Response to the recommendations/comments of the Fifth Report of the Public Administration and Appropriations Committee on the examination of the Realignment of Ministries and Departments

Recommendations: OPM should provide updates on the following by August 15, 2022.

1. **The Classification of the technical and State Counsel positions by the CPO:**

Response:

The following positions are to be classified by the Personnel Department:

- ✓ Co-ordinator, Drop-in Information Centres
- ✓ Manager, Special Projects (Rg.54E) – has been classified by CPO LN No. 97 dated 26th April, 2022
- ✓ Manager, Gender Support (Rg.54E) – has been classified by CPO LN No. 97 dated 26th April, 2022
- ✓ Chief Procurement Officer
- ✓ Senior Procurement Officer
- ✓ Procurement Officer (reclassification)

The positions of State Counsel II and State Counsel III have not yet been classified by the Personnel Department. The 1st reminder was sent to the Chief Personnel Officer on March 10, 2020 and a subsequent reminder was sent on July 19, 2022 to classify those positions so that the Judicial and Legal Services Commission can identify persons to fill the vacancies.

2. **Filling of vacant positions across the OPM and its Divisions:**

Response:

Gender and Child Affairs Division:

Cabinet by Minute No. 1081 dated 23rd June, 2022 approved the contract position of Assistant Director, Gender Affairs pending the filling of the vacant position of Director, Gender Affairs by the Service Commissions Department. The substantive holder of the position of Manager, Domestic Violence is currently acting Director, Corporate Services and is due to retire in early 2023. The Service Commissions Department has also advertised this position.

The following 23 established positions remain vacant (without bodies) at the Office of Prime Minister, Gender and Child Affairs Division:

- Director, Gender Affairs (Rg.60) (Interviews for this position was conducted by SCD in February 2022. The Commission is yet to pronounce the outcome of the Interview.
- Co-ordinator, Drop-in Information Centres (not yet classified by CPO)
- Manager, Domestic Violence Unit (Rg.54E) (incumbent acting Director, Corporate Services) This position was also advertised by the SCD and interview was conducted, the outcome is yet to be pronounced by the SCD.
- Research Assistant II (Rg.35)
- Manager, Special Projects (not yet classified by CPO)
- Project Analyst (Rg.46)
- Manager, Gender Support Unit (Rg.54E)
- Psychologist (Rg.46)
- Administrative Officer II (Rg.46D)
- Statistical Officer III (Rg.41D) (incumbent on extended sick leave – no replacement)
- Clerk Stenographer II (Rg.20)
- Executive Secretary (Rg.35F)
- Clerk Steno III (Rg.26C)
- Clerk IV (Rg.30C)
- Storekeeper I (Rg.24E)
- Vault Attendant (Rg.10)
- Human Resource Officer II (Rg.53E)
- Human Resource Officer I (Rg.46)
- Clerk Stenographer III (Rg.26C)
- Clerk II (Rg.20C)
- (2) Assistant Project Co-ordinator (Rg.54D)
- Engineering Assistant III (Rg.38G)

The following 89 positions on contract are vacant in the Gender and Child Affairs Division:

- Assistant, Director Gender Affairs
- Active Listener (2)
- Project Coordinator, Non-Traditional Skills
- Assistant Project Coordinator, Non-Traditional Skills
- Placement Officer
- Administrative Support Assistant
- Statistical Analyst
- Business Operations Assistant II
- Clerical Officer
- Gender Training Officer
- Project Execution Officer (3)
- Clerical Officer, Non-Traditional Skills
- Alternative Listener (4)

- Standby Listener (2)
- Counselling Psychologist
- Counsellor
- Counsellor Drop in Centre (7)
- Care Giver (23)
- Driver
- Business Operations Assistant I (4)

CHILD AFFAIRS DIVISION

- Business Operations Assistant I (3)

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION DESK

- Director International Desk
- Business Operations Assistant II
- Researcher

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Business Operations Assistant II

LEGAL UNIT

- Business Operations Assistant I

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

- Hospitality Attendant
- Office Support Assistant

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

- Project Support Officer (4)
- Procurement Specialist
- Construction Superintendant
- Business Operations Assistant I
- Project Officer (3)
- Project Assistant
- Clerical Officer

PERMANENT SECRETARY - GCA

- Business Operations Assistant II

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S REGISTRY

- NCR Coordinator
- Information System Support Specialist
- Business Operations Assistant I (6)

The vacant positions of Business Operations Assistant I and II throughout the OPM Head Office will be filled by September 2022 or before.

<u>**Office of the Prime Minister:**</u>

The position of Director, Economic Policy Research and Planning is yet to be filled by the Service Commissions Department.

The following <u>25</u> established positions remain vacant (without bodies) pending filling by the Service Commissions Department:

- (2) Executive Secretary
- Clerk Stenographer III (Rg.26C)
- Clerk Stenographer I/II (Rg.15/20)
- Research Assistant II (Rg.35)
- Director, Economic Research and Planning (Rg.67)
- (4) Research Officer I (Rg.46)
- (2) Economist I   (Rg.46)
- Research Assistant I (Rg.23)
- Cabinet Affairs Officer I (Rg.46D)
- Records Assistant (Rg.24)
- (3) Clerk Stenographer III (Rg.26C)
- Secretary, National Security Secretariat (Gr.1D)
- Chief Procurement Officer
- Senior Procurement Officer
- (2) Procurement Officer
- Librarian III (Rg.56G)
- Library Assistant (Rg.17)

The following <u>136</u> positions on contract are vacant in the Office of the Prime Minister (Head Office):

- Senior Legal Adviser to The Prime Minister
- Senior Secretary
- Adviser on Security
- Strategic Advisor to The Prime Minister (Public Management)
- Paralegal
- Researcher (2)
- Information System Support Specialist (2)
- Database Specialist
- Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Technical Officer (2)
- Assistant Researcher
- Procurement Assistant (2)
- Office Support Assistant

- Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist (2)
- Manager, Policy Research and Planning
- Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist (2)
- Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (1) - expired
- Economic and Policy Analyst
- Policy and Research Analyst
- Researcher
- Assistant Researcher (2)
- Manager
- Director Client Relations
- Assistant Researcher
- Document Specialist
- Programme Officer
- Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (NACC Secretariat)
- Office Support Assistant (NACC Secretariat)
- Driver/Courier (NACC Secretariat)
- Press Secretary
- Communications Manager
- Corporate Communications Officer
- Archivist
- Digital Manager/Web Editor
- Videographer
- Driver/Courier
- Editor
- Television Engineering Technician
- Audio Technician
- Line Producer
- Project Support Officer
- Engineering Associate
- Clerk of Works
- Web Content Specialist
- Script Writer
- Manager, Corporate Communications
- Speechwriter/Researcher
- Director, Procurement Unit
- Procurement Specialist   (2)
- Assistant Procurement Specialist (2)
- Director of Scheduling and Advance
- Director of Communications
- Deputy Director of Communications
- Closed Circuit Tv Operator (10)
- Manager Sport and Culture Fund
- Researcher (Sport and Culture Fund) (2)
- Assistant Researcher (Sport and Culture Fund)

- Project Manager (2)
- Project Support Officer (4)
- Facilities Officer
- Facilities Technician (2)
- Driver/Courier (Coe)
- Office Support Assistant (Coe) (3)
- Hospitality Attendant (Coe)

The vacant positions of Business Operations Assistant I and II throughout the OPM Head Office will be filled by September 2022 or before.

Communications Division:

The following 335 established Technical positions are vacant in Communications Division:

- Assistant Director of Information (Range 61)- (2)
- Director Producer II (Range 56C)
- Public Relations Officer II (Range 34F) - (2)
- Public Relations Officer I (Range 29) – (2)
- Broadcasting Officer II (Range 36F)
- Information Attache (Range 46C)
- Broadcasting Officer I (Range 31) – (5)
- Broadcasting Equipment Operator II (Range 26E)
- Broadcasting Equipment Operator I (Range 22) – (2)
- Broadcasting Equipment Technician II (Range 32D)
- Broadcasting Equipment Technician I (Range 26)
- Press Officer III (Range 46C)
- Press Officer II (Range 34F) – (2)
- Press Officer I (Range 29) – (2)
- Director Producer I (Range 46) – (6)
- Technical Production Officer II (Range 38G) – (3)
- Technical Production Officer I (Range 34) – (4)
- Television/Film Engineering Technician I (Range 40)
- Television /Film Records Officer II (Range 24)
- Television /Film Records Officer I (Range 16)
- Photographer I (Range 22) – (3)
- Photo Laboratory Technician I (Range 19) – (2)
- Film Production Trainee (Range 18)
- Librarian I (Range 46)
- Library Assistant (Range 17) – (3)

National Archives

- Manager, Records Centre (Range 58)
- Records Manager II (Range 46D)

- Archives Assistant I (Range 35) – (2)
- Archives Repairer II (Range 28B) – (2)
- Archives Repairer I (Range 20) – (1)

The National Archives which has responsibility for the archival heritage of Trinidad and Tobago also requires the requisite human technical resources for conservation and preservation of our patrimony. This Division also needs the financial resources to fill these 13 identified contract positions:

- 1 Senior Archives and Records Specialist: (Records and Information Management)
- 1 Information System / Information Technology (IS/IT) Specialist
- 1 Document Management Specialist
- 1 Business Operations Co-ordinator
- 1 Conservation Specialist
- 3 Assistant Conservator (These are expired and need to be renewed)
- 1 Archival Digitization Technician
- 1 Audio Visual Digitization Specialist
- 1 Audio Visual Technician
- 1 Records Officer
- 1 Microfilm Technician

Of the 31 positions on the establishment of the *National Archives* of *Trinidad and Tobago (NATT)*, 7 or 23% are vacant without bodies. PMCD is currently reviewing the organizational structure of the NATT. At present, OPM-C continues to pursue a request submitted to the SCD to advertise and fill 2 key positions of Manager, Records Centre and Archives Assistant I which are deemed critical for the management of the Records Centre and the operations of the Search Room, respectively

Government Printery

- 1 Printing Supervisor I
- 8 Printing Operator IV
- 19 Printing Operator III
- 41 Printing Operator II
- 12 Printing Operator I
- 1 Smelter
- 6 Printing Operator I
- 1 Printing Supervisor I
- 2 Printing Operator V
- 1 Printing Operator IV
- 1 Printing Operator III
- 16 Printing Operator II

- 7 Printing Operator I
- 1 Roller Maker
- 1 Printing Operator III
- 6 Printing Operator II
- 1 Printing Operator IV
- 2 Printing Operator III
- 73 Printing Operator II
- 18 Printing Operator I
- 1 Printing Mechanic II
- 1 Printing Mechanical Supervisor I
- 5 Printing Mechanic I
- 1 Printing Mechanical Supervisor II
- 1 Printing Mechanical Supervisor I
- 11 Printing Mechanic I
- 4 Printing Mechanical Assistant
- 1 Timekeeper
- 5 Printing Assistant I
- 30 Apprentice

Staffing

The realignment of the Government Printery from the Ministry of Communications to the Office of the Prime Minister-Communications-(OPM-C) has affected the Clerical staff to the extent that the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), had to reorganize its seniority list to include all Divisions that fell under it.

This resulted in the Printery being deprived of most of its more experienced staff attached to Registry, Accounts, Stores, and Administration, who were offered acting positions throughout OPM or were reassigned because of their seniority.

However, the realignment did not affect the technical areas. Although, there is still an existing severe shortage of skilled staff in these areas, namely, the Reading Room, Composing-(Typesetting), Offset Printing, Bookbinding Binding

The organization currently has on its establishment over 450 positions.

Vacant Positions to be filled:

1. The following entry-level vacant positions should be urgently filled to provide for an adequate staff complement in the two (2) main production areas and support staff in the General area:

   - Binding: Twenty (20) out of a total of ninety (90) vacancies;

- Composing: Ten (10) out of a total of eighty (80) vacancies;

- General (Printing Assistants): Six (6) out of a total of thirteen (13) vacancies – Recommendations to fill the six (6) positions of Printing Assistant I's were sent to the Service Commissions Department.

2. Please note that in respect of the above-mentioned items 1 and 2, the Service Commissions Department advertised in October 2020, for the filling of the vacant positions of Printing Operator I (Entry Level). We are currently awaiting the shortlisting of applicants and subsequent interviews for the selection process by the Commission. It is recommended that this process should be expedited for the aforementioned reasons.

Intervention of the Public Management Consulting Division (PMCD):

3. In April of 2022, PMCD started a review of the Draft 2017 Review of the Operations of the Government Printery it had prepared in 2016. It is expected that this long overdue intervention should be completed before, the end of fiscal 2022, for presentation and approval by the Permanent Secretary, Public Administration, Cabinet and onward transmission to the Service Commissions Department for approval and implementation in early in fiscal, 2023.

Digital Transformation – Independent Government Printery Web Page:

4. The Webserver has been acquired, which is one of the requirements from IGov. The uploading of Legislative files along with the 40 General forms frequently used by the public service should be uploaded shortly. Forms sold by the Government Printery Sales section will also be available for purchase by members of the public through this medium. OPM-C is in the final stages of finalizing with First Citizens Bank the online purchasing system that will be used. Examples forms that will sold include:

Upgrade of Computers:

5. The upgrade of dated equipment is ongoing. Six (6) computers in key areas of the administrative areas, such as Government Printer, Assistant Government Printer, HRO III, AO II, ACCT I and Works Control Officer. The upgrade will continue will continue into the next fiscal with the replacement of computers for all technical supervisors.

ICT Upgrade:

6. This project has been undertaken the OPM IT Unit and was funded under the 2022 Development Programme, where $925,000.00 was allocated. The project has commenced and has reached the tendering stage. Having regard to the progress made at this time, it may not be completed by the end of fiscal 2022. However, the OPM ICT continues to provide both offsite and onsite service to the Government Printery as and when necessary to treat with ongoing issues.

Recommendations:

- *Service Commission must start the process of shortlisting of persons for all entry-level positions as soon as possible.*
- *Once PMCD has completed the review of the "2017 Draft Review of the Operations of the Government Printery" and it is approved by the PS Public Administration and the Cabinet, the new structure must be implemented early in fiscal 2023.*
- *Careful consideration should be given before the Government Printery is realigned.*
- *The critical upgrade of Printery's ICT network must be completed in the shortest possible time.*

The following 47 contract positions are vacant in the Communications Division:

- Senior Gov't Communications Specialist (1)
- Customer Service Representative (2)
- Speech Writer/Researcher
- Government Communications Specialist (2)
- Business Operations Assistant II (4)
- Business Operations Assistant I (2)
- Driver/ Courier
- Hospitality Attendant
- Senior Corporate Communications Officer
- Facilities Officer
- Pension & Leave Supervisor
- Project Coordinator
- Project Implementation Officer (2)
- Information & Communications Technology Security Specialist
- Web Content Specialist
- IT Infrastructure Specialist
- Information & Communications Technology Technical Officer (3)
- Network Specialist
- IT Analyst/Programmer (2)
- Legal Officer II
- Legal Officer I

- Executive Director - Freedom of Information
- Senior Freedom of Information Officer (Client Relations & Training)
- Freedom of Information Officer (Monitoring & Evaluation)
- Technical Advisor on Archival Matters
- Audio Visual Technician
- Microfilm Technician
- Assistant Conservator
- Conservation Specialist
- Records Officer
- Business Operations Coordinator
- Senior Archives and Records Specialist (Records and Information Management)
- Audio Visual Digitization Specialist
- Archival Research Specialist
- Archival Digitization Technician
- Information System/Information Technology Specialist
- Document Management Specialist

Established Positions

The OPM-C made recommendations to the SCD for promotions and appointments of 26 positions and requests to advertise 5 critical positions namely: Technical Production Officer I, Broadcasting Officer I, Director Producer I, Television/Film Records Officer I and Manager, Records Centre.

- Technical Production Officer I – Approval was received by the SCD one (1) week ago for the Ministry to proceed with the Shortlisting of applications. This process is ongoing and is intended to be completed within the first week of August. Thereafter, a list of Shortlisted applicants will be submitted to the Permanent Secretary, OPM-C for finalization and then to the SCD for approval. A time-frame for the completion of the recruitment process is dependent on the SCD.

- Broadcasting Officer I – Interviews to fill the position are to be conducted by the SCD on 22, 23, 29th & 30th August and 1st September, 2022.

- Three (3) promotions were made by the SCD: 2 Director Producer II and 1 Broadcasting Officer III; and 1 appointment of Broadcasting Officer I.

- Director Producer I – Filling of the position of Director Producer I is at the shortlisting stage at the SCD;

Contract Positions

There are 65 contract positions remaining on the OPM-C establishment at September 30, 2021. Between 2019 and 2022, 18 contract positions were filled while 47 positions remain vacant as follows:

- o   Government Communications Division   -   11
- o   Other, OPM-C   -   21
- o   National Archives   -   15

The OPM-C has advertised the following 6 positions:

i)   Senior Freedom of Information Officer (Client Relations and Training) – Interviews were conducted in July, final outcome to be determined.

ii)   Freedom of Information Officer (Monitoring and Evaluation) – Interviews were conducted in July. Interview Report to be submitted to the Permanent Secretary, OPM-C with final scores and order of merit list.

iii) Project Coordinator- Shortlisting completed and interviews are to be scheduled within the second week of August.

iv) Project Implementation Officer – Shortlisting completed and interviews are to be scheduled within the second week of August.

v)   Business Operations Assistant II – Shortlisting completed and final list to be submitted to PS, OPM-C for approval.

vi) Business Operations Assistant I – Shortlisting completed and final list to be submitted to PS, OPM-C for approval.

3. **The restructuring exercise being conducted on the NATT and the Government Printery:**

Response:

- NATT - A discussion was held with PMCD with regards to an update on the restructuring of the NATT. They indicated that a submission must be made to them to continue the review of the NATT as the initial request was made years ago. Additionally, they requested detailed position descriptions however, with the Job

Evaluation Exercise being conducted by the CPO and which is still ongoing, the NATT could not furnish them with this request until after the completion of this.

- It should be noted also that the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) secured the services of a Consultant to develop a national policy for archives, records and information management (ARIM) and implementation plan for Trinidad and Tobago. This Project falls under the larger effort of the Strengthening of the Single Window for Trade and Business Facilitation Programme. This Policy, if approved by Cabinet, will form the basis of ARIM legislation which will define a new governance structure for NATT, including staffing.

- It is strongly recommended however that in the interim critical staff positions be filled under key functional areas to meet immediate needs for a successful work programme and project implementation. Presently, the gaps in staffing are negatively impacting NATT's ability to efficiently and effectively carry out its mandate to:

  ➢ guide public records policies and management practices so as to strengthen good governance, transparency, accountability and efficiency, and

to acquire, preserve and provide public access to all records deemed to be of archival value and national historical and cultural significance.

Government Printery:

Between 1973 and 2019, a total of forty-five (45) years, the Government Printery has been realigned eighteen (18) times, with four (4) of these realignments taking place between 2016 and 2019. *Ministry of Communication 2016, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications 2016 -2017, Ministry of Communications 2018 and finally Office of the Prime Minister-Communications 2019 to present.*

On each occasion it has significantly affected inter alia the human resource and accounting functions and generally the continuity of policies and programmes for the organization. In effect, it has resulted on each occasion in the ceasing of all promotions, acting, increments etc., until the positions are reassigned to the new ministry and subsequent approval from the Services Commission. This process takes a minimum of six (6) to nine (9) months and continues to be one of the main causes of industrial relations issues. There is also the issue of personnel files being lost due to the movement between the different ministries.

The creation of the independent systems, including the position of Human Resource Officer III (HRO III) and a pension and leave section will seek to assist with the aforementioned issue.

In April of 2022, PMCD started a review of the Draft 2017 Review of the Operations of the Government Printery it had prepared in 2016. It is expected that this long overdue intervention should be completed before, the end of fiscal 2022, for presentation and approval by the Permanent Secretary, Public Administration, Cabinet and onward transmission to the Service Commissions Department for approval and implementation in early in fiscal, 2023.

4. Draft Note to Cabinet before the Finance and General purposes Committee:

Response:

Cabinet by Minute No. 2111 dated 16th December, 2021 had approved two (2) positions of Human Resource Officer I and II in the Gender and Child Affairs Division of the Office of the Prime Minister. This matter is therefore finalized.

5. The Job Evaluation Exercise on the Civil Service undertaken by the PD:

Response:

The Personnel Department in collaboration with Price Waterhouse Coopers has been conducting job analyses of positions in the public service since 2020, but have been hindered by the challenge of Covid-19 and the additional issues of the availability of public officers to contribute whilst at home. This situation has been prolonged by the lack of resources (laptops, internet coverage, sickness, on rotation due to family obligations). Since the full return to work in April 2022 progress has been slow but steadily increasing.

There are different phases in the exercise namely, Job Analysis and Job Description Development, which are reported to be nearing completion, with the next phase of Job Evaluation to commence in the near future.

6. The SCD should provide a status update on the receipt of transfer approvals of staff

Response:

The Communications Division to liaise with Service Commissions Department for an update

7. **The OPM should provide an update to Parliament by August 15, 2022 on whether permission for temporary posts on the establishment was received from Cabinet as well as whether allowances were paid to the respective staff:**

Response:

The Office of the Prime Minister has drafted the Note for Cabinet for submission to the Minister of Public Administration, and the Public Management Consultation Division, seeking permission for the creation of temporary posts on the establishment. Once obtained, Cabinet's approval will be sought for the grant of approval for payment of allowances to staff and the re-creation of temporary positions consequent on the re-alignment of Ministries in October 2020. The Draft Note will be forwarded to the Permanent Secretary with responsibility for Communications within the next week or so for viewing and editing.

8. **The OPM should conduct an assessment of the performance of all staff since its realignment and submit its findings to Parliament**

Response:

The OPM head office staff has generally received 'Very Good' and 'Outstanding' performance ratings since the re-alignment.

The Communications Division staff has generally received 'Good and 'Very Good' performance ratings since the re-alignment.

The Gender and Child Affairs Division has generally received 'Good' and 'Very Good' performance ratings since the re-alignment.

9. **The OPM should provide an update to Parliament by August 15, 2022 on the progress made (if any) to improve its accommodation**

Response:

This project of improving accommodation is on-going. Measures are being considered to ensure that the accommodation meets operational standards as it relates to the number of persons, work stations as well as work equipment and storage that is required.

10. The OPM in collaboration with the Public Service Academy should devise a training programme (with workshops including dates) to reinforce public policy and regulations by August 15, 2022

Response:

The Ministry of Public Administration, Public Service Academy has already designed training programmes for Public Officers up to September 2022 for selection and participation by Ministries and Departments. The Office of the Prime Minister is expected to submit the training needs to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Administration for approval and implementation during the period October to December 2022 in partnering with the OPM to achieve its training needs.

The undermentioned recommendations for training have been made for all staff of the OPM:

Accounting for Non-Accounting Officers
Accounting Procedures
Advanced Information Technology
Advanced Microsoft Office
Advanced ONBASE for E-Cabinet
Advanced Secretarial Duties
Basic Office Procedures
Basic Writing Skills
Business Report Writing
Cabinet Note Writing
Change Management
Computer Literacy
Conflict Resolution
Creativity and Innovation for Leadership
Customer Care Training
Customer Relations/Telephone Etiquette
Defensive Driving
Delegated Authority
Effective Business Writing

Emotional Intelligence
Employee Wellness and Stress Management
Ethics and Values in the Workplace
Executive Development Programme
Financial Management
IHRIS/IGP Payroll
Increments
Internal Audit Fundamentals
Interpersonal Development
Interviewing Skills
Leadership / Coaching and Mentoring
Managing Work Life Balance
Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Access)
Negotiations in Project and Procurement
ONBASE
Pension and Leave Administration
Performance Management Appraisal System
Preparation for Retirement
Procurement and Office Management
Project Administration
Public Administration
Registry Procedures/File Management
Report Writing
Salary Administration in the Government Service
Short Hand
Strategic Thinking
Supervisory Management

Team Building
Time Management/ Work Life Balance
WEB TMA

11. The OPM should seek to recruit the necessary staff to effectively tag all of its inventory. A status update should be submitted to Parliament by August 15, 2022

Response:

The tagging process is scheduled to begin mid- September 2022

12. The OPM should provide a status update to Parliament on the following by August 15, 2022
✓ **The receipt of funding to purchase additional tags**
✓ **The commencement of tagging inventory in the Communications Division**
✓ **The relocation of the Communications Division**
✓ **The proposed dates of completion of tagging via the OpenMAINT System**

Response:

- The Communications Unit received a $60,000.00 release of funding for stationery. However, the majority of this was committed for the payment of bills from previous years.

- It is anticipated that the tagging of inventory can commence from mid-September, 2022
- This project is on-going, measures are being considered to ensure that the accommodation meets operational standards as it relates to the number of persons, work stations as well as work equipment and storage that is required.

  Proposed Floor layouts have been drafted by PRESD with the view to relocating some units. The Ground Floor shall be redesigned to accommodate the main technical operations of the Communications Division while the other units would be merged with relevant OPM Units. As a consequence, adjustments are proposed for the layout on the upper floors to cater to the displaced Units on the ground floor.

  The first floor shall be adjusted to house additional Units including ICT Unit as well as there will be a reconfiguration of the existing space to accommodate merging of some units.

The second floor is air-marked to be adjusted to include the Audit Unit, the Finance and Accounting Unit as well as the Child Affairs Unit along with the already existing Units there.

The third floor will be adjusted to accommodate two Ministers and their support staff on the northern side of the floor while on the southern side the Permanent Secretaries and their support staff along with NACC Unit would be housed. Also, bathroom amenities are proposed to be built out and enclosed into the Office for the Minister with responsibility for Gender Affairs.

Adjustments are proposed at the Basement to enable storage and accommodation for drivers and service staff.

- It is proposed that the tagging process be completed via the OpenMAINT System within one (1) month from its proposed date of commencement, that is, mid-October, 2022.

13. The OPM should prioritize and conduct an analysis to determine whether the current staff complement of the IAU is sufficient to meet the overall objectives of the OPM. A status update should be submitted to Parliament by August 15, 2022:

Response:

Overview:

The IAU of the OPM is slowly transitioning from Compliance Based Auditing to Risk Based Auditing. This was mandated by MINISTRY OF FINANCE CIRCULAR NO. 05 DATED JUNE 10, 2021, 2021-2022 was deemed the pilot year. An operational plan has been developed for three (3) years beginning 2021-2022, 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. Please see attached the 2021-2022 Operational Plan, which includes the status of the Audits completed.

Factors affecting the goals of the Unit

1. In addition to the Unit transitioning into Risk Based Auditing, the IAU is still required to perform Compliance Audits, and just to name a few:
   - Pension and Leave
   - Arrears of increments, salaries, acting
   - Contract Gratuity
   - Vote book/Schedule of Accounts/Vouchers
   - Daily Abstract of Payments/ Monthly Reconciliation Statements and List of Unpaid Cheques

Inaccurate Pension and Leave, contract gratuity and arrears worksheets, late submissions of Monthly Reconciliations Statements are just some that contribute to the delay in the Audit Work Plan.

2. Structure of the unit
   Auditor II – 1
   Auditor I – 2
   Auditing Assistant - 6

The unit has functioned well with the existing above structure pre Risk Based Auditing and before the merger of the Communications Ministry. Now with the additional duties and the calls for a more professional, efficient and effective audit team, there is now a need for a better IAU structure.

3. Movement of staff
   - Because of acting offers, transfers appointments and promotions, Audits are consistently interrupted by the rotation of staff, including the Head of the Unit.
   - Currently, there is one vacant Auditing Assistant post in the unit which has been vacant for almost one year.

4. Absence of Travelling Allowance
   Staff are expected to make field visits to complete Audit assignments. However, apart from claiming mileage under regulation 16, which amounts to $2.95 per Km, no approval has been given to have scheduled travelling posts in the IAU despite requests for approval sent to the CPO's office since 2018. Numerous enquiries have been made as to the status. To date, no response has been received.
   This has affected the frequency of field visits and therefore resulting in delays of audit completion.

5. Covid 19 Pandemic
   The pandemic has stymied the progress of the Audit Work Plan, as staff were on rotation and field visits stopped. Some meetings and interviews with Auditees were held via online means "Microsoft Teams". Field visits resumed in March 2022.

Proposal

   - The creation of an Auditor III position (preferably a Certified Internal Auditor (CIA). This will allow for in-house training and an enhanced Risk Based Auditing Strategy consistent with the goals of the OPM.
   - Approve the posts for travelling allowances

14. The OPM should draft a training schedule for the staff in the IAU and submit a copy to Parliament by August 15, 2022

Response:

The IAU staff is not trained in Risk Based Auditing:

- One of the areas covered in the Cabinet Minute No.285 dated February 11, 2021 was that *"the skill set of Internal Audit personnel must be upgraded through training programmes, to ensure and enhance the professionalism of the Internal Audit staff."*

To date, the IAU has had no formal training. At this time, the Unit utilizes an Internal Audit Manual "Undertaking Internal Audit Assignments within the Central Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and the Tobago House of Assembly". Some in-house training is afforded to the staff by the present Auditor II (acting) who is a recent Member of ACCA and has had little but some prior training in Risk Based Auditing from a three-day workshop hosted by Public Services Academy in 2016. **This has contributed to the slow progress of the work plan but also highlights the need for formal training for all of the staff in internal auditing, specially the senior staff.**

Please see the current qualifications of the staff listed below and a proposed training schedule:

Training schedule

Consideration is given to the entry level requirements of the certifications and the current qualifications of the staff members:

Post	Name of Officer	Qualification	Experience	Proposed Training/Certification
Auditor II (acting)	Devika Maharaj	• ACCA (Member) • Public Service Academy Training: Risk Based Auditing, Working Paper Analysis and Report Writing	Clerk I 2003-2012 Auditing Assistant 2012-2014 appointed Auditor I (acting) – 2014-2021 Auditor I appointed June 2022 Auditor II (acting) – present	Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) from the Institute of Internal Auditors
Auditor I (acting)	Zalina Khan-Manwah	• CXC Ordinary Level • GCE Advanced Level • Association of	Clerk I – 1987-1991 Clerk II- 1991-1999 Clerk III/IV – 1999-2008 Auditing Assistant (acting) – 2008- 2016 Auditing Assistant appointed 2017 Auditor I (acting) 2020	Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) from the Institute of Internal Auditors

		Accounting Technicians Advanced Level		
	Eureka Colthrust-Prosper	5 O' Level passes	Clerk I (acting) 2001-2003 Clerk II (acting) 2003-2009 Accounting Assistant (acting) 2009-2018 Auditing Assistant (acting) 2018- 2021 Auditor I (acting) 2021 - present	Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) from the Institute of Internal Auditors
Auditing Assistants	Aaron Granger	• Bachelor Degree – Information Technology UWI Professional Certification – Data Analytics and Python Automation from Google	Clerk I (Temp) Clerk II (acting) Clerk III (acting) Accounting Assistant (acting) Auditing Assistant (present)	Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA)
	Naila Kobie-Olufemi	• Certificate in Psychology • Degree in Social Work • Certificate in Practical Auditing	Clerk I/II/III (acting) Clerk IV (acting) Fleet Manager (acting) Auditing Assistant (present)	Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) from the Institute of Internal Auditors
	Marsha Burgin-Augustine	• Degree in OSHE • NEBOSH Diploma in OSH	Clerk I/II/III (acting) Auditing Assistant (present)	Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) from the Institute of Internal Auditors
	Sharla Ali-Sooklal	• CXC • Certificate in Early Childhood Care and Education	Accounting Assistant (acting) Clerk IV (acting) Auditing Assistant (present)	Certificate in Internal Auditing (UWI)
	Kasarah Guy	• 5 CXC passes	Auditing Assistant (present)	Certificate in Internal Auditing (UWI)

The International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (Standards) refers:

Standard 1210 speaks to Proficiency, "Internal Auditors must possess the knowledge, skills and other competencies needed to perform their individual responsibilities. The internal audit activity collectively must possess or obtain knowledge, skills and other competencies needed to perform its responsibilities"

A recommendation for at least one auditor to be certified in CISA, Standard 1210 A3 states *"Internal auditors must have sufficient knowledge of key information technology risks and controls and available technology-based techniques to perform their assigned work. However, not all internal auditors are expected to have the expertise of an internal auditor whose primary responsibility is information technology auditing.*

Both CIA and CISA are recommended because members of both certifications are required to keep up to date with new developments and complete and report on continuing professional education (CPE) yearly.