera, and we have managed to treat with.

I have a full listing of attorneys paid and I will give you the number now. Alphabetically listed, and this was provided to persons seeking information. It appears, Madam Chair, that the answer is 120 attorneys, all being local attorneys and there were several foreign attorneys as well involved if I could provide you with that information now. Just one moment, I have it listed here. Nine foreign attorneys, Madam Chair. Are there any further questions?

**Mr. Hosein:** AG, can you say that this \$51 million, out of this \$51 million in legal fees, how much was incurred for this fiscal year because we are getting an adjustment for this fiscal year? Is this \$51 million incurred this fiscal year that we now need a supplementation from what was allocated in the budget of last year?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** So, the sum that is required is in respect of \$51 million being asked to settle legal fees that are in general in the aggregate owing, a significant sum of which comes from years prior. There were certain matters in the period 2010 to 2015 that we asked to go for taxation and we asked to have worked out by way of resolution to the tune of many millions of dollars, scores of millions of dollars. So part of this sum is in respect of the settlement of those arrears in this year.

**Mr. Hosein:** AG, can you then provide us with what are the fees that were incurred from 2015 to present there?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** I just did.

**Mr. Hosein:** No, meaning a monetary figure.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Oh sure, I will be very pleased to do that.

**Mr. Hosein:** From 2015 to present.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Sure. The fees incurred, as I said before, for the period 2010 to 2015 —

**Mr. Hosein:** No, no, no, I am asking for 2015 to 2021.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** I know. Bear with me, I heard you, hon. Member.

**Madam Chairman:** Just one minute, please.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** I heard your question, allow my answer.

**Madam Chairman:** Proceed, Attorney General.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** For the period 2010 to 2015, \$444,444,197.16 plus arrears of \$141,378,925.54. For the period of 2015 to 2021, \$387,985,199.67 was expended by the Office of the Attorney General. So for six years, we spent \$387-odd million as opposed to the mere \$600 million spent including the arrears in the years prior and part of that \$387 million that we are spending includes the payment of settlement of arrears left for us in the gross sum of \$141-odd million.

**Mr. Hosein:** AG, can you give us a breakdown of a full list of the attorneys that were paid between the period 2015 to present, the matters that they were involved in and the cost incurred to the State, please?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** No, I cannot do that, Madam Chair.

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chair, if the AG will allow me and he will allow me, Madam Chair.

**2.45 p.m.**

Madam Chair, my understanding is that this meeting is simply about the matters before us and does not involve any other matters. And I would really like to close the door on questions of the nature being asked by the Member for Barataria/San Juan, because we could go into a never-ending spiral of going back 10, 20 years asking for details. So could I get a ruling from you please, Madam Chair?

**Madam Chairman:** And I so rule, Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Imbert:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** So, remember we are confined to what is before us, Member for Barataria/San Juan. Do you have any other questions?

**Mr. Hosein:** Yes, please, Madam Chair. So then, if we are only confined to this financial year, can the Attorney General then provide us with a list of the attorneys for this financial year, the matters that they were involved in and also, the cost they have invoiced or the State paid to them?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Madam Chair, I cannot do that for the same reasons that I wrote to the freedom of information request coming from Barataria/San Juan and people acting on his behalf and let me explain why. Whilst we provided a full list of every attorney who has acted for the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, we have consistently stated because certain matters involve ongoing works where we, first of all, need to obtain consent for disclosure and we have written to all attorneys for consent. And secondly, where they involve matters that are on the criminal side of the equation or department of justice or Central Authority or mutual legal assistance or sensitive criminal matters, which are on the civil side of the equation.

For those reasons, Madam Chair, we have very plainly given the entire aggregate sum and showed the hundreds of millions of dollars in savings. But to condescend to that nature of particulars, I regret I cannot agree with that on the basis of advice.

**Mr. Hosein:** So, AG, you are saying that you are not in a position to disclose to the nation the legal

fees that were paid to attorneys for the last fiscal year?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** I have, Madam Chair, disclosed to the nation and under freedom of information requests to all and sundry all the names of attorneys involved for the last decade, the gross sum and I had indicated that where there are matters crossing into the criminal, pseudo-criminal and investigative positions, that the particularization of individual issues becomes problematic. I want to disabuse –

**Mr. Hosein:** AG, but your office only deals with civil matters. I am asking for civil matters.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** I want to disabuse the Member for Barataria/San Juan of the line that he is approaching.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva South?

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Attorney General, very quickly, under Salaries and COLA, I know that is \$1.7 million. Taking into consideration that the Government had placed a hold on recruitment in the public service, is any of this sum – because I see it be being sought for staff on promotion and appointment – were any members of staff recruited into your Ministry via the public service?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Madam Chair, the shortfall in funding is due to the filling of vacant positions. Some of it is the arrears of salaries, increments and acting allowances. And I have given the position that – in fact, I just disclosed a little while ago all of the bodies that is related to the several persons on the contract side of the equation. The permanent side of the equation, I can tell you is with the Judicial and Legal Service Commission and the service commissions there, but these are for the contract officers.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Okay. And in relation to short-term employment, Attorney General, \$5 million is being sought. How many persons were engaged under this short-term employment? And has the project to operationalize the digitization unit primarily for the conversion to database storage, has that been completed?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** That is an excellent question. Thank you, Madam Chair. So the \$5 million that we are requesting, Madam Chair, is properly on the short-term employment side for the property business real estate solution, the digitization at the Registrar General. It may very well be, Madam Chair, that we are underestimating this figure. In fact, I believe it is closer to \$10 million that is required. And the reason is that COVID has had a significant impact upon us with people moving out of rotation and then coming back on rotation. In those circumstances, what we would most realistically have to do is to seek permission from the Minister of Finance to vire moneys within the allocations given to us, most likely coming from the Fees Head into this particular Head.

The answer to the last question posed by the hon. Member as to whether it has been completed: no, it is nearly there but the exercise has not been fully completed.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** And AG, how many persons were recruited by this short-term employment?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** I believe I got an answer to that question provided to me a second ago. Just give me a moment I will tell you now. I think it is close to 199 people, but permit me just to double-check that now.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** And is this recruitment –

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** So under short term, we have a total of 97 of the 199 persons employed on short term in Registrar General. We have under short term, Hugh Wooding trainees, 23 of them for three months and we have the undergraduate programme of 20 people.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Okay. But the majority is recruited through the Permanent Secretary's contracts or under public advertisement?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Yes. Some came from the University of the West Indies via a memorandum of understanding that we had with them and we absorbed their personnel there on that side.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Barataria/San Juan and then I would take the Member for Couva North.

**Mr. Hosein:** AG, with respect to short-term employment, in terms of the Hugh Wooding students and the UWI students, can you indicate what period the other persons are on short-term?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** As I just said a short while ago, for three-month contracts.

**Mr. Hosein:** Is there a specific period or a project that the Ministry has undertaken?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** It must be for this year. We are talking about this financial year. How could it be anything other than this year?

**Mr. Hosein:** In terms of the months, AG. So we have the UWI students and the Hugh Wooding students. They come on around for the in-service period. The other short-term employment?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Madam Chair, I just said in plain detail that we have 97 out of 199 on short term. The definition of short term is a three-month contract. The definition of the period that we are talking about, relevant to this particular Standing Finance Committee, is this year. I do not think you can get any more specific than that.

**Mr. Hosein:** AG, is there a specific programme that you are undertaking at the Ministry to hire these additional 100 persons?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** But we just said that, hon. Member. We are talking about the digitization –

**Mr. Hosein:** What programme?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** – programme. I just said it, the property business real estate solution, the land packages, the digitization of the Ministry.

**Mr. Hosein:** AG, with respect to the legal aid allocation, how many persons or how many attorneys

are enabled on these specialized counsellors and attorneys? I am seeing something called specialized counsellors and attorneys.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Sure. At the legal aid – so you are looking at non-profit institutions, you are looking at the sum of the uplift, which is the \$5,804,000. Is that correct?

**Mr. Hosein:** Yes.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Right. So that is a basket of matters that are involved in that particular point and if I could explain. The sum includes \$1,868,109.30. This is to meet the deficit that their budgetary department has told them to pay current staff. They have been operating without some of their internal support staff and they have asked for those positions to be – continue to be built out. The posts are: Head of Legal Services, Team Lead Legal/Civil, Two Legal Aid Officers, Five Legal Officer Entry. We have an HR Specialist, Communications and Public Engagement; Business Officer/Coordinator; Network Assistant; Information Technology.

Secondly, \$1,494,954.10 are for Salary and COLA for the Public Defenders Department; for two Public Defenders; two juniors; two Public Defenders I; Business Officer/Coordinator; Business Officer II; four Business Officers I; \$100,000-odd for the National Insurance contribution; \$324,000-odd for travelling and subsistence for the aforementioned offices.

**2.55 p.m.**

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Sure.

One hundred and eighty-six thousand for Fuel, Light and Water; \$513,000 for Repairs and Maintenance driven largely by COVID cleaning and other structures, et cetera, and \$1,026,933.33 for Counsel Fee Payments. This is to meet the arrears of payments due and owing to lawyers who work for the Legal Aid Authority as we try to eliminate the backlog of payments.

**Mr. Hosein:** AG, that is the panel? That is the external panel of lawyers under Legal Aid?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** That is correct. Yes, and you are right.

**Mr. Hosein:** And how many of them will this allocation take care of? Because I know the Law Association did raise concerns previously with payments.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** So, this is to treat with that. There was a reconciliation exercise that we engaged the Law Association with to say, “We hear you that moneys are owing, but can members please step forward and reconcile their claim?” That exercise was undertaken and we have asked for this further 1,026,000-odd dollars to meet those payments across the batch of people. I could not give you a precise figure because the reconciliation is still in gear. But suffice it to say that this is to meet that purpose.

**Mr. Hosein:** So, this allocation would not really bring us up because there is still an ongoing reconciliation?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** I do not think that with fees that you ever get fully to par because it is always

ongoing work as you are well aware. So, this is taking us in the right direction, if not to the complete end.

**Mr. Hosein:** Okay, thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva North.

**Mr. Ratiram:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I would like to go to line Item 02/001/23: Fees, \$51 million. The sum is required to facilitate payment of outstanding fees to local and foreign attorneys at law for their services provided. Can the hon. Attorney General provide us with a detailed breakdown of the local and foreign attorneys who these fees are going to be paid to under the Sub-Heading of General Administration. I know he made reference to the criminal law section. And as we tread into the criminal law department there are certain limitations on the part of the Attorney General, but I just want to make reference to the Sub-Heading of General Administration. The Criminal Law Department fees, legal fees for the Criminal Law Department is under Sub-Head 02/009, I am referring to the Fees under 02/001.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Sure. Madam Chair, that was asked and answered in extreme detail. I again will repeat in summary form. Perhaps the hon. Member was not with us at that moment that these matters also include ongoing civil, pseudo-civil criminal work. And the hon. Member will be aware that Central Authority there are roles and functions that are on the criminal side albeit done under the civil rule. We have Norwich Pharmacals, we have investigative work, so this is not a pure even though it is labelled as a different Head, this is not pure civil work per se. So that question has been asked and answered in detail, Madam Chair, and regrettably it cannot be clarified any much further.

**Mr. Ratiram:** So, Madam Chair, if I may? The AG is not willing to provide the breakdown of those legal fees?

**Madam Chairman:** Member, member –

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** That is not what I said, Madam Chair, at all.

**Madam Chairman:** Member, Attorney General, Attorney General. Member, I am not going to allow that question. That conversation has taken place already a few minutes ago. Question was put exactly like that. The Attorney General has answered. Okay, do you have any other question? Please unmute yourself, thank you.

**Mr. Ratiram:** Not at this time, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much. I believe the Member for Chaguanas West.

**Mr. Rambally:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. AG, I do not want to dive to – you know, back into the fees issue, but I just wanted to find out from you what would be the objection to simply stating the period of time for which persons were engaged, and therefore, fees having to be paid in this allotment? Would there be an objection to that because we would not be asking for the details of



any of the work that they did which would somehow tread on the pseudo-criminal issues that you have mentioned?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Madam Chair, I thank the hon. Member for a very sensible question. Just let me put this out clearly. The Office of the Attorney General has across multiple platforms listed in detail every single attorney at law who has worked for the Ministry and published same.

Secondly, the aggregate sums of fees paid to all of the attorneys have been published, Madam Chair. And again, that has been across multiple platforms, so there is no form of lacking in transparency involved in this position here, Madam Chair, just to put it on the record. For this financial year to treat with the supplemental of appropriation, the basket of fees that we are talking about includes matters which are in the Central Authority, in intra-governmental work, and in investigative work which is also involved in the criminal domain. And therefore, in those circumstances I am not able to particularize it much more than I have.

**Mr. Rambally:** Madam Chair—I am grateful for the response, AG. What I want to find out, AG, another Sub-Item that has been listed, Materials and Supplies, I mean we all appreciate the need for the polymer paper. Is this being supplied by an individual entity, one supplier? Or is it that it is going to be sought from different suppliers?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** I thank the hon. Member for the question. Madam Chair, in 2014 Canadian Bank Note was retained to provide polymer certificates to the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Those certificates are down to bare minimal at this point and in those circumstances, we have to order further certificates from the same supplier. We actually went back to the market and asked a number of suppliers for that information. I can tell you now, Madam Chair, several suppliers were not able to match either price or the consistency of product that we went with.

So, it is to answer the hon. Member's question, it is Canadian Bank Note, being a repeat request after we had gone back to the market. We went to De La Rue, we went to five other people, et cetera. So, we are continuing with the Canadian Bank Note from 2014. The sum that is estimated here is moneys that we are looking at for the supply—that is a 60 per cent down payment, we negotiated the price down from US \$1.29 to US \$1.24 to update the stock. So I hope that answers the hon. Member's question.

**Mr. Rambally:** I am grateful, AG. Hon. AG, are you in a position to tell us in terms of, you know, you said we are running pretty low, having last probably procured in 2014 a certain amount, this sum of money now, are you in a position to say what likely period it will possibly cover? In other words, are you working with an average that whatever polymer we secure now it is likely to last a year, maybe three years, you know?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** We are looking at least another two to three years' supply. And what we have done is that we have broken it down to phased payments, which is why we have a payment plan.

**Mr. Rambally:** And I would like to ask in terms of the negotiations and the process, is this being done by the Ministry of the AG itself? Or do you have other entities?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Central Tenders Board.

**Mr. Rambally:** Central Tenders Board?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Central Tenders Board.

**Mr. Rambally:** AG, I am grateful for those responses.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Sure, thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Caroni Central.

**3.05 p.m.**

**Mr. Ram:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To the hon. Attorney General, in line Item, Non-Profit Institutions - Revenue Advisory Authority, it has been stated to mean Operational Expenses. Does this operational expense include the relocation of the Revenue Authority from Barataria to Victoria, I think it is Victoria Street or Avenue, Victoria Avenue?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** No, it does not.

**Mr. Ram:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to return to the Sub-Item 12, Materials and Supplies for the Polymer Paper. The Minister indicated that – sorry the hon. Attorney General indicated that supplies were running low and that was the basis on which an allocation had to be made. Maybe the Attorney General could advise though why there was only a .5 per cent – half a per cent – allocation initially, given that we knew that some expenditure would have been had to have been undertaken for this particular acquisition, even if it were with a new supplier.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Sure. Madam Chair, just to make it abundantly clear, 2014 we ordered 2.5 million polymer certificates at a cost of 21-odd million TT dollars; \$22 million. That stock was anticipated to take us just after the end of 2021. In anticipation of our utilization of certificates, and how we had digitized the process, we were able to calculate with better efficiency when the stock would run out. So we are within ample time. The intention was to see if we could have deferred this to the next financial year. And therefore, the Ministry of Finance, in the original pickup of this line Item, asked us to do some further investigations, and if necessary to approach at mid-year, if we felt that we still needed to be on target for this year. This is exactly what we have done. So, we went to 13 other entities including Canadian Bank Note, to see if anybody else could give us a better price and consistency. Canadian Bank Note came back as the correct provider and that whole process is currently with the Central Tenders Board as we speak now, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** The question is that the 2021 Appropriation for Head 23: Office of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs – [Interruption] The Member for Chaguanas West, do you have a question?

**Mr. Rambally:** Yes please, Madam Chairman.

**Madam Chairman:** I am sorry. When I looked, I did not see it. I am sorry. Yes please.

**Mr. Rambally:** Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair, to the hon. AG. AG, I hope I did not miss this but with respect to Sub-Item this is on the following page, I am looking at the Police Complaints Authority.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Yeah.

**Mr. Rambally:** Right, I do not think we have dealt with that with you. In terms of this record management system. Can you give us some details in terms of how this money is intended to be spent, and whether there will be a requirement for any further costs to operationalize this system, this record management system?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Sure, I will be very pleased to give that, thank you, Madam Chair. No, we have not touched this item nor have we touched the DPP's requests for legal fees. Just to remind that we have a separate line Item entirely for the DPP's request. Madam Chair, I would be very pleased to inform that the \$2,116,264 is broken down as follows:

- 66,264, for the progressive website and mobile app.

So the PCA is building out a website and mobile app, particularly in view of the recent amendments that we did to the law.

- Secondly, there is an expansion with an existing project to include upgrade of hardware; hardware for their computer, upgrades for their digitization exercise is \$224,000.
- The third item is the purchase of laptops and desktops to the tune of \$124,000.
- We have contract gratuity payments due for the period November 2020 to September 2021 and that is precisely in the sum of \$1.482 million.
- And we have a balance of payments due for an existing project in the sum of \$220,000.

So in total, the payments amount to 2,116,264.

**Mr. Rambally:** AG, so, thank you for that breakdown, but do you anticipate any further – at this point in time, do you anticipate any further operationalization costs that we may be burdened with between now and the balance of the fiscal year?

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Not for this fiscal year. There will always be cost, I do not want to say that there is a burden of cost because this is a very essential service and the PCA has been clamouring to get its

best capacity for a while. The digitization and outreach programmes are critical to ensuring that the public has that access. So, I do not quite consider it a bit a burden and I am sure you did not mean it that way. I understand the way that you did but because the public record is at stake here, I just wanted to put that into some better couched delivery.

**Mr. Rambally:** And, AG, in terms of – I am grateful AG – in terms of the item 9009, the Criminal Law Departments and Sub-Item 23, what I wanted to enquire is really what was the nature of the engagement with Deloitte & Touche, if you could give us some details and, therefore, we will be appreciative of what this figure represents.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Sure, this figure represents a payment to a particular firm. The particular firm is the firm retained by the Office of the DPP for the Clico investigation. To date, not including this sum, the DPP's expenditure under that Item to that particular firm, is \$181,393,897.02. So this is an ongoing project. It is in relation to the Clico investigation. It is managed exclusively by the Office of the DPP and this further sum of \$33 million is specifically to be added to the 181-odd million dollars already expended.

**Mr. Rambally:** I am grateful for that info hon. Attorney General.

**Hon. Al-Rawi:** Thank you.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 23 supplemented by the sum of \$118,961,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you, Attorney General. I believe the Minister of National Security is with us so we can revert to the Ministry of National Security.

*Head 22: Ministry of National Security, \$725,608,340.*

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of National Security to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes. Minister.

**Hon. Hinds:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair, as we present the Ministry of National Security's circumstances as we seek a supplementary appropriation in the sum of \$725,608,340. This supplementary appropriation, Madam Chairman, is intended to treat matters of Recurrent Expenditure generally in terms of Personnel Expenditure, Goods and Services, Current Transfers and Subsidies, Madam Chairman, amount into those amount.

Madam Chairman, in terms of the Personnel Expenditure it is largely at the Cost of Living Allowances, Government's contribution to NIS on behalf of our employees. In respect of Goods and Services, Travelling and Subsistence, Uniforms for the personnel in the uniform sections of the Ministry, Materials and Supplies, Maintenance of Vehicles and such like. Madam Speaker, quite regular expenses. We had a shortfall in the allocations February 2021 and we now of necessity seek the supplementation as we have described, and I am open to questions by my colleagues, thank you.

*Question proposed:* That Head 22 be supplemented by the sum of \$725,608,340.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Naparima.

**3.15 p.m.**

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To the hon. Minister: Given that Government has implemented a freeze on new hirings, and it means that the number of public servants in the administrative branch of the Ministry of National Security, the numbers are fixed. Right? If so, if they are fixed and there are no new hirings, given the freeze, why could the Salaries and COLA not have been determined and budgeted for at the beginning of the fiscal year? And while you are answering that, Minister, the budget allocation for Salaries and COLA was 19.8 million in 2019 Actual, and in 2020 the Revised Estimate was 19.4 million, and today we see a jump, a nine-fold increase in Salaries and COLA from 19.4, which was the standard cost allocation over the past years, a nine-fold increase to \$179.2 million.

**Hon. Hinds:** Member, the first part of your question is better directed to the Minister of Finance.  
[Audio difficulties]

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Madam Chair, if you could get the Minister of National Security to repeat. We seem to have lost his audio. It is coming and going.

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of National Security, are you hearing?

**Hon. Hinds:** Yes, I am hearing, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** Could I kindly ask you if you could repeat? The transmission of your sound is being broken up. I do not know if it is on your side. I do not know if it is something to be checked, but maybe if you can repeat your statement so that we could catch it in its entirety.

**Hon. Hinds:** Madam Chair, I had said when we sort the period 2020/2021, we had made — [Audio difficulties]

**Mr. Charles:** Madam Chair, I am not hearing.

**Ms. Ameen:** The Minister's audio seems to be very poor. I, myself, I am not hearing him at all.

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, may I intervene while the Minister's video and audio is being resolved?

**Madam Chairman:** Are you in a position to answer, Minister of Finance?

**Mr. Imbert:** On a point of clarification.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes.

**Mr. Imbert:** What the Budget Division has just advised me, is that they took the supplementary appropriation for all of the departments and divisions of the Ministry of National Security, and supplemented one Vote, the General Administration Vote. So that it appears to be a large increase, but it is really an aggregate increase for all of the divisions which would then be vired internally by the Permanent Secretary to the various divisions in the amounts required. So, it is, on the face

of it, a bit confusing. So I just thought I would clear that up. So it is not a nine-fold increase. The original appropriation for every division was somewhere in the vicinity of 620-odd million. So this is an increase of 179 almost 620, but it is all being put in one Line Item. So it could confuse on the face of it. I just wanted to clear that up.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you, Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Charles:** A follow-up question?

**Madam Chairman:** So, are you prepared to go along with the Minister of Finance? I am not sure we have the Minister of National Security.

**Mr. Charles:** I have a supplemental question.

**Madam Chairman:** Just one minute. Member, I am asking, are you prepared to go along with the Minister of Finance, because I do not think the Minister of National Security has re-joined us?

**Mr. Charles:** Yes, I am prepared to go along.

**Madam Chairman:** Sure.

**Mr. Charles:** Minister of Finance, even if we were to aggregate all the component parts of the Ministry of National Security, do you not find that \$179 million is very ridiculous, to use a kind word?

**Mr. Imbert:** It is a large number. During the annual budget exercise, there is always an effort to maintain an appropriation within a particular range, and it is hoped that during the year one can manage. But we recognized that national security needed this quantity.

**Hon. Hinds:** Yes. Madam Chair?

**Madam Chairman:** You are back, Minister of National Security?

**Hon. Hinds:** Yes, I am. I rather suspect. The Minister of Finance correctly explained that was the total and aggregate sum that went into the General Administration, and we have to direct this to the respective divisions of National Security. For example, that \$179 million, Madam Chair, for the Fire Service, 66 million is allocated for the Fire Service; for the Prison Service, \$109,664; for the Probation Service, 3 million and for the Forensic Science Centre, \$600,870. So these are the amounts for the respective divisions as I have outlined, and we are not asking for any anything new. This is just the shortfall from 2021 for which we are seeking this supplementary allocation.

**Mr. Charles:** Could the Minister explain Government's Contribution to NIS? And I agree that it is for the aggregate for a number of Ministries, but to under-budget by almost – when we look at 1.5 million budgeted and we are asking for a new allocation of 20 – an increased allocation of 20.2 million, I mean, this is almost a nine-fold increase of under-budgeting. Is it that the policy of the Ministry is to under-budget at the beginning of the year and at the midterm review make the thing realistic? And would that not lead to arrears in payments?

**Hon. Hinds:** That is a very colourful imaginary posture. That is not the case.

**Mr. Charles:** It is not. It is not.

**Hon. Hinds:** As I indicated earlier on, Member, we are not seeking any new allocations here. We had a shortfall from the 2021 budgetary allocations. This is a supplement to make up for what was always in existence in our domain. So, the amounts, the Contribution to the NIS, is as a result of a consequence of the need to pay those additional amounts for which we are seeking the supplement. Nothing new.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Naparima, do you have any further questions?

**Mr. Charles:** Minister, could you indicate whether the lack of foresight in anticipating an expenditure in the aggregate of these divisions in the Ministry, has that led to any arrears of payments to the officers in the Fire Service, Prison Service, et cetera, and others listed here, the Life Guard Service, for example?

**Hon. Hinds:** The answer is absolutely no. And it was not as a result, for the fourth time, perhaps, it was not as a result of any lack of foresight. It simply was the Budget Division allocations to us. We have been requesting it earlier.

**Mr. Charles:** Minister, when we get down to another item, we will see, Item 001/01, we will see travelling arrears being factored in. So I think you should be careful in your comments about arrears not being paid. I move on, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva South.

**3.25 p.m.**

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This sum of moneys, Minister, of 17—well, approximately \$18 million, this is being paid for in the context of what collective bargaining period?

**Hon. Hinds:** Yes. This is an allocation for the Fire Service in the sum of \$21,623,170 and for the Prison Service in the sum of \$58 million, totalling the \$79,623,170. This is, as I said earlier, requested to supplement the amount from 2021.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Yes, I accept that, Minister. But their salaries—this computation that you have arrived at, is it for what collective bargaining period?

**Hon. Hinds:** This is for the last collective—the current. The last collective bargaining period as settled by the Chief Personnel Officer.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** And that would have been what?

**Hon. Hinds:** I could not tell you off my head but I can tell you that—

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Could you—if you are coming here for this large sum of money and so on, at least you must be able to project to what your Ministry may have to incur down the road in the context of—these workers are, what we would term, “frontline workers” in the battle against COVID-19. And I would hate to think that you and Members of the Cabinet have not been proactive in terms

of how you are treating them from a compensation point of view, in terms of getting them up to date and so on. That is why I am asking the question.

**Hon. Hinds:** These are their current salary as negotiated entitlements.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Yes, Minister. But you are not telling me, is it for 2012 to 2014? It is for 2014 to 2016? It is for 2016 to 2019? That is what I am simply seeking from you. And given your ministerial authority and always heaping praise on the role of the frontline of law enforcement in serving Trinidad and Tobago and in their battle against COVID-19, I would expect you to be first and foremost up to date in terms of how you treat with the charges under your command.

**Hon. Hinds:** That is why I indicated to you earlier, whatever the exact period in term of dates, we are paying now on the basis of the last negotiated settlement by the Chief Personnel Officer.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West?

**Mr. Indarsingh:** I hear you –

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West?

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And just to go back to the Government's contribution on NIS. Hon. Minister, can you advise us, please, whether the Government has in fact been negligent in not paying the NIS contribution as is due under the law for this period?

**Hon. Hinds:** No. Certainly not. These are to confirm those payments along with salaries and allowances going forward.

**Mr. Tancoo:** So, hon. Minister, this is for new payment to NIS? This is not for former – for debts currently owed to NIS?

**Hon. Hinds:** These amounts that we seek a supplement for will be the monthly payment along with their salaries to the NIS and it is futuristic. And it is to cover for the months of June, July, August, September, going forward.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Hon. Minister, can you advise, please, since this is a projection of a \$20 million increase in the allocation and the initial allocation was 1.5 – so we now have a significant increase and you are saying this is for the period July to September?

**Hon. Hinds:** Yes, yes.

**Mr. Tancoo:** So this must therefore be for new individuals, correct?

**Hon. Hinds:** Yes. And these individuals in the context of the – [*Technical difficulties*] In respect of the Prison Service over – [*Technical difficulties*] – to the NIS. This is of their respective salary.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Minister.

**Hon. Hinds:** And, of course, we anticipate in terms of – [*Technical difficulties*] – some 250 as well as for drivers – [*Technical difficulties*] – and will commence training thereafter. So these amounts are in anticipation of – [*Technical difficulties*]

**Madam Chairman:** Seems we have lost the Minister again.



**Mr. Charles:** Perhaps the Minister of Finance could –

**Mr. Imbert:** Let me assist if I can. I advised the Minister of National Security, who I trust is hearing us, that we should undertake to provide those sorts of details, questions, answers to them in writing. However, I can give some general information. It is a fact that the Ministry of National Security was not provided with the full amount that was required. But it is also a fact there has been recruitment in various divisions of the Ministry, Fire Service, coast guard, regiment, et cetera, which would increase its requirement for personnel expenditure during fiscal 2021. And it is in recognition of that fact that there has been recruitment, coast guard in particular, that we are supplementing the allocation, in addition to the fact that there was somewhat of an under-provision issue. But I would recommend that the Minister give an undertaking to answer your questions in writing before 1.30 on Wednesday.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. Member for Naparima? Member for Naparima, could you kindly unmute yourself, please?

**Mr. Charles:** Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. I think the Minister of Finance should correct his Minister of National Security who said that the \$20 million is with reference to future payments, but it cannot be. If retroactively, for the eight months to June, it was only \$1.5 million and only for June, July, August, September, four months it is \$20 million, clearly there is some retroactivity involved there; that is one. And the second question to the Minister of Finance, he talked about recruitment of coast guard and other officers in part to justify this increase in expenditure. We would be grateful if he could provide the numbers recruited to which he made reference. Thank you.

**Mr. Imbert:** Yes. Let me just deal with the first one and I hope the Minister is back with us for the second one. The same principle applies to NIS as applied to salaries and wages where we put everything into one Head so the Ministry can then distribute among the other Heads. So, if you are looking at General Administration alone for NIS, for example, it could mislead you. It is an aggregate for all divisions of the Ministry – in all. So it is not an original \$1 million and you may need 20 for the balance of the year. You have to add up all of them and you would get the original total, which would be more than \$20 million. With respect to the second one, I would recommend that that answer be given in writing at the appropriate time.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just some – through you, I will ask you a question on the protocols for the virtual. I noticed a while back – I do not know if the Minister of National Security's video was giving trouble also because we were told that in the guidelines that when you are responding on asking a question, one must be visible – must be seen. I am just asking if that could

be corrected, please.

**Madam Chairman:** Well, I am sure, Member, having regard to the fact that you yourself would have participated in many virtual sessions in your capacity as a Member of some of our other smaller committees, the experience has been—and in the ones that I Chair—that sometimes because of problems with bandwidth, Members are not able to participate both by visual and audio simultaneously. And sometimes in an effort to participate when they are—because I am sure you would have observed that we were all having audio problems with the Minister of National Security.

**3.35 p.m.**

So very often, not so much what the protocols require, but to ensure that the Members are able to participate and be available to us for answering of questions, one of the facilities is given up. So I do not know if you prefer picture or audio. I am sure if you only want the picture and not the audio we can also send the necessary directive to the Minister of National Security. In a perfect world, I know we would both want video and audio, okay. So I see we now have the Minister's video, let us hope both his video and audio are now in sync.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Would you like to ask a question, Member for Pointe-a-Pierre?

**Mr. Lee:** Yes, but I think we are going by line Items, correct?

**Madam Chairman:** I am not going by line Items. I am so sorry, I am sure if you have been here you would see that we—once we are under the Head, we allow questions. Please proceed.

**Mr. Lee:** Minister, under the line Item for Vision on Mission, Minister of National Security, there is an allocation of an increase of \$4 million for Vision on Mission. I do know they do great work. The original 2021 estimate was \$3.2 million, so you are asking for \$4 million. Could I ask the Minister if all the 3.2 million that was allocated originally was used up and paid over to Vision on Mission, and this \$4 million, would it assist them for the rest of the fiscal year?

**Hon. Hinds:** We have not released any just yet to that organization, Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

**Mr. Lee:** We have not disbursed any funding to Vision on Mission for the fiscal year 2021?

**Hon. Hinds:** No, we have not.

**Mr. Lee:** So you are now allocating an additional 4 million to their previous 3.2 million that is allocated to them?

**Hon. Hinds:** Yes, yes.

**Mr. Lee:** Could you say when disbursements would be made to that critical organization that does terrific work?

**Hon. Hinds:** Well yes, I subscribe to the view that it is a terrific organization. I subscribe wholeheartedly to the position that it does terrific work. I met and spoke with the entire

management and board a few days ago, and insofar as releases go, you know there is a process. We will make the request, once these supplements are sorted out, and it would be for the Ministry of Finance to make these sums available, and we look forward to doing that with great anticipation.

**Mr. Lee:** Just a last question in respect to the appropriation of 4 million. Seeing that no funds were disbursed as yet, what would have caused them to initiate or ask for an additional 4 million when no funds were disbursed to them for the fiscal year?

**Hon. Hinds:** This is not strictly speaking an addition. This was a shortfall on what was requested in 2021. The allocation for 2021 was 3.2 million. The expenditure for 2020, as you know, was 7.254 million and, therefore, we project that expenditure as to September 2021, and this supplement is designed to treat with that.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Minister.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva North.

**Mr. Ratiram:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to refer the Minister's attention to line item 01, 001, 01, Salaries and COLA, the 179 million, which he gave us a breakdown of 66 million to fire services, 109,664,000 to prisons, and what he explained is that this increase is based on the reduced figures in the 2021 estimate, that this is to compensate for the difference. However, I am looking at the book, and the actual figure under this line Item for Prison Services, 01, Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance, is \$374,220,108. When we add the 109 million that the Minister is saying that this difference is going to go towards Prison Services, it brings us to a total of 415,186,370. It is an increase from the 2019 figure, the actual figure of 2019. It is an increase of 40,965,000. Can the Minister kindly advise why this significant increase from the actual figures of 2019?

**Madam Chairman:** So, Member, I think it is something that we addressed earlier. I cannot allow you to look back at 2019. Could you confine your question to what is happening here within this fiscal year and the supplementation? I think we addressed that earlier in this meeting.

**Mr. Ratiram:** So this increase, Madam Chair, of salaries and COLA, is this to pay additional staff that has been recruited, or what exactly this increase of the \$40 million is going towards?

**Hon. Hinds:** I am not clear. What is it? I am not hearing you plainly.

**Mr. Ratiram:** All right, are you hearing me, hon. Minister? Madam Chair, are you hearing me?

**Madam Chairman:** I am hearing you, Member for Couva North, but apparently the Ministry of National Security is having some technical challenges. It is the Whip who asked for both audio and video. I think we are seeing the consequences of that. I do not know if the Minister of Finance is in a position to respond, and we would see if we get the Minister of National Security back with us. I hope that while it may not be the best world, that Members will be satisfied if we get him audio to have their questions answered, so that we can proceed. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Speaker, I gather the question was whether there had been a net increase in

staff.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes.

**Mr. Imbert:** I think it is best that that question be put in writing to the Minister, so he could give an appropriate response. I do not think it is appropriate at this point in time, especially with the audio/visual difficulties, to go down that road, otherwise we will be here until midnight. So I suggest that question be put in writing and let the Minister answer in writing.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva North, anything else?

**Mr. Ratiram:** No, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Chaguanas West.

**Mr. Rambally:** Madam Chair, is it that the Minister of National Security is in a position that he is hearing us at this point in time?

**Hon. Hinds:** Yes, I am hearing.

**Mr. Rambally:** Madam Chair, with your permission, Minister, in terms of the criminal injuries compensation, there was a provision, an estimated provision of 1 million, and now an increase of 1 million is being sought. Are you able to tell us, or I should say, can you tell us how many persons are eligible to receive payments for this fiscal period?

**Hon. Hinds:** I can put that in writing for you. Let me see, I think I might be able to help right now. Just let me see. We had in respect of 2021, the cases received would have been 179. The number of cases approved, 378, obviously some from the previous period coming over. The amount we approved would have been \$4,463,158.28. The outstanding amount is \$2,253,650, and the number of applications being processed as we speak is recorded as 201 applications.

**3.45 p.m.**

**Mr. Rambally:** Hon. Minister, so this increase that is being sought of approximately \$1 million is going to treat with which set of applications? Because I understand that you spoke about the approval of 300—sorry, 378 applications have been approved and you referred to a sum of 4.4 million approximately and there is an outstanding 2.2 million from that sum. So exactly which—how much is being dealt with now? And if we could link it back to how many applications in this fiscal period?

**Hon. Hinds:** As I told you, altogether there are approximately 201 cases being processed. There was a period, I am advised, when there was, for a short period, no board, and therefore there was a bit of a backlog, but we now have 201 cases being processed.

**Mr. Rambally:** Now, Minister, I am glad that, you know, for the information. Is there any particular—first of all, can you tell us for what period of time there was not a board? Or was there any specific reason for that?

**Hon. Hinds:** I could tell you that in writing.

**Mr. Rambally:** And, Minister, just one point that I wish to raise and you may wish to clear it up in writing, or better now, under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Act, the secretary to the board is the one who – this is section 14, is the one who is the accounting officer for the purposes of the Exchequer and Audit Act. The notion, and this is something you may clear up, the notion in the public is that we have not had a secretary to the board since 2017. So, I do not know if you may be able to clear that up, and therefore, why not? Because that is the accounting officer under the Act.

**Hon. Hinds:** Once it was relevant to the matters before us, I would have eagerly cleared it up for you, but I do not know if it is germane, relevant to what is in front of us. I have given you the facts and the statistics and I will confine myself to that for the time being.

**Mr. Rambally:** And, Madam Chair, through you, it is relevant because one of the explanations given by the Minister is that the board was not functioning for a particular period of time which leads to this ultimate state of figures that he has cited today and hence the reason why, you know, for part of the figures they are seeking this increase. So I think it is relevant, it is germane, that is the accounting officer.

**Madam Chairman:** Member, I think it is tangential and I would not allow us to prolong the conversation along that tangent. Okay? Maybe you have another resource for that but in terms of the figures, you asked particular questions and I think those were answered. Do you have anything else?

**Mr. Rambally:** Madam Chair, just one point, and I mean no disrespect to the Chair nor to the hon. Minister, but earlier I saw some latitude given to another Minister to talk about how he was amazed in his room about newspaper articles.

**Madam Chairman:** Member.

**Mr. Rambally:** We are amazed that the Minister –

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Mr. Hosein:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I want to go on line Item 02/001/13, Maintenance of Vehicles in the sum of \$44 million. Can the Minister indicate to us how many of these vehicles in the fire service, the prison service, the life guard and the coast guard are non-functional right now and require maintenance?

**Hon. Hinds:** No, I am unable to say that at this time but I can always provide that for you in writing.

**Mr. Hosein:** Madam Chair, what is the sense of the Standing Finance Committee if we cannot be provided with answers today? Because we have to follow up on some of these matters. Can the Minister then indicate to us who are the service providers who provide the maintenance for these vehicles?

**Hon. Hinds:** That too I can eagerly produce for you in writing. I do not have that information in

front of me here today. What I have today are allocations, revised numbers, projected numbers and the purpose of these allocations. For example, in respect of the fire service, this is to service and repair water tenders, water tankers, pick up vans.

**Mr. Hosein:** Minister, but how much? How many of these tenders?

**Hon. Hinds:** That figure I will not have – that kind of minutiae I will not have here. You can get recourse to that at any time in the future through a thousand different ways.

**Mr. Hosein:** Minister, are you giving that undertaking that you can provide that information in writing before Wednesday?

**Hon. Hinds:** I told you that I would produce it in writing, otherwise the next you would ask me for is the number of each of the vehicles, the registration number.

**Mr. Hosein:** Minister, with particular reference to the coast guard, with respect to the two new coast guard vessels, is this \$44 million inclusive of the maintenance of those two vessels? And are those two vessels – who are the service providers to provide maintenance to those vessels?

**Hon. Hinds:** Those two vessels are expected to arrive in Trinidad and Tobago towards the end of July. Special arrangements are being made, have been and are being made for the maintenance of those. The figures in front of us today do not contemplate maintenance of those vessels.

**Mr. Hosein:** And who will be the service providers for those vessels?

**Hon. Hinds:** We anticipate – they are brand new vessels built by Austal from western Australia and we anticipate that we may not have, from my general knowledge, we may not have the skills, the parts or the techniques in this part of the world to deal with it, so we are aiming sensibly to have the very manufacturer provide service and support for a period of time until that expertise and the wherewithal is acquired by the people of Trinidad and Tobago, most of all the members of the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard.

**Mr. Hosein:** Minister, you are aware that the reason that most of our coast guard vessels are down is because of improper maintenance, and I do not want to suggest or ask you, then are you saying that we would have purchased these two Cape Class vessels without negotiating the proper maintenance contracts?

**Madam Chairman:** So, Member for Barataria/San Juan, based on the questions you have asked and the answers given in terms of the Minister has indicated that this, anything with respect to those vessels in terms of maintenance do not form part of this fiscal package here, so I am not going to allow you to continue along that line. Do you have any further questions to ask? Please proceed.

**Mr. Hosein:** Thank you. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Minister, with respect to the line Item, Materials and Supplies in the sum \$16 million, I see that it is also for the acquisition of PPE and other hygiene supplies for the officer and inmates within the prison services. Of this \$16 million, how much will be provided for the prison service?

**Hon. Hinds:** In respect of the prison service, we are—the prison service, yes. The additional allocation we seek is \$8 million.

**Mr. Hosein:** \$8 million. And, Minister, is there a supplier for the PPE in light of the urgency of the situation?

**Hon. Hinds:** I would imagine so, but I am unable to tell you who that supplier would be at this juncture.

**Mr. Hosein:** With respect to line Item, Minister, that deals with Repairs and Maintenance of Buildings, again focusing on the prison service, repairs to inmates housing, can you say how of that 18 million was spent on the prison service?

**Hon. Hinds:** Say again? What was the question?

**Mr. Hosein:** I am on line Item, Repairs and Maintenance of Buildings, 18 million. There is prison service, repairs to inmates housing. Can you state how much of the 18 million was spent on the prison service?

**Hon. Hinds:** Well, we are seeing here an additional allocation of \$4.5 million. We had from the '21 allocations \$1 million, we are seeking another \$4.5 million to treat with repairs and maintenance for housing of inmates.

**Mr. Hosein:** And what work is contemplated to be conducted for this \$4.5 million?

**Hon. Hinds:** Well, it would not be \$4.5 million. It will be altogether. We had an actual expenditure of \$3.3 million.

**Mr. Hosein:** Minister, I do not think you understood the question. For the prison service in particular, what work will be done on the prison service?

**Hon. Hinds:** I think I did, you know, and as I indicated to you this is for repairs and maintenance of the buildings for housing inmates.

**Mr. Hosein:** In particular, what repairs or maintenance was done? Was it an additional?

**Hon. Hinds:** I think “they paint” two windows.

**Mr. Hosein:** Two windows “they paint” for \$4.5 million?

**Hon. Hinds:** Madam Chair, I have indicated to the Member this is for repairs and maintenance. I am not able to tell—

**Mr. Hosein:** This is not proper accountability.

**3.55 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** Member. Member for Barataria/San Juan, it is difficult enough, we are not in the same building, we are not in the same room, and therefore, if we are going to talk over each other, we are all going to be the poorer for it. So you have asked a question, if you allow the Minister to answer, you will be allowed follow up questions. Okay? If we could proceed with a particular sense of order, there are others waiting their turn. Do you have any further questions, Member for

Barataria/San Juan?

**Hon. Hinds:** Madam Chair, just to assist the Member further, we have roofing issues, we had generator issues and general repairs and maintenance of a number of –

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and I have a number of questions. I did not know that we could have asked questions under the Head, but now that I know I have a number. First question, 002/001/01, Travelling and Subsistence \$4.7 million. And we are told this is to pay arrears of travelling and subsistence to the Immigration Division and officers of the Immigration Division and Forensic Science Centre, to pay arrears of travelling and subsistence for the period 2018 to 2020. And the question that I have is: Why have we waited until 2021 in a supplemental allocation to pay arrears going back to 2018 and 2019? Why were these not dealt with in accordance with proper accounting procedures?

**Mr. Imbert:** Allow me to answer that question, Minister of National Security. In all of these claims for travelling and allowances, sometimes there is need for an audit. The head of the department might indicate that there may be something with respect to the claim that has to be checked, and sometimes these audits take quite a while. It may have been flagged by the Auditor General. So, we have now reached the stage where the audits have been completed for previous years and now these appropriations can be made to make these payments. But it is all about audits.

**Mr. Young:** Madam Chair, if I may assist here. That answer given by the Minister of Finance is exactly correct. This was outstanding for a long period of time. It was something that was being worked on. There was an audit that was taking place in a tripartite arrangement. The Ministry, the Officers Association as well as the administrative side of the officers, and that is what has happened, and it is now partially complete, and that is what this is for.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Naparima, do you have anything else?

**Mr. Charles:** Madam Chair, Item 02/001/03, Uniforms \$4.9 million. And we are told that the sum is required to facilitate the purchase of uniforms and operational kits for use by employees within the fire service, regiment, lifeguard and air guard. And the first question is: Does this equipment and operational kit include PPEs? And I say that in the context of a comment by the president of the National Union of Government and Federated Workers, President James Lambert. He said that lifeguards are specifically asking for an adequate supply of PPE, and the question is: Will this be able to purchase enough to protect lifeguards when the beaches are open?

**Hon. Hinds:** We anticipate that the answer to your question is undoubtedly, yes.

**Mr. Charles:** Okay. So that our lifeguards can look forward to PPE. Item 02/001/08, Rent/Lease Office Accommodation and Storage, \$9.8 million. And we are told the sum is to enable the fire service and regiment to pay arrears, rent as well as enable the Immigration Division to meet its rent



obligations with respect to San Fernando offices and lifeguards with respect to accommodation at Mayaro. I am dealing with lifeguards with respect to accommodation in Mayaro, and the question: How many lifeguards are in Mayaro? And the second question is, that there is a report in the *Guardian*, March 28, 2021, that lifeguards stationed at Mayaro complain that they had no vehicles to patrol a 3-mile stretch of coastline and were not equipped with any light watercraft to undertake rescues, as well as lifeguard towers were not being sanitized? And the question is: Will these issues be resolved as a consequence of this increase?

**Hon. Hinds:** Your question suggests something into the future. Well, I am happy to inform the hon. Member that perhaps about a week or two after coming to this Ministry, I had the honour to complete work begun by Minister Young, where I handed over some light mobility equipment in the form of jet skis to the lifeguard division of the Ministry of National Security, and that I am – one of them I am told, one piece of that equipment would have been put in use in Mayaro. So your question is futuristic, but that matter, that base has been covered and as we continue to provide more for them. So these allocations or the allocation to the lifeguard service is to continue providing them with the equipment, and in particular the mobility and the training that they need, and the uniforms that they need to properly carry out their work.

**Mr. Charles:** Madam Chair, Item 02/001/12, Materials and Supplies, 16 million. I think my colleague had raised some concern. It has to do with – this allocation has to do with supplies for use by officers and inmates within the prison service. And I am looking at a report, it was on CNC3, January 18, 2021, where Prison Officers Association President Ceron Richards said that prison officers are paying out of their own pockets for medical items, even in the light of a serious pandemic. And the question is: Will prison officers be equipped and will the president Ceron Richards be satisfied that there is going to be shortly an adequate supply of PPEs and other hygiene related items as a consequence of this allocation?

**Hon. Hinds:** Insofar as PPE is concerned, as I said earlier, the additional appropriation, the supplement that we seek here today is for the purpose of purchasing materials and supplies to be used by officers and inmates, including personal hygiene items, PPE clothing and aids to inmates upon their release. So we are aiming at dealing with those issues as we have dealt with them in the past. As you know, the world does not stand still, it is a moving target, we provide, things get lost, things deteriorate, they become old and in a state of disrepair and they constantly have to be replenished. That is the aim and purpose of the additional supplement that we seek.

**Mr. Charles:** Madam Chair, Item 02/001/16, Contract Employment, \$2.9 million. The sum is required to enable the buyout of vacation leave from officers in the office of law enforcement policy, to reimburse cost incurred by overseas missions on behalf of the Ministry as well as to enable the recruitment of two pathologists for the Forensic Science Centre. And I am speaking specifically to

the recruitment of two pathologists for the Forensic Science Centre and I have a number of questions. How many pathologists are needed to have a Forensic Science Centre operate at optimum efficiency? Second question: Would any of these pathologists be specialized in forensic pathology since expertise is required in order to assist our judicial system in this regard? Those are the two questions.

**4.05 p.m.**

**Hon. Hinds:** I am advised that the leadership at the Forensic Science Centre would have indicated that they need another four forensic pathologists. They need four forensic pathologists. *[Interruption]* Yes, the establishment makes provision for four and that is where the objective – they have two at the moment and we are aiming – I am aware that action is being undertaken as we speak to recruit two more to bring it up to the establishment and the expectation.

**Mr. Charles:** A follow-up question, Madam Chair. Often, we find a lack of integration and consistency between the establishment and what is required. Is the Minister saying that the establishment calls for four forensic pathologists? Is that what he is saying? And if he is saying so, I am asking the question, will that get the Forensic Science Centre up to optimal world class performance capabilities?

**Hon. Hinds:** Well, we rely on the experts and they have indicated that they require four forensic pathologists to function optimally. At the moment, they are with two and I am aware, as I indicated a while ago, that action is under way as we speak to recruit another two to bring them up to the anticipated or expected levels as directed by the professionals there.

**Mr. Charles:** Madam Chair, Item 02/001/15, Repairs and Maintenance Equipment, and there is an allocation of \$4.5 million. And we are told that the sum is required to enable the fire service, the air guard and prison service to meet the course to maintain and repair their equipment, which includes breathing apparatus, compressors, gantry crane, fire extinguishers, baggage scanners, et cetera.

With respect to the fire service, I have been listening on Power 102 and the President of the Second Division Officers saying that in most of the fire stations, the equipment is non-functional. Could the Minister confirm that this is true or not true and if so, could he tell us how many are operational and how many are down at this time?

**Mr. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, may I intervene here. May I ask whether that is a proper question for this finance committee that general, broad-based, far reaching type of question? Thank you.

**Mr. Charles:** Minister, this is in repairs and maintenance –

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Naparima, I think the Minister of Finance knows what you have asked. And what I will ask you to do is if you could reshape the question in light of what is the exercise here. I think that you can reshape that question. Member, I think you are on mute.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you very much for your guidance, Madam Chair. So I will rephrase the question. With respect to maintenance and – repairs and maintenance –

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Before the Member continues, are you hearing me now?

**Mr. Charles:** Yes, I am.

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Madam Speaker, are you hearing me?

**Mr. Al-Rawi:** We are all hearing you.

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** Okay. I was waiting for a response from Madam Chairman. Madam Chairman, I just want to go back to a statement that you made previously with regard to the questions that are being asked and the answers that are being given. Because, Madam Chairman, we cannot anticipate everything that Members would ask. And in addition to that, all the Members of the Government can do is have a reasonable anticipation or anticipate to a reasonable degree the questions that are likely to be raised based on the information before the Committee. So, Madam Chairman, as a consequence of that, I recall that you did state this before, so we would not be able to anticipate every question that Members may ask –

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. All right.

**Mrs. Robinson-Regis:** – and we try to keep it within –

**Madam Chairman:** Member – Minister of Planning and Development, thank you very much. I think the Member for Naparima has got the gist of it. I think the question that he asked offended another issue that we are dealing with. So let us see if he can reshape his question. And Member for Naparima, I know you have many questions but remember with every intervention is five minutes. What I have tried to do is let Members speak for five minutes. So after this question, I will ask you give the other two Members who are waiting an opportunity and then you will come back in another intervention. Yes, Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** I am guided. I am guided. So the question is – and I cannot see that this is a question that –

**Madam Chairman:** Member, please ask the question.

**Mr. Charles:** The question is under repairs and maintenance of equipment and we are told that that is maintenance and repairs of fire service equipment. So the question I am asking is, how many vehicles – because there must be some basis of allocating a sum for the fire services. How many appliances are functional and the repairs are in respect of which number of vehicle?

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. So I will allow the second question. Basically you want to know, how many vehicles the allocation will repair.

**Hon. Hinds:** This Head is not about vehicles, this Head is about equipment. And this is to service and repair, for example, breathing apparatus and compressors, not about vehicles, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** All right. So I now call Member for Couva South and after that, Member for

Oropouche East.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I know some of the issues have already been covered but I just would like the Minister to provide some further information if it is possible. For example, under the line Item that deals with uniform, I know that it has been indicated to purchase operational kits and I speak in the context of lifeguards because I know that beaches are currently closed. But prior to the closure of beaches and so on, there were unfortunate deaths at a number of our beaches in Trinidad and Tobago, especially in Trinidad. And if the Minister can tell us, from an operational kits point of view, will the acquisition for lifeguards be focusing on dinghies and jet skis and binoculars, and so on?

With respect to materials and supplies, and the purchase of fire hose and hoses and related materials for the fire services, in the Constituency of Couva South, there is the Couva South Fire Station and also the Couva Fire Station. And within the geography, there are very important areas such as the Point Lisas Industrial Estate, the Couva children's hospital, the aquatic centre, the cycling velodrome and so on. And I hope that – because my sources told me that the operations of these two fire stations are very deficient as it relates to fire hoses and so on, and I do not know if, for example, repairs to the gantry crane and so on, will be done so it could be utilized for the use of these stations in the context of what may transpire, God forbid, if certain negative situations should unfold.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, so as far as jet skis and so, I believe the Minister answered that in an earlier intervention when we dealt – it was asked under uniforms but the Minister answered it under maintenance of vehicles. So I would allow the second question with respect to your specific – the fire stations in your specific constituency. Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Hinds:** Madam Chair, this is precisely why we are seeking the adjustment in our funding to treat with matters of that nature because we too would have had reports from the fire service, from members of the public and this is precisely what we are aiming at, allocations to be able to attend to those and resolve the problems of the likes of which raised by my friend, the Member.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche East?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And I trust that all would be hearing me. Madam Chair, I want to begin, I have two or three questions which I will ask, but I want to begin by indicating that I find it unacceptable that a multibillion-dollar Ministry that is charged with surveillance, intelligence gathering and so on, and asking today for over \$200 million to deal with some of these matters, that this Ministry in the last hour cannot fix or repair a video camera.

At no time am I complaining that I wish to see the Minister of National Security or for that matter the Leader of Government Business, but we have agreed on certain protocols and I think we should try our best to abide by them. Some of us you know had to fix our cameras and our

attire and so on, to participate today even though we may be at home. I think the Minister deserves another allocation for his IT department to get equipment and personnel to assist unless this is a deliberate strategy for the Minister to receive up close prompting and briefing that we do not know about. Anyway, my question relates to 02/001/03—I see the Minister of Finance “sniggling” but this is a very serious matter that I think—[Crosstalk]

**Mr. Imbert:** Member, please behave.

**4.15 p.m.**

**Dr. Moonilal:** Could I continue please? I have waited patiently, extraordinary expenditure. The Minister is asking for \$30 million here and this \$30 million, mind you, is for the rest of the fiscal year, for three months more or less. So \$30 million for the conduct of covert operations—not COVID, covert operations—and I would like to ask the Minister: Could you indicate—and I am very clear. I am not for a moment asking the nature of covert operations, what they do, how they do it, where they do it—which unit of national security here—because is clearly not the TTPS—is undertaking covert operations for in excess of \$30 million that we require for the year and for \$30 million for the three months ahead of us? What is that money to be spent on? Is it camera? Is it listening devices? It is for motor vehicles to rent? Exactly what? Again, I am not asking at all for information on what the covert operations are, but what is this money to be used for and by which unit under the umbrella of national security?

My second question relates to the Strategic Services Agency. There is a request here and it is 04/009/02. They are requesting a further 188 million-plus for the Strategic Services Agency to enable this agency to meet its operational expenses for what really would be three months. Now what operational expenses would that include? This agency has received hundreds of millions of dollars, is this also to purchase spying equipment, to purchase camera, to purchase listening devices, high technology? I assume it is not to purchase video camera for computers. What exactly is this money required for in three quick months that you need \$188 million for operational expenses to complete the fiscal period? Those would be the two questions I would ask for now to exhaust my five minutes or so and I can return later to some other matters. Thank you very much.

**Madam Chairman:** Minister.

**Hon. Hinds:** I would venture to share with the hon. Member that four of the units that would utilize moneys under this Head would be, for example, our witness protection arrangements, our transnational organization crime unit, organizational criminal unit; we have the counter-terrorism unit, and we have our coastal radar system. Those are some of the agencies that would be engaged in these, and it involves the obtaining of vehicles to carry out that kind of covert works, radar repairs and maintenance, and as the Member correctly pointed out, all the modern well-known cutting-edge techniques for surveillance and for that type of work.

Listening devices, watching devices, covert places, covert people, and all of those things to catch criminals and people who committed crimes including white-collar crimes and believe that the end would have come. These expenses are to ensure that those persons get the attention of the State so that their crimes would not go unpunished.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chairman, could I just follow up please?

**Madam Chairman:** May I ask are you – the second question, you are no longer pursuing your second question?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Well, the Minister – because I am not seeing him. I was not sure if he is finished or not. So I do not know – did he answer? If he has an answer for the second question because I am not seeing him. But on the first question which I think he was trying to answer, he has not yet stated which agencies would utilize \$30 million. Is it the Witness Protection Unit? Is it the coastal radar? What is it and state specifically the units in national security that will benefit from what is called extraordinary expenditure? And I am still asking the Minister if he can explain the second question which relates to the Strategic Services Agency?

**Hon. Hinds:** Madam Chair, my response is – and the Member wanted to know whether I was finished. I will never be finished until I see some of the criminals in this country brought to justice and put where they are supposed to be put. In terms of my finishing that is my response, and I did indicate the names of four agencies, all of which would be involved in utilizing sums under this Head – all of which.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chair, I will accept that only to let the Minister know whatever he wants to see – first, he should allow people to see him in a meeting and fix the camera. Thank you.

**Hon. Hinds:** Madam Chair, all I would like to –

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chair, I am not engaging the Member in –

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche East, are you asking your second question or are you vacating it?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chairman, I will leave the question standing unanswered. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** That means you are not pursuing it?

**Dr. Moonilal:** No, Ma'am.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. Member for Naparima.

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and I have one question, relation to 04/007/15: Compensation to the estate of members of the protective services and 3 million has been allocated. I take it that the three officers who unfortunately and sadly have died – but the question is: Why are we not seeing an allocation for prison officers and coast guards who are dying on duty in the same Ministry due to exposure to COVID while on the job? So it is a policy question.

**Madam Chairman:** Well, I do not know that this is a proper question for what is before us. This is

compensation to estate of members of the protective services. I do not believe —

**Mr. Charles:** The question is: Why not the estates of members of the Ministry National Security who are prison officers and the coast guards who are exposed to the Brazilian strain while out in the south-east peninsula? It is question they have not considered it or they are about to consider it? That is all.

**Madam Chairman:** And that is not a question that I would allow under what is being —

**Mr. Charles:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva South.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. A very simple question to the Minister: 02/001/16, Contract Employment. Minister, I see that part of this allocation is being utilized to enable the buyout of vacation, leave of officers in the office of law enforcement policy, is there a shortage of staff that persons cannot be sent on leave and staff rotated or put to act and so on? Could to say what really has prompted this decision/policy position to go in the direction of the buyout of vacation of officers.

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of National Security.

**Hon. Hinds:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I am told that they had some staff issues, shortage of staff issues which is being attended to as we speak and that is what would have given rise to some of these elements.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva South, are you finished?

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Yes, Ma'am. While I am not totally satisfied with the Minister's response, but that is what I have to work with.

**4.25 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Ma'am. Would the Minister of National Security be able to advise us why there was no provision under Head and Sub-Head 02/ 001/61 for insurance for the Trinidad and Tobago Air Guard? Why was there no provision made in the budget and now we have a provision of \$11 million now being made? Is it an oversight or an under-budget?

**Hon. Hinds:** We had made a request, Madam Chair, for a provision for the 2020/2021 for the purposes of insurance, but again, we were not in receipt of it so we are making a request for it at this point.

**Mr. Tancoo:** If I may just continue then? So is it that no insurance was being paid for these aircraft that are currently being used or is it that we are now to going to pay for insurance? What arrangements have been made in the interim since no allowance was made by the Minister of Finance for this purpose?

**Hon. Hinds:** The aircraft are at the moment properly insured and operational and these sums are

to take care of future and anticipated payments. So let it be quite clear, they are operational and properly insured as we speak. These sums are to deal with future insurance payments.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Just to repeat what the Minister said for clarification, these sums are to meet with future insurance premiums. Does that mean that the current period is already covered by previous payments?

**Hon. Hinds:** I have said so twice.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Mr. Minister, can you also advise what was the initial request to the Ministry of Finance for this Head?

**Hon. Hinds:** We had sought, I think, \$11 million and we received none of it at that time and we are now here seeking this supplement in order to treat with it.

**Mr. Tancoo:** If I may direct my question then to the Minister of Finance? Perhaps the Minister of Finance can advise us today why this very critical component was not facilitated when request was made for money for insurance coverage for the Trinidad and Tobago Air Guard?

**Mr. Imbert:** We can certainly provide that answer by Wednesday but I want to make the point that a lot of the Government's assets are self-insured. That is a practice going back 50 years, and if you look at the Estimates of Expenditure, you will see that the insurance for these assets is normally in the range of 5 or \$6 million. If you look at the revised figures for 2020, you will see that there was no expenditure in 2020. So, we will get an explanation for you but I just want to make the point that much of the Government's assets are self-insured.

**Mr. Tancoo:** With due respect, Minister, that is not relevant to the question asked. So is this –

**Mr. Imbert:** I will provide a further explanation by Wednesday. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Minister.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you very much. I just want to remain on this issue of insurance and to ask the Minister whether or not this insurance is also related because I am seeing "Helicopter fleet" here. Is it also related to the helicopter that was left to rot at Cumuto that was part of an arrangement with a United States company where the issue of insurance was also a matter before the court? And if the Minister can update us on what is, you know, currently the status of that court matter and exposure by the people of Trinidad and Tobago as a result of not paying for that helicopter and leaving it to rot at Cumuto?

**Madam Chairman:** So I will allow the first part of the question.

**Hon. Hinds:** What was that, Madam Chair?

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chair, the Minister apparently did not hear me.

**Hon. Hinds:** I can hear you now.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Okay well I have asked the question already and I am not prepared to repeat it.



Thank you.

**Hon. Hinds:** It is not worth repeating, Madam Chair.

**Dr. Moonilal:** When you learn to fix “ah” camera, we will do it.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 22 supplemented by the sum of \$725,608,340.*

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much, Minister of National Security. We now go on to the Ministry of Health.

*Head 28: Ministry of Health \$267,113,637.*

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of Health to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes. Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and good afternoon to you and good afternoon to the Standing Finance Committee and by extension to Trinidad and Tobago. I welcome the opportunity to once again account to the Parliament and to the public at large. The Ministry of Health has been afforded the opportunity to supplement its budget, mainly for recurrent expenditure to the amount of \$267,113,637.

Madam Chair, as the questioning will elucidate, most of this is in fact for COVID-19, a significant sum. As you know no country was spared the ravages of COVID-19. Some of the items we would have spent funds on would have been pharmaceuticals and non-pharmaceuticals, vaccines, both for COVID and non-COVID uses, on CDAP, on ambulance services and for critical infrastructural work, mainly the Central Block in Port of Spain. So, Madam Chair, I look forward to the questioning from my hon. colleagues and accounting to the population of Trinidad and Tobago.

*Question proposed: That Head 28 be supplemented by the sum of \$267,113,637.*

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Fyzabad.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I have several questions over this Head which I will ask as we go along. So, hon. Minister, my first question relates to the \$34 million allocated for the COVID-19 vaccines under the COVAX facility in accordance with the agreement between the Government and the COVAX facility.

Minister, can you clarify because there have been, you know, several pronouncements both in the Parliament committee and the media as to the actual cost. Can you clarify what exactly this \$34 million was intended to cover and in particular whether this includes the 108,000 doses initially promised by COVAX?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Yes, thank you. So by Cabinet Note, I believe it is from September 2020, we had agreed that we would ask COVAX for vaccines to cover 33 per cent of the population using a two-dose vaccine regime at that time. The vaccines purchased today and paid for under the Ministry of

Health via COVAX goes like this: An initial down payment of US 1.47 million or about TT \$10 million. The first shipment of 33,600 of March 30<sup>th</sup>, that payment was TT \$148,000. The second shipment again, 33,000 – US, sorry, US 148,000. A second shipment of 33,600 of May 10, 2021, a payment of US \$152,000 which was paid for via an EU grant to CARPHA. The third shipment of 33,600 which is due in June of this year – yeah, later on this month – a payment of US \$150,000.

**4.35 p.m.**

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** So, the total amount spent so far will be US \$1.927 million. I hope that answers your questions, Member.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Thank you, Minister.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** You are welcome.

**Dr. Bodoë:** So just to move on. I may have to come back to the vaccine issue. But I just want to draw your attention to the PAHO payments and in particular with regard to the \$229,953,850 that is being requested and that includes the Abbott rapid testing for COVID-19, can you separate that Item out and say exactly what portion of that amount is being used to secure those kits and how many kits will be secured?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Sure. Thank you very much. So I will give you the entire breakdown, hon. Member, for the 22.9 million. For influenza vaccines, which as you know, we import every year, so we have 100,000 doses coming in. That is TT \$2.84 million. The Abbott rapid test, which includes 24,000 tests plus swabs and media, \$584,420; antiretroviral drugs and kits, 15.24 million; and other medical supplies, Member, example swabs, media, nasal cannulas, IV lines, blood administration lines, 4.3 million, and I think when you add them up you will get 22.9 million, Member.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Thank you, Minister. Minister, can you indicate with the 24,000 kits that you are going to acquire, how soon you anticipate those will be here and how you intend to deploy those kits?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Yes. So we have kits coming in on a rolling basis, both from Abbott and also BGI out of China. So we deploy those kits wherever we have the Abbott PCR machines. So, for example, at San Fernando General Hospital, at North Central RHA, where we have the Abbott test machines, PCR test machines. So that is how they will be deployed and used.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Thank you, Minister. With regard to the rapid testing, Minister, as you would be aware in other countries there have been situations where citizens are able to purchase some of these kits; some of the kits I am talking about, the self-testing kits. Does the Government have any policy for or against the use of these by citizens?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** So that is not applicable to this line Item, hon. Member.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Thank you, Minister. Minister, is it the Government's intention to utilize any of these rapid testing kits, especially in view of the students going out to write examinations, and so on, as a screening process? Is that being considered, or would consideration be given to that at this time?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** The use of the rapid test is under the purview of the Chief Medical Officer to deploy as he sees fit. Right now, I know for a fact we are in fact using them at many of the RHAs, and he will make that determination.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Thank you, Minister. Minister, if I can just draw your attention to the payment for NIPDEC, in relation to the National Health Card system and I just have a few questions here. Can you tell us what will this payment achieve for this system, and how long has the health card system been in use and how many citizens have successfully registered for the health card?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Sure. So the number of persons on CDAP is 125,427. I will give you some more details. The number of pharmacies on CDAP is 238 and the number of CDAP pharmacies using the health card, which I think is part of your question, is 238. How will the \$12 million be used? I will give you the breakdown: Internet services, August 2019 to July 2020, \$942,862.30; third party costs payable to Info-Tech for hosting software, same period, \$4,984,574.27; administrative costs payable to Info-Tech for management and helpdesk, August 2015 to July 2020, \$5,092,330.48; and NIPDEC management fees at a 3 per cent percentage, August 2015 to July 2020, \$1,037,984.70. That will give you, if the math is correct, Member, a grand total of \$12,057,751.75, VAT exclusive.

**Dr. Bodoë:** So just confirming that some of this payment is for past services delivered?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** That is correct, hon. Member.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Minister, are you in a position to say what would be the projected annual cost going forward for the rollout of this card?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** That is something we would have to get for you from NIPDEC. I do not have that information at this time, Member.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Fyzabad, could I therefore ask if you will allow?

**Dr. Bodoë:** Sure, absolutely.

**Madam Chairman:** So I would call now on the Member for Siparia and after the Member for Siparia, Member for Oropouche West. Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. On the Item relating to expenditure for NIPDEC, can the Minister confirm whether Dr. Maryam Abdool-Richards is a member of the NIPDEC board and whether there would be some kind of conflict of interest with her acting with respect to medical supplies and procuring medical supplies, and so on? Is this – [*Technical difficulties*] – member.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** What? I do not think that issue arises under this Head.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Well, when next would you speak about NIPDEC, Sir?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Well, I have accounted for the \$12 million. I have given you the breakdown, down to the last cent, which is the purpose of the Standing Finance Committee.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** I am guided. I thank you.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** You are most welcome.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just sticking with NIPDEC. I am going to transfer to state enterprises and move to Sub-Item 05. In the explanatory notes, the Minister advised that the loan was accessed to pay for pharmaceuticals, et cetera. Can the Minister advise what was the original and overall purpose of this loan? How much of it has already been accessed and specifically how much is left outstanding?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Sure. So, we have that information. Yes, hold on one sec, please, let me get to the correct page. Yes. So on the loan, the funds are required to meet the principal payment of the loan facility to RBC Merchant Bank to the tune of 671 million. With the loan, 444.9 million was issued to meet the cost of procurement, storage and distribution for both pharmaceuticals and non-pharmaceuticals.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Minister. But the reason I am asking is because I want to be very clear that this loan was specifically created and signed off for the purpose of meeting expenditure for the purposes now being used.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Correct.

**Mr. Tancoo:** But if this NIPDEC loan was for other purposes and it is only now being used partially for pharmaceuticals, et cetera.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** No, Sir. This loan was specifically taken out for pharmaceuticals and non-pharmaceuticals. Let me give the assurance it has been used faithfully for that purpose.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Minister. One follow-up question. If this was a fixed rate policy, why is the supplementation now 68 per cent higher than what was budgeted? Because you would have known at the point in time of signing the agreement what the interest would have been. Why is it we are now 68 per cent higher?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Maybe I should ask the Minister of Finance to come in here on that particular question.

**4.45 p.m.**

**Mr. Imbert:** I was about to come in. This is the whole purpose of the Mid-Year Review, that we look at the appropriation, we look at expenditure, we look at requirements and we supplement as appropriate, and this supplementation is required at this time.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Minister.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Caroni East.

**Dr. Seecheran:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Could the Minister of Health— with regard to the additional allocation to the COVAX Facility, could you indicate which vaccines — which brands of vaccines that we would be expecting and when they would be received? And I think he said June.

And in terms of when the expiry dates of these vaccines would occur?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** So all the vaccines purchased through the COVAX Facility, as is public knowledge, has only been the Astra-Zeneca vaccines to date. The expiry dates range from May 2021, to at this time, August 31, 2021. We do not yet have the confirmed expiry date for the last shipment, which is due in June later on this month.

**Dr. Seecheran:** Okay. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** You are most welcome.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Fyzabad.

**Dr. Bodo:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, if I can just draw your attention to line Item 04/009/01, that is Regional Health Authority with an expenditure of \$86,529,506. And I have a few questions there regarding the first subheading, which is to enable the continued engagement of the GMRTT for the operations of the national emergency ambulance service. So, the \$43,900,000, Minister, can you clarify in terms of what is the monthly cost for GMRTT? Because I note here that it is now a month-to-month agreement between the Government and GMRTT. So, what is the monthly cost and how far this allocation will take us?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** The monthly cost is roughly between 10 to \$11 million per month.

**Dr. Bodo:** Right. And can you say, Minister, how many ambulances are currently in operation?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Forty-eight.

**Dr. Bodo:** Forty-eight.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Yeah.

**Dr. Bodo:** And I just wanted some clarification on how these ambulances are deployed? Is it from a central command centre or is it via the Regional Health Authorities?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** No, Sir. They are deployed via a regional hub which is situated just behind the old market in Port of Spain.

**Dr. Bodo:** Minister, in view of the increasing load with COVID-19 patients, I am just wondering whether in the contract with GMRTT, whether there is a built-in clause for a maximum response time for emergencies? Are you in a position to give that answer? Whether it is an hour, two hours, three hours, like that?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** So there are minimum and maximum response time depending on geography, but I would not be able to give you such granular details but I can certainly ask that information from GMRTT.

**Dr. Bodo:** Just before I leave GMRT – okay. So the second Item there with regard to GMRTT because I see here to facilitate an interim payment to the GMRTT to offset amounts owed for the transport of additional patients to public health facilities for the period 2015 – September 01, 2015 to May 31, 2019 and that is \$37 million. Minister, can you explain how we would have arrived at

such a situation where these payments would have been made from as far as six years ago?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** So, yeah. So from September 2015 to August 2016, based on the contract, there were 5,574 excess transports which would have racked up a bill of 10 – sorry, hold on. Okay. So there were 5,574 excess transports from September 2015 to 2016. When you add up all the extra transports from September 2015 to May 2019, you get a total of 36,187 excess transports that were not possibly initially contemplated.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Understood. But I am just wondering Minister because is it that the system for billing is not working because this is quite a large sum of money that the GMRTT has been owed over the years?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** So what you have to realize, this is the way the contract was negotiated back in 2015 under your administration. And what we have done now with the Ministry of Finance, with central audit, is to undertake a thorough audit process where we examine every single excess transport and the numbers are in fact coming down. Actually, we will be paying less because they are being audited both internally at the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Health and the RHAs to make sure that the taxpayer is not paying for excess transport that cannot be accounted for.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Madam Chair, I will give way at this time to my colleagues.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much. I will now call on the Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

**Dr. Ragbir:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And to the hon. Minister of Health, if you would permit me, I want to go back to 04/07/01: Medical Treatment of National Institutions. I just want to ask the hon. Minister of Health, that medical treatment at private institutions, that will also include cardiac surgery, would it not?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** No. So this line Item, if you look at the details, it covers four areas of treatment, Member, renal dialysis, where we are asking for this supplementation –

**Dr. Ragbir:** “Um-hmm.”

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** – eye surgery, and administration of chemotherapy and radiation. We are not asking for any extra money at this time for cardiac services. It is limited to those four areas of treatments.

**Dr. Ragbir:** Thank you.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** You are welcome.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to go to Sub-Item 04/011/10 and 11. Those would be the loan repayments for the Port of Spain General Hospital, Central Block. In particular, I would want to find out if the reason for this significant increase in the allocation was because while the Ministry would have asked the Minister of Finance to include it in his budget, whether he did not

in fact so do?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** I will refer that question to the hon. Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Imbert:** [*Inaudible*] – having a good time? Would you repeat the question, please?

**Mr. Tancoo:** Hon. Minister, I am trying to determine whether this significant increase in the request for moneys to be allocated for these two loans, whether this increase was as a result of the Ministry itself – the Ministry of Health requesting payment for these bills but the Ministry of Finance not including it in the annual budget?

**Mr. Imbert:** Any fiscal year, what we in the Ministry of Finance try to do, and especially in these difficult times, is to see whether we can reschedule or rationalize our borrowing programme and also to streamline our debt service payments. So we continuously engage in this exercise almost on a daily basis to see how we can reduce the impact of the debt servicing payments on the public expenditure.

During this mid-year, we have done our analysis and we have determined that these particular payments need to be made, and therefore, we are seeking the appropriation to cover these particular debt to service payments. But there will be many other payments which would have been rescheduled.

**Mr. Tancoo:** If I may direct a related question then to the Minister of Health. Hon. Minister, can you advise the Parliament and the national community what the request was for under this Head made to the Ministry of Finance?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** This was to execute the contract to enable construction –

**Mr. Tancoo:** Hon. Minister, I am trying to get from you – I know that the purpose is. I am trying to get from you whether you requested – what was the value of your request to the Ministry of Finance under these two Heads?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** I do not have that figure at my fingertips. Maybe we could supply it to you in writing.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Can I ask, Sir, that you confirm that you would be able to provide that figure to us in writing by Wednesday for 1.30?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** We will certainly attempt to do so once it will be available, hon. Member.

**4.45 p.m.**

**Mr. Tancoo:** Can I also ask the Minister, given that this is a recurring item, whether he could provide a repayment schedule for these loans including principal and interest so that we can project –

**Mr. Imbert:** May I just interject here, please? The requirement for Appropriations and Allocations for Debt Servicing, especially Government guaranteed loans and direct Government loans is a

responsibility of the Ministry of Finance. Please direct your questions about debt servicing to the Ministry of Finance.

**Madam Chairman:** Member, your mike, Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, hon. Minister, as per your request, would you therefore confirm that you would be able to provide to the Parliament before 1.30 p.m. on Wednesday, the repayment schedule for these loans so that we will be able to determine what was due, when it was due and when it will be due?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** As the Minister of Finance said, that is a matter for the Ministry of Finance.  
[Crosstalk]

**Mr. Imbert:** I think I just said that.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Tancoo:** I just asked directly to the Minister of Finance, can he provide the schedule, the repayment schedule for these loans, so that we can also determine what is due, when it was due? Because thus far, the Minister has indicated that there were several loans that came forward for which budgeting information was not provided.

**Mr. Imbert:** Member for Oropouche, I would most certainly provide that information. On the next occasion, identify which Minister you are speaking to because you did not.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I am on 04, 009, 01 Regional Health Authority, where we are being asked to approve \$86.5 million more for these. And I note in the explanation – and my question relates to that explanation which says this money is required for these RHAs to augment the personnel assigned to the various health facilities within the parallel healthcare system, the various RHAs are enumerated. Would the Minister kindly advise, per RHA listed there, how many more persons will be recruited to augment persons assigned to these RHAs?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** It will be my pleasure to do so. Under the North Central RHA, we recruited an extra 959 persons; under North West RHA, 72; under South West RHA, 199 and under ERHA, 96, giving you a total of 1,326.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, Minister. With respect to the RHAs, you mentioned over 900 persons were brought in under NCRHA. How many of those were assigned to the Couva Hospital?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Okay, so I would not have that granular detail with me. So I would not be able to answer that particular question right now.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Well, I look forward to your responses in time for the debate on Wednesday. Can I ask a further question here? Under what legal authority is the NCRHA operating to manage the Couva Hospital?



**Hon. Deyalsingh:** That issue does not arise from these line Items.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** So you agree that you are operating illegally?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** I never said that, I said the issue does not arise under this line Item. You are going to report it to police and the courts and we look forward to defending it.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Minister, you are illegally operating that Couva Hospital.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** That is your opinion, it does not arise.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva South.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Minister, you just indicated to the Leader of the Opposition, in relation to the recruitment of personnel within the RHAs, a total of 1,326. Could you provide a breakdown of the respective classifications from an engagement point of view in relation to –?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Oh sure, sure.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** You will do that?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** I can give it to you now.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** And whether they are under contracts, and the duration of these contracts, and so on.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** So I can tell you: Accounting Assistants, we hired three; Administrative Assistants, we hired one; Clinical Psychologists, we hired six more; House Officers, 247; Registered Nurses, 259. We hired 14 Dialysis Technicians; we hired 27 more handymen. I could give you the entire list but it would take me about half an hour to go through it, but we have it all here. That adds up to 1,326 across four RHAs. From Accounting Assistants, Biomedical Engineers, Dieticians, Emergency Medical Technicians, General Manager (Operations), Inventory Control Officers and so on and so on. So I have that here, we can provide it for you.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** And in the provision of information with respect to the House Officers, could you give a breakdown of how they have been deployed to the respective Regional Health Authorities?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** I can give you it now. The House Officers, three were assigned to the North West RHA; 192 to North Central RHA which carries the brunt of the COVID response; 22 to ERHA and 30 to South West, giving you a total of 247.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Okay. Minister further to this in relation to the Regional Health Authority, line Item 04/0001/009 – sorry 01, you indicated in a response to my colleague, Dr. Bodoie, the Member for Fyzabad, that 330 individuals were employed as Emergency Medical Technicians in relation to dealing with the 48 ambulances within the –

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** No Sir. Member, I never said that. Please do not put words in my mouth. I never said that, please.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** You did not? You did not say 330 persons?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** No, sir. Never.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Okay.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** I said 48 ambulances were deployed throughout Trinidad.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Okay, in addition to that, could I ask because these medical or Emergency Medical Technicians are currently transporting COVID-19 positive patients within the public health system. Are you in a position to tell us if any, and what are the numbers of these Emergency Medical Technicians who have contracted COVID-19, and if any have died during their performance of their duties? [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** I would not allow that question.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** It does not arise.

**Madam Chairman:** I will not allow that question. Can we now go on to Member for Caroni East?

**Dr. Seecheran:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I have two questions to the Minister of Health. Minister of Health, with regard to these additional appointments in the Regional Health Authorities, have any specialist doctors with specialties relating to COVID treatment been hired, within these persons that have been contracted by the Regional Health Authorities?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Yes, we hired an extra two Medical Chiefs of Staff to manage that facility, and that is what I am seeing here and we did redeploy specialists from the existing RHA system to oversee the COVID ward. So for example, Dr. Michelle Trotman, who is already engaged at Caura is engaged in the treatment of COVID patients, both at Caura and Arima and Couva, overseeing treatment. So we have redeployed, and we have hired a couple extra.

**Dr. Seecheran:** But the Medical Chiefs of Staff would not necessarily be clinical doctors, in terms of treating patients that may be COVID positive on the ward.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** So what is the question?

**Dr. Seecheran:** Have we hired any additional specialist doctors for the treatment of COVID-19 positive patients in Trinidad and Tobago in our Regional Health Authorities?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** We have to a point, where we have hired people like infection control persons to do all of those things and as I said, we did hire an extra 247 House Officers, and we did redeploy Consultants into the Couva facility.

**Dr. Seecheran:** So no additional Internal Medicine Specialists, no additional Pulmonary Specialists, no additional Cardiologists may have been hired to help with this surge of cases?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** We use our existent Consultants in the RHAs to provide that coverage.

**Dr. Seecheran:** So no one else was hired. So I have a second question. You said that there is one regional hub for the ambulances that deploy out of the Regional Health Authorities and this is in Port of Spain. Are there any plans for any additional hubs? Because, someone that may ask for an ambulance let us say in another extremity of Trinidad and Tobago, let us say the South West

peninsula, would they then have to wait for an ambulance that is deployed from, as you said, the market in Port of Spain?

**5.05 p.m.**

Okay. So, let me just go back to the question. We did hire some senior medical officers, Member, across the range of specialties that you did ask, but I do not have the actual details. Yes, coming back to the central hub, ambulances are deployed, to some extent, geographically. So although calls going to a central location, they are then filtered to the ambulance closest geographically to them. Is not to say, you make a call, it goes into the central hub in Port of Spain, and an ambulance is deployed from Port of Spain to go to Cedros. They would call the nearest ambulance nearest to where the patient is, whether it is in Cedros, Toco, wherever. Okay?

**Dr. Seecheran:** And Minister, just one more question. After an ambulance treats with a COVID-positive patient, do they then have to return to the central hub in Port of Spain in order to be sanitized and disinfected to then go back out to be able to respond to another patient?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** So, they sanitize. I do not think they go back to the central hub. I am advised that they do their sanitization, changing of PPE and so on, wherever it is possible to do, sometimes at the A&E Departments when they offload their patients.

**Dr. Seecheran:** And do you have any idea what is the average rollover time in terms of downtime in terms of how long it would take to sanitize an ambulance and get it back into the service?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Yes. That is a very good question. It could take sometimes up to an hour to sanitize an ambulance to make sure it is safe for both the ambulance operators and the next patient.

**Dr. Seecheran:** Thank you very much.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** You are welcome.

**Madam Speaker:** Member for Fyzabad.

**Dr. Bodo:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, I just wanted to take you back to the Item: Medical Treatment of Nationals in Institutions. Now, you have included the renal dialysis, but I am also aware that the Ministry has a programme for renal dialysis. It is a special programme where an allocation on this budget here would have been made for \$100 million. So, I just wanted to get some clarity. Is it that that amount has been exhausted for renal dialysis and you are now seeking a separate allocation or is it that, for the COVID-19 patients, specifically, that this has been asked for?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** You have to recall that renal dialysis is funded under the Development Programme. So what we are doing now, we are using both Votes, Recurrent and Development Programme to fund renal dialysis. Okay?

**Dr. Bodo:** Understood. Yeah. So, I just wanted that clarification.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** No problem.

**Dr. Bodo:** Are you in a position to say how much has been spent of the 100 million allocated under

the Development Programme?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** I would not have that information with me right now. We could endeavour to get it for you.

**Dr. Bodo:** I would appreciate that. Thank you, Minister.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Madam Chair, yes. Minister, on the issue of, again, the Global Medical Response of Trinidad and Tobago, we are expending quite a sizeable amount of money, nearly \$44 million on a month-to-month contract, and in terms of expending taxpayers' moneys, based on an article I read, where Emergency Medical Technicians are calling for better working condition, as a responsible Minister of Health and which belongs to a Cabinet, which belongs to a country that is a member of the International Labour Organization, I would call upon you to launch an immediate investigation as it relates to the call for better working condition for Emergency Medical Technicians in the COVID-19 pandemic environment.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Madam Chair, I just want to correct the misleading impression that the Member would have given, when he—the unsuspecting member of the public would believe we are spending 44 million per month on a month-to-month contract. As I stated before, it is about \$10 to \$11 million per month. I urge members not to mislead the public.

On the second issue raised, GMRTT is contracted by the Ministry of Health and I would surely advise you to contact the GMRTT to raise your concerns.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Thank you, hon. Madam Chair. With respect to the same line Item 04/009/01, Augmenting Personnel at the RHAs, the Minister indicated there were over 1,000 persons have been recruited. Would the Minister kindly tell us what was the process utilized to recruit these persons?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** So, as we know, the RHAs are responsible for recruiting persons. They would have used their established selection and recruitment processes.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Minister, would you kindly share with us what are those established procedures for recruitment? The RHAs fall under your watch.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** But the typical method is internal and external advertisements. You send in your résumés, résumés are screened, people are shortlisted, people are interviewed and hired based on suitability.

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, Member for Siparia.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Yes, thank you Madam. Okay. So advertisements would have been placed. Would the Minister be kind enough, if not today, to provide us with a breakdown of the ads that were placed, dates of advertisements, dates and places of those advertisements, if we can get that before Wednesday's debate please?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** If the RHAs can provide it before Wednesday, we would certainly endeavour

to provide it. We would contact the RHAs for the necessary information.

**Mrs. Persad-Bissessar SC:** Most kind, Minister. Perhaps you could give some lessons to the Minister of National Security in answering SFC's questions. He might prove much better. Thank you so much.

**Mr. Hosein:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I am on the line Item that deals with Medical Treatment of Nationals in Institutions. Minister, I saw that you have a non-exhaustive list. Does this include imaging services that are being offered outside of the public health care system?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** So, Member, as I said before, if you read the notes accompanying the line Item, it was used for four categories of treatment: renal dialysis, eye surgery, administration of chemotherapy and radiation therapy. It covered those four areas of treatment, nothing more nothing less.

**Mr. Hosein:** Thank you very much. That is, in fact, an exhaustive list that we have here.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** For this particular line Item for which we are requesting 6.3 million, it was only to be used and will only be used for renal dialysis, eye surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy.

**Mr. Hosein:** Thank you.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** You are welcome.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, I just want to go back to—okay, I am looking at the expenditure of \$5,629,506 which is to facilitate the operationalization of six mass vaccination sites for a six-month period; two questions here. Can you list the six mass vaccination sites? And the second question would be whether you will be in a position to provide a breakdown of the cost for the medical staff; how many and the category? The medical staff and with regard to the computers, how many and the cost per unit?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** So the six sites are: One, the Paddock at Queen's Park Savannah, already up and running, as we know; National Racquet Centre, up and running as we know; UTT Campus, Munroe Road, Cunupia, up and running and SAPA in San Fernando. The fifth which started today is the Mayaro Sport Facility and the sixth that we intend to bring up to speed would be the Penal PowerGen site to cater for folks living there.

**5.15 p.m.**

As to the costs, the total one-off cost to set up these six vaccination sites, including of vaccinations stations, IT which you asked about, site infrastructure, medical equipment is \$1.27 million. As far as computers are concerned, I will see if I can get an exact amount for computers. We do not have an exact amount but that will be under IT infrastructure built in to the total one-off cost of \$1.27 million, and also IT consumables, \$28,800. And the total cost is going to be \$5,629,506

to set up these six mass vaccination sites. Okay, Member?

**Dr. Bodoë:** Yeah.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** All right.

**Dr. Bodoë:** I had asked about the number of medical and clerical staff as well –

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Yes.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Could you provide –

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** I can give you that. So at the Paddock, Queen's Park Savannah, vaccination nurses, which is the main one, 12; other clerks, two clerks. So it varies from site to site depending on the number of vaccination stations that we have. So, for example, Queen's Park Savannah, 12 nurses; SAPA, we will have 18; Tacarigua Racquet Centre, we have 30; Mayaro, I am told today we are going to have six, and a central site, UTT, 12. So that is how the numbers go and to support that we do have data entry clerks and so on, and then to support that we do have volunteers.

**Dr. Bodoë:** And just to clarify, these are additional staff, not staff that is redeployed from the current RHA complement?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** It will be a mixture but what we are trying to do now is train up about 200 vaccinators in addition to the RHA staff, so you do not have to stretch the RHA's staff too thin. And we have started that process already.

**Dr. Bodoë:** Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** You are welcome.

**Madam Chairman:** And Member for Caroni East.

**Dr. Seecheran:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And to the Minister of Health again, Minister, I just wanted you to clarify for me with regard to the COVAX facility that we are making another payment to, is this third tranche that we are supposed to be getting in June, will this be our last tranche from COVAX or are we expecting future tranches from COVAX?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** No. This is the last tranche to satisfy the first block of 100,800 doses. There are other tranches to come. So we have satisfied now that first block of 100,800 doses with these tranches of 33,600 each but this is not the final amount. If you would recall, hon. Member, the original purport of COVAX was to supply vaccines to vaccinate 20 per cent of the global population by the end of 2021, but the Cabinet Note which I took in September 2019 extended it, as I said before, to 33 per cent of the population. But now that we are getting into bilateral deals, we will see how the numbers play out.

**Dr. Seecheran:** This is a supplemental, all the future vaccines that we expect from COVAX will be of the *AstraZeneca*?

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** No, that is not correct at this point in time. We are guaranteed 100,800 doses of *AstraZeneca*. Going forward COVAX will determine, based on global supply, whether we get other

WHO approved vaccines, for example, Pfizer or Moderna.

**Dr. Seecheran:** Okay, thank you.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** Okay?

**Dr. Seecheran:** Yeah.

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** You are welcome.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Fyzabad.

**Dr. Bodo:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, in response to my colleague, Caroni East, you mentioned the bilateral agreements, are you in a position to give us the cost of the 800,000 Johnson & Johnson vaccines that were recently announced by the Prime Minister?

**Madam Chairman:** Okay –

**Hon. Deyalsingh:** That does not arise out of this line Item.

**Madam Chairman:** So I was just going to say, I allowed the Member for Caroni East a little latitude because of the whole issue with vaccines, but, again, let us be reminded about what our exercise is. Okay?

**Dr. Bodo:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** All right.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 28 supplemented by the sum of \$267,113,637.*

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you so much, Minister of Health. Head 31, Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation.

*Head 31: Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation \$24,800,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of Public Administration and Digital Transformation to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes.

**Hon. West:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, Members of the Committee, members of the esteemed public, I am pleased to appear before the Committee for the purpose of answering questions relating to the proposed adjustment, that is an increase of \$24.8 million to be appropriated Recurrent Expenditure for Head 31, Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation. Madam Chair, the Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation's mandate includes creating a digital nation with particular focus on creating a digital public service, with the avid attention being paid to all things digital.

Allow me to remind the Committee, as well as the viewing and listening public, that this mandate is not only about information and communications technology, although this comprises a significant part of the portfolio, this administration and transformation mandate requires four key components, mainly people, processes, technologies and facilities. This is evidenced by the composition of the Ministry with its core technical divisions, as well as the two agencies under the

Ministry, iGov and TATT.

The adjustment—the Committee will note, Madam Chair, that the Item requiring additional funding relates to the property management programme. I indicated during my appearance before this Committee for the presentation of fiscal 2021 that the property management programme was one of the two largest cost elements in this Ministry. A major component of the property management programme is the servicing of loans and other payments associated with the International Waterfront Complex, the Government Campus and other major property investments by the State.

Members will note that the original allocation to the Ministry's 1.207 billion, the Ministry is now seeking an increase of \$24,800,000 under Recurrent Expenditure for payment of a loan due in respect of the Government Campus Plaza fit out. Madam Chair, I stand ready to answer questions in relation to this proposed adjustment to the Ministry's 2021 allocation. I thank you.

*Question proposed:* That Head 31 be supplemented by the sum of \$24,800,000.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Chair. Also, I want to thank the hon. Minister for her willingness to answer questions on this issue. I note that this is the second instalment of this loan. Can the Minister advise when this loan was finalized and signed?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister, you need to unmute your mike.

**Hon. West:** Sorry, Madam Chair. I believe, Member, this was a 2012 loan. I will confirm for you if you will give me a few minutes. Sorry, it is 2018, Member.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Minister. Can the Minister advise if a repayment schedule was included in that agreement?

**Hon. West:** Yes, there was a repayment schedule. It requires biannual payments in respect to —

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Minister. Because that follows into the next question, because the initial allocation for this purpose was \$24,800,00, we now have a doubling of that principal payment. Why was this not factored in then in the 2021 budget?

**Hon. West:** Member, the biannual payment is in the sum of 24.8. The Ministry requested sufficient funds to account for both annual payments. We received the allocation initially for the first annual payment so we are now seeking an allocation for the second annual payment which is due in September.

**5.25 p.m.**

**Mr. Tancoo:** So, Madam Minister, the first payment was for last year, 2019/2020?

**Hon. West:** No, it was for this current fiscal year.

**Mr. Tancoo:** And the second annual instalment is for —

**Hon. West:** It was tabled in March. And the second annual instalment which is also due in this



fiscal is due in September 2021.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Minister. So you were aware that you would have needed 48 million – \$49.6 million to settle this year?

**Hon. West:** Yes, Member.

**Mr. Tancoo:** And a deliberate decision was taken not to include this figure in the annual budget preparation, 2020/2021?

**Hon. West:** Member, as I indicated earlier, we requested the full amount due. We got sufficient to make the first payment. So we are now seeking the balance needed to make the second payment. You are on mute, Member.

**Mr. Tancoo:** My apologies. Minister, if I may ask, can you advise what is the current status of the outfitting of this local government campus?

**Hon. West:** The campus has been outfitted, and the state agencies that have been allocated space in the campus are in occupation and operating.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Are there also other facilities that are provided to members of the public for rent? Are there also other facilities in this local government campus that are available for rent for tenants?

**Hon. West:** As far as I am aware, there is one entity operating out of the campus that is a non-state agency, as well as the auditorium in the tower allocated to the AG's Office, that is provided for rent to members of the public.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Minister.

**Hon. West:** You are welcome.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 31 supplemented by the sum of \$24,800,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you, Minister.

**Hon. West:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

*Head 39: Ministry of Public Utilities \$944,577,000*

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of Public Utilities to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes. Minister.

**Hon. Gonzales:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair, good evening. Good evening colleagues.

Madam Chair, in 2020, when I took on the mantle of Minister of Public Utilities, I resolved that the Ministry and its agencies would eliminate inefficiencies through stronger leadership, governance and accountability, to maximize the use of limited financial resources existing, and achieve greater cost-effectiveness in meeting the needs of fellow citizens.

In 2021, as our country continues to grapple with unprecedented socio-economic challenges, like so many others across the globe, the Ministry of Public Utilities has sharpened its focus on taking necessary action to enhance the efficiency with which public utility services are

provided to the population. Our efforts are not singularly focused on one service, but all the services that contribute to a higher quality of life for the people of this country.

The additional \$944 million the Ministry has received in this time of financial challenges, gives rise to the old adage: "To whom much is given, much is expected." We at the MPU will continue to pursue strategies to ensure that the utility sector is re-engineered to perform at a much higher level of operational efficiency.

Despite the fact that WASA, T&TEC, TSTT are owed hundreds of millions of dollars by customers, the utility companies continue to do yeoman service to ensure a level of stability and reliability in the provision of utility services to the country in very difficult financial circumstances.

In respect of WASA, Madam Chair, the Minister of Finance was very clear in his budget presentation in October last year, that as a country we cannot continue to fund the huge transfers made to operational expenses as we had done in the past. A sizable cut was effected and the WASA board and management was put to the task of rationalizing expenditures in several discretionary areas.

By this action alone, the Government was signalling that transformation of the Authority had commenced. I am pleased to report that our efforts have already had a positive impact. Over the past six months, significant cost reductions amounting to approximately \$84 million have been affected against the original allocation in areas such as overtime and allowances, goods and services, short-term employment and office equipment. These savings, together with the supplementary allocation to WASA of \$575.9 million, will be used to meet major expenses related to salaries, wages and cost of living allowances, contract employment and payments to DESALCOTT for the remaining period of the current financial year.

In the coming weeks, I expect the Board of Commissioners to complete the HR audit exercise, the transformation strategy and a new organizational structure that is reflective of the needs of a modern, efficiently functioning water utility company. This will trigger the commencement of major transformation initiatives that are geared towards improving management and operational efficiencies, reducing operational cost, improving revenue and weaning the Authority off state subventions.

In closing, I must acknowledge the PS and her team of dedicated and committed public officers at the Ministry of Public Utilities who, despite the current environment, continue to provide me with unswerving support.

Thank you very much.

*Question proposed:* That Head 39 be supplemented by the sum of \$944,577,000.

**Madam Chairman:** The Member for Caroni Central.

**Mr. Ram:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To the hon. Minister of Public Utilities, I deal with Item 001,

Sub-Item 42, Street Lighting. Can the hon. Minister indicate what is the period of these arrears in the amount of 152 million thereabout? So one, what is the period of arrears? Is there additional moneys in arrears that will be required at the end of this financial year? I will start with those two please, Madam Chair.

**Hon. Gonzales:** Thank you very much, hon. Member. The sum of \$152,673,000, that would be to cover arrears between the period December 2019 to April 2021.

**Mr. Ram:** Supplemental, please, Madam Chair. Will the country see any better response to the calls for street lighting repairs when these moneys are made available? Because as Members of Parliament we get quite a number of calls and emails about street lights not being repaired. Will the country see a better response to street lighting repairs when these payments are made?

**Hon. Gonzales:** Yes, I think the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission has been doing quite a fantastic job in spite of the financial challenges that the utility company currently faces in trying its best to effect the repairs of street lights across Trinidad and Tobago and the avalanche of requests that they get across the country from Members of Parliament, councillors, et cetera. So they have been trying their best. Despite the fact that the Ministry of Public Utilities has not been paying the bill on time, T&TEC continues to do its part in trying to ensure that the country gets – and this particular service continues in a very stable fashion. So I can tell you that hopefully – and I am hoping that with the clearance of that outstanding sum, T&TEC will continue to do work in the best of circumstances.

**5.35 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Just for clarification, hon. Minister. You are Minister for both, well for public utilities in the Ministry and as well T&TEC falls directly under you. Can the Minister indicate specifically why we have ended up in a situation where we have arrears to a company which you accept is under financial duress at this point in time? Why was there this accumulation for this extended period of time?

**Hon. Gonzales:** The hon. Member will appreciate that you can make payment once you have the funds available. So obviously we were not in a position to make the payments and I very grateful that the Ministry of Finance has accepted the request to provide the necessary funds so that we can pay the utility company for the service that they are providing to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

**Mr. Tancoo:** If I am therefore to continue, can the Minister confirm that these funds were requested before and were not provided? Or is it that you are now making the request to the Ministry of Finance in this situation here?

**Hon. Gonzales:** No. Well, this is an ongoing expense and – [*Technical difficulties*] – at the start of

every financial year we will make the necessary request for funding.

**Mr. Tancoo:** So, Minister, you can confirm then that you would have made a request for payments for the arrears for 2019 and 2020 and you are making a request now having not been able to meet for those arrears for the three-year period 2019 to 2021?

**Hon. Gonzales:** The Member will also appreciate as Ministry we make all kinds of requests to pursue programmes and to pursue outstanding bills that the Ministry is faced with. But at the end of the day, those payments can only be made when funds become available.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Minister, I will hold and allow my other colleagues to ask questions.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Pointe-a-Pierre. Member for Couva South.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, based on the fact that you indicated these arrears are as a result of a number of requests coming from Members of Parliament, councillors and so on, could you provide a detailed breakdown of how these moneys were spent across the 41 constituencies of Trinidad and Tobago?

**Hon. Gonzales:** I can provide that at the appropriate time. I do not have the information readily available at this time.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Minister, it is possible to get that before the debate begins?

**Hon. Gonzales:** I am sure I can.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for St. Augustine.

**Ms. Ameen:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. To the Minister of Public Utilities, this allocation for outstanding payments for street lighting, I want to ask you if this represents the total amount that is owed to T&TEC at this time. And if not, can you provide us with what is outstanding. What does the Ministry of Public Utilities still owe T&TEC? And I have a follow-up question.

**Hon. Gonzales:** Okay. So that amount, Member, will completely clear the outstanding amounts owed to T&TEC up to this point in time.

**Ms. Ameen:** Also, Minister, lights on recreation grounds. Although these recreation grounds fall under regional corporations, these lights are often paid for under street lighting.

**Hon. Gonzales:** That is correct.

**Madam Chairman:** Member, could you tell me under which Item you are asking the question?

**Ms. Ameen:** This is with regard to the outstanding payment for street lighting.

**Madam Chairman:** This is under 02/001/42?

**Ms. Ameen:** Yes.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. I understood the Minister to say there is no longer any arrears.

**Hon. Gonzales:** That is correct.

**Ms. Ameen:** Yes. That is correct. So I just wanted to ask him, if during the time, the period of arrears, if he could provide the information, he may not have it at hand, whether any of the lights to recreation grounds had to be cut because of this outstanding amount?

**Hon. Gonzales:** No. The Ministry adopts a policy where it will not discontinue the service for providing lights for recreational spaces across the country. So despite the fact that this amount was owed to T&TEC, the Ministry continued to provide the necessary services by allowing T&TEC to have those public spaces properly lit as best as possible.

**Ms. Ameen:** Thank you very much.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. Member for Caroni Central.

**Mr. Ram:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I move on to line Item 007, Households, Sub Item 08, Refunds to T&TEC Rebate on Electricity Bills. Can the hon. Minister indicate the number of persons who benefit from this programme?

**Hon. Gonzales:** Or rebate, yes. I do apologize for the delay in the response. So I can tell you that there are approximately 210,000 customers, Rate A domestic customers, that benefit from this programme.

**Mr. Ram:** Supplemental, please. And how are these persons chosen to be on the programme? What is the process of choosing these persons to be on the programme?

**Hon. Gonzales:** Yeah. So the way in which this policy is implemented, Member, is that once any citizen whose bill is \$300 and below, they will automatically qualify for the rebate. So that is the sole qualifying criteria. Your domestic bill once it reaches TT \$300 and below, you are automatically entitled to the rebate and that is calculated in the final bill before it is given to the customer.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Mr. Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, I just wanted to get some clarification on the line Item dealing with street lighting. Minister, can you just clear up whether or not the sums that are being paid to T&TEC is the body that solely undertakes the street lighting? Or whether or not this service is contracted out?

**Hon. Gonzales:** No. T&TEC is the body that is solely responsible for executing those projects.

**Mr. Hosein:** For street lighting repairs?

**Hon. Gonzales:** Street lighting. Yes.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Again, I am returning to the rebate Item for Households. I noticed that your estimate was \$14 million but your request for increase is now twice that at \$72 million more that you are asking for. It is that the option was over-subscribed? Because your Ministry would have been able to calculate exactly based on trending how many people would have accessed or would have been able to access this facility. So my question then, is it that the

option was over-subscribed? Or was it that you underestimated the initial provision to start with?

**Hon. Gonzales:** So the \$40 million that was requested in 2021, that was a fair estimate for the financial year 2021. The \$72 million that was supplemented in this allocation is to cover our outstanding sums owed in previous years.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Can the Minister therefore advise, what was the period of time that we are referring to now, how long have these arrears been in the works? Just to repeat, Minister, for what period these arrears have been owed by your Ministry to households.

**Madam Chairman:** The outstanding refunds, Member? Are we still under Refunds?

**Mr. Tancoo:** We are still under Refunds, yes, Madam Chair. The Minister indicated that part of this, the 40 million was a fair estimate for 2021, but that the additional figures, the \$72 million was in fact for payment of arrears which would have been for a period before 2021. My question then is, for what period does this 72 million cover?

**Hon. Gonzales:** So it covers two periods, 2020 and 2021 to June 2021. Member, you are muted. Can you unmute? I am not hearing what you are saying.

**Madam Chairman:** Member.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Sorry.

**Madam Chairman:** Just one minute, please. Minister, you have another device on? We are getting a lot of feedback.

**Hon. Gonzales:** No other device is on, Madam Chair.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. All right. Member for Caroni Central.

**5.45 p.m.**

**Mr. Ram:** Madam Chair, just for some housekeeping, I believe the Member for Oropouche West had a follow up from that but I will continue and maybe he can come back in after. I am dealing with line Item, again, 009, Other Transfers, and I can deal with them, all the Sub-Items 18, 19, 20 and 21. So, the observation is – first a comment. The observation is that these fixed rate bonds, the allocation of these fixed rate bonds at the beginning of the financial year was known and only half of those, approximately half of those was given at the beginning or released at the beginning. Can the Minister indicate why was this such a situation?

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. So, Member, I think we have been advised that all questions with respect to debt payments and loans we should direct them to the Minister of Finance. So I would ask the Minister of Finance to –

**Mr. Imbert:** Put them in writing and I would answer all of them.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Caroni Central anything else?

**Mr. Ram:** Madam Chairman, I will come back. I will allow my colleagues to continue.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** No.

**Madam Chairman:** I will take Member for Couva South.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam Chair, just to clarify my previous issue with regard to the rebates. Based on the Minister's explanation, the \$14 million that existed in the provision that was made for 2021 was up to the period July 2021, is that correct?

**Hon. Gonzales:** June 2021.

**Mr. Tancoo:** June 2021. But you are now asking for twice the amount of money to carry you – almost twice – to carry you through to the end of the financial year?

**Hon. Gonzales:** No, no, no. What I explained, that this amount will cover outstanding arrears owed from 2020 into 2021, and it would bring us up to our commitments for June 2021.

**Madam Chairman:** Member, can you kindly unmute your mike please?

**Mr. Tancoo:** My apologies, Madam Chair. Since the line Minister is unable to answer questions falling under his watch with regard to financing, would the hon. Minister of Finance be able then to provide some answers with regard to T&TEC loans. I noted that the Minister has said that if requests are put in writing he would answer accordingly. However, this is the Standing Finance Committee in which we are being asked to approve funds to be paid by the State. It is unacceptable that we are now being asked to put questions in writing for the Minister to respond. I think that is very, very disrespectful to the Parliament session that we are in now, otherwise what is the function then of the Standing Finance Committee. We cannot be a rubber stamp.

**Hon. Gonzales:** Is that a question for me to answer Member?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Hon. Minister, I was responding –

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of Finance. You are on mute, Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Imbert:** I am so sorry. I apologize. I will answer all questions on debt service, loan payments, debt financing, appropriation for debt in every single Ministry, entity, agency, statutory authority, state enterprise, or any other entity for which provision is being made for debt servicing. And in those circumstances since there are many provisions for debt servicing, I am asking Members to put their questions in writing so that the Debt Management Unit of the Ministry of Finance can answer these questions efficiently.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Hon. Minister.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you. Hon. Minister, I find that a little bit difficult as a Member of the Standing Finance Committee, because these specific increases are being asked of the Standing Finance Committee today, and therefore these specific queries and questions should have been at the Minister's hand for responses today. If we put these questions in writing we have no idea when

we will get a response. But the Minister should have come prepared to answer questions on these documents that he has provided to the Standing Finance Committee today. Is the Minister unable to provide these questions today?

**Mr. Imbert:** I am willing to intervene again now for the fourth time. I will answer every single question, every single question posed by every single Member on every single provision for debt service and debt financing by 1.30 on Wednesday. I do not wish to say this again, Madam Chairman.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Hon. Minister, therefore I am to ask my question now and you can put it in writing then by Wednesday. Is that okay, Mr. Minister?

**Mr. Imbert:** To avoid any misunderstanding, I would be grateful if you would put your questions in writing. If you wish to ask them verbally, please feel free. But I hope there is no misunderstanding.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Mr. Minister, I will like to assist you by putting it verbally to you now, and as you so desire you can review the tape or send it to your colleagues for them to prepare their responses. Hon. Minister, I would like to find out when these bonds listed under Other Transfers, when these bonds were negotiated and signed? What is the status of these bonds? Why are they not in the budget preparation documents, budget of 2021, especially since we are now asking for a 100 per cent increase in almost every one of them, principal and interest? Why was this not factored in? Because you would have known that these bonds required servicing, and you would have known the date and time. Why was this provision not placed in the annual budget for the financial year 2021? That is my question, hon. Minister, for the one, two, three, four payments to be made under Other Transfers with regard to the T&TEC fixed rates bonds? I await the Minister's response –

**Mr. Imbert:** You are asking me now?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of Finance, I think you indicated that you will put the answers in writing and therefore we will move on. Member for Couva South.

**Mr. Imbert:** Sorry, Madam Chairman, I am sorry I was muted just now. I apologize.

**Madam Chairman:** Yeah. Well, I said Minister of Finance you indicated that you will put all those answers in writing with respect to the debts, why the servicing was not included before and so on. So I will leave you to put those things in writing. I have gone on to the Member for Couva South.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Minister under 06/004/51, Water and Sewerage Authority, we are being asked to supplement \$575,900,000 to WASA. Could you give a breakdown to this meeting as it relates to, out of this sum, what is needed to meet Personnel Expenditure, salaries to contract officers, and to meet contractual obligations to DESALCOTT for the delivery of desalinated water to the end of fiscal 2021? And in relation to salary to contract



officers, how much contract officers are involved in this particular allocation?

**Hon. Gonzales:** Okay, thank you very much Member. So for Wages and COLA we are looking at \$100,900,000. For contracted officers we are looking at \$245 million, approximately 2,200 contracted officers. For DESALCOTT we are looking at – oh sorry, for contract employment, sorry, the sum that we are looking at is \$230 million, and with approximately 2,100 contracted officers. And for outstanding payment for DESALCOTT up to the end of the financial year we are expecting to incur the sum of \$245 million. Member, I think you are muted, yeah.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Sorry, I am. Minister, you indicated that, and quite a sizable amount is for, I would expect, Personnel Expenditure in respect of bargaining agencies, 2,100 contract officers.

**5.55 p.m.**

You indicated that a manpower audit exercise would be completed. Could you state when this manpower audit exercise would be completed? And which entity has been engaged as it relates to the conduct of this manpower exercise?

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, so Member, I will not allow this under the exercise that we are currently engaged in. Member for Caroni Central.

**Mr. Ram:** Thank you, Madam Chair. If I could just take back the hon. Minister to line Item 011: Transfers to State Enterprises, Sub-Item 02, Solid Waste Management Company Limited in the tune of 7.8 million thereabout. Could the hon. Minister indicate what operational expenses would SWMCOL incur up to September 2021?

**Hon. Gonzales:** What is the question, Sir?

**Mr. Ram:** What operational expenses? It is stated that the sum is required by SWMCOL to meet current operational expenses to the end of fiscal 2021, that is the 7.8 million. Can you indicate what operational expenses are required or will be incurred?

**Hon. Gonzales:** Well, that is the payment of the salaries to workers, payment to contractors and other contracted services that the utility, not the utility company but the state enterprise would require to meet some of its daily obligations. However, I must point out that that \$7 million that we are asking for here, it arose as a result of some transfers that were made during the financial year to assist the National Maintenance Training Company to meet outstanding payments on a fixed rate loan obligation. So what we are actually doing there is getting that outstanding sum back into SWMCOL's coffers so that it can continue its operations up to the end of the financial year.

**Mr. Ram:** Thank you. I will then move on to Item 03/05 and the write up indicates that it is for the production of delivery of **bulk power. Item 585 – projects.** Can you disaggregate the amount of 3.6 million into what will be used for the upgrade, what will be used to pay land compensation for the land owners and what will be used to facilitate the expansion of the power of the utility corridor or the union estate –

**Hon. Gonzales:** All right. So with respect to the payment of land acquisition compensation we are looking at somewhere in the region of \$28 million. For planned expenditure that is being targeted for the remainder of this fiscal year we are looking at approximately \$4 million. With respect to the other items, I could provide that information in writing.

**Mr. Ram:** Hon. Minister, the amount for compensation for land owners the end of this financial year is \$4 million, right? You know where you can get that?

**Hon. Gonzales:** Just one second please. Let me just get some clarification here. Yes, so the \$4 million, yes, is anticipated for the payment of land acquisition compensation.

**Mr. Ram:** Right. And then hon. Minister, that is the end of this financial year. Now, the total amount asked under this line item, under this Vote as we call it, is 3.6 million. So therefore, all you would be doing for the end of this financial year is an acquisition and it will not be sufficient to even achieve that. Is that correct?

**Hon. Gonzales:** What is the last question, Sir?

**Mr. Ram:** You are indicating that \$4 million was required for land acquisition for the end of the financial year. The entire Vote, the entire Vote today, the additional is 3.6 million.

**Hon. Gonzales:** Yes.

**Mr. Ram:** Will that then be sufficient?

**Hon. Gonzales:** It will be sufficient because we intend to get the additional sums from T&TEC's internal funds.

**Mr. Ram:** Understood. And how many land owners we are looking at to be compensated on this exercise? How many?

**Hon. Gonzales:** It is approximately nine land owners towards the end of this financial year. But there are about 74 land owners in total.

**Mr. Ram:** Hon. Minister, you would have or T&TEC would have recruited certain persons to do surveying and legal services among other things. How were they selected?

**Hon. Gonzales:** All these things are being done internally.

**Mr. Ram:** Internally, thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva North.

**Mr. Ratiram:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I would just like to draw the Minister's attention to line item 05/06 Community Water Improvement Programme with the request for \$16 million. Additional funding is required to provide water supply to unserved and underserved areas throughout the country. Minister, I would like to draw your attention to a correspondence that I would have sent to your office on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February, 2021, on behalf of the residents of Brickfield Village, Waterloo, Carapichaima, seeking your intervention to resolve the poor water supply in the area. I indicated that I have met with several residents and they have all raised the

issue of poor water supply they are currently experiencing. Some have not received pipe borne water supply for months while others have complained that when they do get a supply it is very low in pressure and it comes at irregular hours, making it very difficult for them to fill their barrels, their tanks, their containers and so forth. Minister, I do recall that you responded on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February via a social media platform and you expressed your enjoyment to tackle these types of issues with small communities and persons having problems with water and so forth. That was back in the February month. From then I would like to believe that you would have put the necessary investigative measures in place to formulate a plan that I am now hoping this 16 million will help to address the challenges that the community in Brickfield, Ojar Maharaj, Butler Village, around that Carapichaima area is experiencing in Couva North. Can you indicate to me if this additional 16 million will resolve the water challenges that we discussed in February?

**Hon. Gonzales:** Thank you very much for that question, hon. Member, and yes I wish to confirm that the Community Water Improvement Programme is a PSIP programme that I intend to utilize to address some of the very concerns that you just expressed. Because there are many communities around Trinidad and Tobago that suffer for a reliable water supply and upon further investigation you recognize that the issues to address those concerns may not take hundreds of millions of dollars. And therefore, it is the very reason that prompted me to write every single Member of Parliament to assist me to identify those areas in their respective constituencies so that I can undertake the necessary assessment, the necessary project planning so that we can utilize the limited funds that are available under the CWIP programme as we fondly call it in the Ministry of Public Utilities to address and to go into those very small communities to address the concerns so that they can experience an enhancement in their water supply. And I am pleased to tell you that your constituency was in fact taken into consideration and this particular concern that you have just raised is now part of the programme of works to be executed under this programme.

**Mr. Ratiram:** Thank you very much, thank you very much, Minister. Can you at this time give us an indication, the completion date for those works to be undertaken in that community?

**Hon. Gonzales:** Okay, now that the Minister of Finance was so very generous to me to allocate \$16 million so that I can pursue the work, I can tell you that we have started the preparation and now that \$16 million is now being allocated to execute some of these programmes. I have already started marshalling the resources of the Ministry of Public Utilities and WASA to commence the execution of these projects.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, if I am to build as well on my colleague's question. Can the Minister now then provide us with a detailed breakdown, a disaggregation by region, by constituency if possible, of the expenditure under this line Item 061 Community Water Improvement Programme? Would

you be in a position to provide the breakdown by constituency of the expenditure of this money, this \$20 million that you now have at your disposal?

**Hon. Gonzales:** So we have no expenditure as yet. Now that we have an allocation, we would now develop a programme to be put across the various constituencies across Trinidad and Tobago.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Minister, but this money would have been requested based on a vision of what you had proposed to execute within the next three months, because this money is for the next three months. Can you then be able to provide an indication, well, two things if you may, how much was requested and whether this will be sufficient to undertake whatever programme that you would have set out when you provided the estimates to the Ministry of Finance to get clarification upfront?

**Hon. Gonzales:** Yes, that is in fact correct. So the projects that have been completed under this programme I can tell you have been executed in Talparo, Champs Fleurs, Fyzabad, Santa Flora, Vista Bella, Matura, Palo Seco, and the projects in the pipeline will be executed in Tabaquite, La Horquetta, Talparo, Pointe-a-Pierre, Siparia, Cumuto/Manzanilla, Couva, Toco/Sangre Grande, St. Joseph, Morvant, Tunapuna, Point Fortin, Diego Martin North/East, Diego Martin West, Oropouche West and Carapichaima.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Minister. It was very refreshing to hear the mention of my constituency. However, I would like if it is possible at all if you would provide a breakdown as to exactly what Item going forward for each of these constituencies.

**Hon. Gonzales:** I will do so.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Cumuto/Manzanilla.

**Dr. Ragbir:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Again to you, Minister. I am delighted, I am hearing Cumuto/Manzanilla. As you know in that area there are a lot of people who have no water, we need booster pumps. Sir, I thank you and I hope and pray that we will get water and the cries in Cumuto/Manzanilla, each one of the MPs throughout the country will be clamouring for the underserved areas of the community. Thank you, Sir.

**Hon. Gonzales:** Well, I do hope that with the transformation of the Water and Sewerage Authority which should interest every single citizen and every single Member of Parliament because we all have constituents who are suffering as a result of the dysfunction in WASA and from an unreliable water service. So that every Member of Parliament including every Member of the Opposition will come and support the Government in the transformation of the Water and Sewerage Authority because all of our constituents and each and every one of us we all experience poor water service in some way or the other.

**Dr. Ragbir:** Thank you.

**6.05 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam. Just to note that the Minister has been in office just a few months but the Government has been in office for almost six years, and therefore, we remain concerned about the quality of supply and the quantity of supply of water still. That is my comment, Ma'am. Thank you.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 39 supplemented by the sum of \$944,577,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** I wish to thank the Minister of Public Utilities.

*Head 42: Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government \$142,216,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of Rural Development and Local Government to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes.

**Hon. Hosein:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Minister, could you kindly unmute? Yes? I think you are now unmuted.

**Hon. Hosein:** Sorry. Sorry, Madam Chairman. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman, and good evening to all my colleagues. It has always been my privilege to report to this Standing Finance Committee and the people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the progress made by the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government. As we continue to battle with the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, now more than ever, we recognize the importance that local government plays in our everyday lives. Without essential services such as community policing via the Municipal Police Service, disaster management and relief, public health and sanitation, we will all be faced with great difficulty, not to mention the impact it will have on our quality of life. Local government remains a catalyst to represent and protect the everyday interest and the needs of all citizens. Despite the financial challenges faced over the years, we at the Ministry and the 14 municipal corporations remain dedicated to delivering good governance and service excellence by putting people first.

Madam Chair, we at the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government, and by extension, the 14 municipal corporations and the two state agencies are very pleased with the proposal for supplemental allocation in the amount of 142,216,000 that will allow us to cover Personnel Expenditure as well as Goods and Services for the remainder of the financial year. We welcome today's democratic exercise which opens the floor for increased transparency, accountability and collaboration as we continue to service the people of our beloved country. I thank you.

*Question proposed: That Head 42 be supplemented by the sum of \$142,216,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** Member for St Augustine. Member for St. Augustine, could you kindly unmute?

**Ms. Ameen:** Yes, I apologize. I want to thank you, Madam Chairman. And I think the allocations in this – the supplementation in this mid-term review is a testimony to the plea that the Opposition has been making for increased funding to local government, and I want to begin with Sub-Head 04: Current Transfers and Subsidies, Item 007, Sub-Item 40, which is Gratuities to Contract Officers. Now, Madam Chairman, there has been a request for increase – an additional sum, and I want to ask the Minister how many contract officers will receive gratuity payments because of this increase? That is in this fiscal year 2021.

**Hon. Hosein:** Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you very much for the question. And for fiscal year 2020 to 2021, approximately 140 contract officers will be paid these gratuity payments.

**Madam Chairman:** Member, please unmute.

**Ms. Ameen:** Minister, can you say how long these officers were owed their gratuity? If the answer is not available now and it could be provided in writing before Wednesday, I will appreciate it. And I would also like to know what criteria the Ministry uses to select who will get their gratuity first because we have had a number of instances of outstanding gratuities and I do not know if it is because they have not been processed or that the money is not available.

**Hon. Hosein:** Hon. Member, I did not hear the first part of the question because we had a lapse. Right? But from what I am hearing, you asked: Who would be paid – what criteria is used to pay these contract officers? Normally, when these contract officers' periods are up, they are given first priority to pay the gratuity toward them and that is the criteria used here at the Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government.

**6.15 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** Member for St. Augustine, your mic.

**Ms. Ameen:** Thank you. The other question with regard to this, as I said, the Minister can provide in writing is: Does this sum cover all the gratuities owed and if not, how many officers' gratuity is still outstanding?

**Hon. Hosein:** This will include all the officers for this financial period.

**Ms. Ameen:** Are there officers from the previous financial year who have not received their gratuity?

**Hon. Hosein:** Yes, yes. Some from the previous year have not been paid.

**Ms. Ameen:** All right. I just want to register a concern and I hope that the Minister of Finance is listening. Although people who are getting their gratuity for this financial year, there are people from previous years who are still owed their gratuity after working within the Ministry of Local Government and I think that is a serious issue that needs to be addressed with the proper allocation being given. Every year you stifle Local Government and this allocation does not cover all the persons who are owed gratuity by the Ministry of Local Government. *[No audio]*

**Hon. Hosein:** Okay, well so far, 70 officers have been paid to date inclusive of like many litter wardens, et cetera. These officers include like the legal officers, business operators, assistants, drivers, couriers, regional planners, corporate secretaries, financial officers, et cetera. And the sum required, the sum we asked for, we got. This will be used to pay off the rest of officers who are on contract.

**Ms. Ameen:** So, is it that you are not requesting the moneys for those owed from the previous financial year? *[No audio]*

**Hon. Hosein:** This is an ongoing process and those payments have been made and as soon as they come up, we are going to pay them here to ensure that they get the payment that is required for them.

**Ms. Ameen:** Okay, thank you, Minister. *[No audio]*

**Madam Chairman:** I am going to now invite the Member for Oropouche West to ask his questions.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister, following on the same line Item as my colleague, Contract Gratuities to Contract Officers. I am curious as to why we are now asking for 2.3 million because when we engage these persons by contract, you would have known at that point in time when their contracts are going to be terminated, when their contracts are going to end, and therefore provision should have been made for these gratuities to be put in hand. This is very concerning as my colleague said that we have persons who, from the last financial year, have not yet been paid based on what you have just told us.

My query then is why it is that—let me ask it differently, Minister, just to make it fairly straightforward. Why is it that a full amount of money to pay all gratuities was not requested at the start of the financial year so that we would not have to come now to pay persons and have persons waiting for years for their gratuities? Once you have hired them, you would have known that their contracts would be ended—*[No audio]*

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Yes, Ma'am?

**Madam Chairman:** There has been a consistent trend in asking that particular question under every Head and I think on each occasion the answer has been the same. Every time you have asked that question, we have got the same answer. So might I suggest in the interest of time, you rephrase that question to find out if it falls within that circumstance? Okay? So if you have another question, I will allow you, if you need to rephrase, I will give you time and go to some other of your colleagues.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Madam Chair, I can rephrase now. Can the Minister of Rural Development and Local Government advise whether sufficient funding was requested to cover all gratuities at the start of the financial year that would have become due for contract officers at this point in time?

**Hon. Hosein:** Yes, yes, the request was made.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, hon. Minister.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva South.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Just a quick follow-up. [*Technical difficulties*] – gratuities and so on, or persons who pass through in the last five or six years are awaiting the payment of their gratuities and have they been rehired and so on. How many of these contract officers – [*Technical difficulties*]

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva South, we are having great difficulty in hearing you, you keep breaking up, so I do not know if you could check your device. I will go on to Oropouche East in the meantime and come back to you. Okay, Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and I trust that all are hearing me. Minister, I just want to clarify a matter really. 04/009/04, the Community-based Environment Protection and Enhancement Programme. As you are aware within the last 48 hours or 72 hours or so, we have had in the public domain two conflicting stories – and I have the letters in my hand – a media release from CEPEP and a media release from your Ministry conflicting in terms of what exactly is happening here. If it is that we accept the Ministry’s version as opposed to CEPEP, you are creating a salary grant to reduce the salaries of CEPEP workers and issue a type of social welfare grant.

My first question is that in light of the very new policy announced by your Ministry, and the Prime Minister I believe, is the 43 million-plus dollars provided for here is still necessary bearing in mind that the CEPEP programme is effectively closed down and the workers will be receiving a salary grant? Whatever is the legal issue, I do not want to get into what really is “ah” salary grant and its legal basis but bearing in mind the CEPEP is effectively closing down from now until we do not know when. Do you really need this transfer because there is a social welfare salary grant that you will now be giving workers that I believe is “ah effectively ah 33 per cent” cut in their wages. So, my first question is: Is this relevant?

Second-related question is that: Do the workers continue to be employed directly by the contractor or is the Ministry paying this salary grant and who is paying NIS during this period? I will just leave those two questions there and come back as we go along or other colleagues.

**Hon. Hosein:** [*No audio*]

**Dr. Moonilal:** I am not hearing the Minister.

**Hon. Hosein:** Hon. Member, the money is needed. The allocation, it is needed at this time. This allocation will be used to meet the shortfall in wages to daily-paid workers and fees to contractors within the CEPEP company.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Minister, for a very strong abbreviated answer. Could I ask if the managers, executive managers and supervisory staff of CEPEP would also be receiving a salary grant as opposed to their full salary and benefits?



**6.25 p.m.**

**Hon. Hosein:** Hon. Member, the staff at CEPEP is still working because they are responsible for the payment to workers, and so on and we will need the staff working in order for the contractors and the workers to get paid. So they will still be at work at this present time.

**Dr. Moonilal:** So Minister, I take it that the managers and supervisors, about 200 I think, will receive their full salary and benefits while the lower-income elementary workers will get a salary cut of 33-plus per cent. Is that correct?

**Hon. Hosein:** I want to correct you. It is not 200, it is 135 and they will continue because they are actually working in order for everybody to get paid. It is a continuity.

**Dr. Moonilal:** And Minister, finally before I give way, the contractors themselves, would the contractors be receiving as well the slash in contractual fees?

**Hon. Hosein:** Yes.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Okay. Thank you, Minister, and thank you to the person on your left as well.

**Hon. Hosein:** You are most welcome.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for St. Augustine.

**Ms. Ameen:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Minister, can you indicate—we have had reports of contractors levying on CEPEP, taking their furniture, because moneys owed to contractors. Can you indicate if any of this will go towards paying moneys owed to contractors? And let us know how much is still owed, outstanding payments, to contractors.

**Hon. Hosein:** I turned to the left because the screen went blank and I am looking at an iPad. I want to let you know, hon. Member, that I will provide that in writing for you.

**Ms. Ameen:** I appreciate it. I also would provide like if you can provide me with information with regard to the number of contractors that are currently employed by CEPEP and the number of workers that are employed by these contractors.

I would further like for you to provide me with a breakdown by constituency. How many CEPEP contractors, CEPEP teams are assigned to each constituency in Trinidad and Tobago in each of the 41? If you can provide that breakdown in writing, I will appreciate it.

**Hon. Hosein:** Okay. I can let you know immediately that there are 9,405 employees which are the external contract workers. The rest, you would get in writing, but this is the number of workers.

**Ms. Ameen:** The numbers and by constituency. I just want to ask also, Mr. Minister, what is the policy in terms of the number of teams assigned by constituency? There seems to be a disparity.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, Member for St. Augustine, I am not going to allow that under the exercise that we are involved in. Okay? Member for Couva South, I see you are back with us.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I apologize for the break in transmission. Minister, and again, I am going back to CEPEP because there seems to be some kind of confusion from the time

this announcement was made last Friday. Could you assure this meeting that none of this additional \$43,497,000 will be utilized to pay any salary grant to CEPEP workers? I hope the iPad is providing the appropriate information.

**Hon. Hosein:** As I said, the allocation will be used to meet the shortfall in wages to the daily-paid workers and fees to the contractors within CEPEP.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Minister, if I listened to the Prime Minister correctly, the Prime Minister indicated that the programme has been stopped to avoid congregating and 10,000 workers going to seek the Salary Relief Grant, I am asking you whether this sum that is being appropriated, if any, will be used to pay this salary grant to CEPEP workers?

**Madam Chairman:** But Member for Couva South, I believe the Minister has answered the question that you asked.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** I will move on, Madam Chair. I am not totally satisfied. In addition to the issue of gratuities to contract officers –

**Madam Chairman:** I am calling on the Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Mr. Hosein:** Madam Chair, can you hear me?

**Madam Chairman:** Yes, I can.

**Mr. Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, Assalamu alaikum. I just want to find out from you, really, based on the cut in the CEPEP, the 33 per cent cut in the salary and now they are going to be given this salary grant, can you now indicate to us, as Members of Parliament, which body will be, one, taking up the responsibility of CEPEP to do what CEPEP formerly did, one? And two, in addition to the information that the Member for St. Augustine would have requested, can you also give us a list of the contractors based on each constituency?

**Hon. Hosein:** Hon. Member, this is a temporary situation we are dealing with. We are looking at probably the end of June and it would be back on track as soon as possible.

**Mr. Hosein:** And what about the list of the contractors, if you could give us a breakdown of these per constituency?

**Hon. Hosein:** Yes, I will put that in writing for you.

**Mr. Hosein:** All right, thanks.

**Hon. Hosein:** You are welcome.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It is just a follow-up on the questions asked by both my colleagues from Oropouche and Barataria. Firstly, I would like to find out whether the board directors—now I understand that the Minister has stated that management, and so on, are currently working and therefore they are receiving their full salaries. But are board directors also going to be experiencing a cut? I have one more question but I would like to give the Minister the

ability to respond.

**Madam Chairman:** Member, could you tell me under which Item that is being—

**Mr. Tancoo:** I am dealing with Item 04/009/04, the Community-based Environment Protection and Enhancement Programme in which a further sum of \$43 million is being asked for.

**Madam Chairman:** So what is the question?

**Mr. Tancoo:** My question, based on the response and the query, the response by the hon. Minister to a query by my colleague from Oropouche East. My query then is whether board directors are also going to be taking a cut?

**Hon. Hosein:** Okay. Member, I would like to let you know that the board do not receive a salary. They receive an honorarium.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, hon. Minister. Can you confirm whether that honorarium would be in fact slashed as well?

**Hon. Hosein:** That will continue.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Minister. One further question. With regard to this \$43.5 million, would this be used in any form or fashion to revisit or to revise the geographic discrimination with regard to the selection of Oropouche West in particular and other Opposition constituencies, based on the number of CEPEP contractors that are in each constituency?

**Madam Chairman:** Member, this sum, the explanation is for supplement funding. Is that not what this is? Member for St. Augustine. Could you kindly unmute your mike please?

**6.35 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** Could you kindly unmute your mike please?

**Ms. Ameen:** Can I go to Item 011: Transfers to State Enterprises, under this same Sub-Head 04? This is the National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme where an additional \$2.1 million is requested for—is required to meet Personnel Expenditure. Minister, can you indicate if there was an increase in the personnel within this programme over the last fiscal year?

**Hon. Hosein:** Hon. Member, there was no increase.

**Ms. Ameen:** Did you request the full amount at the beginning of the financial year for this?

**Hon. Hosein:** Member, I would like to inform you that this 2.1 million has to do with funding for Tobago.

**Ms. Ameen:** Is it that you are giving additional contracts in Tobago?

**Hon. Hosein:** No, no, no. They have an allocation, and this funding is going towards that allocation.

**Ms. Ameen:** So the full allocation was not given at the beginning of the financial year?

**Hon. Hosein:** No.

**Ms. Ameen:** All right. Mr. Minister, can you list the contractors for this financial year and indicate

where they are assigned? Again, perhaps, by constituency?

**Hon. Hosein:** You will be able to get that in writing, Member.

**Ms. Ameen:** Thank you very much.

**Hon. Hosein:** And the reason why that happened is because the programme started late in Tobago.

**Ms. Ameen:** Again, Minister, this is one of the expenses that you can predict at the beginning of the financial year. If the programme started late –

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva South.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Minister. Again, very quickly Minister, because there was a break in asking these questions. How many workers or persons are still awaiting their gratuities at the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development? And have you computed a total sum and how do you plan to relinquish that?

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva South, maybe in the loss of transmission I believe questions were asked under that Head with respect to how many people were not paid for previous years and so on. Those questions were asked and answered. Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Mr. Hosein:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, I want to focus on some of the allocations being given to each of the regional corporations. Minister, two questions. These allocations were given based on requests from each corporation. Can you indicate whether or not any corporation did not get the full amount that they requested, one? And two, can you also indicate to us whether these releases or what date these releases will be made to the various regional corporations?

**Hon. Hosein:** What I can say safely is that the 14 corporations, whatever they asked for in this mid-year review, they got it this time. They got it.

**Mr. Hosein:** And when will the releases be made to the corporations?

**Hon. Hosein:** Well, as you know we will have to approach the Ministry of Finance through the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and go back to the corporation. That is the procedure, it has always been like that.

**Mr. Hosein:** So we cannot commit to a date at this time?

**Hon. Hosein:** No. But the money was allocated, and the 14 corporations whatever they requested, everybody got what they requested.

**Mr. Hosein:** Sure. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, the question is that the 2021 –

**Ms. Ameen:** Madam Chair, I had my hand up.

**Madam Chairman:** I am allowing you one question. What is the question?

**Ms. Ameen:** Yes. The sum for the regional corporation is an aggregation of Wages and COLA as well as sums for provision of Goods and Services. Can the Minister provide a breakdown in terms of what is for Wages and COLA and what is for Goods and Services? Thanks.

**Hon. Hosein:** Member, I have it here, but I will provide it for you in writing. I have it in detail here, but it is plenty. So, and you are seeing it on the left. Right? *[Laughter]*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 42 supplemented by the sum of \$142,216,000.*

*Head 43: Ministry of Works and Transport \$294,426,700.*

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of Works and Transport to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes. Minister of Works and Transport. Okay. It seems that we have lost the Minister of Works and Transport, we will try to get onto him and bring him back. So could we just go on to Head 61 and do the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.

*Head 61: Ministry of Housing and Urban Development \$90,961,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of Housing and Urban Development to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes. Minister.

**Hon. Beckles:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. And I am pleased to appear before this Committee and in doing so I would like to indicate that the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development through its units and agencies has been working to improve the lives of citizens by providing adequate shelter, home and land solutions to qualifying low and middle income households.

The Ministry also engages in the education of the citizenry with respect to the housing sector. The agencies of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development are the Trinidad and Tobago Housing Development Corporation, the Land Settlement Agency, East Port of Spain Development Company Limited, Port of Spain Shopping Complex, and Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development is requesting as you indicated the sum of \$90,961,000, and the sums requested in the respective Votes are as follows: The Housing Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago, Rehabilitation and maintenance of the HDC rental apartments, Housing Programme Facilitation and Implementation Unit (HPFIU), supplemental funds for housing grants, the Land Settlement Agency, for the Housing and Village Improvement Programme, the Land Settlement Agency for regularization of squatter communities, and project development which is 04/08/241 for the improvement of residential lots in the Petrotrin area.

Madam Chairman, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development will seek to facilitate the planned achievement of targets in all areas of the housing sector to a well-organized system of governance where stakeholders will have ample opportunity to seek out services of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. And now I make myself available for any questions. Thank you very much.

*Question proposed:* That Head 61 be supplemented by the sum \$90,961,000.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for St. Augustine. Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And thank you Minister. Just a few quick questions to ask and maybe I can ask all in one shot and allow the Minister to respond. The first issue concerns 004/08/E2/14, notably the Residential Lots Programme Petrotrin.

**6.45 p.m.**

There is a requirement here for a relatively small sum of \$3.5 million for finalizing bidding documents, regrading of residential lots, completion of sites. Could the Minister indicate the identity of the sites selected, the number of residential lots to be developed, and the estimated total costs of land development for all residential lots for what should be the former Petrotrin employees? And if this is the programme for the former Petrotrin employees, could you indicate the list of employees that have been approved for these residential lots and you can, at a later time, provide that complete list?

**Hon. Beckles:** Right—*[Technical difficulties]*

**Dr. Moonilal:** Okay. I will leave it there and come back.

**Hon. Beckles:** Yes, I will prefer to answer you right away on that. As you realize, based on the request, this is at its very, very early stages. But based on what you have asked, I can provide those responses in writing.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Okay. Thank you very much. The matters concerns 004/08/D 075, which is really the first Item, Rehabilitation and Maintenance of HDC Rental Apartments and Housing Units. Now, I noticed that for the next three months or so, there is a request for 39.7 million, more or less. I wanted to ask first if this is feasible, given the fact that at this time, we have had a closure, a seizing, you know, a termination, of—all construction works have been terminated both, as you know, privately and in the public area as well. So whether or not this is still a viable to have this money for that purpose, when you may not do much work in the next two or three months, given the situation now? Even if there is an improvement in the few weeks or months ahead, is this realistic to take the money for this purpose, as opposed—and I raised this in connection with the other areas on the request—as opposed to using that type of money, 40 million more or less, to support HDC communities where there are certain families that are unable—let us put it this way—to pay their monthly rental or loan instalment? And on that issue, Minister, I want to ask you and to, please, if you could go on record, whether or not it is the policy of the Housing Development Corporation today to serve eviction notices on HDC tenants and occupants, whether it is rental, whether it is on a rent-to-own, whether it is mortgaged property? I believe that it is cruel, it is inhumane it is, it is almost—well, I would not say criminal but it is terrible and inhumane, for the HDC as an arm of the State to be taking action to evict HDC tenants at a time when many, as you

know, are unable to work, many have lost their jobs, many had reduced income. And I do not want to go on and go on, I think you understand the picture painted.

**Madam Chairman:** So, Member for Oropouche East—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yeah?

**Madam Chairman:**—I would allow the first question which you asked. Minister.

**Hon. Beckles:** Thank you very much. Yes, Madam Chairman, I understand the statement made by the hon. Member as it relates to the fact that we are in the rainy season and there is the pandemic. But at the same time, the various sites that I have indicated, which is Maloney; Embacadere; John John; Carlsen Field; Duncan, George, Nelson and Prince Streets, most of these areas, we are really talking about—some areas relating to roofs, some areas relating to— if we take Carlsen Field, it has to do, for example, with stagnant water, drainage. So that once we have this situation—and I know the Minister himself is well aware because he would have—when he was here—would have done some projects in some of these areas, most of them have to do with concrete roofs that are leaking. And particularly during the dry season, some of them have opened up. So yes, we have to make every effort, notwithstanding the challenges that exists, to do these projects within the shortest possible time.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Minister. So I take it—if I interpret what you are saying is that these works, although it is not stated here, but would be emergency work and work related to health concerns as well.

**Hon. Beckles:** Yes, yes and—yes, they are at least—two of the areas, Duncan and George, Nelson, where we are talking about some replacements of roofs relating to asbestos issues which, of course, are critical issues that we have to deal with. You know, these are some of these are ongoing works and then, one, dealing with issues relating to possible fires that could exist. So dealing with some suppression, establishing some—putting in place some suppression systems to reduce the possibility and minimize the risk of potential damage—

**Dr. Moonilal:** Sure.

**Hon. Beckles:**—to the HDC units.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Having said that—and I accept that these works as covered under 075 may be emergency work, also health related, at 004/08/E 237, this speaks of ongoing civil works. It is ongoing civil works and there is a further requirement for \$19 million—a little more—to continue these works. Now, again, I want to route it into my question, could the Ministry and could your division of HDC consider some type of support for the critical HDC tenants who are unable to pay their rents at this time due to the pandemic? Because these are ongoing works that you require almost \$20 million. Have you considered some type of relief for persons who are unable at this time? And would the HDC be serving eviction notices at a time like this?

**Madam Chairman:** Member, again, I would not allow that question under the Item that you have identified.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Ma'am, I will leave it like that. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Beckles:** Well, just to respond to what he – the question as it relates to what works though – because we are looking at lead testing, doing engineering designs, and yes, we need to do those urgent matters related to civil works and there also some payments that are due. And to say that the HDC has made it public in the newspapers as it relates to asking persons who are owing to come in and speak with HDC.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Mr. Hosein:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Minister, on line Item: Regularization of Squatter Communities, can you just tell us which one of, which are the communities right now that works are ongoing in order to get the final approvals?

**Hon. Beckles:** Okay. If you can allow me kindly, I will provide this week before Wednesday.

**Mr. Hosein:** In writing?

**Hon. Beckles:** Yes, please.

**Mr. Hosein:** Okay. And also, on the line Item relating to the housing grants and the Housing and Village Improvement Programme, if you can give us the criteria for persons to access these grants also in writing, I would appreciate that. And the breakdown – I do not know if you have it – based on geographical location or by constituencies, if you can have that provided to us?

**Hon. Beckles:** Yeah. Well, I have provided it before but I will provide it again, yes, and in writing.

**Mr. Hosein:** I will appreciate that.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And I just want to continue on the Housing and Village Improvement Programme. There is a requirement for the next three months or so of \$8.5 million and this is as a result of the increase in contract price for the construction of houses under this programme. Would the Minister care to tell us what exactly has been increased in the contract prices? What was the initial price? And what was the final price for the construction of houses under this programme? What was the cause of that escalation? And would the Minister give a list of the contractors to whom moneys are owed under this programme? Thank you.

**Hon. Beckles:** Okay. So I cannot at this stage provide you the list of contractors, but I can provide that. But just to say that the – we are looking at moving from 100,000 to 120,000; 30 houses under phase one of the programme, and to undertake infrastructure development and HVIP house construction in the Wallerfield area. Development will accommodate 15 residential lot houses and it is also projected at a total of 129 new HVIP houses can commence as soon as possible, with 51 new agreements signed in March 2021, and further units shall commence in – well, this month.



*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 61 supplemented by the sum of \$90,961,000.*

**6.55 p.m.**

**Hon. Sinanan:** Good afternoon Madam Chairman, good afternoon to Members.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, Minister. One minute please. Thank you.

*Head 43: Ministry of Works and Transport, \$294,426,700.*

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of Works and Transport to make a brief opening statement for a maximum of five minutes. Minister?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Thank you again, Madam Chairman. Good evening all. As Minister of Works and Transport, I welcome the opportunity to be part of the first meeting of the Standing Finance Committee of the Twenty-First Session of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to consider proposals relating to the supplementation of variation of estimates for fiscal year 2021.

The Ministry of Works and Transport remains aware of the economic and physical constraints faced by the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic and has sought to implement business continuity measures, while undertaking the continued provisions of infrastructure and transportation service. In this context, the provision of supplementary funding in the amount of 294,426,700 consisting of 277,597,900 and Public Sector Investment Programme, 16,828,800, is greatly appreciated and will address areas under the Ministry's Recurrent and Development Programme that are in urgent need of additional funding.

Madam Chairman, for the Members present, I would like to briefly outline some of the areas where the supplementary funding is to be utilized to the end of this financial year as follows.

1. Payment of statutory obligations with respect to wages and salary increments, national insurance contribution, severance benefit and cost of living allowances.
2. Payment due to utility companies, namely, the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission and the Telecommunication Company of Trinidad and Tobago.
3. Security and janitorial services payments, which are due to various firms.
4. Payments with respect to rental of office accommodations.
5. Payments owe to various contractors under the Highways Division and Traffic Management Unit and project expenditure to the end of this fiscal year.
4. Funding required for National Helicopter Service Limited to meet its operational expenditure and debt obligations.
5. Payments outstanding with regards to the charter of the interisland passenger vessel, the *Jean de la Valette*; operational and maintenance cost of the two new ferries the *APT James* and the high speed Catamaran *Buccoo Reef*.

In the Public Sector Investment Programme, additional funding is required for key projects under the area of sea transportation as follows. To facilitate the award of contracts for the upgrade of various navigational aids, which will ensure greater safety for mariners travelling the waters of this country; to remove and dispose of wrecks in the Port of Spain Harbour and Sea Lots to ensure the safer environment and mitigate marine casualties as a result of the grounding and potential oil spills and to increase efficiencies of cargo handling operations at the Port of Port of Spain.

Madam Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to provide a brief incite as to areas which will be addressed in the supplementary funding that is being proposed for the Ministry. I stand ready to provide details and/or clarifications if still required. Thank you.

*Question proposed:* That Head 43 be supplemented by the sum of \$294,426,700.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Minister, for your opening introduction. Minister, let me take your line Item by line Item –

**Hon. Sinanan:** Sure.

**Mr. Lee:** – and I will start with Allowances for Daily-Rated Workers. You are asking for an increase. You are getting an increase of \$7.8 million. Your original allocation for 2021 was 4.1 million, approximately. And why is this steep increase of nearly double the amount of your allocation of 2021?

**Hon. Sinanan:** This is for all the increments, all the daily-rated employees that would take us to the rest of the year. We had to make sure that we calculated everything and this is the final figure.

**Mr. Lee:** A follow-up question in that line Item, Minister. So, to date, has any of the 4.1 that was allocated been paid out in allowances and this balance?

**Hon. Sinanan:** This balance is to take us to the end of the year after the calculations. This will complete the payments for them. In terms of whether the allocations that we got in the budget whether it was paid out, I would have to –

**Mr. Lee:** And the final question on this line Item is: How many staff this would benefit? How many individuals?

**Hon. Sinanan:** I would have to get that information to you in writing. The quantum of staff.

**Mr. Lee:** Sure. Madam Chair, going ahead, line Item, Electricity. You are getting an increase of \$2.5 million, an original amount in 2021 was 3 million. Why is this steep increase in electricity? Could you explain?

**Hon. Sinanan:** We do have some outstanding bills over a period of time. So this is to clear all the outstanding bills across the Ministry. And this is for across the Ministry.

**Mr. Lee:** So this amount will bring you out of arrears and in current, this small additional?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes. More or less, yes.

**Mr. Lee:** And this is owed to T&TEC? Correct?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you. Under Highways, 002/28; Other Contracted Services –

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes.

**Mr. Lee:** You are getting an allocation of additional 24.8 million approximately. Your budget original was 35 million. This is a very steep increase mid-year. Could you explain?

**Hon. Sinanan:** We do have previously outstanding bill totally 17 million and we do have some new proposed work for an additional 8.7 billion, million, sorry.

**Mr. Lee:** So, Minister, the 35 million that was allocated previously, has all that 35 million been disbursed?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Well, remember, this is projection to the end of the year. So we would have anticipated what the expenditure to the end of year is. That is how we come up with these figures. So, we would have commitments for all the money that we have allocations for and these are extra funding that is required.

**Mr. Lee:** You might not have –

**Hon. Sinanan:** – commitments for everything.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you. You might not have the answer, but you can give it to me in writing of the contracted services and for the period September – for new fiscal, October to what is determined to be end of fiscal 2021.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Sure. So you want the figure for contracted. You want a –

**Mr. Lee:** Whatever is the contracted services, the individuals or companies that would have been enjoying the expenditure under this line item for the fiscal year 2021. This \$24.8 million additional is required.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Sure, no problem. But, as I said, some of that –

**Mr. Lee:** Was in arrears.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes some is arrears and some is for future work plan for the rest of the fiscal year. So we would not have contracted, because most of these works have to be tendered out.

**Mr. Lee:** Okay.

**Hon. Sinanan:** So, I would not be able to tell you which contractor is going to get.

**Mr. Lee:** Okay. Thank you. But for future work, Minister, how far future payments would be made?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Well, I mean, going forward now, once we tender something and we are hoping to finish it within the financial year and we should be able to apply for the funding to pay the contractors. So when we say future work, we are talking about a month, two months, three months, because the financial year will end on us. We will try to complete the work within the financial year.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Minister. Line Item under Traffic Management; Other Contracted Services. You are getting an additional \$26.2 million. Could you explain what is the need for this, because your original allocation was \$4.2 million. So this is a sizeable amount.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Again, it is outstanding sums. I can tell you things like the cable barriers, we still owe a significant amount of funding there. As you know, we have been carrying that and reducing it as we go along. So we owe outstanding bills on that alone, close to \$18 million debt. So most of this here has to go to paying previous years bills.

**Mr. Lee:** Okay. Thank you, Minister. And moving along. Under Drainage; Contract Employment, your original allocation is 3.6 and now you are getting an additional 3.1. Are these new employment that incurred during the last 12 months or the last fiscal which started from October to present?

**7.05 p.m.**

**Hon. Sinanan:** We did have an approval by the Cabinet to strengthen the Drainage Division, however, the Cabinet approval was after the last—the budget. So now that when we got the Cabinet approval, we now applied for the funding for those extra staff from the Drainage Division.

**Mr. Lee:** So that extra staff had not been hired as yet?

**Hon. Sinanan:** No. No. At the time of the last allocation—they were not hired at the time of the last allocation but they are on duty now.

**Mr. Lee:** Okay. And how many contract employments that relates to? How many individuals?

**Hon. Sinanan:** So far it would have been about 31 employees, but we have additional employees to strengthen the Drainage Division.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you. Again, under line Item—under Transport Division, Telephones, you have \$1.5 million, could you explain?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Telephone, yes, this is, as said before, for the service providers for the telephone which is TSTT, and then we do have some outstanding from Massy Communications, and also we do have some outstanding on the janitorial services.

**Mr. Lee:** And when you say Transport Division, that is not your entire Ministry of Works and Transport?

**Hon. Sinanan:** No, but this will be spread across the Ministry outstanding.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Minister. And that also applies for security services, right?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes. Yes. Yes.

**Mr. Lee:** Right. Under Rent/Lease and Accommodation, Minister, a 1.7 allocation increase, could you explain? Is it back arrears of rental?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes. Yeah, it is arrears of rental and to bring us up to date going forward, the rest of the financial year.

**Mr. Lee:** So this arrears – this increase – sorry – of 1.7 of would take care of all arrears?

**Hon. Sinanan:** In terms of the Maritime Services Division.

**Mr. Lee:** Okay. Just, Minister, as going forward, were there any new rental accommodations in this fiscal for maritime services?

**Hon. Sinanan:** No. Actually the Ministry, we had taken a policy to ensure that we maximize existed space owned by the Ministry. So you would have seen some movements within the Ministry but most of the buildings we would have gone into work, the Ministry-owned buildings. So we would have reduced our rentals over the last three years and we continue to do that.

**Mr. Lee:** Moving along, under Transfers to State Enterprises, Chair, to the Minister, line Item 18, National Helicopter Services Limited, an increase of \$14.4 million that is owing to them. You had originally – 42.8 is the original budget estimate for the Helicopter Services Limited, that 14.4 additional, Minister, could you explain what is the need for that?

**Hon. Sinanan:** We would accept the fact that the National Helicopter, because of the decline in the energy sector, the National Helicopter would have – their revenues would have been reduced significantly. So this is a supplementary funding for National Helicopters to help with their operational expenditure.

**Mr. Lee:** Just a quick question on that same line Item, Minister. The original allocation in 2021 is 42.8. They would have requested that amount or the Ministry would have put in that amount.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes.

**Mr. Lee:** Was that the amount that they requested that they got or was it an additional amount that they had requested that they did not receive?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Well, a significant amount of this would have gone to loan payments and so, from what they would have requested, but with the reduction in the revenue, and as you will appreciate, National Helicopters plays a very important part in our transportation system between the islands. So it is just one of these –

**Mr. Lee:** So basically, it is a subvention to help them meet their expenditures?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Well, when you consider the importance of national helicopter and the global decline, like the energy sector, one, and with the COVID pandemic, yes, we see it necessary for that subvention.

**Mr. Lee:** Okay. Just a quick thing, Minister. In the other line Items or the other Heads, the national helicopter would have been owed, like from THA, et cetera. So I just want to say that I hope that, you know, they are collecting their outstanding accounts payables or receivables or receivables that is owed so that they –

**Hon. Sinanan:** All attempts are being made to collect the receivables.

**Mr. Lee:** Minister, when we get into line Item 20, that is the NIDCO Charterer of Inter-island and

it relates to the *Jean de la Valette*, \$23.9 million, the 72.7 was allocated originally in September and could you tell us, this Committee, what is the status of the *Jean de la Valette*?

**Hon. Sinanan:** That would have left our shores in February, I think it was. The reason for the increase is because we had to keep the vessel for a further three months outside of the contracted time period. So it was contracted, I think it was, up to November and they could keep it up to February. So the increase in the budget is really for that extra period when they kept the vessel because of the small delay in the new vessels coming in. So once the *APT James* came in, went into service, the *Jean de la Valette* contract was completed.

**Mr. Lee:** So the 23.9 basically is a three-month contractual payment?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes.

**Mr. Lee:** And this line Item 20 would no longer be in existence because everything that is owed to janitorial –

**Hon. Sinanan:** Everything before the janitorial – no, that contract had been terminated so we will have a new line Item now for the *APT James* and the *Buccoo Reef*.

**Mr. Lee:** And the *Jean de la Valette* is not in our waters anymore?

**Hon. Sinanan:** No, that left in February.

**Mr. Lee:** Okay. Thank you, Minister. Let us go to line Item 28, Minister. Line Item 28, because you do not have line Items for the *APT James* and the *Buccoo Reef*, it falls under line Item 28 which also includes the *Galleons Passage*. Correct?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes, correct. But we have already made the submissions for the new line Item and we are working with the Ministry of Finance to have a new line Item for the other vessels.

**Mr. Lee:** Okay. So let us look at that \$160 million additional. The *APT James* came into our waters in March this year? – February, and it went into service when, February? – the *APT James*?

**Hon. Sinanan:** It went into service – I do not have the exact date but within early March.

**Mr. Lee:** Early March. And the *Buccoo Reef* just recently went into service a couple of days ago. Correct?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes.

**Mr. Lee:** Our fiscal year ends in September. This \$160 million additional, could you help this Committee understand – given these are two new vessels, that they would be under warranty, and I am assuming they would also be under some sort of maintenance agreement in those contracts, why is it necessary for this \$160 million and we are in the month of June and we have literally June, July, August, four more months to complete our fiscal that they are requesting \$160 million for these two new vessels?

**Hon. Sinanan:** All right. Let me start by saying, we took possession of the vessels not in June. We took possession of the vessels – of one of the vessels in November last year. So I will have to give

you a breakdown of the—and which I could furnish in writing of a breakdown of the budgeted figure. However, we must remember that, yes, the vessels are new vessels and they are on warranty on parts, but this is for operational and maintenance of—there are certain parts that you have to maintain or there will be guarantees and warranties on the major parts and so but maintenance has to be done on the vessel.

This includes things like diesel for the vessel, staffing for the vessel, along that line. So this is operational cost. What I will do—I will venture to do is to give you a breakdown of the money but this is for the operation of the vessels for the end of the financial year, but it would not have started in June as you are suggesting. It would have started way before June.

**Mr. Lee:** Okay. Well could you put this—okay, let me ask—let me phrase it in another way, Minister. Could you give us by vessel, the two new vessels, what is the monthly operational cost to maintain these two vessels, monthly— Well, so this 160, if I hear you correctly, is to take care of some arrears because the vessels were already taken possession of, and I am assuming the—  
**7.15 p.m.**

**Hon. Sinanan:** Right. It is not just four from June come back, I mean we would have taken possession since November last year on the vessel.

**Mr. Lee:** Of the *APT James*?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Of the *APT James*.

**Mr. Lee:** And the *Buccoo Reef*, when you would have taken possession?

**Hon. Sinanan:** I do not have the exact date now, but it would be from that date going forward. But I will furnish you with a breakdown on the estimated budget.

**Mr. Lee:** So where does the maintenance for the *Galleons Passage*, what is their monthly maintenance? Because you had allocated 15 million for them originally.

**Hon. Sinanan:** The allocation is really for the *APT James* and the *Buccoo Reef*. So it is not the *Galleons Passage*. The *Galleons Passage*—

**Mr. Lee:** Okay. So this 160 is not strictly for the two new vessels?

**Hon. Sinanan:** These are for the two new vessels.

**Mr. Lee:** So I will wait for the answers in respect for the monthly operational costs.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Sure, sure.

**Mr. Lee:** And also how much staff is required on each vessel, because I am assuming we are responsible for the staffing of those vessels.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes, to some extent, yes. We have staffing, both local and foreign staff on the vessel. But I will furnish you with the exact amount.

**Mr. Lee:** Minister, under this same line Item, where does the *Cabo Star* fit in?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Again, this appropriation is for the *APT James* and the *Buccoo Reef*. So I would not

venture into the *Cabo Star* because we are not getting any appropriation funding for the *Cabo Star*.

**Mr. Lee:** But we own the *Cabo Star*, correct?

**Hon. Sinanan:** I want to stick to where the appropriation funding really is, and not venture off.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Minister. Minister, I will complete my questions because I see some of my Members—I see Minister Young also has his hand raised up. I do not know. So I will complete my other question so we will not have to come back to me, Minister.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Sure.

**Mr. Lee:** Under the economic infrastructure, under Sea Transport, and this is under PSIP—

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes.

**Mr. Lee:** You have an upgrade of navigational aids of \$5.2 million.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes.

**Mr. Lee:** You had originally budgeted 1.7 and now you are getting an additional allocation of 5.2 to carry it up to close to \$7 million. Could you tell us what is the status of these aids, how many renewals have been done, in what locations, or contracts had been given out for this, at the at the end of the day, \$7 million?

**Hon. Sinanan:** So, we would have completed the first phase of it, and the additional funding is to continue the—to complete the entire project. What I can do is furnish you with an update report on the navigational aids.

**Mr. Lee:** And who got contracts.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes. Again, these are public tenders. I think this was handled by the Central Tenders Board but I will furnish you with that.

**Mr. Lee:** Chair, just one more question to the Minister. Line Item 824, Removal and Disposal of the Wrecks in the Harbour. You had allocated 4 million. I know in the last fiscal you had removed four wrecks, close to the same \$4 million. This additional of 5.7, at the end of the day would be 9.7. How many wrecks do you envisage to remove, or have you removed any wrecks already for this fiscal, and who got those contracts to remove those wrecks?

**Hon. Sinanan:** Again, these contracts are Central Tenders Board. I will have to furnish you with the names of the companies but these are public tenders through the Central Tenders Board. In terms of the update, I have an update here where 10 wrecks would have been removed in area B, and some additional wrecks were removed in the other—because this is actually zoned out, so I will again furnish you with that. But a significant amount of wrecks would have been removed and, again, we are going into the last phase of removing the wrecks in that base.

**Mr. Lee:** Area A would be more or less in the Port of Spain harbour areas, right?

**Hon. Sinanan:** All of this is within the channel and the Port of Spain harbour area.

**Madam Chairman:** I now call on Member for Couva North.



**Mr. Ratiram:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to take the Minister's attention to line Item 02/002/28 and Other Contracted Services of 24.869,900. Minister, would you be able to provide us with a breakdown of those contracts, the recipients of the contracts and the quantities of the contracts?

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva North, in the interest of time, that question was already asked and that undertaking was given. Do you have something else you would like to focus on? Member, I do not think your microphone is on.

**Mr. Ratiram:** Are you hearing me now, Madam Chair?

**Madam Chairman:** Perfectly.

**Mr. Ratiram:** Thank you. The increase in line Item 020/003/28, Other Contracted Services, that was estimated at 4.2 million, and now the Minister is asking for an increase, an additional 26 million. Minister, would you be kind enough also to supply us with the details of that?

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, so Member, that was interrogated. Those undertakings were given. So Member for Couva North, if you would allow me in the meantime to go on to another one of your colleagues, and maybe you can orient yourself into areas that have not been asked and undertakings given or questions answered. Member for Barataria/San Juan.

**Mr. Hosein:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I just want to focus on the line Item that deals with the operation and maintenance of the *MV Galleons Passage*, which is really the *APT James* and the *Buccoo Reef*. Minister, can you just indicate to us when these vessels were procured, whether or not there was also a maintenance contract that was negotiated for these particular vessels?

**Madam Chairman:** Member, again, I am certain from the discourse that I heard, that that was said. So, if it is a springboard for another question, if you could ask the other question.

**Mr. Hosein:** Madam Chair, the Minister did, in fact, speak of the operational cost per month. What I am asking is something separate and apart from what the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre was in fact interrogating on, with respect to the actual maintenance contracts, and who are the persons, whether or not it is Incat who are the ones who will be maintaining these vessels, because we have to have a proper maintenance cycle for these particular vessels.

**Madam Chairman:** I will not allow that question under this Item. This is just the operational and maintenance cost. What I said to you is, the Minister indicated in his answer that because these were new vessels they came with a maintenance contract. I am certain I heard that. Do you have another question you would like to ask? Please go ahead. Unmute your mike please.

**Mr. Hosein:** Sorry. I know an undertaking was given with respect to the Item for the Contracted Services, but the Member for Pointe-a-Pierre only asked for a list of the contractors. Can I just —

**Madam Chairman:** And what I am saying is, this Item only deals with the operational and maintenance costs.

**Mr. Hosein:** No, Madam Chairman –

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Port of Spain North/St. Ann's West.

**Mr. Young:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. It hopefully will be a very brief intervention. Madam Chair, I think it is important for somebody to draw all of the Members' attention to the fact that we have support staff in offices right now. We are coming to the close of curfew. I am getting a number of messages from staff members from different Ministries, et cetera, pleading that they do not have curfew passes, et cetera. Some of the questions, with the greatest of respect, are repetitive. To be grilling the Minister for 20 minutes on what is obvious, that boats have to operate, they have to have crews, they have to have diesel, they have to have insurance paid, they have to have maintenance carried out, et cetera. You have to pay docking fees, et cetera.

**7.25 p.m.**

So, Madam Chair, really it is to intervene at this point to make a plea on behalf of the staff that are across the various Ministries including, Madam Chair, as you are very aware, your own parliamentary staff – not that they are making the request – and just ask people to really stop, with the greatest of respect, asking the repetitive questions and wasting time. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much. I just really would like to say that not everybody has curfew passes and some of us may be in the comfort of our homes, and if not, we have curfew passes. Let us remember that. Member for Couva North.

**Mr. Ratiram:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Line Item 02/005/16, Contract Employment. Minister, that would be the contract officers under the drainage Head. Right? The drainage Sub-Head.

**Hon. Sinanan:** Yes.

**Mr. Ratiram:** Would you be able to advise if these contract officers are the ones responsible for overseeing the cleaning of these watercourses, these various rivers and outfall drains?

**Hon. Sinanan:** You would – well, I do not know if you would remember but between 2010 and 2015, the Drainage Division of the Ministry of Works and Transport was merged with water resource – that Ministry of water resources and when it came back to the Ministry, it was a depleted drainage division. So what we had to do was to rebuild the Drainage Division of the Ministry of Works and Transport, and Cabinet approved some positions for us to go out while we wait for the Service Commission to fill the vacancies that they left. So these are at different levels in the Drainage Division. It is all at different levels and it was all advertised. The employment process was advertised in the newspaper, people applied, they were interviewed and so far, they have filled 30-odd positions on the workforce.

**Mr. Ratiram:** Thank you, Minister. Yes, it was brought to my attention that there were manpower issues –

**Madam Chairman:** Member for –

**Mr. Ratiram:** – at the –

**Madam Chairman:** Member. Member, could you kindly just get to the question and just try to remember other people. I understand that we initially said five minutes for the interventions but let us kind of use our discretion and be more targeted in the time that we have.

**Mr. Ratiram:** Thank you, Madam Chair, for your guidance. Hon. Minister, can you advise that if this Drainage Division – and based on the recruitment of officers and contract labour – would be well equipped to ensure that all the watercourses and rivers passing through central Trinidad will be cleaned all the way to the sea – to the ocean? Because we recognize that cleaning works are taking place intermittently and if it is that it is not cleaned all the way out to the ocean, there is a backup of water when the rain comes down causing significant flooding across central Trinidad. So I am asking you for your commitment that these works will be completed all the way out to the ocean.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. So, Minister, I am not going to allow that question under the Item asked. Okay.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 43 supplemented by the sum of \$294,426,700.*

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much to the Minister of Works and Transport. We now go onto the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service.

*Head 64: Trinidad and Tobago Police Service \$57,722,353.*

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of National Security to make a brief opening statement and I will hold him to less than five minutes.

**Hon. Hinds:** Thank you very kindly, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service continues the pursuit of its mandate to protect and serve the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Madam Chairman, it is without controversy that police service is a very significant and important part of the social, the economic life of Trinidad and Tobago. Even in this COVID experience, it is the police service, particularly with the SOE that now prevails, that is tasked largely with the responsibility of enforcing measures to ensure the safety of the citizens of this country in a war that carries no guns and sees no enemy, the virus, COVID.

Madam Chairman, we come this afternoon – Head 64: the police service – to seek a supplementary allocation of \$57,722,353 in respect of the rent and lease of vehicles and equipment, office stationery and supplies, maintenance of vehicles, contract employment, fees and, of course, fuel and lubricants, and to pay interest on a loan to advance the promotion of and the provision of the assets that the police absolutely need in order to fulfill its mandate to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. And on that basis, Madam Chair, we are in your hands, the hands of my colleagues for any questions they may have in respect of.

*Question proposed:* That Head 64 be supplemented by the sum of \$75,722,353.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Of course, we are all mindful of the time that we are getting at and I would be as brief as I can. Minister, bearing in mind that the 2019 to 2020 budget of TTPS was \$550 million, which was brutally slashed for this fiscal to \$340 million, that is almost 200, I could say, \$200 million less than requested. Do you believe from the start that \$57 million will make any dent given the type of bills that the TTPS has to pay in terms of overtime, salary, equipment, resources, bearing in mind that the TTPS is on the frontline? In fact, I know – apart from the Ministry of Health – I know of no other department that is on the frontline of the fight against the COVID-19 and exposed, as you know, where, I think, almost 200 officers have been infected and many are home and so on.

**Madam Chairman:** So, Member for Oropouche East, I understand the broad nature of your question, what I would ask you is to condescend on one of these Items, please.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Minister, could indicate whether this will lead to the collapse of the TTPS?

**Hon. Hinds:** Certainly not. The TTPS has been here longer than you have been and it will be here longer than you could imagine and foresee it. It will be here with us long past when you are gone.

Insofar as the word “brutal”, in terms of the slashing of its budget is concerned, that is to be rejected. It is the revenues of the country that had been brutally slashed by the falling commodity prices that Trinidad and Tobago depended upon. The revenue of our country was brutally slashed for reasons that we all know and therefore, all Ministries, all agencies, all families, all private businesses have been affected by this.

The budgetary allocations of the Ministry of Finance for the 2021 period were what the country could sensibly, in our circumstances, afford. The police service – the leader, the commissioner told us recently that as far as he is concerned, it cannot be truthfully said that the police service is without the resources that needs. It is a question of optimizing them, making more efficient use of them and certainly where there is a need that exists, as a basis for our requests for a supplementary allocation, we must do so. And the police service is making this approach and the Government is making – the Ministry of Finance, sorry, is making the adjustment to the tune of \$57-plus million. The police service is serving us and –

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much, Minister of National Security. Minister of Finance?

**7.35 p.m.**

**Mr. Imbert:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman, I think I now got the hang of this system, my mike was mysteriously muting before. I just want to deal with a particular issue. The Member for Oropouche consistently makes this false allegation about under-funding of the police. In this very document, if one goes to page 20 one will see that contained within the 57 million is a

provision of \$4.5 million for a new loan facility for the TTPS in the amount of \$200 million, and therefore the actual additional appropriation or additional funding being made available to the TTPS in fiscal 2021 is not 57 million, it is 257 million. So when you add that to the original allocation you will see the TTPS is being very well provided for. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chair, can I follow up since the Minister responded to me.

**Madam Chairman:** Yes.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Oropouche East here.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Yes. Very quickly again, Minister of Finance, could you indicate for the loan of 200 million, has one cent been released to the TTPS, and when will the first dollar reach the TTPS from that loan?

**Hon. Hinds:** We are, Madam Chair –

**Mr. Imbert:** I will come in here if I will be allowed?

**Hon. Hinds:** Okay.

**Mr. Imbert:** I am still trying to get the hang of this muting business.

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Imbert:** The way the loan is set up the TTPS applies to the Ministry of Finance for the funds and we do not take much time with that application, as soon as it comes in it is checked. And I as Minister of Finance authorize the bank to disburse the funds for onward transmission to the TTPS. We are in the process of arranging for the disbursement.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Minister, on my screen I am seeing Nancy. It is ah Nancy story you are giving. Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for – Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Imbert:** I just want to make it crystal clear that this loan has been negotiated. It has been arranged. I as Minister of Finance have done the necessary letters, made the necessary guarantees, set up the necessary procedures, and we await the request from the TTPS for the disbursements. These are facts. Thank you very much.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam Minister. Sorry, thank you, Madam Chair. Maybe the Minister of Finance can also engage here. Based on what the Minister just advised –

**Hon. Hinds:** Madam Chair. Madam Chairman, in addition to –

**Madam Chairman:** I know maybe we are having some technical challenges at this time. I have recognized the Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and I turn my question to the hon. Minister of

Finance, since he has just indicated that the allocation to the Ministry, sorry, to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service has just been increased by \$200 million which is the value of this loan. Can I then expect that the revised provision for 2021 will reflect a \$200 million increase rather than a \$57 million increase?

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Pointe-a-Pierre.

**Mr. Lee:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I just want to make a quick intervention here. Some of my Members I have noticed when they are asking questions they are being muted before they complete their questions. I do not know why that is happening. Because they are complaining to me that they are not being allowed to finish their questions. So, I hope – I know we are coming to an end so I am hoping that some – I do not know why that is happening.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Quickly to the Minister of Finance because I really want to get under this issue. Minister, can you confirm that this \$200 million loan is to pay outstanding debts from 2019 to 2020 and absolutely no payment for the resources that the TTPS need today to continue the fight against crime?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of Finance.

**Mr. Imbert:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. Are you hearing me?

**Madam Chairman:** Perfectly.

**Mr. Imbert:** Thank you. The answer to that question is that the \$200 million and the \$57 million, the 2-5-7, and just to add to a tangential question, this is off budget financing so it would not appear in the appropriation. But if you look on page 20 you would see reference the \$200 million loan for the TTPS. It is to pay this year's.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche East.

**Dr. Moonilal:** Madam Chairman, I would leave it there for now.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 64 supplemented by the sum of \$57,722,353.*

**Madam Chairman:** I thank you the Minister of National Security.

*Head 67: Ministry of Planning and Development, \$44,728,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** I now invite the Minister of Planning and Development to make a brief opening statement for less than five minutes. Minister, could you unmute your mike please? Minister, can you unmute your mike please?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. And, Madam Chairman, in the interest of time and to assist those persons who do have to leave shortly because of the curfew hours, I will not do the opening statement, but I am ready for my colleagues to ask any questions that they deem fit.

**Madam Chairman:** Indeed grateful to you.

*Question proposed:* That Head 67 be supplemented by the sum of \$44,728,000.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam Chair. And also in the interest of time since the Member was so concerned, I would be very brief and straightforward with my questions. With regard to Item 004, Salaries and Cost of Living Allowances, I would like the Minister to provide, if not verbally then certainly in writing before the presentation on Wednesday, the number of persons, the positions which have been upgraded? When this upgrade took place? And why is it that we have arrears under this Sub-Head?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Thank you very much for that question. Madam Chairman, the arrears for Ministers who were previously in authority, but was subsequently regularized by the DPA by Cabinet Note 1951, dated the 6<sup>th</sup> of August, 2015. Madam Chairman, the persons are as follows:

- 7 statistical assistants;
- 21 survey interviewers;
- 19 assistant field interviewers;
- 34 statistical aides;
- 1 temporary clerical assist;
- 3 temporary AFI's; and
- 1 programmer.

In all 90 persons, Madam Chairman.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Ma'am. Can the Minister also advise then when these persons were originally brought on, on short-term basis?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** It was previously 2019, and I can give you the exact date please before our meeting of the Parliament.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Ma'am. Just to continue, I note that we have an increase of 3.5 million for telephone phone bills which is a 100 per cent increase. Can the Minister indicate what would have prompted this 100 per cent increase in the allocation for telephone bills?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Okay, there was an additional allocation because of outstanding arrears to Flow, and that was for the period January to December 2020, and the breakdown is as follows: 660,000 owing on the land line service; and \$1,345,251 on the Internet service; and we also requested the required Recurrent Expenditure for March 2021 to September 2021.

There are a number of Internet users, 350 within the Town and Country Planning Division. You may have noticed we have digitized quite a number of the areas that are served by the Town

and Country Planning Division, also the National Trust, also the Environmental Policy and Planning Division, the Green Fund Executing Unit, our Technical Cooperation Unit, our Human Resources Management Division, particularly the accounts department, and those are the areas that we have those 350 Internet users.

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. So, I just want to advise Members, it is now 7.46. I really think that we should try and end this meeting by 8.05. Okay, I think that would be reasonable to allow our support staff to pack up and go home. So I ask you all to please use your time wisely.

**7.45 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva South.

**Mr. Indarsingh:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, with respect to Salaries and COLA, I know you gave – provided information to my colleague for Oropouche West. Is it normal for short term employees to be upgraded to monthly paid officers within the organizational structure establishment of the Ministry and was this process made known to the recognized majority union for monthly paid employees?

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, so I am not going to allow that under the exercise that we are currently involved. Member for Oropouche West. Member, could you kindly unmute your mike please.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to go straight into the Statutory Boards Sub-Item 004, Chaguaramas Development Authority. I know that there was no allocation in the 2021 fiscal year budget. I want to find out, similarly to other question before, since these were contract positions why was there no provision made during the budget of 2021?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Are you referring –

**Mr. Tancoo:** I am referring to 06/004/49.

**Madam Chairman:** And this is the \$10 million?

**Mr. Tancoo:** Yes, it is.

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Okay. Let me just indicate that the \$10 million was not in relation to contract employment. The \$10 million is specifically in relation to the pension fund that the CDA has to pay.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Ma'am. That makes the question even more important. Why was this not considered in the 2020/2021 budget for the fiscal year?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Previously a sum was given to the CDA in order to deal with this situation and a certain amount was paid into the pension fund. However, there is an additional amount that has to be paid in, particularly because the CDA used its own funds for the pension fund. but, we are trying to assist them by topping it up and that is the position.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam. Just out of curiosity though, you said that some money was put into the fund, but I am seeing a zero allocation in 2021. Where was that funding coming from?



**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** The CDA as I said before – [*Technical difficulties*] – reflected in the budget documents. However, because of the fact that we are assisting the CDA with making sure that they can pay what is outstanding now the \$10 million is being allocated. Your mike is muted.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Ma'am, one final question based on 04/005/01. That is the National Trust Council, an expenditure request of \$995,000. Can the Minister indicate why we have retroactive payments to the National Trust Council? And if she can make up the difference between the amount owed for maintenance and the amount owed to these members of council.

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Certainly. In relation to the National Trust the retroactive payments are to members of the National Trust Council for fiscal 2021. The affairs of the trust, as you rightly said, are administered by a council and it consists of five elected and six appointed members. The appointed members of council are remunerated in accordance with memoranda from the Ministry of Finance dated August 14, 2008, and a breakdown of the fees are as follows: that is to say, the chairman gets \$6,500 and a travelling allowance of \$1,000; the deputy chairman \$4,800 and a travelling allowance of \$750 and the ordinary members get \$3,200 and a travelling of \$500.

The elected members of the council are currently not remunerated as they were notified prior to their election that they were serving on a voluntary basis and agreed to service in that way. However, the matter of non-payment of stipends were fees to elected members was raised by a member during council meetings and that member sought the clarification of the Ministry of Finance in relation to this, and the Ministry of Finance by memorandum of August 14, 2008, responded in terms of that clarification.

However, there was a further clarification that was sought in November 2019 that elected members should be remunerated on par with the appointed members. Additionally, a pre-action protocol letter was served to the National Trust in January 2021 on the subject and that resulted in the total outstanding amount owed to past and present elected members of the council of the national trust in the sum of \$725,200. And the total cost of remuneration owing to the elected members of the previous council during the period November 2017 to October 2020 is therefore \$562,400. And I can give you a breakdown of who is owed what if you wish. So the total cost of remuneration –

**Mr. Tancoo:** Madam Minister, out of an abundance of respect for the time maybe I should suggest that you to provide that in writing since you already have it.

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** Well, I have the information and seeing that you want it now, if you want it – [*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** Okay so –

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** We would end there, but the total amount to cover outstanding fees and allowances to elected members is a sum of \$995,000.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much. Member for Moruga/Tableland.

**Ms. Benjamin:** Thank you, Madam Chair, I would just like the Minister with regard to 04/007/03, if she could provide it, it could be in writing, how many cane farmers would benefit from these funds, the \$1.4 million?

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** I can give you the information.

**Ms. Benjamin:** Well, with regard to the time you can give it to me in writing because I know it is 8.05 p.m. and that is just now.

**Hon. Robinson-Regis:** I am happy that you all are now taking the time into consideration and we will be very happy to provide it in writing.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 67 supplemented by the sum of \$44,728,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** I thank you, Minister of Planning and Development.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Appropriation for the fiscal year 2021 supplemented by the sum of \$2,927,600,002.*

**7.55 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** Members, we now go onto Item 2 which is the variation and I will skip the formalities. I think Members understand the process. Hon Members, we shall now consider the proposals for variation of fiscal year 2021. The proposals for decreases will be considered first, followed by the proposals for increases. Hon. Members, we shall now consider the proposals for decreases for fiscal year 2021.

*Head 18: Ministry of Finance, \$107,310,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** I will now ask the Minister of Finance to make a very brief opening statement if he so wishes. Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Imbert:** Madam Chairman, the Ministry of Finance has an allocation for COVID relief measures and the purpose of this allocation is to provide funding to Ministries that require it. So that we have decreased or we propose to decrease our COVID relief Item by \$107,310,000 in order to—we are decreasing our allocation in that particular line Item in order to provide funding to three Ministries: OPM, Agriculture, Social Development. It is on page 23 and it is self-explanatory.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you.

*Question proposed: That Head 18 be varied by a decrease in the sum of \$107,310,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Hon. Minister of Finance, can you please advise what specific benefits to households which were proposed, costed and budgeted for 2021, have now been sacrificed to facilitate a \$50 million movement from the COVID support funding under Households?

**Hon. Imbert:** That is a misconception. Nothing has been sacrificed. There was a block allocation in the Ministry of Finance being distributed among Ministries. We are now distributing it to the places where it was always intended to go

**Mr. Tancoo:** Hon. Minister, just to continue, can you therefore provide a breakdown of what has been spent under this Head to date, for the provision of COVID support to households?

**Madam Chairman:** Member, I will not allow that question. This is a movement of 50 million from a particular Head which the Minister just said was a block, so I do not see a question of what has been spent arising out of what is before us. Member for Couva South. Member for Couva North, sorry.

**Mr. Ratiram:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Madam Chair, I would like to ask the hon. Minister of Finance if he could kindly explain why it is that only \$57,310,000 is being moved from Ministry of Finance line Item 80, 04, 009, 42, Fiscal Incentive Programme for Farmers and why the entire 500 million that is in that line Item is not being moved across to the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Imbert:** This strange question. The \$57 million that we are moving is for the supply of food boxes for the months of May, June, July, August and September at approximately \$11 million a month for five months. So that is how you get the \$57 million. I do not understand the other question. In this particular case, this particular measure satisfies two purposes. It provides incentives to farmers to produce crops, and produce, and livestock, and it also provides COVID relief to needy farmers. So that is why we are taking it from there and putting it into this.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Minister. Can the hon. Minister advise if any of the sums allocated on the line Item at the Ministry of Finance, 18, 04, 009, 42, Fiscal Incentive Programme for Farmers other than the 57.3 million being transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries? Can the hon. Minister advise if any of the remaining sum has been used to benefit our farmers?

**Hon. Imbert:** I think the hon. Chair answered that very well. That is not under review at this point. We are running close to curfew time.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Oropouche West. Member, your mike please.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Madam Chair, my question is similar. I want to find out whether or not any funding has been used further from the COVID-19 support under Item 21?

**Madam Chairman:** Okay, and I will now put the question. Could Members kindly mute their mikes please?

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 18 varied by a decrease in the sum of \$107,310,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you, Minister of Finance. We now go on to increases. Hon. Members,

we shall now consider the proposals for increases for fiscal year 2021.

*Head 13: Office of the Prime Minister \$10,000,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister to make a very brief opening statement if he so wishes. Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister.

**Hon. Young:** Madam Chair, as Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, this \$10 million has been allocated to assist with COVID relief to the religious bodies and organizations as it has been done previously. In the last fiscal we had an allocation of \$30 million was allocated to the various religious bodies. We will be utilizing the exact same methodology on this round to allocate and distribute \$10 million to all of the various religious organizations in Trinidad and Tobago who fulfill certain criteria.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much.

*Question proposed: That Head 13 be varied by an increase in the sum of \$10,000,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Chaguanas East.

**Ms. Mohit:** Thank you, Madam Chairman. Madam Chairman, in the interest of time I would ask for such to be provided in writing and that would be: Who are the organizations earmarked to receive this intended imbursement; and in addition to that the allocations for each?

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 13 varied by an increase in the sum of \$10,000,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister.

**8.05 p.m.**

*Head 77: Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries \$57,310,000.*

**Madam Chairman:** I will now invite the Minister of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries to make a very brief opening statement. Minister?

**Hon. Rambharat:** Madam Chair, thank you very much and thanks to my colleagues. I am going to be very quick. I am going to cover eight items very quickly and perhaps that would reduce the time required. The first is to say, as the Minister has said, this is a variation and a transfer from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries. The increase is an existing Item in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries' allocation under COVID is currently \$5 million and the proposal is to add 57 to bring it to 62.

This 57 will be used over the months, May, June, July, August and September to benefit a minimum of 125,000 families across the country, mainly through the 41 Members of Parliament in Trinidad and Tobago. The average cost of the production of the veggie, fruit and chicken packages would be \$456 and we have tried so far to keep it within that price range, cost range and even reduce it.

The fourth point is that the programme last year benefited 76 farmers, we have doubled it so far, 159 farmers. I am hoping it could get to 200 or more with the support of all of Members of Parliament who have farmers in their communities and want them to supply. I estimate that these farmers, we will spend about 50 million out of this 57 million as a direct payment to the farmers. I expect that some of the farmers will earn, over the five-month period, as much as 600,000, maybe more. I expect, on average, farmers who are in the programme will earn about 175,000.

The fifth point I want to make is in addition to the work we have done with the MPs so far, delivering over 25,000 in the first month. We have also delivered via the councillors, packages of chicken only to 9,815 families. We have the second delivery next week, June 17<sup>th</sup>, and we include in that peeled and frozen provision. And I want to continue that over the entire five months and I expect that over the five months, via the councillors, we will impact 50,000 families. So 125,000 through the MPs, 50,000 through the councillors. I expect that along –

**Madam Chairman:** Minister, can I ask you for your last two points, that you pick the one –

**Hon. Rambharat:** The total impact of this programme – this 57 million – the total impact, I expect it to be in the range of 185,000 to 200,000 families, over 200 farmers. And the eighth point, I will allow somebody to ask me that burning question and I will answer it.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much.

*Question proposed:* That Head 77 be varied by an increase in the sum of \$57,310,000.

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva North.

**Mr. Ratiram:** Thank you, Madam Chair. The hon. Minister indicated that 50 million, out of the 57 million, is going to be allocated to farmers. Can the hon. Minister advise what is the criteria used to select these farmers?

**Hon. Rambharat:** Originally, NAMDEVCO used the criteria of farmers whose farms have been certified and farmers who supply via the NAMDEVCO wholesale markets and retail markets. We have expanded it by doing inspections on the farms of those farmers who have indicated their interest. That is how we got to 159. And any farmer – as I said before, any farmer who has produce, we currently put into the basket 17 items. The MPs are familiar with it. If you have somebody in your constituency doing cassava, doing dasheen, sweet potato, plantain, those things, you can indicate to NAMDEVCO, you can indicate to me because the more farmers we have in the programme, the more we will spread the intended spend and we have room to spend more. I encourage you – and that is why we are doing the frozen packs too because we would take up some of the surplus which exists with plantain and cassava and those things that are currently in excess supply on the market. So I want all the MPs to help us do this.

**Mr. Ratiram:** Thank you.

**Madam Chairman:** Thank you very much, Minister. Member for Oropouche West.

**Mr. Tancoo:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would prefer if the Minister could put this in writing but it is up to him in the interest of time. I would like to get from the Minister a policy for the distribution on these very same hampers he is referring to today, that these are hampers that are being provided to MPs, this funding is being provided to MPs. But I am aware that there are other hampers being provided –

**Madam Chairman:** Seeing that this is not really a question that is allowed, I will allow it to be given in writing.

[*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** The question is that the 2021 Appropriation for Head 77: Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries be increased by the sum of \$57,310,000. Those in favour say aye, those against say no. I think the ayes have it. Head 77: Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries has been varied by an increase in the sum of \$57,310,000. Thank you.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 77 varied by an increase in the sum of \$57,310,000.*

Head 78: Ministry of Social Development and Family Services \$40,000,000.

[*Crosstalk*]

**Hon. Cox:** Madam Chair, in the interest of time, I will have to – [*Inaudible*] – my opening statement and –

[*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members? [*Crosstalk*]

**Mr. Hosein:** [*Inaudible*] – 57 – [*Crosstalk*]

*Question proposed:* That Head 78 be varied by an increase in the sum of \$40,000,000.

[*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Chaguanas East, could you kindly put on your mike?

**Ms. Mohit:** Sure.

**Mr. Ratiram:** Yes, Madam Chair.

**Ms. Mohit:** Madam Chair, under Item –

**Mr. Ratiram:** My mike is on and I am saying this is unacceptable that I was –

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva North, you are not recognized. Member for Chaguanas East, please proceed. Please unmute your mike.

**Ms. Mohit:** Sorry about that, Madam Chair. Head 78/007/03, can the Minister advise what initiatives were undertaken with the original allocation of \$330 million?

**Madam Chairman:** Well, what is here before us is \$40 million. So could you ask a question relative to that, please?

**Ms. Mohit:** All right. Madam Chair. I was – just to be brief, how much of this \$40 million is

anticipated to be spent on administrative and operational costs if the Minister can state, please?

**Madam Chairman:** Minister?

**Hon. Cox:** Yes, I am unmuting. Madam Chair, none because actually the staff—internal administrative arrangements were made to organize this phase two.

**Ms. Mohit:** Okay. Madam Chair, quickly, just two more questions: Can the Minister state whether relief mechanisms have been afforded to persons who experienced income loss prior to May 31, 2021?

**Hon. Cox:** Madam Chair, this 40 million is for persons who have experienced difficulties from May 01, 2021.

**Madam Chairman:** I recognize the Member for Moruga/Tableland.

**Ms. Benjamin:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would just like to find out if persons would be also allowed to apply for the month of June since the lockdown period was extended and also if any provisions would be made for persons in the construction sector. And to date, although as MPs, we were notified of the food card programme, we have not been given any feedback as each MP could attest to them being bombarded with calls, so if I could get an answer, please?

**Madam Chairman:** Okay. So I will only allow the question with respect to whether members of the construction sector are included in this because the explanation tells you it is only for May 01, 2021. Yes?

**Hon. Cox:** Okay, Madam Chair, thank you. We are having discussions with the Ministry of Finance concerning the construction sector. No final decision has been made.

**8.15 p.m.**

**Madam Chairman:** Member for Couva North.

**Mr. Ratiram:** Madam Chair, I was speaking and my mike got mute. I raised my hand while the MP—

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Member.

[*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, I want to say at this time, any further questions should be sent to the relevant Ministers in writing.

*Question put:* That Head 78 be varied by an increase in the sum of \$40 million.

*Question agreed to.*

[*Crosstalk*]

**Madam Chairman:** Hon. Members, please note that the debate for the adoption of the Committee's report will take place on Wednesday June 9, 2021 at 1:30 p.m. This meeting of the Standing Finance Committee is now adjourned

[*Crosstalk*]

**8.17 p.m.:**      *Standing Finance Committee adjourned.*



**APPENDIX IV**

**Schedule relating to the Supplementation/Variation of Estimates 2021**

**SCHEDULE**  
**RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTATION / VARIATION OF ESTIMATES - 2021**

HEAD/SUB-HEAD/ITEM AND SUB-ITEM			Provision in Estimates 2021 including Direct Charges, Transfers & Virements	Revised Provision 2021	NET		Explanation
					Increase	Decrease	
			\$	\$	\$	\$	
<b>HEAD</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>ELECTIONS AND BOUNDARIES COMMISSION</b>	74,875,000	79,071,500	4,196,500		<b>Supplementation of Appropriation</b>
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>Development Programme</b>	0	4,196,500	4,196,500		
<b>Item</b>	<b>005</b>	<b>Multi Sectoral and Other Services</b>	0	4,196,500	4,196,500		
Sub-Item	06	General Public Services	0	4,196,500	4,196,500		
Project Grp.	A	Administrative Services	0	4,196,500	4,196,500		
Project No.	005	Upgrading of the Electronic Voter Registration and Election	0	4,196,500	4,196,500		

		Management System					
<b>HEAD</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER</b>	<b>471,111,325</b>	<b>497,631,325</b>	<b>26,520,000</b>		<b>Variation - \$10,000,000; Supplementation - \$16,520,000</b>
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Current Transfers and Subsidies</b>	<b>188,411,380</b>	<b>214,931,380</b>	<b>26,520,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>005</b>	<b>Non Profit Institutions</b>	<b>57,752,750</b>	<b>67,752,750</b>	<b>10,000,000</b>		
Sub-Item	01	Ecclesiastical Bodies	500,000	10,500,000	10,000,000		Variation of Appropriation
<b>Item</b>	<b>007</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>76,016,300</b>	<b>92,536,300</b>	<b>16,520,000</b>		
Sub-Item	03	Children's Authority	67,816,000	84,336,000	16,520,000		Supplementation of Appropriation
<b>HEAD</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>TOBAGO HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY</b>	<b>2,116,000,000</b>	<b>2,196,000,000</b>	<b>80,000,000</b>		<b>Supplementation of Appropriation</b>
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies</b>	<b>1,867,854,768</b>	<b>1,917,854,768</b>	<b>50,000,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>001</b>	<b>Tobago House of Assembly</b>	<b>1,867,854,768</b>	<b>1,917,854,768</b>	<b>50,000,000</b>		
Sub-Item	06	Tobago House of Assembly	1,867,854,768	1,917,854,768	50,000,000		
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>Development Programme</b>	<b>248,145,232</b>	<b>278,145,232</b>	<b>30,000,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>003</b>	<b>Economic Infrastructure</b>	<b>95,468,574</b>	<b>100,468,574</b>	<b>5,000,000</b>		
Sub-Item	11	Other Economic Services	32,350,000	37,350,000	5,000,000		
Project Grp.	G	Business Services	8,000,000	13,000,000	5,000,000		
Project No.	019	Enterprise Assistance Grant Programme	1,000,000	6,000,000	5,000,000		

<b>Item</b>	<b>004</b>	<b>Social Infrastructure</b>	<b>126,855,674</b>	<b>151,855,674</b>	<b>25,000,000</b>		
Sub-Item	08	Housing and Settlements	42,509,674	67,509,674	25,000,000		
Project Grp.	B	Land Development	42,509,674	67,509,674	25,000,000		
Project No.	497	Development of Land for Airport Relocation	22,500,674	47,500,674	25,000,000		
<b>HEAD</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>MINISTRY OF FINANCE</b>	<b>6,312,869,104</b>	<b>6,321,328,576</b>	<b>8,459,472</b>		
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Current Transfers and Subsidies</b>	<b>4,184,239,376</b>	<b>4,192,698,848</b>	<b>8,459,472</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>007</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>519,154,866</b>	<b>469,154,866</b>		<b>50,000,000</b>	
Sub-Item	21	Covid-19 Support	200,000,000	150,000,000		50,000,000	Variation of Appropriation
<b>Item</b>	<b>009</b>	<b>Other Transfers</b>	<b>2,847,500,800</b>	<b>2,905,960,272</b>	<b>58,459,472</b>		
Sub-Item	11	Infrastructure Development Fund	1,647,534,000	1,763,303,472	115,769,472		Supplementation of Appropriation
Sub-Item	42	Fiscal Incentive Programme for Farmers	500,000,000	442,690,000		57,310,000	Variation of Appropriation
<b>HEAD</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY</b>	<b>2,768,958,858</b>	<b>3,494,567,198</b>	<b>725,608,340</b>		<b>Supplementation of Appropriation</b>
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>Personnel Expenditure</b>	<b>1,901,347,520</b>	<b>2,184,677,830</b>	<b>283,330,310</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>001</b>	<b>General Administration</b>	<b>23,682,366</b>	<b>302,810,466</b>	<b>279,128,100</b>		
Sub-Item	01	Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance	19,439,880	198,704,750	179,264,870		

Sub-Item	04	Allowances - Monthly Paid Officers	299,680	79,922,850	79,623,170		
Sub-Item	05	Government's Contribution to N.I.S.	1,527,740	21,767,800	20,240,060		
<b>Item</b>	<b>012</b>	<b>Lifeguard Service</b>	<b>18,760,320</b>	<b>22,962,530</b>	<b>4,202,210</b>		
Sub-Item	02	Wages and C.O.L.A. (including Leave Pay)	14,687,790	18,890,000	4,202,210		
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Goods and Services</b>	<b>330,918,068</b>	<b>551,296,418</b>	<b>220,378,350</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>001</b>	<b>General Administration</b>	<b>105,783,930</b>	<b>326,162,280</b>	<b>220,378,350</b>		
Sub-Item	01	Travelling and Subsistence	1,591,450	6,293,450	4,702,000		
Sub-Item	03	Uniforms	27,490	4,981,450	4,953,960		
Sub-Item	08	Rent/ Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage	7,488,620	17,306,090	9,817,470		
Sub-Item	12	Materials and Supplies	0	16,906,530	16,906,530		
Sub-Item	13	Maintenance of Vehicles	195,030	44,967,640	44,772,610		
Sub-Item	15	Repairs and Maintenance - Equipment	7,730	4,551,870	4,544,140		

Sub-Item	16	Contract Employment	29,111,230	32,031,780	2,920,550		
Sub-Item	21	Repairs and Maintenance - Buildings	1,936,450	20,098,760	18,162,310		
Sub-Item	28	Other Contracted Services	1,881,688	37,660,708	35,779,020		
Sub-Item	36	Extraordinary Expenditure	50,675,280	80,675,280	30,000,000		
Sub-Item	43	Security Services	3,241,040	22,248,610	19,007,570		
Sub-Item	61	Insurance	0	11,693,780	11,693,780		
Sub-Item	96	Fuel and Lubricants	266,270	17,384,680	17,118,410		
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Current Transfers and Subsidies</b>	<b>303,456,560</b>	<b>525,356,240</b>	<b>221,899,680</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>001</b>	<b>Regional Bodies</b>	<b>12,414,478</b>	<b>24,514,158</b>	<b>12,099,680</b>		
Sub-Item	05	The Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS)	11,689,258	23,788,938	12,099,680		
<b>Item</b>	<b>005</b>	<b>Non-Profit Institutions</b>	<b>3,254,000</b>	<b>7,254,000</b>	<b>4,000,000</b>		
Sub-Item	02	Vision on Mission	3,254,000	7,254,000	4,000,000		

<b>Item</b>	<b>007</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>10,200,000</b>	<b>18,200,000</b>	<b>8,000,000</b>		
Sub-Item	02	Ex-Gratia Awards	300,000	1,300,000	1,000,000		
Sub-Item	13	Criminal Injuries Compensation	1,000,000	2,000,000	1,000,000		
Sub-Item	15	Comp. to the Estates of Members of the Protective Services	1,000,000	4,000,000	3,000,000		
Sub-Item	40	Gratuities to Contract Officers	7,000,000	10,000,000	3,000,000		
<b>Item</b>	<b>009</b>	<b>Other Transfers</b>	<b>247,497,562</b>	<b>445,297,562</b>	<b>197,800,000</b>		
Sub-Item	02	Strategic Services Agency	205,419,562	393,919,562	188,500,000		
Sub-Item	10	Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM)	12,000,000	21,300,000	9,300,000		
<b>HEAD</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS</b>	<b>365,077,200</b>	<b>484,038,200</b>	<b>118,961,000</b>		<b>Supplementation of Appropriation</b>
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>Personnel Expenditure</b>	<b>89,895,100</b>	<b>91,595,100</b>	<b>1,700,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>001</b>	<b>General Administration</b>	<b>64,060,000</b>	<b>65,760,000</b>	<b>1,700,000</b>		
Sub-Item	01	Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance	38,000,000	39,700,000	1,700,000		
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Goods and Services</b>	<b>185,646,060</b>	<b>293,486,060</b>	<b>107,840,000</b>		

<b>Item</b>	<b>001</b>	<b>General Administration</b>	<b>132,191,000</b>	<b>206,331,000</b>	<b>74,140,000</b>		
Sub-Item	12	Materials and Supplies	150,000	13,290,000	13,140,000		
Sub-Item	16	Contract Employment	47,345,000	52,345,000	5,000,000		
Sub-Item	22	Short-term Employment	11,700,000	16,700,000	5,000,000		
Sub-Item	23	Fees	33,500,000	84,500,000	51,000,000		
<b>Item</b>	<b>009</b>	<b>Criminal Law Department</b>	<b>36,809,000</b>	<b>70,509,000</b>	<b>33,700,000</b>		
Sub-Item	23	Fees	15,100,000	48,800,000	33,700,000		
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Current Transfers and Subsidies</b>	<b>63,566,040</b>	<b>72,987,040</b>	<b>9,421,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>005</b>	<b>Non-Profit Institutions</b>	<b>40,000,000</b>	<b>45,804,000</b>	<b>5,804,000</b>		
Sub-Item	01	Legal Aid and Advisory Authority	40,000,000	45,804,000	5,804,000		
<b>Item</b>	<b>007</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>4,000,000</b>	<b>5,500,000</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>		
Sub-Item	40	Gratuities to Contract Officers	4,000,000	5,500,000	1,500,000		
<b>Item</b>	<b>009</b>	<b>Other Transfers</b>	<b>19,443,840</b>	<b>21,560,840</b>	<b>2,117,000</b>		
Sub-Item	01	Police Complaints Authority	16,900,000	19,017,000	2,117,000		
<b>HEAD</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>MINISTRY OF HEALTH</b>	<b>5,216,280,312</b>	<b>5,483,393,949</b>	<b>267,113,637</b>		<b>Supplementation of Appropriation</b>



<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Goods and Services</b>	<b>341,535,727</b>	<b>410,993,828</b>	<b>69,458,101</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>004</b>	<b>Vertical Services</b>	<b>175,108,021</b>	<b>244,566,122</b>	<b>69,458,101</b>		
Sub-item	39	Drugs and Other Related Materials and Supplies	159,941,026	229,399,127	69,458,101		
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Current Transfers and Subsidies</b>	<b>4,332,853,796</b>	<b>4,530,509,332</b>	<b>197,655,536</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>007</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>66,354,000</b>	<b>72,654,000</b>	<b>6,300,000</b>		
Sub-item	01	Medical Treatment of Nationals in Institutions	55,000,000	61,300,000	6,300,000		
<b>Item</b>	<b>009</b>	<b>Other Transfers</b>	<b>4,123,529,698</b>	<b>4,288,559,204</b>	<b>165,029,506</b>		
Sub-item	01	Regional Health Authority	94,600,000	181,129,506	86,529,506		
Sub-item	02	North West Regional Health Authority	953,000,000	969,767,927	16,767,927		
Sub-item	03	Eastern Regional Health Authority	439,866,932	453,866,932	14,000,000		
Sub-item	04	North Central Regional Health Authority	1,155,520,000	1,190,122,235	34,602,235		
Sub-item	05	South West Regional Health Authority	1,106,400,000	1,119,529,838	13,129,838		
<b>Item</b>	<b>011</b>	<b>Transfers to State Enterprises</b>	<b>108,709,642</b>	<b>135,035,672</b>	<b>26,326,030</b>		

Sub-item	05	NIPDEC-RBC Merchant Bank (T&T) Ltd. TT\$ 671.3Mn. 7 year Fixed Rate Loan Notes	25,000,000	42,762,219	17,762,219		
Sub-item	10	UDeCOTT - TT \$46.9Mn. Port-of-Spain General Hospital Central Block	1,163,290	5,073,058	3,909,768		
Sub-item	11	UDeCOTT - US \$8.3Mn. Port-of-Spain General Hospital Central Block	1,321,000	5,975,043	4,654,043		
<b>HEAD</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATI ON AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATI ON</b>	<b>1,207,530,475</b>	<b>1,232,330,475</b>	<b>24,800,000</b>		<b>Supplementation of Appropriation</b>
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Current Transfers and Subsidies</b>	<b>502,112,275</b>	<b>526,912,275</b>	<b>24,800,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>011</b>	<b>Transfers to State Enterprises</b>	<b>490,595,295</b>	<b>515,395,295</b>	<b>24,800,000</b>		
Sub-Item	10	UDECOTT - TT\$49.6 Mn Principal payment on 10 year Fixed Rate Loan Gov't Campus Fit-Out	24,800,000	49,600,000	24,800,000		

<b>HEAD</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>MINISTRY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES</b>	<b>1,944,382,285</b>	<b>2,888,959,285</b>	<b>944,577,000</b>		<b>Supplementation of Appropriation</b>
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Goods and Services</b>	<b>324,679,503</b>	<b>477,352,503</b>	<b>152,673,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>001</b>	<b>General Administration</b>	<b>312,676,503</b>	<b>465,349,503</b>	<b>152,673,000</b>		
Sub-item	42	Street Lighting	50,000,000	202,673,000	152,673,000		
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Current Transfers and Subsidies</b>	<b>523,019,082</b>	<b>711,819,082</b>	<b>188,800,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>007</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>47,000,000</b>	<b>119,000,000</b>	<b>72,000,000</b>		
Sub-item	08	Refunds to T&TEC - Re-Rebate on Electricity Bills	40,000,000	112,000,000	72,000,000		
<b>Item</b>	<b>009</b>	<b>Other Transfers</b>	<b>360,374,082</b>	<b>461,574,382</b>	<b>101,200,300</b>		
Sub-item	18	Principal on T&TEC \$812.6Mn. Fixed Rate Bond	46,881,812	94,967,612	48,085,800		
Sub-item	19	Interest on T&TEC \$812.6Mn. Fixed Rate Bond	13,524,588	25,845,288	12,320,700		
Sub-item	20	Principal on T&TEC \$800Mn Fixed Rate Bond	21,675,715	44,230,815	22,555,100		
Sub-item	21	Interest on T&TEC \$800Mn Fixed Rate Bond	19,117,895	37,356,595	18,238,700		
<b>Item</b>	<b>011</b>	<b>Transfers to State Enterprises</b>	<b>108,595,000</b>	<b>124,194,700</b>	<b>15,599,700</b>		
Sub-item	02	Solid Waste Management Company Limited	100,773,600	108,594,600	7,821,000		

Sub-item	06	Interest on NMTS TT\$300Mn. Fixed Rate Loan	7,821,400	15,600,100	7,778,700		
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies</b>	<b>1,016,912,500</b>	<b>1,592,812,500</b>	<b>575,900,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>004</b>	<b>Statutory Boards</b>	<b>1,016,912,500</b>	<b>1,592,812,500</b>	<b>575,900,000</b>		
Sub-item	51	Water and Sewerage Authority	1,016,912,500	1,592,812,500	575,900,000		
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>Development Programme</b>	<b>56,450,000</b>	<b>83,654,000</b>	<b>27,204,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>003</b>	<b>Economic Infrastructure</b>	<b>45,750,000</b>	<b>56,954,000</b>	<b>11,204,000</b>		
Sub-item	05	Fuel and Energy	20,750,000	31,954,000	11,204,000		
Project Grp.	A	Electricity	20,750,000	31,954,000	11,204,000		
Project No.	585	Production and Delivery of Bulk Power	1,000,000	4,604,000	3,604,000		
Project No.	596	Replacement of Aging Transmission Infrastructure	2,000,000	9,600,000	7,600,000		
<b>Item</b>	<b>005</b>	<b>Multi-Sectoral and Other Services</b>	<b>8,700,000</b>	<b>24,700,000</b>	<b>16,000,000</b>		
Sub-item	06	General Public Services	5,500,000	21,500,000	16,000,000		

Project Grp.	A	Administrative Services	5,500,000	21,500,000	16,000,000		
Project No.	061	Community Water Improvement Programme	4,000,000	20,000,000	16,000,000		
<b>HEAD</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT</b>	<b>2,304,204,253</b>	<b>2,446,420,253</b>	<b>142,216,000</b>		<b>Supplementation of Appropriation</b>
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Current Transfers and Subsidies</b>	<b>494,250,829</b>	<b>542,147,829</b>	<b>47,897,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>007</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>3,046,640</b>	<b>5,346,640</b>	<b>2,300,000</b>		
Sub-item	40	Gratuities to Contract Officers	3,046,640	5,346,640	2,300,000		
<b>Item</b>	<b>009</b>	<b>Other Transfers</b>	<b>400,400,000</b>	<b>443,897,000</b>	<b>43,497,000</b>		
Sub-item	04	Community Based Environment Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP)	400,400,000	443,897,000	43,497,000		
<b>Item</b>	<b>011</b>	<b>Transfers to State Enterprises</b>	<b>90,576,389</b>	<b>92,676,389</b>	<b>2,100,000</b>		
Sub-item	09	RDC-National Reforestation and	85,000,000	87,100,000	2,100,000		

		Watershed Rehabilitation Programme (NRWRP)					
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies</b>	<b>1,453,738,655</b>	<b>1,548,057,655</b>	<b>94,319,000</b>		
Sub-item	23	Port of Spain City Corporation	222,779,817	237,509,817	14,730,000		
Sub-item	24	San Fernando City Corporation	129,551,472	135,401,472	5,850,000		
Sub-item	25	Arima Borough Corporation	82,437,758	86,472,758	4,035,000		
Sub-item	26	Point Fortin Borough Corporation	69,376,576	74,103,576	4,727,000		
Sub-item	27	Chaguanas Borough Corporation	69,323,393	82,185,393	12,862,000		
Sub-item	28	Diego Martin Regional Corporation	102,745,909	107,346,909	4,601,000		
Sub-item	29	San Juan/Laventille Regional Corporation	157,120,636	160,977,636	3,857,000		

Sub-item	30	Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation	157,205,236	176,149,236	18,944,000		
Sub-item	31	Sangre Grande Regional Corporation	75,685,363	79,023,363	3,338,000		
Sub-item	32	Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corporation	99,617,784	103,704,784	4,087,000		
Sub-item	33	Mayaro/Rio Claro Regional Corporation	57,100,493	58,859,493	1,759,000		
Sub-item	34	Siparia Regional Corporation	78,455,000	83,722,000	5,267,000		
Sub-item	35	Penal/Debe Regional Corporation	63,705,415	70,065,415	6,360,000		
Sub-item	36	Princes Town Regional Corporation	72,214,068	76,116,068	3,902,000		
<b>HEAD</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT</b>	<b>2,417,253,141</b>	<b>2,711,679,841</b>	<b>294,426,700</b>		<b>Supplementation of Appropriation</b>
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>Personnel Expenditure</b>	<b>401,288,000</b>	<b>410,523,000</b>	<b>9,235,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>001</b>	<b>General Administration</b>	<b>54,184,656</b>	<b>55,570,656</b>	<b>1,386,000</b>		
Sub-item	01	Salaries and COLA	41,000,000	42,386,000	1,386,000		
<b>Item</b>	<b>002</b>	<b>Highways</b>	<b>111,171,000</b>	<b>119,020,000</b>	<b>7,849,000</b>		
Sub-item	30	Allowances-Daily-Rated Workers	4,151,000	12,000,000	7,849,000		

<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Goods and Services</b>	<b>240,826,249</b>	<b>306,338,149</b>	<b>65,511,900</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>001</b>	<b>General Administration</b>	<b>42,434,500</b>	<b>44,984,500</b>	<b>2,550,000</b>		
Sub-item	04	Electricity	3,000,000	5,550,000	2,550,000		
<b>Item</b>	<b>002</b>	<b>Highways</b>	<b>49,259,800</b>	<b>74,129,700</b>	<b>24,869,900</b>		
Sub-item	28	Other Contracted Services	35,000,000	59,869,900	24,869,900		
<b>Item</b>	<b>003</b>	<b>Traffic Management</b>	<b>9,759,000</b>	<b>35,959,000</b>	<b>26,200,000</b>		
Sub-item	28	Other Contracted Services	4,220,000	30,420,000	26,200,000		
<b>Item</b>	<b>005</b>	<b>Drainage</b>	<b>63,610,500</b>	<b>66,730,500</b>	<b>3,120,000</b>		
Sub-item	16	Contract Employment	3,606,700	6,726,700	3,120,000		
<b>Item</b>	<b>014</b>	<b>Transport Division</b>	<b>15,462,500</b>	<b>21,162,500</b>	<b>5,700,000</b>		
Sub-item	05	Telephones	1,000,000	2,500,000	1,500,000		
Sub-item	37	Janitorial Services	349,450	1,349,450	1,000,000		
Sub-item	43	Security Services	3,300,000	6,500,000	3,200,000		
<b>Item</b>	<b>015</b>	<b>Maritime Services</b>	<b>5,902,180</b>	<b>8,974,180</b>	<b>3,072,000</b>		



Sub-item	08	Rent/ Lease Office - Accommodation and Storage	1,965,000	3,737,000	1,772,000		
Sub-item	43	Security Services	540,000	1,840,000	1,300,000		
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Current Transfers and Subsidies</b>	<b>1,212,070,583</b>	<b>1,414,921,583</b>	<b>202,851,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>007</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>22,477,633</b>	<b>26,832,333</b>	<b>4,354,700</b>		
Sub-item	01	Severance Pay and Retirement Benefits	15,000,000	19,354,700	4,354,700		
<b>Item</b>	<b>011</b>	<b>Transfers to State Enterprises</b>	<b>787,987,834</b>	<b>986,484,134</b>	<b>198,496,300</b>		
Sub-item	18	National Helicopter Services Limited (NHSL)	42,866,300	57,266,300	14,400,000		
Sub-item	20	NIDCO- Charter of an Inter-Island Passenger Vessel	72,707,200	96,607,200	23,900,000		
Sub-item	28	NIDCO - Operation and Maintenance of the M.V. Galleons Passage	15,000,000	175,196,300	160,196,300		
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>Development Programme</b>	<b>229,172,000</b>	<b>246,000,800</b>	<b>16,828,800</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>003</b>	<b>Economic Infrastructure</b>	<b>215,247,000</b>	<b>232,075,800</b>	<b>16,828,800</b>		
Sub Item	15	Transport and Communication	179,247,000	196,075,800	16,828,800		
Project Grp.	H	Sea Transport	102,110,000	118,938,800	16,828,800		
Project No.	789	Upgrading and Modernization of Navigational Aids	1,750,000	6,997,380	5,247,380		

Project No.	822	Empty Container Yard Paving/Repair to Container Terminal	2,000,000	3,000,000	1,000,000		
Project No.	824	Removal and Disposal of Wrecks and Derelict Vessels	4,000,000	9,756,942	5,756,942		
Project No.	827	Procurement of one (1) Ship to Shore Gantry Crane	51,960,000	56,784,478	4,824,478		
<b>HEAD</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>844,028,300</b>	<b>934,989,300</b>	<b>90,961,000</b>		<b>Supplementation of Appropriation</b>
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>Development Programme</b>	<b>95,500,000</b>	<b>186,461,000</b>	<b>90,961,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>004</b>	<b>Social Infrastructure</b>	<b>92,432,000</b>	<b>183,393,000</b>	<b>90,961,000</b>		
Sub-item	08	Housing and Settlements	90,432,000	181,393,000	90,961,000		
Project Grp.	D	Housing Estates	20,000,000	59,709,000	39,709,000		
Project No.	075	Rehabilitation and Maintenance of HDC Rental Apartments and Housing Units	20,000,000	59,709,000	39,709,000		
Project Grp.	E	Settlements	70,432,000	121,684,000	51,252,000		
Project No.	232	Housing Grants	8,000,000	10,210,000	2,210,000		
Project No.	235	Housing and Village	24,932,000	33,508,000	8,576,000		

		Improvement Programme					
Project No.	237	Regularisation of Squatter Communities	10,000,000	29,213,000	19,213,000		
Project No.	239	Government Aided Self-Help Programme	4,000,000	21,670,000	17,670,000		
Project No.	241	Development of Residential Lots - Petrotrin	20,000,000	23,583,000	3,583,000		
<b>HEAD</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO POLICE SERVICE</b>	<b>2,283,953,921</b>	<b>2,341,676,274</b>	<b>57,722,353</b>		<b>Supplementation of Appropriation</b>
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Goods and Services</b>	<b>334,689,921</b>	<b>387,899,945</b>	<b>53,210,024</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>001</b>	<b>Police Service (Trinidad)</b>	<b>329,329,821</b>	<b>382,539,845</b>	<b>53,210,024</b>		
Sub-Item	09	Rent/Lease - Vehicles and Equipment	15,000,000	22,805,000	7,805,000		
Sub-Item	10	Office Stationery and Supplies	3,000,000	6,500,000	3,500,000		
Sub-Item	13	Maintenance of Vehicles	19,148,470	22,148,470	3,000,000		
Sub-Item	16	Contract Employment	72,000,000	87,905,024	15,905,024		
Sub-Item	23	Fees	13,948,488	29,948,488	16,000,000		
Sub-Item	96	Fuel and Lubricants	14,000,000	21,000,000	7,000,000		
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Current Transfers and Subsidies</b>	<b>20,916,000</b>	<b>25,428,329</b>	<b>4,512,329</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>011</b>	<b>Transfers to State Enterprises</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,512,329</b>	<b>4,512,329</b>		
Sub-Item	01	NIPDEC - TT\$200Mn. Interest	0	4,512,329	4,512,329		

		Payment - 7yr. Fixed Rate Loan					
<b>HEAD</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>271,403,250</b>	<b>316,131,250</b>	<b>44,728,000</b>		<b>Supplementation of Appropriation</b>
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>Personnel Expenditure</b>	<b>63,919,200</b>	<b>69,259,200</b>	<b>5,340,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>004</b>	<b>Central Statistical Office</b>	<b>23,654,500</b>	<b>28,994,500</b>	<b>5,340,000</b>		
Sub-item	01	Salaries and Cost of Living Allowance	21,234,000	26,574,000	5,340,000		
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Goods and Services</b>	<b>65,968,600</b>	<b>73,911,600</b>	<b>7,943,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>001</b>	<b>General Administration</b>	<b>22,218,900</b>	<b>30,161,900</b>	<b>7,943,000</b>		
Sub-item	05	Telephones	1,512,000	5,025,000	3,513,000		
Sub-item	22	Short-term Employment	3,489,500	7,919,500	4,430,000		
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Current Transfers and Subsidies</b>	<b>88,063,000</b>	<b>109,508,000</b>	<b>21,445,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>005</b>	<b>Non Profit Institutions</b>	<b>2,617,000</b>	<b>3,612,000</b>	<b>995,000</b>		
Sub-item	01	National Trust Council	2,617,000	3,612,000	995,000		
<b>Item</b>	<b>006</b>	<b>Educational Institutions</b>	<b>28,000,000</b>	<b>43,034,000</b>	<b>15,034,000</b>		
Sub-item	01	Caribbean Industrial Research Institute	28,000,000	43,034,000	15,034,000		
<b>Item</b>	<b>007</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>4,357,400</b>	<b>9,773,400</b>	<b>5,416,000</b>		
Sub-item	03	Settlement to Cane Farmers re - 2007 transition	1,000,000	2,403,000	1,403,000		
Sub-item	40	Gratuities to Contract Officers	3,357,400	7,370,400	4,013,000		

<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies</b>	<b>17,940,450</b>	<b>27,940,450</b>	<b>10,000,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>004</b>	<b>Statutory Boards</b>	<b>17,940,450</b>	<b>27,940,450</b>	<b>10,000,000</b>		
Sub-item	49	Chaguaramas Development Authority	0	10,000,000	10,000,000		
<b>HEAD</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LAND AND FISHERIES</b>	<b>695,267,700</b>	<b>752,577,700</b>	<b>57,310,000</b>		<b>Variation of Appropriation</b>
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Current Transfers and Subsidies</b>	<b>145,811,300</b>	<b>203,121,300</b>	<b>57,310,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>007</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>17,852,200</b>	<b>75,162,200</b>	<b>57,310,000</b>		
Sub-item	07	Emergency Food Support Measure - COVID - 19	5,000,000	62,310,000	57,310,000		
<b>HEAD</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY SERVICES</b>	<b>4,963,845,000</b>	<b>5,003,845,000</b>	<b>40,000,000</b>		<b>Variation of Appropriation</b>
<b>Sub-head</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Current Transfers and Subsidies</b>	<b>4,758,015,627</b>	<b>4,798,015,627</b>	<b>40,000,000</b>		
<b>Item</b>	<b>007</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>4,730,294,727</b>	<b>4,770,294,727</b>	<b>40,000,000</b>		
Sub-item	03	Social Assistance	330,000,000	370,000,000	40,000,000		

## APPENDIX V

### Proposals for the Supplementation and Variation of Appropriation for fiscal year 2021

AGENDA FOR THE FIRST MEETING OF STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE  
OF THE 2021 SESSION OF THE HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  
TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY ON

7<sup>th</sup> JUNE, 2021

#### MATTERS RELATING TO THE 2021 ACCOUNTS

ITEM NO.	F.C. NOTE NO.	FILE NO.	SUBJECT
01	01	F:BUD:4/4/8	Supplementation of Appropriation for fiscal year 2021
02	02	F:BUD:4/4/8	Variation of Appropriation for fiscal year 2021

ITEM NO. 1

**NOTE FOR STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
F.C. (2021)

F: BUD: 4/4/8

**SUPPLEMENTATION OF APPROPRIATION FOR**  
**FISCAL YEAR 2021**

Standing Finance Committee is being asked to consider the under-mentioned proposals:

Provision of Supplementary Funds in the sum of *Two Thousand, Nine Hundred and Twenty Seven Million, Six Hundred Thousand and Two Dollars (\$2,927,600,002)* to fund urgent and critical Recurrent and Capital Expenditure to September 30, 2021, in areas where insufficient or no allocation was provided.

2. Standing Finance Committee is asked to note that as a result of the review of the Recurrent Expenditure and the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) which was conducted by the Ministry of Finance it is necessary to return to Parliament to seek approval for a supplementation of the Appropriation (Financial Year 2021) Act, 2020 for fourteen (14) Heads of Expenditure totaling \$2,927,600,002.

3. Further, the Standing Finance Committee is now being asked to approve the additional sum amounting to **\$2,927,600,002** which will be sourced from the Consolidated Fund and is required to meet expenditure under the following sub-heads:-

- (i) Personnel Expenditure - \$299,605,310
- (ii) Goods and Services - \$677,014,375
- (iii) Current Transfers and Subsidies - \$1,051,571,017
- (iv) Current Transfers to Statutory Boards and Similar Bodies - \$730,219,000
- (v) Development Programme - \$169,190,300

4. Details of the total proposed Supplementation by Heads of Expenditure are given in the Table below:

**Supplementation by Heads of Expenditure - 2021**

Heads of Expenditure		Amount \$
08	Elections and Boundaries Commission	4,196,500
13	Office of the Prime Minister	16,520,000
15	Tobago House of Assembly	80,000,000
18	Ministry of Finance	115,769,472
22	Ministry of National Security	725,608,340
23	Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs	118,961,000

28	Ministry of Health	267,113,637
31	Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation	24,800,000
39	Ministry of Public Utilities	944,577,000
42	Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government	142,216,000
43	Ministry of Works and Transport	294,426,700
61	Ministry of Housing and Urban Development	90,961,000
64	Trinidad and Tobago Police Service	57,722,353
67	Ministry of Planning and Development	44,728,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,927,600,002</b>

5. Explanations for the areas for the proposed supplementary funding are as follows:

**Head 08 - Elections and Boundaries Commission**

**Public Sector Investment Programme (P.S.I.P) - \$4,196,500**

09/005/06/A/005 - Upgrading of the Electronic Voter Registration and Election Management System - \$4,196,500

This sum is required to enable payment to De La Rue International Limited (now ID Global Solutions Limited) in accordance with a contract to provide the Elections and Boundaries Commission with support and services related to the Voter Registration and Election Management System.

**Head 13 - Office of the Prime Minister**

**Recurrent Expenditure - \$16,520,000**

04/007/03 - Children's Authority - \$16,520,000

The sum is required to give effect to Cabinet's decision to increase the budgetary allocation to the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (CATT) to enable the provision of services by the Authority.

**Head 15 - Tobago House of Assembly - \$80,000,000**

**Recurrent Expenditure - \$50,000,000**

06/001/06 - Tobago House of Assembly - \$50,000,000

The funds are required to:

- i) enable the operationalization of the Roxborough Hospital as well as the Moriah Health Centre - \$25,000,000;
- ii) facilitate the payment of outstanding debts to the National Helicopter Services Limited (NHSL); and other suppliers and creditors as well as to enable the settlement of gratuities and benefits to employees - \$15,000,000;
- iii) enable the acquisition of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), medical equipment, cleaning supplies, as well as to meet the cost of rental of accommodation including the refurbishment and outfitting of same to provide quarantine services, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic - \$10,000,000.



**Public Sector Investment Programme (P.S.I.P) - \$30,000,000**

09/003/11/G/019 - Enterprise Assistance Grant Programme - \$5,000,000

The sum is required to provide relief through loans and grants to entrepreneurs who were negatively affected by the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

09/004/08/B/497 - Development of Land for Airport Relocation - \$25,000,000

This sum is required to meet the cost of developing serviced plots at Cove and Shirvan Estates, in order to relocate the residents of Crown Point and Store Bay local roads who have been displaced by the construction of the new ANR Robinson International Airport.

**Head 18 - Ministry of Finance**

**Recurrent Expenditure - \$115,769,472**

04/009/11 - Infrastructure Development Fund - \$115,769,472

The sum is required to supplement the Infrastructure Development Fund (IDF) to enable the undermentioned Ministries to meet their obligations:

Head 28 - Ministry of Health -\$65,769,472- amounts owed to VAMED;

Head 39 - Ministry of Public Utilities - \$50,000,000 to bring to account amounts previously disbursed under the IDB Wastewater Project.

**Head 22 - Ministry of National Security**

**Recurrent Expenditure - \$725,608,340**

01/001/01 - Salaries and COLA - \$179,264,870

01/001/04 - Allowances - Monthly Paid Officers - \$79,623,170

01/001/05 - Government's Contribution to NIS - \$20,240,060

01/012/02 - Wages and COLA - \$4,202,210

The additional sums are required to enable the Fire Service, Prison Service, Lifeguard Service, Probation Service and Forensic Science Centre to pay salaries, allowances and wages to employees as well as Government's Contribution to NIS on behalf of employees for the period July-September 2021.

02/001/01 - Travelling and Subsistence - \$4,702,000

The sum is required to enable the Immigration Division and Forensic Science Centre to pay arrears of travelling and subsistence to their respective officers for the period 2018 to 2020, as well as enable the payment of arrears to Probation Officers for fiscal 2020.

02/001/03 - Uniforms - \$4,953,960

The sum is required to facilitate the purchase of uniforms and operational kits for use by employees within the Fire Service, Regiment, Life Guard and Air Guard.

02/001/08 – Rent/Lease – Office Accommodation and Storage - \$9,817,470

The sum is required to enable the Fire Service and the Regiment to pay arrears of rent owed with respect to properties leased from the Chaguaramas Development Authority; as well as enable the Immigration Division meet its rent obligations with respect to San Fernando Offices, and the Life Guards, with respect to the accommodation at Mayaro.

02/001/12 – Materials and Supplies - \$16,906,530

The sum is required to enable the acquisition of new passports by the Immigration Division from the contracted vendor (Canadian Bank Note Co. Ltd.), the acquisition of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other hygiene supplies for use by the officers and the inmates within the Prison Service, as well as the purchase of fire hoses and related materials for the Fire Service.

02/001/13 – Maintenance of Vehicles - \$44,772,610

The sum is required to enable the Fire Service, Prison Service, Coast Guard and Life Guard to meet the costs associated with the maintenance and repairs of their respective vehicles, such as, water tenders, land vehicles and sea vessels, and ambulances.

02/001/15 – Repairs and Maintenance - Equipment - \$4,544,140

The sum is required to enable the Fire Service, Air Guard and Prison Service to meet the costs to maintain and repair their equipment, which include breathing apparatus, compressors, gantry crane, fire extinguishers and baggage scanners.

02/001/16 – Contract Employment - \$2,920,550

The sum is required to enable the buyout of vacation leave of officers in the Office of Law Enforcement Policy; to reimburse the costs incurred by Overseas Missions on behalf of the Ministry as well as to enable the recruitment of two (2) Pathologists for the Forensic Science Centre.

02/001/21 – Repairs and Maintenance – Buildings - \$18,162,310

The sum is required to meet the cost of repairs and maintenance of buildings by various Divisions of the Ministry:

- Fire Service - repairs consisting mainly of roofing and electrical work on buildings at several locations;
- Prison Service – repairs to inmates’ housing;
- Regiment and Coast Guard - repairs consisting mainly of plumbing and electrical works at several locations;

- Probation Service and Forensic Science Centre - repairs to the air conditioning systems; and
- Life Guards - Repairs and maintenance to Lifeguard towers and refurbishment of the Toco Facility.

02/001/28 – Other Contracted Services - \$35,779,020

The sum is required to enable the Fire Service Division, Defence Force, Immigration and Prison Service to meet their contractual obligations as well as facilitate the reimbursement of expenditure incurred by Overseas Missions on behalf of the Ministry.

02/001/36 – Extraordinary Expenditure - \$30,000,000

The sum is required to meet the costs associated with the conduct of covert operations, the expenditure for which is met under General Administration.

02/001/43 – Security Services - \$19,007,570

The sum is required to enable the payment of sums owed for the provision of security services.

02/001/61 – Insurance - \$11, 693,780

The sum is required to meet the cost of insurance coverage for the Trinidad and Tobago Air Guard’s fixed wing and helicopter fleet.

02/001/96 – Fuel and Lubricants - \$17,118,410

The sum is required to enable the replenishment of fleet cards, and to purchase bulk fuel for generators and reserve storage.

04/001/05 – The Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) - \$12,099,680

The sum is required to enable Trinidad and Tobago to meet its financial obligation to the Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) for the year 2021.

04/005/02 – Vision on Mission - \$4,000,000

The sum is required to meet the annual contribution to Vision on Mission.

04/007/02 – Ex-Gratia Awards - \$1,000,000

The sum is required to supplement the shortfall in funding for Ex-Gratia Awards for fiscal 2021.

04/007/13 – Criminal Injuries Compensation - \$1,000,000

The sum is required to enable the payment of Criminal Injuries Compensation to eligible persons.

04/007/15 – Compensation to the Estate of Members of the Protective Services - \$3,000,000

The funds are required to enable the payment of compensation to the estates of members of the Protective Services.

04/007/40 – Gratuities to Contract Officers - \$3,000,000

The sum is required to enable the payment of gratuities to contract officers.

04/009/02 – Strategic Services Agency - \$188,500,000

The additional sum is required to enable the Strategic Services Agency to meet its operational expenses to September, 2021.

04/009/10 – Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM)- \$9,300,000

The sum is required to meet the cost associated with the acquisition of the National Early Warning Public Notification System as well as to meet other obligations of the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM).

**Head 23 – Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs**

**Recurrent Expenditure - \$118,961,000**

01/001/01 – Salaries and COLA - \$1,700,000

The sum is required to facilitate payment of salaries and cost of living allowance to staff on promotion and appointment, as well as to pay arrears of acting allowances and increments.

02/001/12 – Materials and Supplies - \$13,140,000

The sum is required to meet sixty percent (60%) down payment for the acquisition of polymer paper which is to be used in the Civil Registry of the Registrar General’s Department.

02/001/16 – Contract Employment - \$5,000,000

The sum is required to facilitate payment of salaries to contract officers and the related Government’s Contribution to NIS to the end of fiscal 2021; and to meet the payment of arrears of salaries due as a result of revised terms and conditions of employment.

02/001/22 – Short-term Employment - \$5,000,000

The sum is required to facilitate payment to persons employed on short term to operationalize the Digitization Unit primarily for the conversion to database storage.

02/001/23 – Fees - \$51,000,000

The sum is required to facilitate payment of outstanding fees to local and foreign attorneys-at-law for their services provided.

02/009/23 – Fees - \$33,700,000

The sum is required to facilitate the payment of outstanding fees to Deloitte and Touche for the period August, 2019 to October, 2020.

04/005/01 – Legal Aid and Advisory Authority - \$5,804,000

The sum is required to enable the Legal Aid and Advisory Authority to meet the payment of salaries for August to September, 2021; enable the retention of the services of specialized counsellors and attorneys; as well as meet administrative and operational expenses.

04/007/40 – Gratuities to Contract Officers - \$1,500,000

The sum is required to facilitate payment of gratuities to contract officers whose contracted period have expired or will expire in fiscal 2021.

04/009/01 – Police Complaints Authority - \$2,117,000

The additional sum is required to enable the Police Complaints Authority to implement a Record Management System primarily for data conversion.

**Head 28 – Ministry of Health**

**Recurrent Expenditure - \$267,113,637**

02/004/39 – Drugs and Other Related Materials and Supplies - \$69,458,101

The funds are required to:

- i) enable the acquisition of Covid-19 vaccines under the COVAX Facility in accordance with the agreement between the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) and The Gavi Alliance for the COVAX Facility - \$34,000,000;
- ii) facilitate payment to PAHO to enable the acquisition of pharmaceutical supplies such as Influenza vaccines, ABBOT Rapid Testing for Covid-19, Anti-viral Drugs for AIDS Patients and other medical supplies - \$22,953,850; and
- iii) facilitate payment to the National Insurance Property Development Company Limited (NIPDEC) in respect of the CDAP IT System (The National Health Card System) - \$12,504,251.

04/007/01 – Medical Treatment of Nationals in Institutions - \$6,300,000

The sum is required to facilitate payment of bills on hand for patients who were referred to private medical institutions for treatments such as renal dialysis, eye surgery, and the administration of chemotherapy and radiation therapy.

04/009/01 – Regional Health Authority - \$86,529,506

The funds are required to:

- i) enable the continued engagement of the Global Medical Response of Trinidad and Tobago (GMRTT) for the operations of the National Emergency Ambulance Service in Trinidad. It should be noted that Cabinet agreed to engage GMRTT on a month to month basis - \$43,900,000;
- ii) facilitate an interim payment to the Global Medical Response of Trinidad and Tobago (GMRTT) to offset amounts owed for the transport of additional patients to public health facilities over the period September 01, 2015 – May 31, 2019 - \$37,000,000; and
- iii) facilitate the operationalization of six (6) mass vaccination sites for a period of approximately six (6) months to enable the roll-out of Phase III of the Covid-19 vaccination programme. The budget includes the expenditure associated with the hiring of medical and clerical staff and the purchase of laptops - \$5,629,506.

04/009/02 – North West Regional Health Authority - \$16,767,927

04/009/03 – Eastern Regional Health Authority - \$14,000,000

04/009/04 – North Central Regional Health Authority - \$34,602,235

04/009/05 – South West Regional Health Authority - \$13,129,838

The respective amounts are required to facilitate the payment of salaries and related allowances to enable the four (4) Regional Health Authorities to augment the personnel assigned to various Health Facilities within the parallel health care system.

04/011/05 – NIPDEC – RBC Merchant Bank (T&T) Ltd. TT \$671.3Mn. 7 Year Fixed Rate Loan Notes - \$17,762,219

The funds are required to meet the principal payment on a loan facility, NIPDEC – RBC Merchant Bank (T&T) Ltd. TT \$671.3Mn. 7 Year Fixed Rate Loan Notes payable in September 2021. The facility was accessed to meet the cost of procurement, storage and distribution of pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical items, the terms and conditions of which were finalized after the presentation of the 2021 Budget.

04/011/10 – UDeCOTT – TT\$46.9Mn Port of Spain General Hospital Central Block

04/011/11 – UDeCOTT – US\$8.3Mn Port of Spain General Hospital Central Block

The funds are required to meet the payments of principal and interest on loan facilities, UDeCOTT – TT\$46.9Mn Port of Spain General Hospital Central Block - \$3,909,768 and UDeCOTT – US\$8.3Mn Port of Spain General Hospital Central Block - \$4,654,043, both of which fall due in June 2021. The terms and conditions of the loans were only finalized after the presentation of the 2021 Budget.

### **Head 31 – Ministry of Public Administration and Digital Transformation**

**Recurrent Expenditure - \$24,800,000**

04/011/10 - UDeCOTT -TT\$49.6Mn Principal payment on 10 Yr Fixed Rate Loan Gov't Campus Fit -Out - \$24,800,000

The funds are required to enable the payment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> installment due in fiscal 2021 on the UDeCOTT TT\$49.6Mn Principal payment on 10 Yr Fixed Rate Loan Gov't Campus Fit -Out loan facility.

**Head 39 - Ministry of Public Utilities - \$944,577,000**

**Recurrent Expenditure - \$917,373,000**

02/001/42 - Street Lighting - \$152,673,000

The sum is required to enable the payment of arrears owed to the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC).

04/007/08 - Refunds to T&TEC Re: Rebate on Electricity Bills - \$72,000,000

This sum is required to enable the payment of outstanding refunds owed to the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC) arising from the 25% rebate granted to all Rate A (Domestic) customer accounts with electricity billings of \$300 or less.

04/009/18 - Principal on T&TEC \$812.6Mn. Fixed Rate Bond - \$48,085,800

04/009/19 - Interest on T&TEC \$812.6Mn. Fixed Rate Bond - \$12,320,700

04/009/20 - Principal on T&TEC \$800Mn. Fixed Rate Bond - \$22,555,100

04/009/21 - Interest on T&TEC \$800Mn. Fixed Rate Bond - \$18,238,700

04/011/06 - Interest on NMTS TT\$300Mn Fixed Rate Loan - \$7,778,700

The respective amounts are required to meet obligations totaling \$108,979,000 with regard to loans facilities due before September 30, 2021.

04/011/02 - Solid Waste Management Company Limited - \$7,821,000

The sum is required to enable the Solid Waste Management Company Limited to meet its current operational expenses to the end of fiscal 2021.

06/004/51 - Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) - \$575,900,000

The funding is required to enable the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) to meet personnel expenditure including wages and COLA; salaries to contract officers; and to meet the contractual obligations to DESALCOTT for the delivery of desalinated water to Pt. Lisas to the end of fiscal 2021.

**Public Sector Investment Programme (P.S.I.P) - \$27,204,000**

03/05/A/585 - Production and Delivery of Bulk Power - \$3,604,000

The sum is required to upgrade the 66kv Pinto Road sub-station, pay compensation to land owners, and to facilitate the expansion of the power utility corridor from Union Estate to Debe under the Production and Delivery of Bulk Power project.

003/05/A/596 – Replacement of Aging Transmission Infrastructure - \$7,600,000

The sum is required to replace two (2) 66/33kv power transformers, refurbish the North Oropouche Toco Link #1 33kv circuit and replace defective poles/insulators on the St. Mary's - Galeota 33kv circuit.

05/06/A/061 - Community Water Improvement Programme - \$16,000,000

Additional funding is required to provide water supply to unserved and under serviced areas throughout the country.

**Head 42 – Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government**

**Recurrent Expenditure - \$142,216,000**

04/007/40 – Gratuities to Contract Officers - \$2,300,000

The sum is required to enable payment of gratuities to contract officers on completion of contract in accordance with the terms and conditions of employment.

04/009/04 – Community Based Environment Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP) - \$43,497,000

The sum is required to supplement funding to the Community Based Environment Protection and Enhancement Programme (CEPEP) to meet its expenditure to September, 2021.

04/011/09 – R.D.C. - National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme (NRWRP) - \$2,100,000

Additional funding is required to meet personnel expenditure under the National Reforestation and Watershed Rehabilitation Programme (NRWRP) to September 2021.

06/005/23 - Port of Spain City Corporation - \$14,730,000

06/005/24 – San Fernando City Corporation - \$5,850,000

06/005/25 - Arima Borough Corporation - \$4,035,000

06/005/26 - Point Fortin Borough Corporation - \$4,727,000

06/005/27 - Chaguanas Borough Corporation - \$12,862,000

06/005/28 - Diego Martin Regional Corporation - \$4,601,000

06/005/29 – San Juan/Laventille Regional Corporation - \$3,857,000

06/005/30 - Tunapuna/Piarco Regional Corporation - \$18,944,000

06/005/31 - Sangre Grande Regional Corporation - \$3,338,000

06/005/32 – Couva / Tabaquite / Talparo Regional Corporation - \$4,087,000



06/005/33 - Mayaro /Rio Claro Regional Corporation - \$1,759,000

06/005/34 - Siparia Regional Corporation - \$5,267,000

06/005/35 - Penal/Debe Regional Corporation - \$6,360,000

06/005/36 - Princes Town Regional Corporation - \$3,902,000

The aggregate sum of \$94,319,000 is required to supplement funding to the fourteen (14) Municipal Corporations to enable them to meet payment of wages and COLA as well as to pay sums owed for the provision of various goods and services.

**Head 43 - Ministry of Works and Transport - \$294,426,700**

**Recurrent Expenditure - \$277,597,900**

01/001/01 - Salaries and COLA - \$1,386,000

Supplementary funding is required to enable the payment of increments and acting allowances to monthly paid officers to September 30, 2021.

01/002/30 - Allowances - Daily - Rated Workers - \$7,849,000

The sum is required to meet the payment of wages and Cost of Living Allowance to daily rated workers to the end of fiscal 2021.

02/001/04 - Electricity - \$2,550,000

This sum is required to meet obligations to the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC) to September 30, 2021.

02/002/28 - Other Contracted Services - \$24,869,900

02/003/28 - Other Contracted Services - \$26,200,000

Supplementary funds are required to pay amounts owed to contractors and meet projected expenditure to the end of fiscal 2021.

02/005/16 - Contract Employment - \$3,120,000

The sum is required to supplement the shortfall in provision to facilitate payment of salaries to contract officers and Government's Contribution to NIS to September 30, 2021.

02/014/05 - Telephones - \$1,500,000

Supplementary funds are required to pay arrears owed to the Telecommunications Company of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT).

02/014/37 - Janitorial Services - \$1,000,000

Additional funds are required to meet outstanding monies owed for janitorial services.

02/014/43 – Security Services - \$3,200,000

02/015/43 – Security Services - \$1,300,000

Supplementary funding is required to enable outstanding payments to firms contracted to provide security services.

02/015/08 – Rent/Lease - Office Accommodation and Storage - \$1,772,000

The sum is required to meet the outstanding cost associated with the rental of office accommodations.

04/007/01 – Severance Pay and Retirement Benefits - \$4,354,700

Additional funds are required to meet expenditure related to outstanding severance benefits owed to daily rated workers.

04/011/18 – National Helicopter Services Limited (NHSL) - \$14,400,000

The sum is needed to enable the National Helicopter Services Limited (NHSL) to meet its operational expenditure and debt obligations to the end of fiscal 2021.

04/011/20 – NIDCO - Charter of an Inter-Island Passenger Vessel - \$23,900,000

Additional funding is required to facilitate the payment of certified bills on hand which accrued in the operation of the Jean de la Valette.

04/011/28 – NIDCO – Operation and Maintenance of the M.V. Galleons Passage - \$160,196,300

Supplementary funds are required to meet the operational and maintenance costs of the two (2) new high speed Passenger/Cargo Roll-On/Roll-Off Catamaran Ferries - A.P.T. James and High Speed Craft (HSC) Bucco Reef.

**Public Sector Investment Programme (P.S.I.P) - \$16,828,800**

003/15/H/789 – Upgrading and Modernization of Navigational Aids - \$5,247,380

Supplementary funds are required to enable the award of a contract by the Central Tenders Board with regard to the upgrade and modernization of navigational aids.

003/15/H/822 – Empty Container Yard Paving/Repair to Container Terminal - \$1,000,000

Additional funding is required to meet the full contract price with regard to the paving and repairs undertaken at the Container Yard and Terminal.

003/15/H/824 – Removal and Disposal of Wrecks and Derelict Vessels - \$5,756,942

The additional funding is required to facilitate payments to contractors for works to be completed with regard to removal and disposal of wrecks and derelict vessels to the end of fiscal 2021.

003/15/H/827 – Procurement of one (1) Ship to Shore Gantry Crane - \$4,824,478

Supplementary funding is required to enable the final payment to Liebherr Container Cranes (LCC) Limited for the installation of a Gantry Crane, the payment of which is due in June 2021.

**Head 61 – Ministry of Housing and Urban Development**

**Public Sector Investment Programme (P.S.I.P) - \$90,961,000**

004/08/D/075 – Rehabilitation and Maintenance of HDC Rental Apartments and Housing Units - \$39,709,000

Supplementary funding is required to undertake works on housing units at the Maloney, Embacadere, John John, Carlsen Field, Duncan, George, Nelson and Prince Streets.

004/08/E/232 – Housing Grants - \$2,210,000

Additional funds are required to enable the disbursement of housing grants to applicants currently in the system, to the end of fiscal 2021.

004/08/E/235 – Housing and Village Improvement Programme - \$8,576,000

The funds are required to expedite the payment of outstanding amounts owed following the increase in the contract price for the construction of houses under the Housing and Village Improvement Programme (HVIP).

004/08/E/237 – Regularisation of Squatter Communities - \$19,213,000

Additional funding is required for on-going civil works, lead testing, engineering design, retentions owed for completed contracts, as well as payments for proposed road and water works required to be done prior to the granting of final approvals.

004/08/E/239 – Government Aided Self-Help Programme - \$17,670,000

Supplementary funds are required to allow for the payment of ongoing civil works including additional repairs to paved roads and concrete box drains; repairs to leaks on the water reticulation network; road repairs throughout designated sites; site electrification, engineering design and review; construction supervision for the civil works and other costs.

004/08/E/241 – Development of Residential Lots – Petrotrin - \$3,583,000

Funding is required to facilitate payment for finalization of bidding documents, re-grading of residential lots and completion of sites.

**Head 64 – Trinidad and Tobago Police Service**

**Recurrent Expenditure - \$57,722,353**

02/001/09 – Rent/Lease – Vehicles and Equipment - \$7,805,000

The sum is required to meet the cost associated with the rental of vehicles for use in covert operations for the period June to September 2021.

02/001/10 – Office Stationery and Supplies - \$3,500,000

The sum is required to enable the purchase of stationery and supplies for the Administration Division and all Police Stations.

02/001/13 – Maintenance of Vehicles - \$3,000,000

The sum is required to pay service providers for maintenance of vehicles for the period May to September, 2021.

02/001/16 – Contract Employment - \$15,905,024

The sum is required to pay salaries and Government’s Contribution to NIS for the period July to September, 2021 in relation to officers on contract.

02/001/23 – Fees - \$16,000,000

The sum is required to pay for subscriptions, membership fees and maintenance of software. Additional funds are also required to pay for network security applications, maintenance of CCTV systems and email management.

02/001/96 – Fuel and Lubricants - \$7,000,000

The sum is required to pay for fleet cards for the period June to September, 2021.

04/011/01 – NIPDEC – TT\$200Mn. Interest Payment – 7yr. Fixed Rate Loan - \$4,512,329

The sum is required to enable the payment of interest on a new loan facility, NIPDEC – TT\$200Mn. Interest Payment – 7yr. Fixed Rate Loan which was entered into to pay 2020 bills under Goods and Services and Other Minor Equipment Purchases. The first payment is scheduled for October 6, 2021.

**Head 67 – Ministry of Planning and Development**

**Recurrent Expenditure - \$44,728,000**

01/004/01 – Salaries and COLA - \$5,340,000

The sum is required to enable the payment of arrears of salaries to staff of the Central Statistical Office (CSO) who were upgraded from short term status to monthly paid officers within the Ministry’s Establishment of approved posts.

02/001/05 – Telephones - \$3,513,000

The additional funds are required to enable the settlement of arrears owed to Columbus Communications Trinidad Ltd. (FLOW) for the provision of services - \$3,513,000.

02/001/22 - Short Term Employment - \$4,430,000

The sum is required to enable the employment of persons on a short term basis.

04/005/01 - National Trust Council - \$995,000

The sum is required to provide for the maintenance and upkeep of the Mille Fleurs Building to September 2021, and enable retroactive payments to members of the National Trust Council for fiscal 2021.

04/006/01 - Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI) - \$15,034,000

The additional funds are required to enable the payment of arrears of emoluments to all categories of employees at the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI) in accordance with the new collective agreement for the period January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2020.

04/007/03 - Settlement to Cane Farmers re-2007 transition - \$1,403,000

The funds are required to pay outstanding claims to former cane farmers.

04/007/40 -Gratuities to Contract Officers - \$4,013,000

The funds are required to enable the payment of gratuity to forty five (45) persons on completion of their contracts in accordance with terms and conditions.

06/004/49 - Chaguaramas Development Authority - \$10,000,000

The additional funds are required to facilitate the payment of outstanding pensions to former employees of the Chaguaramas Development Authority (CDA).

6. Accordingly, the Standing Finance Committee is asked to approve a Supplementation of the 2021 Appropriation in the sum of \$2,927,600,002 as indicated in paragraph (1) above.

**NOTE FOR STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE**

ITEM NO. 2

F.C. (2021)  
**VARIATION OF THE APPROPRIATION FOR  
FISCAL YEAR 2021**

F: BUD: 4/4/8

The matter for the consideration of the Standing Finance Committee is the Variation of the Appropriation for the fiscal year 2021 in the sum of *One Hundred and Seven Million, Three Hundred and Ten Thousand Dollars (\$107,310,000)* to fund urgent and critical expenditure to September 30, 2021.

2. The Standing Finance Committee is asked to note that as a result of the Mid-Year Review which was conducted by the Ministry of Finance, it is now necessary to return to Parliament to seek approval for a Variation of the Appropriation Act, 2021 in the sum of \$107,310,000 to enable the implementation of Covid-19 relief measures under three (3) Heads of Expenditure.

3. Further, the Standing Finance Committee is asked to note that the funds for the Variation of the Appropriation Act, 2021 will be met from sums already appropriated to one (1) Head of Expenditure within the Appropriation Act, 2021.

4. It should be noted that the Variation will affect the Heads of Expenditure as follows:

	<b>Head of Expenditure</b>	<b>Increase \$</b>	<b>Decrease \$</b>
13	Office of the Prime Minister	10,000,000	
18	Ministry of Finance		107,310,000
77	Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries	57,310,000	
78	Ministry of Social Development and Family Services	40,000,000	
	<b>TOTAL ESTIMATES</b>	<b>107,310,000</b>	<b>107,310,000</b>

5. The Standing Finance Committee is also being advised that funds identified for transfer were initially provided in the 2021 Appropriation to implement Covid-19 related relief measures and fiscal incentive to farmers to the end of the year under Head 18 - Ministry of Finance as indicated hereunder:

**04/007/21 - Covid-19 Support - \$50,000,000**

Funds which were provided in fiscal 2021 to facilitate the implementation of various Covid-19 relief measures are available for transfer to the relevant Ministries with responsibility for implementing certain Covid-19 relief measures, thereby enabling greater efficiency and accountability in the management of the initiatives; and

**04/009/42 - Fiscal Incentive Programme for Farmers - \$57,310,000**

Funds which were appropriated in fiscal 2021 to provide incentives to farmers through the Ministry of Finance is now being transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries to assist with Covid-19 relief measures.

6. Accordingly, the Standing Finance Committee is asked to approve the Variation of the 2021 Appropriation in the amount of \$107,310,000 to fund urgent and critical expenditure associated with the provision of Covid-19 relief to September 30, 2021 for the Heads of Expenditure indicated at paragraph (4) above.

7. Explanations for the proposed increases under the following Heads of Expenditure are as follows:

- **Head 13 - Office of the Prime Minister - \$10,000,000**

- 04/005/01 - Ecclesiastical Bodies - \$10,000,000

- To enable religious organizations and bodies to undertake food distribution to the vulnerable persons and households adversely affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic;

- **Head 77 - Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries - \$57,310,000**

- 04/007/07 - Emergency Food Support Measure - Covid-19 - \$57,310,000

- To enable the distribution of 20,000 “market boxes” per month with effect from May 2021 to September 2021. These are to be distributed to the vulnerable persons and households adversely affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic; and

- **Head 78 - Ministry of Social Development and Family Services - \$40,000,000**

- 04/007/03 - Social Assistance - \$40,000,000

- To enable the provision of an income support grant to persons who have experienced reduction or loss of earnings on or after May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions implemented by the State.

8. Accordingly, the Standing Finance Committee is asked to approve a Variation of the 2021 Appropriation in the sum of \$107,310,000 as indicated in paragraph (1) above.