

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
MEDIUM-TERM POLICY FRAMEWORK
2001-2003**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The year 2000 has seen a strong rebound in the global economy. World output is expected to increase to 4.2 percent in 2000, exceeding the earlier projection of 2.2 percent. At the forefront of this strong growth has been North America and the emerging economies of Asia. The Trinidad and Tobago economy is also poised to register strong growth of 7.9 percent in 2000. This compares favourably with some of the fastest growing economies in the world, such as Korea (7 %), Ireland (7.4%), Taiwan Province of China (6.2%) and Singapore (6%). Consistent with the overall expansion in output, unemployment rates have also been falling.

World inflation has been subdued with a projected average for 2000 of 1.8 percent in the major industrial countries and in the developing countries, 5.7 percent. Inflation in developing Trinidad and Tobago is expected to average 3.8 percent for the same period.

With a positive outlook for the major economic indicators, the Trinidad and Tobago economy is projected to grow by 5.1 percent per year over the next three years. To ensure that the economic gains are widely and equitably disseminated, Government's focus will continue to be people-centred. Accordingly, the Medium-Term Policy Framework 2001-2003 emphasises human development - health care, education, social welfare and community development while maintaining macroeconomic growth and stability.

II. CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION

A. THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY

The global economy has exhibited a strong rebound in 2000, with financial conditions improving dramatically. Although the effects of the recent financial crises may be felt for some time, the emerging economies in Asia have for the most part staged a strong recovery, while the transition countries and Latin America have begun to recover from the subsequent turbulence that particularly affected Russia and Brazil. The impressive expansion in the United States is now the longest on record and the outlook has also improved for Europe. The Japanese recovery, however, remains tentative and fragile.

The momentum of recovery from the 1997-1998 slowdown has proven much stronger than anticipated. Global economic growth is now estimated at 3.3 percent in 1999. This compares to a projected 2.2 percent toward the end of 1998, at the height of financial market turbulence and the low point in the associated confidence crisis. Moreover, world economic growth for 2000 is now projected to reach 4.2 percent. Economic growth in the advanced economies is projected at 3.6 percent, developing countries 5.4 percent and countries in transition 2.6 percent.

Much of the strong growth in world output has been supported by: the continued strength of the U.S. economy, engendered by strong domestic demand and increased business investment; a rebuilding of inventories in Asian countries; and an improved outlook for Europe in the face of growing consumer confidence. Economic recoveries evident in the transition countries and Latin America, reflect a deepening of the adjustment and reform efforts being pursued by these countries. In retrospect, the global downturn in the wake of the crisis in Asia and other emerging countries since 1997 now appears to have been relatively mild and brief.

Consistent with the overall expansion in output, unemployment in the major industrial countries is projected to decline further to 5.9 percent in 2000 from a level of 6.1 in the preceding year. In the case of the United States, unemployment is expected to be maintained at 4.2 percent, and in Japan at 4.7 percent. While poor labour market performance continues to pose a challenge in Europe as a whole, unemployment levels are projected to fall further in 2000 for most countries of the region from a rate of just below 10 percent.

Inflation in the major industrial countries is expected to increase to 1.8 percent in 2000 compared to 1.5 percent in 1999. The United States is forecast to record the highest rate of 2.5 percent and Japan the lowest rate of 0.1 percent. For the developing countries, the

rate of inflation is expected to decline further to 5.7 percent in 2000, down from 6.5 percent in the preceding year. In Latin America also, the projection is for a general decline in inflation resulting from the maintenance of firm monetary policies and stabilised exchange rates. For countries in the Middle East and Europe, inflation is forecast to fall from 20.3 percent in 1999 to 16.2 percent in 2000, while for the Asian region, it is expected to remain relatively unchanged at 2.6 percent. In Indonesia, the hardest crisis-hit country in the region, inflation is projected to decline to 3.5 percent from 20.5 percent in 1999 as a result of the turnaround in real activity.

The main developments among the international exchange rates were the weakening of the Euro against the US dollar and a corresponding strengthening of the yen. Interest rates in the mature credit markets, with the exception of Japan, (which remained virtually unchanged) exhibited a general upward movement during the first half of 2000. This was driven by continued strong growth in North America and the firming of the economic recovery in Europe, which precipitated a tightening of monetary conditions.

The recovery in global activity has been accompanied by a more than two-fold increase in oil prices since early 1999. This was mainly due to production curbs by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and several other oil producers. The price rise is contributing to significant improvements in external balances and fiscal positions of exporters, including Russia, the Middle East and some African countries. However, with oil having become a less important factor in the world economy since the 1970s, the consequences of the recent price increase from oil importing countries are smaller than they would have been in the past.

In the Caribbean, efforts towards the creation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and the pursuit of membership in the Free Trade Area of the Americas are being stepped up.

B. THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY

The Trinidad and Tobago economy has performed well since the mid-1990s, with steady economic growth, low inflation and a strengthened external position. Real GDP growth for fiscal 1999/2000 is estimated at 7.9 percent, reflecting increased exports in both the non-oil and energy sectors. The impetus for this seventh year of positive economic expansion, however, will be the non-oil sector which is expected to grow by 7.7 percent compared to 5.9 percent in the previous year. Expansion in the petroleum sector is expected to slow to 5.4 percent following a 10.7 percent expansion in the preceding fiscal year.

Growth in the non-oil sector will be led by Manufacturing (10.9 percent), with the Services and Agriculture sectors registering increases of 7.2 percent and 6.3 percent respectively.

With the coming on stream of Atlantic LNG, natural gas production is expected to increase by 42.9 percent offsetting the impact of the downturn in Exploration and Production and Petrochemicals.

The expansion in economic activity continues to impact positively on the level of unemployment. By the end of 2000 the unemployment rate is expected to decline further to around 12.8 percent. This compares to the 13.2 percent unemployment figure recorded in 1999. For the first nine months of the financial year, inflation stood at 3 percent. This compares to a rate of 5.3 percent for the corresponding period of fiscal 1998/1999. For the period January to December 2000, however, a slight increase of 0.4 percent over the 1999 figure is projected. This notwithstanding, Trinidad and Tobago's inflation rate is still firmly in line with those of our major trading partners.

The Central Government's fiscal account is expected to register a small deficit of 0.6 percent of GDP in 2000, largely due to the non-realisation of the budgeted revenue from the National Enterprises Limited (NEL) during fiscal 1999/2000.

Monetary policy continued to focus on maintaining the relative stability of the exchange rate against the U.S. dollar and on containment of the inflation rate. Development of a sound financial system remains the overriding objective of the monetary authorities. Accordingly, the monetary programme for 2000 entails a strengthening of the net creditor position of the Central Government to the Central Bank, and some expansion of financial credit to the non-financial public enterprises and to the private sector. In addition, there is an ongoing effort to improve open market operations by expanding and diversifying the instruments used, and by widening market participation to include non-bank financial institutions. Following the establishment of primary dealers in November 1999, the Central Bank will take appropriate steps to make operational a system of secondary market trading by primary dealers.

Trinidad and Tobago registered its seventh successive overall balance of payments surplus in 1999 (2.5 percent of GDP). Buoyant oil prices and a \$230 million Eurobond issue contributed significantly to this surplus. The forecast for 2000 is a surplus of 3.3 percent of GDP. However, the current account surplus is expected to widen to about 4.1 percent of GDP as several of the newly commissioned plants in the energy sector, including Atlantic LNG Train 1, will provide their first full year of exports. Although major commodity prices are expected to remain buoyant during 2000, softer commodity prices are expected in the latter part of the triennium. The capital account is expected to swing into deficit in 2000 as a result of the maturity of a Eurobond issue. A strong rebound is, however, forecast for the medium-term. Also, following a slow down in 1999, a new surge in foreign direct investment is expected. Gross international reserves are targeted to reach US \$1114 million by end 2000, the equivalent of 3.6 months of import cover.

III. THE MEDIUM-TERM POLICY FRAMEWORK

A. MEDIUM-TERM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In order to consolidate the progress already achieved in improving Trinidad and Tobago's economic performance, Government, in this new millennium, will continue to implement an economic programme designed to maintain a high rate of growth with low inflation, and diversify the economic base to further reduce the unemployment rate. Major focus will, however, remain on people-oriented issues, as Government seeks to improve the quality of life for all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Government's major policy goals and objectives for the three-year period 2001-2003, will therefore include:

- Maintaining a high rate of economic growth with low inflation;
- Fostering an environment conducive to generating and sustaining increased employment opportunities;
- Developing our most important asset, our people;
- Enhancing the well-being of all citizens; and
- Protecting and preserving the country's natural environment.

Achievement of these objectives will be facilitated by Government's continued emphasis on sound and prudent management of the economy. In so doing, strong fiscal policy will be complemented by effective monetary and financial policy and appropriate strategies will target the efficient allocation of available public resources among the various competing national demands.

B. MEDIUM-TERM OUTLOOK AND FINANCING REQUIREMENTS

Export-led growth in the non-oil sector is expected to be the major contributor to sustainable economic growth over the medium-term, with a projected contribution to GDP of around 79 percent in 2000 and an average of 76 percent per year, over the three-year period 2001 to 2003. The increased output from the oil/gas sector is expected to be a significant contributor as well, with output averaging 24 percent per year over the three years.

The rate of inflation is expected to remain closely in line with those of our major trading partners averaging 2.8 percent per year over the period 2001 to 2003.

Over this period, gross official international reserves is expected to remain strong at around 4.5 months of prospective imports. The most important downside risk to this scenario relates to possible lower oil prices, which would reduce budgetary revenues and impede the accumulation of international reserves. The establishment of the Revenue Stabilisation Fund is, however, expected to provide a bulwark against turbulence in the international financial and commodity markets.

Table I provides the projections for selected economic indicators over the medium-term, 2001-2003

Table 1: SELECTED ECONOMIC INDICATORS 1999 – 2003
(in percent unless otherwise stated)

	--- Actual ---		----- Estimates -----		
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Real GDP Growth	7.0	7.9	5.3	5.1	5.0
Inflation	3.4	3.8	3.0	2.8	2.6
Investment/GDP	21.2	21.0	21.0	21.0	21.0
National Savings/GDP	15.6	20.9	22.2	22.2	22.0
Central Gov't: Savings/GDP	-0.1	1.9	2.8	3.4	3.9
Central Government Fiscal Balance/GDP	-0.5	-0.6	0.3	0.4	0.7
Overall Non-financial Public Sector Balance	-0.6	-1.8	-0.8	0.0	0.8
BOP Current Account/GDP	0.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.0
Debt Service Ratio	7.8	11.6	5.1	4.4	4.1
Gross Official Int'l Reserves (US\$M)	945.4	1114.0	1345.0	1605.0	1843.0
Import Cover (Months)	2.7	3.6	4.1	4.5	4.8

Source: Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Finance and Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago

Note: Government fiscal items reflect new fiscal year September - October

Capital investment in the nation's social infrastructure will increase as the Public Sector Investment Programme continues to focus on strengthening and expanding the services and facilities available to our citizens. The level of capital investment will be supported by a healthy level of national savings, which is projected to average 22.1 percent of GDP per year over the medium-term.

The current account balance is expected to remain in surplus over the medium-term. This is largely on account of increased imports in both the non-oil and oil/gas sectors.

The capital account is projected to remain positive over the medium-term due to renewed foreign direct investment and increased capital market activity.

The performance of the overall balance of payments will remain strong, generating consistent surpluses over the period.

With respect to debt, Government has continued its policy of prudent debt management by reducing the public sector external debt stock through debt restructuring and refinancing.

c. MEDIUM-TERM POLICY AGENDA

i. Savings and Investment

Government's policy continues to be geared towards further enhancement of national savings and investment within an environment of low inflation and competitive rates of interest. The focus will remain on maintaining macroeconomic stability and on implementation of the necessary regulatory and institutional framework including the strengthening of supervision and regulation of the growing domestic financial sector and the expanding capital market. To this end, Government will continue its programme of Institutional reform and regulatory strengthening.

The major initiatives will include:

- Ongoing reform of the pension and social security system;
- Drafting of the legislation governing Employee Share Ownership Plans (ESOPs) and the Collective Investment Vehicles (CIVs) Legislation;
- Establishment of the Revenue Stabilisation Fund;
- Establishment of a mega-regulatory body for the financial sector; and
- Acceleration of the Credit Union Strengthening Programme.

Concomitant with continued foreign direct investment in the energy and energy-based

sectors, the ratio of investment to GDP is projected to average 21 percent over the next three (3) years, with gross national savings to GDP averaging about 22.1 percent per year. This compares with a national savings to GDP ratio of 22.2 percent and an unchanged investment to GDP ratio in 2000.

ii. Fiscal Policy

Given the strong performance of the petroleum sector during the last fiscal year, and the inherent volatility of international oil prices, Government will continue to exercise prudent fiscal policy over the medium-term. Accordingly, expenditure restraint will continue with the maintenance of the revenue stabilization fund which will allow surplus oil revenues to be saved when oil prices are high and accessed when the oil price is low.

Over the medium-term, Government will continue its efforts to strengthen its revenue collection machinery through the on-going Tax Administration Reform Programme. Specifically, concentrated efforts to strengthen the Revenue Administration are programmed in the medium-term. Restructuring of the Inland Revenue Division will continue, together with a re-engineering of current methods in information technology and enhancement of tax compliance through the recruitment and training of additional Tax Monitoring Officers.

iii. Monetary and Financial Policy

Over the medium-term, monetary policy will remain focused on maintaining price and exchange rate stability and on the continued strengthening of the inter-bank market for foreign exchange. Expansion of open market operations (OMO) will also be a point of emphasis. Accordingly, over the medium-term, liquidity management will be strengthened in the context of the widening of the range of participants at open market auctions. The latter will allow for a larger number and broader range of securities to be made available to participants in the financial market. The Monetary Authority will also continue to stimulate increased activity on the secondary market through its primary dealerships.

In addition, the Central Bank, through the Financial Stability Committee, will continue to monitor the domestic financial system and provide early warning signals of potential threats to the domestic economy from events that may occur internationally and locally.

The Central Bank will also proceed with the development of a framework for the integrated supervision of financial institutions in order to facilitate coordinated and comprehensive oversight of the services provided by the financial sector. Over the medium-term, focus will

also remain on reviewing legislation and amending existing deficiencies as they relate to developments within the financial arena.

iv. Balance of Payments

The Balance of Payments is expected to generate strong surpluses over the medium-term. This is following on a solid performance in the energy and energy-based sector, as a result of the recent expansion in liquefied natural gas. Increased exports in the non-oil sector and the oil/gas sector are expected to contribute significantly to this strong position in the medium-term, notwithstanding softer commodity prices and increased capital imports.

The capital account is expected to remain in surplus in 2000. Moreover, with Government's participation in the international capital market, and continued foreign direct investment, the capital account is expected to strengthen considerably over the medium-term.

Trinidad and Tobago's level of gross official reserves is programmed to attain a level of US\$ 1843.0 million or 4.8 months of import cover by the end of the three-year period, 2001 to 2003. This compares with a projected level of US\$1114 million, or 3.6 months of prospective imports for the year 2000.

v. Debt and Debt Management

With a view toward reducing the debt service burden to a manageable level, Government has begun the restructuring of its high-cost domestic debt by refinancing US\$146.8 million (TT\$925 million) of its domestic debt during the 1999/2000 fiscal year. It is projected that savings of approximately US\$2.0 million (TT\$13 million) would be realised on these loans in the 1999/2000 fiscal year. Government is expected to maintain this thrust over fiscal 2000/2001 with a further US\$127 million (TT\$800 million) of domestic debt earmarked for refinancing.

By the end of September 2000, the Central Government's domestic debt stock is expected to reach US\$1.7 billion (TT\$10.6 billion). This represents an increase of US\$0.2 billion (TT\$1.3 billion) over September 1999, concomitant with the acceleration of Government's development programme during the period. Over the medium-term, however, the domestic debt stock is not expected to increase significantly, as Government continues to pursue a policy of efficient debt management.

As anticipated, all payments under bilateral and commercial loans with creditors of the Paris and London Clubs terminated in 2000, consequently eliminating the debt-servicing

burden on these rescheduled loans. Government will maintain its presence in the international bond market, sourcing two loans of US\$250 million and JPY11 billion during 2000. As such, the external debt stock is expected to increase from US\$1.5 billion (TT\$9.3 billion) as at September, 1999 to US\$1.8 billion (TT\$11.4 billion) by the end of September, 2000.

Over the 2001-2003 period, Government will continue to have favourable access to the international capital markets, having received investment grade ratings from the two top international credit rating agencies – Moody's and Standard and Poor's. This will augur well for debt service obligations in the future.

vi. Foreign Policy

The main objective of Government's Foreign Policy will be to protect and preserve our country's political, legal, social and other interests abroad. Accordingly, multilateral Foreign Policy will focus on increased co-ordination between Trinidad and Tobago and foreign government agencies and international organisations to maximise benefits from education, training and technical co-operation opportunities.

Collaboration with Regional Governments on the establishment of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and the Caribbean Court of Justice will continue to be a foreign policy priority. The revitalisation of the CARICOM/Central American integration process will also be advanced.

Government will pursue the establishment of bilateral agreements such as Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements, Double Taxation Agreements and Technical Co-operation Agreements. A review and evaluation of existing bilateral agreements will also be undertaken. Government has already finalised agreements with Venezuela, Cuba and Costa Rica, which will increase co-operation between Trinidad and Tobago and these countries to combat the illegal drug trade. A number of co-operation agreements have also been signed with Cuba, the Dominican Republic, the United States, Canada and the European Union with a view to facilitating trade between these countries and Trinidad and Tobago over the medium-term.

In the continuing expansion of the global network of honorary consuls for Trinidad and Tobago, West Europe, North America and Asia will be targeted. Concurrently, Government will continue to promote the emergence of Port of Spain as the major diplomatic centre of the Region.

Foreign Policy will continue to be used as a tool to promote Trinidad and Tobago's culture

and products through participation in cultural tours, expositions and trade shows. Increasing the number of export markets for Trinidad and Tobago's products including asphalt, aromatic bitters, cut flowers and garments, will also be pursued.

Over the medium-term, tourism promotion and investment initiatives will be accelerated and, in order to facilitate this process, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Trinidad and Tobago Industrial Development Company (TIDCO) and other relevant government agencies will work in closer collaboration.

Trinidad and Tobago will sustain its ongoing championship of the cause of vulnerable small island economies in the international arena and will advocate the full implementation of the United Nations Programme for Small Island Developing States.

vii. Trade, Industrial and Consumer Policy

Trade and industrial policy will focus on economic growth, productivity, quality and development of a dynamic and self-sustaining non-oil sector. The Trade Policy will be hinged on three (3) pillars as follows: -.

- i. developing strategies to enhance exports of goods and services by providing sustainable and stable market access opportunities through the negotiation of free trade agreements;
- ii. active participation in rule-making bodies at the regional, hemispheric and multilateral levels to ensure that our national concerns and economic vulnerabilities as a small island developing country are taken into consideration in the development of any agreement; and
- iii. continued collaboration with relevant stakeholders – NGOs, labour and the private sector – towards a participatory approach to the decision-making process for the formulation of trade and industrial policies.

In addition, Government will ensure implementation of the nine (9) Protocols which seek to amend the treaty establishing the Caribbean Community and to effect the CARICOM Single Market and Economy. Of significance is the operationalisation of Protocol II which seeks to prevent the introduction of new, and the removal of existing, restrictions and barriers related to the rights of establishment, provision of services and movement of natural persons.

Industrial Development Policy will continue to establish a framework for the pursuit of

strategies geared towards the creation of an entrepreneurial environment, which will promote and diversify exports so that the non-oil sector contributes more significantly towards the economic development of Trinidad and Tobago.

Accordingly, Government will review and revise the Industrial Policy and develop a programme of identifying and prioritizing sub-sectors and industries for promotion. In addition, investment promotion legislation will be enacted and bilateral investment treaties pursued.

Small Business Development

Government is committed to the development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) as a stimulus to economic growth and a potential contributor to aggregate employment, production and national income.

In this regard, an implementation plan for the intensification of the development of a Micro/Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Sector, the appointment of a Small Business Co-ordinator and the creation of a Policy Unit within the Ministry of Trade and Industry will be executed. The implementation plan will also include: a restructuring of the Small Business Development Company (SBDC) to function more effectively as the implementing arm of Government's MSME sector policy; development of an export-sector within the MSME sector; and the identification of financing mechanisms for the sector.

Moreover, the SBDC will continue to focus on the provision of advisory services, training and marketing know-how for small business entrepreneurs.

Consumer Policy

Government's consumer policy will continue to emphasise consumer protection, consumer safety, consumer education, equity in the marketplace and consumer empowerment. During this period, focus will be placed on the prosecution of violators of consumer rights, and the promotion and facilitation of quality services to consumers. Special emphasis will be placed on empowering and protecting the rights of the elderly and persons who are in any way challenged.

To enhance the empowerment process, Government will facilitate programmes targeted towards the youth and the elderly. Access to consumer services will also be strengthened through the establishment of new facilities; increased participation in the decision-making process by civic groups; the development and maintenance of alliances with local and international groups and organisations; and the dissemination of information on the testing and rating of consumer products.

The protection of the environment, as it relates to consumer empowerment and behaviour, will be targeted, with greater focus on encouraging sustainable consumption.

viii. Public Sector Investments

Public Sector Investment Programme

Over the medium-term, Government will continue to use the Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP) to strengthen the nation's economic and social infrastructure. Significant strides have been made in enhancing the nation's economic infrastructural base, principally in the areas of water and sewerage, energy, port facilities and the road network.

In the medium-term, emphasis will be placed on improving the nation's social infrastructural framework to ensure balanced and sustainable development. Consistent with Government's integrated approach to national development, the private sector will be encouraged to support Government in partnership-type arrangements in future infrastructural development.

In this context, the PSIP will focus on projects and programmes designed to promote a higher quality of life for all. Efforts will be made to empower marginalized communities and disadvantaged groups to increase their ability to effectively participate in the productive activities along with the rest of society.

An essential feature of Government's medium-term policy will be the development of the country's human resource. Enhancement of the quality and increased access to primary education will continue through the Fourth Basic Education Programme, with the reconstruction and expansion of primary schools, provision of early childhood care and teacher training. The introduction of school-based management in primary schools will empower the new primary school boards and principals to make decisions in the best interest of their respective communities.

The Secondary Education Modernisation Programme will complement initiatives at the primary level, through improved administrative strategies, curriculum development, enhanced teaching and learning skills. Greater access to secondary level education will also be achieved with construction of new schools in rural areas and refurbishment of existing schools.

Tertiary level educational opportunities will be expanded through the establishment of the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT) and

the Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Technology (TTIT). In addition, further educational opportunities will be made available through widened distance learning approaches. The availability of tertiary level educational opportunities will also be enhanced by encouraging private sector participation in this area. The expanded need for human resources in the hospitality industry would be facilitated by the Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute.

The National Skills Development Programme, which offers specialised skills training to youth, will be expanded over the medium-term through the establishment of additional centres, thereby making the youth employable and equipping them with the tools necessary for entry into a variety of employment fields.

Measures to improve the quality of life of citizens will include the provision of better health care, adequate shelter and strategies to reduce poverty. Under the Health Sector Reform Programme, it is envisaged that affordable health care will be delivered in an efficient and equitable manner. Focus will be on providing high quality primary care services by strengthening institutional reforms and upgrading health facilities in the communities. Strategies will include the implementation of new and innovative prevention programmes to combat chronic diseases.

Over the medium-term, a second phase of the National Settlements Programme will be initiated to address the shortages in the provision of shelter. This programme will focus principally on upgrading squatter sites as well as providing additional sites and services for new home construction.

Poverty alleviation continues to pose a challenge to the society. One major instrument in the drive to reduce the ill effects of poverty will be the Community Development Fund. This programme will continue to empower community-based and non-governmental organisations, individuals and micro-enterprises through education, welfare and institutional strengthening activities. Another initiative will be the provision of non-traditional training for women aimed at qualifying them for entry into new areas of employment.

In the medium-term, Government will continue reforms of the Agricultural Sector. These reforms will be complemented by major investments under an Agricultural Sector Investment Programme, which will be supported by funds sourced from a multilateral lending agency. The programme will provide direct investments in farming communities, upgrade the sector's infrastructure, and facilitate private sector participation.

The PSIP will continue to support the productive activities of the private sector through expansion and improvement of the nation's physical infrastructure. The Southern Roads Development Project will be completed, and is expected to significantly reduce traffic

congestion, increase access to commercial areas and lower transport costs in the southern areas. Under the National Highways Programme, rehabilitation of some 220 km of the main road network, as well as approximately forty (40) bridges throughout Trinidad will be completed. Rehabilitation of the main arterial causeway between north and south Trinidad - the Solomon Hochoy Highway, will be completed between Couva and Tarouba bringing significant relief to commuters.

Government's partnership with the private sector will continue as efforts will be made to strengthen and expand the telecommunications sector. The Telecommunications Authority will be established under a telecommunications modernisation project. This project will expand participation in the sector by creating an environment for enhanced regularisation and competition. Reform of the postal services will also be completed and will provide significantly enhanced postal communication along with a wide variety of services nationwide.

Direct investments in other productive activities will be facilitated by the establishment of industrial parks for light manufacturing, and for technologically related industries. In order to accelerate the integration of the country into the global information technology industry, Government is currently pursuing the establishment of a Science and Technology Park in Wallerfield. The Master Plan and Site Upgrade Engineering for this Park is nearing completion, and the preliminary infrastructure work is in progress. Infrastructure on existing industrial estates will also be rehabilitated and in some instances expanded as demand requires.

Public sector reform and strengthening will continue with the introduction of new financial management systems throughout the public service. To increase efficiency as well as the access and delivery of services to the public, several ministerial web sites and new information systems will be created, including the establishment of Human Resources Information Systems.

In respect of environmental upgrade and protection, permanent accommodation for the Environment Management Authority and the Environment Commission will be provided. Focus will be placed on adherence to environmental legislation and monitoring activities.

State-owned Enterprises

During the medium-term, Government will continue the process of rationalisation of the state enterprise sector, with a view to optimising the use of State resources. In this regard, Government will retain or acquire equity in state enterprises when such ownership is critical to the achievement of policy objectives.

Increased sharing of resources and the development of strategic linkages among State sector enterprises will also be pursued over the period 2001-2003

Public Utilities

The Public Utilities Sector reform and strengthening process will continue over the medium-term, with focus being placed on a strong and effective regulatory framework.

Having achieved significant gains in the areas of operational efficiency, quality of utility services, efficient use of physical and human resources and elimination of financial losses, the medium-term will see an intensification in the implementation of these primary objectives. Major capital investment programmes will be undertaken in the areas of water supply and wastewater treatment, postal services and in the electricity transmission and distribution sector.

Water and Wastewater

Having considerably reduced the water deficiency in the country through the implementation of the South Water Project, the Build-Own-Operate (BOO) Desalination Project, the ongoing North Water Project and the Tobago Water Project, Government will accelerate its initiatives to address the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the water and sewerage network. The priority pipeline projects will be accelerated throughout the country in expanding the distribution network to meet Government's stated objective of water for all.

Further improvements in the quantity of the water supply would be undertaken through the development of localized groundwater sources by the use of modern drilling technology. Over the period, satellite technology will also be utilized for the identification of new water sources.

Government is committed to the establishment of a sound and sustainable wastewater system and to improving the quality of wastewater services in the country. To this end, Government will seek to facilitate investment in the sector, outline the approach for the maintenance of the entire wastewater system, and will support the implementation of rate structures to ensure that wastewater systems will be financially self-sustaining. The construction of a new Beetham Sewerage Facility to service the entire Port of Spain area will be completed and a "revolving fund" will be established to finance the upgrading of non-WASA wastewater treatment plants to ensure compliance with environmental and health standards.

The Government will continue to play a vital role in the regulation of the water and wastewater sector and in the establishment of policy objectives and operating standards to

ensure the protection of human health and the environment. In this regard, a new legal and regulatory framework for the Water and Wastewater Sector will be developed. A Water Resources Management Authority will also be established.

Electrical Power

Government's policy of decoupling power generation from transmission and distribution has significantly reformed the electricity sector. This strategy has attracted substantial competitive private investment in the generation sector, increased the reliability of supply and expanded installed capacity.

Government will continue its focus on the generation sector, inclusive of the removal of constraints to investment, as more industries develop and the need for additional electricity capacity increases.

Major expansion and rehabilitation work on the transmission and distribution network will continue with a view to improving the reliability of supply in outlying areas and ensuring adequate maintenance of infrastructure assets. In order to improve financial autonomy and accountability in the transmission and distribution sector, Government will complete the drafting of new electrical power legislation and give consideration to the establishment of the Trinidad and Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC) as a public limited liability company.

Postal Services

Government's approach to postal service reform has resulted in a dynamic new entity that has attracted new capital investment, improved and expanded basic services, and created new value-added services. Having achieved major policy reforms and institutional strengthening, emphasis will now be placed on commercialization and technological reform.

The strengthening of the postal network, at a cost of approximately \$56 million, through selective investment and introduction of modern technology, will be the Government's major objective over the next three years. Generation of revenue from new products will continue apace.

The Regulated Industries Commission

In order to meet the increasing demand for utility services, to enhance the efficiency of the sector as well as to ensure that consumers are protected from monopoly abuse, the development of a regulatory and legal framework conducive to efficient utility provision and

private sector participation, will continue. In this regard, the Government has adopted a two-pronged approach to regulatory reform in the utilities sector:

- the proclamation of the Regulated Industries Commission (RIC) Act to provide umbrella legislation for incentive-compatible regulation; and
- sector-specific legislation and regulation in the Water and Wastewater and the Electricity Sector.

The operationalisation and efficient functioning of the RIC will be Government's focus during the medium term. Intensive training of the RIC staff will be emphasized and new principles for rate determination will be developed.

ix. Public Administration

Government will continue to place emphasis on public service transformation. In this regard, greater attention will be given to improving the quality of service delivery in terms of customer satisfaction, timeliness and access. In addition to ensuring that the principles of good human resource management in the public service are firmly grounded in practice, programmes and projects will be developed to inculcate the culture of strategic management, assess and benchmark organisational performance and increase consultation and collaboration among stakeholders.

x. Sectoral Policies

Energy and Energy-Based Sector

Government will continue to manage the domestic energy sector so that the country's position as a desirable location for international investments remains intact. Towards this end, new investors and new processes will be proactively encouraged. This objective will be achieved by targeting those companies whose operations will deepen industrial linkages within the country and have a strategic fit with already established energy plants.

The Government will seek to increase foreign investment capital while at the same time ensuring the continued viability of local investors. In this regard, due care and attention will be focused on the development of the local goods and services aspect of the energy operations.

The primary areas targeted for developmental activity will lie in the offshore environment. In fulfilling this objective the Government will engage in further rounds of competitive bidding during the medium-term. This programme will seek to extend the frontier of oil exploration to deeper waters offshore. Although this activity will take place in the medium-term it could lead to further growth of the sector in the longer time horizon.

Another aspect of Government's medium-term strategy is to put systems in place, which will lead to an almost immediate increase in crude oil production. This objective will be achieved in part by continuing and expanding the programme of lease operatorships and farmouts. Through this initiative the Government expects to engage idle local capacity and attract both local and foreign companies into joint venture arrangements with the State-owned company, PETROTRIN.

The phased de-monopolization of the retail-marketing sector will continue. The Government is in the process of preparing an invitation for bids for wholesale marketing licenses from both local and foreign interests. On completion of this process the market will be poised to enter the last phases of partial and full deregulation.

Continued emphasis will be placed on the development and expansion of gas-based industries in Trinidad and Tobago during the medium-term. Consequent on the gains achieved through the introduction of LNG processing, a two-train expansion of the LNG plant at Point Fortin will be high on Government's agenda during the medium-term. Increased petrochemical production is also targeted during the medium-term with the imminent construction of one additional ammonia facility and two methanol plants.

Gas to liquids processing will be introduced during the medium-term and work will continue on the establishment of an aluminum smelter plant. The development of an ethylene complex and manufacturing industries further downstream will be a major strategic policy objective. A master plan will be developed for the natural gas sub-sector to facilitate optimal growth and diversification.

Government has also embarked on measures to streamline the operations of the quarrying industry. A Minerals Division is to be established within the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries while legislation will be enacted which will seek to regulate the industry, replace outdated laws and address the issues of pollution and control.

In recognition of the fact that energy sector development is often achieved at a price to the environment, priority will be given to ensuring that environmental concerns are adequately addressed and that energy operators maintain the environment in as pristine a condition as may be expected.

Agriculture

Government's critical goals in the area of agriculture, land and marine resources are: employment creation; national food and nutrition security; sustainable natural resource management; increased foreign exchange earnings; empowerment of rural communities; and enhanced contribution to Gross Domestic Product.

Strategies for generating additional employment in the sector include:

- increasing access of farmers, fisherfolk and aquaculturists to agricultural credit;
- provision of appropriate infrastructure and institutional strengthening of the Ministry of Agriculture Land and Marine Resources (MALMR); and
- development of agro-industry through the formulation of linkages with the tourism and input supply sectors, development of agro-industrial potential and the provision of appropriate incentives.

Food and nutrition security will also have priority status over the medium-term. Strategies to achieve this goal will include the expansion of preventive, regulatory and curative animal health with a view towards reduction of morbidity especially among food producing animals; and the development of Integrated Pest and Disease Management and Food Safety Programmes. The MALMR will continue to develop linkages between local farmers and caterers in the School Nutrition Programme; and to develop and extend farm management and advisory services to the farming community.

In respect of marine fisheries, and aquaculture, Government, as part of its efforts to promote sustainable management of natural resources, will seek to provide institutional and infrastructural support to fisherfolk and aquaculturists; and establish links with national and international agencies for the necessary financial and technical support.

In the area of forestry, activity will focus around the enhanced management and conservation of the natural forest and wildlife, with a view toward increasing the sustainable production of both wood and non-wood forest products. The development and maintenance of protected areas including the National Parks System, as well as management of national wetlands with emphasis on the Nariva Swamp, will be continued. In order to facilitate increased foreign exchange earnings from both traditional and non-traditional exports, Government will, over the period 2001-2003, continue to provide appropriate incentives for the export of traditional and non-traditional products and to promote increased private sector investment in the agricultural sector.

Strategies for the empowerment and social stability of rural communities will include the rationalization and control of squatting, the continued development of the National Land Information System, and the implementation of the Accelerated State Land Distribution/Regularization Programme.

Over the medium-term, the MALMR in conjunction with the Tobago House of Assembly, will seek to rationalise agriculture in Tobago through the formulation of development policies and plans.

Implementation of the Transformation Plan for Caroni (1975) Limited, will continue to occupy the attention of the Government over the medium-term.

Tourism

Government will continue to establish policies and implement programmes to facilitate the development of Tourism in Trinidad and Tobago in a sustainable manner. In this regard, the National Tourism Policy and Five-Year Strategic Plan will guide strategic planning for the development of the Tourism Industry and identify priorities for development.

Systems and procedures will be established to ensure the effective implementation of provisions contained in the new Tourism Development Act. The Act will enhance our country's tourism product through the construction of new hotels and guesthouses and the development of a diverse range of tourist attractions and amenities. It will also facilitate the refurbishment of existing accommodation stock and tourist facilities.

In the medium-term focus will be placed on ensuring that key public sector organisations charged with the responsibility for the transformation of the Tourism Sector are strengthened. Efforts will therefore center on upgrading of the human resource and on the acquisition of advanced technology.

Government will continue to collaborate with interest groups and associations in the hotel and tourism industry to ensure that their personnel are appropriately trained and that their services are geared to the international market.

Marketing activities will be strengthened and selected material will be made available for publication in German, Spanish, French and Portuguese.

Greater alliances will be sought with high-profile destinations in the Caribbean. Emphasis will be placed on packaging cultural events and activities, construction of visitor facilities, development of renaissance areas, preparation of national accounts for the Tourism Sector and exploration of farm tourism.

The regulatory framework will be improved and Government will seek to strengthen the institutional framework in order to ensure that tourism projects are implemented in accordance with good environmental practices in a manner that preserves and enhances the country's natural assets.

Given the competitiveness of the Tourism Industry internationally, Trinidad and Tobago must seek to be at the cutting edge of technology at all times. In this regard, it is imperative that we create awareness of our destination via e-commerce. Stakeholders in the Tourism Sector will be encouraged to utilize e-commerce to access a vast network of ideas and information. This facility will equip them to strategise for the establishment of Trinidad and Tobago as a world-class destination. Technical assistance will be offered to small hotels, other tourism enterprises and related associations to facilitate the application of electronic technology as a tool to position themselves successfully in the global market.

Government is determined that development of the economy must translate into an enhancement of the quality of life of all citizens. Given that one of the vehicles to support this objective is the involvement of the community, community tourism programmes will be promoted over the medium-term. Community tourism ensures that the development of tourism infrastructure, sites and attractions is spread throughout the country and that there is a more equitable distribution of income.

xi. Services

Transportation

Government will continue to pursue strategies for the further development of the air, sea and land transport sectors, with safety being of critical concern over the medium-term.

Government is at present pursuing the development of an aviation policy to guide growth in the aviation sector. To meet the growing demands of air transport, over the triennium, implementation of the Strategic Development Plan for Piarco International Airport will continue, with construction of a new terminal building and ancillary facilities. Improvement works will also be continued at the Crown Point International Airport.

Also on the agenda for the medium-term, will be institutional strengthening of the Airports Authority; the Civil Aviation Division; and revision of the air transport legislation to foster increased efficiency and safety in the aviation environment.

On the regional front, Government has agreed to work in tandem with its CARICOM

partners in the development of an “Open Skies” policy with the United States and also with the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) to promote the principle of uniting the Caribbean by air and sea.

In the area of Sea Transport, Government will seek to improve the standard and quality of navigational aids in the waters of Trinidad and Tobago.

The inter-island sea transport service will be enhanced to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness. In this regard, tenders have been advertised for the lease (with an option to purchase) of a replacement ferry during the dry-docking of the MF Panorama. Plans are also on stream for the establishment of a port, and ferry service from North East Trinidad to Scarborough. The port project will be undertaken via a Build Own Operate Transfer (BOOT) contract without Government guarantee. Negotiations are ongoing with the preferred bidder.

An alternative transport mode within Trinidad is currently being explored and tenders for the establishment of a ‘Water-Taxi’ Service on the western coastline will soon be advertised. Additionally, the Jetty at King’s Wharf, San Fernando, will be reconstructed with a view to the establishment of sea-links between Trinidad and Venezuela.

There are also plans to restructure the Caribbean Fisheries Training and Development Institute into a Maritime and Fisheries Institute. This institute will provide an avenue for our seafarers to develop skills in fishing and to become more proficient in seafaring skills and duties.

The Port Authority will continue its effort to achieve financial self-sufficiency and overall productivity. The deepening of the Port of Spain Harbour is currently being pursued with a view to increasing the Port’s transshipment business. In order to further enhance inter-regional trade, the CARICOM wharves will be reconstructed. The Port Authority will also continue its equipment acquisition and maintenance programme.

In the area of land transport, Government will purchase new buses to meet the needs of the growing school population, as well as the “differently-abled” persons. In this regard, a policy will be developed with respect to the School Transport Sector. The maxi-taxi system in the East/West Corridor will be streamlined through the introduction of a user-fee system at City Gate. Road safety will be further enhanced through the expansion of a vehicular inspection network and the promotion of defensive driving and the introduction of increased penalties.

Government will continue to improve the regulatory environment in the road transport sector making it more user-friendly and safe. This will be achieved through the phased

computerisation of records at the Transport Division as well as the establishment of a National Road Safety Programme and the introduction of the alcometer. These activities would reduce the number of road fatalities.

Modernisation of the roads infrastructure is being undertaken. Towards this end, the Government will continue the rehabilitation of the Sir Solomon Hochoy Highway; the construction of twenty (20) bridges and sixty (60) km of roads; the Port of Spain access improvement, and the dualling of the San Fernando Bye-Pass Phase II. The Sir Solomon Hochoy Highway to Ciperio Road will also be extended.

Several pedestrian walkovers will be constructed at key locations along both the Churchill Roosevelt Highway and the Sir Solomon Hochoy Highway.

Drainage

Government will continue to develop and maintain flood control facilities in order to provide adequate and reliable protection to the citizenry and to its investment in physical infrastructure.

The provision of proper drainage and irrigation infrastructure to support the agricultural thrust will continue. Some of the projects to be undertaken during the next fiscal year include the establishment of flood retention basins; reclamation and protection of agricultural areas; rehabilitation of relevant watercourses throughout the country; and the conduct of coastal studies to determine measures for alleviating coastal erosion.

Public Buildings

The restructuring of the Maintenance and Construction Division of the Ministry of Works and Transport will be completed shortly. This measure will optimize the use of resources; facilitate the development of project management expertise; and provide a structured approach to maintenance activities associated with Government buildings.

In keeping with Government's thrust to renew, upgrade and expand the building infrastructure, the Maintenance and Construction Divisions of the Ministry of Works and Transport, will continue to undertake repairs to public buildings in accordance with prescribed industry standards.

During the review period, construction works on the National Library Complex will be completed.

Labour

The Government will continue its efforts at improving all aspects of the labour environment with increased emphasis on empowering workers to seek their own best interest.

Government will continue to ensure the enforcement of legislation such as the Industrial Relations Act and the Minimum Wages Amendment Act through its conciliation and inspection services. The proposed Occupational Safety and Health legislation will also provide additional protection for workers.

Workers will be educated on the rights provided to them through existing labour legislation, with special emphasis on new legislation such as the Minimum Wage Amendment Act.

Over the medium-term, the National Human Resource Management Information System (NHRMIS) will become fully operational and will, among other things, provide key labour market information to policy planners, and provide workers with information on the types of skills that would allow them to meet the demands of the labour market. The effective use of information generated by the NHRMIS would facilitate alignment of the human resource skills base with the demands of the labour market.

The National Employment Service expects to broaden its client base through its online facility by allowing registration of job seekers and employers via the Internet. Consistent with the new approach, focus will be placed on providing world of work counseling to job seekers, to assist them in attaining employment.

The physical enhancement and expansion of the Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operatives Studies coupled with other developments such as the recent relocation by the International Labour Organisation of its library to the college and the accreditation of academic courses would ensure that the college is recognised as a regional institution for tertiary education.

Government continues to strive for promotion of the socio-economic development of the nation through the co-operative ethos. Accordingly, Government will review current policy and operations of the Co-operatives Division so as to ensure its continued relevance to its clients in the dynamic world order.

xii. Social Sector Policies

Social Services

Over the period 2001-2003 Government will continue to implement measures to foster holistic social development of all, particularly the aged, the disabled, children at risk, substance abusers, the socially displaced and the poor.

Through the National Family Services Division, the Probation Division, the Disability Affairs Unit, the Adoption Section and the Foster Care Unit, Government will continue to provide services to strengthen the family and promote the development of the youth. These services include family and individual counseling, community based parent outreach, subventions and grants, adoption of children and remedial therapy.

In the area of poverty alleviation, Government will adopt the two-pronged approach of implementing measures to address immediate needs while at the same time providing beneficiaries with the capacity to sustain themselves. In this regard, the SHARE and Relief Centers Programme and the Micro Enterprise Social Rehabilitation Project will continue to offer both relief and rehabilitation options. Additionally, through the Change Management Unit for Poverty Eradication and Equity Building (CMU/PEEB), community-based projects and programmes and networking with community-based organisations and non-governmental organisations will continue.

By the year 2003, the number of drug treatment and rehabilitation facilities will be expanded. Public education programmes will also be continued. In the area of demand reduction, primary prevention programmes, as well as community-based prevention programmes which target schools, as well as, treatment and rehabilitation services, will be accelerated.

Given the necessity to ensure that young offenders are effectively rehabilitated and reintegrated into the society, the implementation of Community Service for first time offenders will be intensified.

In order to ensure that value for resources allocated to the social sector is maximized, the restructuring of the social services delivery system will be accelerated. Implementation of the new system over the medium-term, 2001-2003, will ensure greater participation by non-governmental and community-based organisations in service delivery, reduce duplication, foster service integration and will more effectively meet the needs of clients.

Culture

Over the period 2001-2003, Government will continue to promote and preserve the cultural heritage of Trinidad and Tobago and support culture and the arts, so as to motivate and empower citizens to achieve their creative potential. Accordingly, Government has adopted

the philosophy of the National Visual and Performing Arts Policy, that equity and cultural freedom, must be integral to the promotion and preservation of our cultural heritage. To this end, the Cultural Council of Trinidad and Tobago will operate as a co-ordinating and implementing body having as its core function, the development and growth of all art forms and the promotion of our national heritage.

Other strategies such as the promotion of our national days and festivals and the intensification of the Cultural Immersion Project will continue. The refurbishment of the National Archives, Queen's Hall and the development of Nelson Island as a heritage site will also continue.

Over the period, members of the National Steel Orchestra will benefit from specialised training. The Carnival Institute will also provide research facilities and training for various artistes in Carnival skills and administration.

Government will also continue to seize every opportunity to effect cultural exchanges and trade in cultural products for the enrichment of our national heritage.

Gender Issues

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago remains committed to:

- promoting gender equality, by an active and visible policy of gender mainstreaming;
- promoting and strengthening the effectiveness of the national machinery for Inter-Ministerial co-ordination, Inter-Sectoral collaboration and networking among Non-Governmental Organisations; and
- empowering and equipping the Ministry of Culture and Gender Affairs with the authority and capacity to act as the central body for gender policy development and for monitoring the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all national programmes and policies.

Accordingly, the recently established Women's Leadership and Enhancement Institute, will continue to promote women's leadership participation at the community, business and political levels.

The Women's Second Chances Programme will address the needs of low-skilled, unemployed women, especially single female-headed households, with training in agricultural production, the care of the elderly and the provision of community-based homework centres for children.

Over the period, a National Gender Policy will become operational. In addition, a Male Support Programme and the National Youth Outreach Programme focusing on cultural understanding, social integration and gender sensitization, will be strengthened. Attention will also be paid to research and programming on issues of gender as they affect men and women so that adequate programmes may be developed.

Education

In the area of education, Government has as its over-arching goal, the delivery of quality education to citizens at all levels of the education system. In its efforts to further inspire and sustain quality in schools, the principal initiatives of the Government are as follows:

- (i) The expansion and development of the curriculum;
- (ii) The development of the Division of Education, Research and Evaluation, including testing and assessment and continuous assessment;
- (iii) The introduction of a programme of systematic inspection and evaluation of schools;
- (iv) A school-based management programme to support policy initiatives;
- (v) The strengthening of teacher education and development.

Additional strategies include the institutional strengthening of the Curriculum Division and other Divisions of the Ministry of Education; the introduction of Secondary Entrance Assessment to replace the Common Entrance Examination; and the introduction of Technology Education and Health and Family Life Education on the curriculum.

Continued focus will also be placed on early childhood care and education, through the development of harmonized teacher training programmes; rationalisation of continuing Education Programmes; establishment of performance standards for lecturers and teachers; introduction of a programme of systematic inspection and evaluation of schools and provision of library facilities for secondary schools and Teacher Training Colleges. Additionally, graduates of Teachers Training Colleges for 1998, 1999 and 2000 will be upgraded.

Student support services such as the School Nutrition and School Transport Programmes will be expanded. In addition, standardization of textbooks at the secondary level; provision of security services to high risk schools; and expansion of the Regional Diagnostic Prescriptive Services will also be addressed.

Over the medium-term, the Education System will be reviewed and revised to ensure cost effectiveness and compliance with contemporary needs. The principal strategies for achieving this objective include: -

- continued decentralization of the Ministry of Education through the establishment of Regional Education Districts;
- development of the Information Technology Unit; the Human Resource Management Division; and the Educational Research and Evaluation Division; and
- enhancement of the Ministry's capacity in all aspects of the Project Cycle.

In order to achieve the goals of Universal Primary and Secondary Education (USE), Government will continue the implementation of both the Fourth Basic Education Project and the Secondary Education Modernization Programme (SEMP). In pursuit of USE, Government will continue to purchase secondary school places at private schools and assist denominational boards in the construction of new secondary schools. To further increase the number of available school places and assist in the goal of USE, Government will continue to improve the physical environment at pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary levels through construction, reconstruction and upgrading of physical facilities.

Seventeen Life Long Learning Centers will also be established. The thrust towards Adult Education will continue through the Read Me Now Project and private sector and NGO participation will be sought for the provision of secondary, vocational and special education.

Information and library services will be upgraded through the establishment of a Management Information System, the strengthening of the Libraries Division, and the development of resource centres at Regional Education District Offices.

In order to develop well-articulated human resources within the Ministry, in-service training for teachers at all levels of the Education System, as well as continuous training for administrators and support staff will be provided.

During the period 2001 to 2003, Government will also seek to expand international, regional and local co-operation in education, through the pursuit of opportunities for financial and technical assistance and intellectual co-operation.

Health

Government, through the Ministry of Health and the Regional Health Authorities, will

continue to systematically implement the National Health Services Plan. This Plan addresses improvements in systems, structures and human resource capacity in the context of its broad mandate to improve health status, and its specific obligation to meet the health care needs of the population.

The year 2003 will mark the end of Phase I of the Health Sector Reform Programme. It is anticipated that the activities detailed in the Programme will be completed as planned. The focus of the reform remains on primary care. During the period 2001-2003, eight (8) District Health Facilities will be completed and commissioned and all health centres and outreach centres refurbished/rebuilt. There will also be a focus on service and health promotion activities which seek to sensitise the population to the value of health and the benefits of adopting healthy lifestyles.

The delivery of a quality service will be supported by a variety of legislative approaches, which cover both public and private sector providers. Graduates of the Diploma Programme in Family Medicine will be available to the sector and will contribute to improvement in the quality of services delivered.

Rationalisation of hospital services will continue with the commissioning of the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex and hospital-specific infrastructure development, as set out in the Development Control Plans. To support this rationalisation and to ensure accessibility to needed care, the National Emergency Health Service will be fully established.

In support of these initiatives, planned improvements in management systems will be undertaken. The approved training plan for the Ministry and the Regional Health Authorities will be implemented, thereby providing the necessary technical and managerial skills for achievement of sector goals and objectives.

Based on work in progress, it is expected that there will be significant progress in implementing the National Health Insurance System, the design of which will be determined by the pilot scheduled for completion in 2001.

Housing

Government's policy in respect of the Housing and Settlements sector is based on the recognition of shelter as a fundamental human right enshrined in the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago. It is also acknowledged that pursuit of this right should be facilitated within a holistic planning framework, which takes account of the need to manage land, marine and other natural resources in a way that promotes sustainable development and closes the gaps between physical planning, social planning and economic planning.

It is also recognised that much more can be achieved when Government plays a facilitative role in development and harnesses the tremendous synergies resulting from partnering arrangements with private enterprise and community organisations than when it is the main provider of goods and services, as has been the norm.

Accordingly, of prime importance in the area of Housing and Settlements is the development and implementation of a new framework for physical development to facilitate the achievement of key national goals of economic development, self-sustainability of communities and affordable shelter for all. The over-arching strategy advanced for achieving these goals revolves around the concept of 'Selected Urban Centres' – areas identified for national physical planning purposes.

Over the review period, appropriate physical planning will be advanced through the operations of the National Physical Planning Commission (NPPC). The NPPC will be a new organisation whose functions will encompass those of the current Town and Country Planning Division. Its objectives will be to:-

- Prepare a comprehensive and integrated physical plan for Trinidad and Tobago;
- Develop codes of appropriate building construction and development standards and practice;
- Ensure that all persons and agencies adhere to the requirements of the National Plan and the codes of standards and practices;
- Meaningfully expand the scope of planning as it relates to human settlements; and
- Ensure the integration of physical planning and project implementation.

Other Agencies of the Ministry will continue to provide equally important support. The period 2001 to 2003 marks the commencement of a process which will transform the National Housing Authority (NHA) from its traditional role of landlord providing highly subsidised flatted (rental) accommodation and mass housing developments, into a proactive, customer driven, business oriented provider of high quality housing developments. This will be facilitated through strategic alliances with the private sector within designated selected urban centres.

The regularisation of spontaneous settlers on State land by the Land Settlement Agency, will take on added impetus in the period under review, as will the development and allocation of new settlement areas for low-income land-less citizens.

In spite of Government's efforts to provide financing through a range of progressive subsidies presently administered by the Approved Mortgage Companies, there still remains a substantial number of households which cannot access financing for shelter construction. Mindful of this need and in keeping with the thrust towards joint venture participation, plans are afoot to introduce new mechanisms that will allow low-income earners to access financing through non-traditional sources, such as Credit Unions and other emerging institutions whose focus may favour this cause.

Sport and Youth Development

Over the period 2001-2003, Government will concentrate much energy and resources on the challenges that face our youth. Sport and youth policies are formulated to cater to all our citizens irrespective of race, color, gender, creed, physical or mental condition and area of residence.

The National Sport Policy engenders several major objectives, three (3) of which will earn significant prominence during this period. These will include:

- The development and improvements in knowledge and practice of sport in the interest of the holistic development of the individual and the enjoyment of the public-at-large;
- The promotion and facilitation of the development of sport as an industry, that will contribute to the earning capacity of the individual, as well as to the national economy;
- The promotion of Trinidad and Tobago as a hub of world sporting activities in the Caribbean and positioning of Trinidad and Tobago as a preferred destination for international sporting events; and
- The enhancement of facilities for the cultural, sporting and recreational development of youth.

At the heart of these objectives will be the aim to facilitate "Total Participation, Quality Training and Excellence".

Over the medium-term, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs will continue to implement its programme of infrastructural development to create an enabling environment for the nurturing of elite athletes and the development of young people.

The Draft National Youth Policy document is expected to be finalised and approved by

Cabinet during this period. This Policy provides a broad framework within which Government's policy initiatives for youth development will be executed. It is a flexible and dynamic process of interaction between Government and civil society, from which programmes, activities and projects will emerge. The National Youth Policy, which advocates a culturally relevant participatory approach, emphasises youth empowerment, while recognising Government's responsibility to create a facilitative and supportive framework .

Some of the goals include:

- creation of mechanisms to facilitate the development of appropriate social interactive and communicative skills;
- creation of facilitative mechanisms to promote leadership capacity;
- promotion of a national environment that would encourage the relevant institutions to ensure the spiritual development of young men and women;
- development of the social and economic infrastructure and services to facilitate strong family units and quality family life;
- provision of education and training opportunities to ensure enhanced employability of young people; and
- enhancement of the social and economic care-giving capacity of the society.

Focus will be shifted from a social welfare model to a participatory one involving:

- Effective and meaningful participation in decision-making by young people;
- Definition of a range of conditions young people require for empowerment; and
- Working with young people rather than working for young people.

xiii. Local Government

Over the period 2001-2003, the focus will continue on empowering local bodies, through the decentralization process, thereby providing for greater autonomy on the part of the Municipalities. The policies, strategies and measures will therefore be geared towards fulfillment of the core purpose of the Municipal Corporations, which is to ensure the satisfactory delivery of those basic communal services necessary to maintain a proper standard of living within the region (Municipality) and to provide all other public facilities aimed at improving the quality of life of its citizenry.

Financial self-sufficiency and a strengthened revenue base, continued legislative review as well as the establishment of Collection and Assessment Units to effect the collection of property taxes will be among the strategies used to achieve this objective.

In the provision of physical and social infrastructure, the Ministry of Local Government will continue to undertake development and maintenance work, and also provide engineering and technical advice to local bodies. It will make available to Municipal Corporations raw material from the Tapani Quarry to assist with the construction impetus.

Recognising the importance of investing in human capital as a key factor in improving and increasing capability, a major objective will be increasing intellectual capital through training and upgrading of the human resource base of the Ministry. Training will be geared towards administrative staff as well as local government practitioners. The use of succession planning techniques will further enhance proposed human resource initiatives.

A review of the Weights and Measures Ordinance and Regulations will be conducted with a view to improving its operations. Management systems will be developed to ensure that the Lifeguard Services and the Unemployment Relief Programme function efficiently. Additionally, the private sector will be targeted in seeking employment opportunities for graduates of the Unemployment Relief Training Programme.

The development of Information Systems continues to be of foremost priority. Among other things, establishment of the Local Area Networks (LANs) and Wide Area Network (WAN) for the Ministry of Local Government and all Corporations is expected to be completed within the medium-term. Initiatives to facilitate the establishment of electronic data-communication infrastructure, a document management and imaging system and a Facility Management System will continue to be targeted.

Government will seek to facilitate the widest citizen participation in local affairs. To this end, greater community participation will be encouraged by involving citizens and communities to participate in meetings of Council and in the planning of projects to be undertaken in the Region.

Concomitant with the increase in local government functions has been the quantum of financial and other resources to manage. Government continues to be committed to ensuring transparency and accountability in all operations and therefore intends to undertake continuous audits, financial evaluations and reviews of all Local Government operations, to ensure compliance with regulations, procedures and specifications.

xiv. Tobago Affairs

Government will continue to ensure that relations with the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) are maintained, consistent with the Constitution and is committed to facilitating the implementation of the provisions of the THA Act No. 40 of 1996. In this regard the Government will continue with its programme of facilitating ongoing discussion and negotiation between the THA and organs of Central Government.

Notwithstanding the Fifth Schedule, there are areas for which the Central Government retains responsibility, including the delivery of critical services, which impact on the economic and social life of the people of Tobago. Continued emphasis will be placed on promoting the delivery of quality services in Tobago, especially those falling under the Sixth and Seventh Schedule. Efforts will also be made to encourage the private sector to expand and introduce new services and business in Tobago.

The Government will continue to promote education, both within the school system and in the technical arena. To this end, the music project will be continued and expanded so that eventually all schools in Tobago will have formal music classes and be equipped with musical instruments. With regard to the improvement of technical skills in Tobago, the Government, in conjunction with the NESC will continue holding welding classes in the Mobile Welding Unit at Roxborough until the \$11 million Roxborough Skills Center is completed. The Skills Center will offer a wide range of technical training, particularly in areas that will aid in the development thrust of the island.

The findings of the task force set up to enquire into the poor performance of students in Secondary Schools in Tobago will be used to develop strategies for improving the quality of education in Trinidad and Tobago.

xv. National Security

Government will pursue policies and programmes that will sustain the physical and social infrastructural development that has taken place in National Security over the past few years.

Matters to be urgently addressed include the need for additional manpower for the Fire, Prison and Police Services and for the Immigration Division. Additional staffing for the Coast Guard will also be provided on account of the establishment of new ports at Charlotteville and Cedros and the acquisition of additional boats and aircraft. With a view

to addressing the matter of acquiring and retaining quality staff at the Forensic Science Center, Government will seek to de-link technical posts in the Center from the civil service salary ranges. In addition, the Strategic Review exercise currently being undertaken in the Ministry of National Security, will also address the structural problems that presently impede delivery of quality services on a timely basis.

Police accommodation will be improved through the construction, reconstruction and upgrading of facilities. New police stations are earmarked for Gasparillo, Mayaro, Roxborough, Mathura, Brasso, Besson Street, Matelot, Manzanilla, Piarco, Oropouche and Old Grange Tobago. Major refurbishment works will be carried out at several police stations and other facilities including the Traffic Branch and Guard and Emergency Branch at Betham Estate. Full service garages are planned for Port of Spain, San Fernando and Tobago, with satellite garages in Sangre Grande, Couva, Siparia and Tunapuna. The old Police Headquarters at St. Vincent Street will also be restored by the end of the three-year period 2001-2003.

New fire stations will be constructed at San Fernando, Mayaro, Arouca, Sangre Grande, Piarco, Couva and Black Rock/Plymouth. It is to be noted that the new Couva Fire Station will be fully equipped to handle emergencies at the nearby Point Lisas Industrial Estate.

Transformation of the current dilapidated structures at Titan Barracks and Camp Cumuto is underway and will be completed within the three-year period. At Camp Ogden, extensive construction and refurbishment works will be carried out to buildings formerly occupied by the Ministry of Works and Transport, but now allocated to the Trinidad and Tobago Defense Force. A new Regiment Camp will be established at Hope Estate, Tobago in a joint venture exercise with the Tobago House of Assembly.

The matter of overcrowding in the nation's prisons is also being addressed. To this end, initiatives are being taken by the Prison Service to realize full occupancy of the new Maximum Security Prison by 2001. The new Women's Prison at Golden Grove is scheduled for completion by end 2000, and a new medium security prison in Tobago is planned for 2001-2002. To further improve prison conditions for inmates, plans are being developed for a new Remand Yard, for improvement of facilities at the Youth Training Center and for the expansion of the Golden Grove inmates dormitory. Refurbishment works will be carried out at the former Mausica Teachers' Training College, which will be converted to a Training College for prison service recruits as well as for the ongoing training of Prison Officers.

The E-999 Telecommunication System will be developed into a private telecommunication network offering voice, data, fax and full motion video facilities to the Police Service as well as the Defence Force; other arms of the Protective Services and Government Ministries

and Agencies. Through the new technology, the response capability, efficiency and effectiveness of the Police Service will be enhanced through Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) and Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), while the Point to Multipoint System (LMDS) will facilitate other Government Agencies with other applications such as Distance Learning, School Security, Telemedicine and a Ministerial Data Network.

The crime management capability of the Police Service will be enhanced through the installation of an Automated Fingerprinting Identification System (AFIS) including mugshots, and by the further development of the Computer System of the Police Service through acquisition of Human Resource and GIS software applications and linkages to the E-999 System.

The use of the new Information Technology will be phased into the operation of the other Divisions of the Ministry of National Security, including the Defense Force and the Fire and Prison Services. In the case of the Immigration Division, computer operations will be upgraded to facilitate the digitalized preparation of passports and automation of 100 percent of the business operations of the Division.

With a view to rebuilding its maritime capability to stem drug trafficking operations around the coastal waters of the country, Government will seek to acquire Ex-Royal Navy Vessel HMS Orkney for the Coast Guard, as well as complete refurbishment works on the TTS Cascadura (CG6). To improve marine surveillance and control for drug interdiction, electronic surveillance equipment will be acquired for installation in two C-26 aircraft donated to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago by the United States Government. A Global Maritime Distress and Safety System to monitor shipping will be installed by the Coast Guard, in accordance with international conventions, and in joint venture with Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago and the Maritime Division of the Ministry of Works and Transport.

Through lease and maintenance arrangements with selected financial agencies, the Ministry of National Security will acquire and maintain an operating fleet of vehicles and equipment for the Defense Force and Protective Services. In the case of the Police Service, vehicles will be acquired and dedicated for use in the E-999, Highway Patrol and Praedial Larceny Squad.

The Ministry of National Security will continue to place emphasis on the preservation of its buildings and vehicles. In this regard, a Facilities Manager has been engaged in order to ensure appropriate maintenance of all police buildings. A Fleet Manager has also been engaged to implement maintenance systems for the police fleet.

Training will continue to be of critical importance. Priority areas will include Bomb Disposal

Techniques, Information Technology, Project Management, Narcotics, Investigations and Intelligence Gathering and Analysis, Money Laundering, Drug Enforcement, Firearms Training, Computer Training and Forensic Training. Emphasis will also be placed on local training of officers through the establishment of Officers' Training Schools.

xvi. Law and Justice

Government continues to take up the challenge to make law not only speak justice but deliver justice. In respect of the Law Reform Programme, the focus has been on areas involving law and justice so that the justice system would be accessible to all members of the public, the rich and the poor.

Government is not only concentrating on modernizing the laws, the justice system and its procedures, it is also engaged in refurbishing existing courts, constructing new courts throughout Trinidad and Tobago and providing conducive conditions to facilitate the timely administration of justice.

Also, one of the main aims of the Government is to continue to pursue penal reforms and to institute alternative measures to litigation and custodial sentences in an attempt to reduce the number of offenders passing through the legal court system; thereby increasing the opportunity for rehabilitation of offenders, and ultimately re-integrating offenders into the community.

Government recognizes that Law, Order and Justice are integral items in the recipe for a stable and productive economy, and therefore, will continue to strengthen and enhance the legal system to deal effectively and appropriately with wrong-doers and ensure that the rights of victims are properly protected.

In order to build public confidence in the Rule of Law, the Public Legal Education Programme will be continued and the Legal and Judicial System reviewed.

Legal and Judicial reforms facilitate improvements in conflict resolutions and inform the effectiveness of the justice sector which facilitates and encourages private sector transactions. Improved legal frameworks also assist in promoting transparency and accountability in Government actions.

A well-functioning legal and judicial system is essential to the rule of law and the role of the State as guarantor of justice. Law Reform is an integral part of institutional development and a key element for sustainable growth of the economy.

Government will continue to train officers in relevant fields, provide up-to-date technology

for staff use and strengthen the institutional capacity of the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs so that it can effectively fulfill its objectives.

Government will also continue to improve the administrative and legal frameworks under which the Land and Companies Registries operate by computerizing the systems and updating legislation relating to the operation of the Registries.

Over the medium-term, Government will create a database of the entire population under the Population Registration System of the Civil Registry. This database will be made available to public agencies, private organisations and members of the general public.

In its bid to protect the Intellectual Property Rights of inventors, and the creative and intellectual works of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, the Government is actively pursuing the institutional strengthening of the Intellectual Property Office and will be reviewing and updating legislation and regulations to ensure that the services offered by this office are in accordance with the standards set down by the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

xvii. Information/Communication

The principal challenge for Trinidad and Tobago is the formulation of a comprehensive strategy to participate gainfully in the new knowledge-driven economy. Competition in the new economy compels Trinidad and Tobago to view the development and effective use of its information infrastructure as a key national objective. A competitive environment for the development of information technology-related industries and improvement in the existing telecommunications network infrastructure are therefore critical to meet the demands of the knowledge economy.

Government is of the view that the effective management of telecommunications, information technology and broadcasting, to create a robust, knowledge-based economy, depends on a holistic approach to policy management. This approach would relate to policy development, implementation, review and evaluation in respect of a co-ordinated and integrated information and communications sector. Accordingly, the new Policy Planning and Research Unit for the Information and Communications Sector of the Office of the Prime Minister will be strengthened through the engagement of consultancy services, to formulate a Strategic Plan for the Unit and recommend an appropriate organisational structure and human resource requirements. Resources will also be provided over the medium term for the design and installation of a Knowledge Management System.

Over the medium-term, provisions of the new Telecommunications Act will be fully implemented, and will establish a new and modern legislative and regulatory framework for telecommunications and broadcasting services in Trinidad and Tobago. In so doing, it will encourage new providers to enter the domestic sector, especially for internet-based services.

Government hopes to utilise technical assistance resources under the Multilateral Investment Fund of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for the purpose of strengthening policy formulation and implementation; and training and procuring the services of a Senior Technical Advisor, primarily to assist in the operationalisation of the proposed Telecommunications Authority. It is anticipated that the Authority will be fully functional within one year of the proclamation of the Telecommunications Act. The procurement of a Frequency Spectrum Management System (FSMS) will be actively pursued during the next three years and the National Broadcast Policy will be finalised in collaboration with the proposed Telecommunications Authority.

Over the medium-term, the state-owned National Broadcasting Network (NBN) will upgrade and modernize its radio and television equipment in keeping with current technological trends. To enhance corporate performance within the present competitive environment in the broadcasting sector, NBN will institute a programme of training and development for current and future staff. In keeping with prevailing business strategies in the broadcasting sector worldwide, NBN will also explore the provision of multimedia services over the Internet, inclusive of webcasting. Support to the Distance Learning Secretariat of the Ministry of Training and Distance Learning will also be strengthened, and NBN will undertake a revision of its corporate structure and commence preparation of a Strategic Plan.

The Information Division will focus, over the next three years, on improving the provision of information services to the Government and the population. Measures would include the computerisation of all functions of the Division, improvements in accommodation and institutional strengthening. Furthermore, a Freedom of Information Unit will be created consistent with the Freedom of Information Act.

Government firmly believes that to be relevant in a knowledge-based economy it has to incorporate the use of information technology in every aspect of its operations. During the medium-term, an Electronic Government (E-government) Unit will be established for the purpose of managing the transition to an electronic information infrastructure. The E-government Project Unit will be responsible for developing and implementing a national policy on E-government. The end result will be a Government operating as a unified, well-run enterprise in which the use of Information Technology is key to achieving each

Ministry/Agency's mission and goals. The eventual supervision of the Government Virtual Network, created by the E-government Unit, will be part of the portfolio of the National Information System Center (NISC). Consequently, in order to meet this additional challenge, the process of restructuring the NISC will continue over the medium term.

An initial step towards E-government will be the implementation of a communications backbone for the Public Service. This would allow for the interconnectivity of all major Government Ministries, institutions and associated bodies. Approximately fifteen Ministries and Agencies are targeted to be provided with workstations and servers to facilitate the launch of a Public Service Internet during the medium-term. In addition, Government hopes to enter into an agreement with the Microsoft Corporation for enterprise wide licences for server software as part of the final phase of the Year 2000 Compliance Programme.

Training and Distance Learning

Over the medium-term Government will ensure that the nation is continuously supplied with persons who have the competency for the world of work and other productive endeavours. Accordingly, a National Training Policy will be prepared in order to ensure that the training programmes of public and private sector institutions are conducted within an established policy framework. The drafting of a National Training Bill will also be pursued in conjunction with the National Training Agency.

Government will also implement a retraining and in-plant training programme. The programme is essentially designed to re-tool workers with new and appropriate skills in order to enhance their marketability.

The Ministry of Training and Distance Learning will be strengthened in order to provide it with the capacity to engage in assessment and utilization of contemporary analytical mechanisms for the evaluation of the overall impact of national training strategies on the socio-economic environment. An Intranet/Extranet Network will be implemented within a suitable centralized accommodation for all of the Units of the Ministry's Head Office.

In order to facilitate a more educated population and promotion of the concept of lifelong learning, Government will continue to strengthen the operations of the Distance Learning Secretariat through the provision of additional staff and support for the development of a Students' Records Management System. An electronic library will also be established to create a National Virtual Campus, while the Community-Based Distance Learning Centres will all be connected to each other and to the Internet.

In furtherance of the goal of achieving lifelong learning, the Ministry of Training and

Distance Learning will enter into partnership in the designing of a web-based wireless multimedia network to facilitate programme delivery to twenty-five (25) virtual classrooms. These classrooms are planned to come on stream over the medium term using the finance, construct and operate approach. Meanwhile, the Distance Learning Secretariat would continue to aggressively pursue the forging of alliances with international educational and training providers with the aim of providing educational and training opportunities via distance learning methods to the public.

The National Training Agency will continue to develop and administer the Trinidad and Tobago National Vocational Qualifications (TTNVQ) and occupational standards for key sectors of the economy will be formulated. Related to the TTNVQ, another strategic initiative by the NTA will be the continuing establishment of Industrial Training Organisations (ITO). ITOs will be part of the new National thrust to involve industry partners in the development of National Training Programmes. The role of the ITOs will be to develop occupational standards for their respective industries. They represent the vital link between employment and training and will ensure that the training is more responsive and relevant to the needs of a growing economy. The NTA also proposes to institute a new Mentorship Programme for enabling a smooth transition from academia to the world of work. There will also be collaborative efforts with NIHERST and other related agencies towards a national system of accreditation.

The Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) Limited will commence over the next three years, an infrastructural development programme focused on increasing the number of persons who participate in its various programmes and courses in addition to offering additional computer training. This programme will involve the construction of four full-time centres strategically placed in targeted catchment areas of the country. In addition, refurbishment and upgrading of existing centres will also be undertaken.

The Metal Industries Company, over the medium term, will be seeking to upgrade its capital equipment. The aim of this exercise will be to improve the technological skills base of the country by training engineers in the field of product design and manufacturing which will in turn provide for increased industrial activity in Trinidad and Tobago. The National Skills Development Programme (NSDP) will be upgraded in order to enhance its efficiency in respect of the timely delivery of adequately trained professionals in the technology field. The NSDP is now even more critical in light of the proposed Science, Technology and Innovation Park being advanced by the Tourism and Industrial Development Company (TIDCO).

The Government Printery will continue initiatives towards reliable printing and related

services to Government and the general public. A principal measure would be the engagement of consultancy services to undertake a Diagnostic Review of the Government Printery. This review will eventually recommend measures to be adopted to increase the efficiency of the operations of Government printing services. Procurement of new equipment and the use of updated printing technologies will be advanced during the next three years. There will also be the acceleration of training programmes for the staff of the Government Printery.

xviii. The Environment

Development efforts over the medium term will continue to be underpinned by a strategy to promote the sustainable management of the renewable and non-renewable resources of Trinidad and Tobago. This will ensure that adequate cognizance of environmental concerns, both national and international, is taken in all decisions involving the allocation of resources, thus advancing the goal of sustainable development. Government will seek, therefore to consolidate the significant gains made over the last few years in strengthening the framework for sound environmental management of the country's resource base. In this regard, particular emphasis will be placed on measures to engender greater voluntary compliance with environmental laws by both corporate and individual citizens, increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the enforcement function, and facilitate the increased use of market instruments.

The adoption of the National Environmental Policy (NEP) in 1998 represents a significant milestone in the development of the policy planning framework for promotion of sound environmental management of Trinidad and Tobago's resources. The NEP will be further developed to address existing gaps, particularly in relation to Government's obligation under various Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) and to provide more detailed policy directions in specific areas of environmental concern. In this regard, emphasis will be placed on the development of policy instruments related to sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity; national parks; wildlife management; sustainable forest management including watersheds; hazardous, oily, toxic and solid wastes; water resources management; bio-safety; and market incentives. The further development of the policy framework will be predicated on the need to provide greater environmental benefits in the most cost-effective way possible and will also adopt the principle of shared responsibility among all stakeholders, bearing in mind the polluter pay principle.

An important landmark in Government's efforts to address the deficiencies in the legislative and regulatory framework was the recent adoption of the Environmental Code by Parliament. The Code provides a framework for the consolidation and harmonization of national environmental laws. During the period 2001-2003, there will be an intensification

of efforts to modernise this legal framework. In this regard, subsidiary legislation will be enacted for air, noise and water pollution, environmentally sensitive species, environmentally sensitive areas, waste management (solid, oily, hazardous and toxic) issuance of Certificates of Environmental Clearance, spills, and bio-safety.

The recent establishment of the Ministry of the Environment has significantly strengthened the institutional framework for environmental management particularly in terms of policy development and co-ordination, monitoring the implementation of the MEAs to which Government is signatory, and facilitation of timely enforcement actions by State Agencies on environmental functions.

Another significant institutional development is the operationalization of the Environmental Commission, a Superior Court of Records, which will provide judicial support to the Environmental Management Act No.3 of 2000. This will allow for greater effectiveness in the enforcement of environmental laws. The investigative, monitoring and enforcement capabilities of the Environmental Management Authority as well as licensing and permitting capacities will also be strengthened. There will also be a similar strengthening of the enforcement capabilities of all State Agencies with respect to environmental laws, while the research and environmental monitoring capabilities of the Institute of Marine Affairs will also be enhanced. In this regard, a new headquarters including modern laboratory facilities is being constructed for the Institute. This will allow, inter alia, for the international accreditation of the Institute's laboratory facilities.

In keeping with the emphasis on voluntary compliance, Government will seek to enhance the institutional arrangements directed at empowering citizens with the skills, attitudes and values for responsible environmental stewardship. An important development in this regard, will be capacity building of community groups, non-governmental organisations and other elements of civil society involved in efforts to promote the sound environmental management of the resources of Trinidad and Tobago.

Government recognizes that the management of Trinidad and Tobago's water resources is an area of critical importance, and in this regard, recently approved the transfer of the Water Resources Agency from the WASA to the Ministry of the Environment. This represents an initial step in Government's Integrated Water Resources Management Strategy. During 2001-2003, Government will continue its efforts to strengthen the institutional structure of the Water Resources Agency, to further the implementation of its Water Resources Management Strategy.

In order to address the growing problem of solid waste management - a consequence largely of population growth, increased urbanization and changing production and consumption patterns over time - Government will seek to strengthen the present capacity

for solid waste management including the promotion of recycling activities. Special emphasis will be placed on the collection and safe disposal of bulky wastes including white goods and derelict vehicles. A major focus of efforts in this regard, will be the institutional strengthening of the Solid Waste Management Company Limited.

IV. CONCLUSION

The 2001-2003 Medium-Term Policy Framework is a comprehensive guideline for the continued development of the Trinidad and Tobago economy and for the growing empowerment of its people.

It is based on an economic development agenda that continues to support low inflationary growth, diversification of the productive base, reduction of the unemployment rate and broad-based social restructuring and rehabilitation.

Given the positive outlook for the next three years, the gains arising from this socio-economic agenda will redound to the benefit of all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

IV. MEDIUM-TERM POLICY MATRIX

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August, 2000