



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Ministry of Finance and the Economy

Communications Unit

MEDIA ADVISORY

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Attention: All Editors

Media Release: Government moves to settle outstanding collective agreements

WITH the settlement of collective agreements for the 2008-2010 period, additional demands have been placed on Government's 2013 budget, for which Finance and the Economy Minister, Larry Howai, sought Parliamentary approval in the Finance (Supplementary Appropriation) (Financial Year 2013) Bill 2013 on Wednesday.

A statement issued by the Minister's office quoted Howai as saying: "In keeping with our commitment to put an end to protracted wage negotiations, several of which pre-dated this Government's term of office, and ensure that our industrial relations commitments and collective agreements are more current, a number of wages and salaries agreements have been settled, which places an additional burden on this year's Budget. Many of the agreements now being settled relate to the 2008-2010 collective bargaining period, but we intend to hold to our commitment to ensure that people in work can benefit from enhanced wages and salaries right away, rather than having to wait long periods for retroactive payments."

"Also, additional funding will be required to continue a number of development programmes which are at various stages of completion therefore Parliament's approval was sought for an additional \$2.8 billion."

The Minister added: "It must be noted, however, that approximately \$1.8 billion of this additional funding is allocated for the direct settlement by Government of wages and salaries following agreement for the 2008-2010 collective agreements, and interim settlements for the 2011-2013 bargaining period which will be settled by way of direct transfers to various Ministries as well as transfers to selected state enterprises."

“We are, however, encouraged, that these increases will be taking place in an environment of continued overall growth in the energy and non-energy sectors and increased revenues of the Central Government,” Howai said.

The Minister also stated that although he has asked for increases in the mid-year review, he still expects expenditure for the year to come in within the overall figures originally budgeted. He referred to the fact that as at the end of March, recurrent expenditure was well within the Budget and the fiscal accounts showed that this expenditure was almost \$3billion below budget.

Among those in line for increased funding are the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources; the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure; the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training; the Ministry of Sport; the Ministry of National Security, and the Ministry of National Diversity and Social Integration.

Among the measures to be funded are flood and disaster mitigation works ahead of the wet season and hurricane months.

Underscoring the Government’s focus on sustainable development, Howai stated: “While there have been some challenges, the Government’s focus on economic development has progressed well. Having started with measures to halt the economic decline, the focus is now moving to generating not simply growth, but growth that is self-sustaining.”

Thanking you in advance for your usual cooperation

Kind regards,

Regards,

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