



Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Finance News

A PUBLICATION OF THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Happy New Year !

"There are greater things to be achieved in every New Year, and each and everyone must prepare themselves to be great, not by words of the mouth, but by a lot of sacrifices."

– Michael Bassey Johnson



The Honourable Colm Imbert Minister of Finance addressing the audience members

Attendees at the Corporate Governance Seminar

Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago delivering the feature address

Investments Division hosts Corporate Governance Seminar

The Investments Division, Ministry of Finance on January 18th 2017 hosted a Corporate Governance Seminar at the Hyatt Regency Trinidad with the theme "Achieving Effective Corporate Governance in the State Sector".

Dr. the Honourable Keith Rowley, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago delivered the feature address and the Honourable Colm Imbert Minister of Finance addressed the Chief Executive Officers, Board of Directors and Corporate Secretaries of the various State Enterprises.

Also, in keeping with the seminar's theme, specialist speakers presented on key areas such as compliance, procurement practices, integrity in public life and internal audit. For further information, a link to some of the presentations is provided here. <http://www.finance.gov.tt/about-us/divisions/the-investments-division/corporate-governance/>.

Major focus was also placed on the State Enterprises Performance Monitoring Manual (SEPMM). The SEPMM outlines the framework within which State Enterprises and the Minister of Finance (Corporation Sole) interact.

The SEPMM defines:

- (i) the roles of the major interacting agencies involved in monitoring the State Enterprise Sector;
- (ii) the Monitoring Mechanism;
- (iii) the Performance Monitoring Indicators applicable to the Sector;
- (iv) Compliance as well as the inputs for generating synergies within the Sector.

A copy of the SEPMM is available [here](#).

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Members of the Permanent Double Taxation Team for the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Republic of Korea after the signing ceremony.

Double Taxation Negotiations between the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Republic of Korea

The first round of negotiations of a double taxation agreement between the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Republic of Korea took place from December 12th to 14th, 2016 at the Finance Building, Eric Williams Financial Complex, Port-of-Spain.

Speaking at the Diplomatic dinner held on the first evening of the negotiations at the Hilton Trinidad, Senator the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon Minister of Trade and Industry, formally welcomed the South Korean delegation. In her address, the Minister stated that the policy of this Government is attracting foreign direct investment as a means toward diversification of the economy. The negotiations would help to create the ideal business environment to incentivize South Korea to do even more in Trinidad and Tobago. She added that the economic ties between both countries will continue to grow from strength to strength and highlighted the economic synergies

that both countries share. Finally she noted that Trinidad and Tobago has much to learn from South Korea.

The successful conclusion of a double taxation agreement between both countries is expected to deliver the following benefits:

- The elimination of double taxation and the minimisation of fiscal evasion and tax avoidance by enabling the exchange of tax information;
- Greater certainty and clarity for taxpayers with respect to taxation on investments between the two countries.

Additionally, the treaty would act as a signal of the commitment by both countries to create a favourable environment to encourage foreign direct investment. It is expected that a second round of discussions will take place in the Republic of Korea.

Fraud And Its Implications

The Comptroller of Accounts recently collaborated with the Fraud Squad of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS), to conduct a fraud sensitization session for staff of the Treasury Division.

Inspector Rishi Singh from the TTPS, was invited to present to members of staff on the topic, "Fraud and Its' Implications". These sessions were aimed at informing staff on the relevant aspects of the Laws of Trinidad and Tobago and Inspector Singh also provided examples of fraudulent activities and the

consequences of such. He also emphasised to staff that persons found accepting bribes or asking persons to pay for services during the execution of their duties can be charged.

During his presentation, Inspector Singh reminded staff that 'Public Officers are the ones to make a difference' and 'good conduct is its own reward'.

At the end of the session, members of staff expressed their appreciation for the information shared.



Inspector Rishi Singh reviews the Prevention of Corruption Act with staff



FIUTT Director, Ms. Susan Francois (left) and FIU Liberia Director, Mr. Alex Cuffy (right) at the signing of the MOU between Liberia and Trinidad and Tobago at the FIUTT office in Port of Spain.

FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO SIGNS MOU WITH THE FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT OF LIBERIA

Friday December 9th, 2016, saw the formalising of an information sharing agreement, through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, between two countries, in different continents, separated by thousands of miles of ocean ...Liberia in Central Africa and Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean. Ms Susan François, Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (the FIUTT) and Mr Alex Cuffy, Director of the Financial Intelligence Unit of Liberia, signed the MOU on behalf of their respective FIUs.

In her remarks Ms. François used the old adage **“Crime knows no borders”**. She said, *“This is particularly apt when we consider the serious crimes of Trafficking in Persons, Drugs, and Weapons, Corruption, Money Laundering and the movement of criminally obtained money through wire transfers, across borders, in a split second. Terrorism and the phenomenon of Foreign Terrorist Fighters who travel from their home country, including from Trinidad and Tobago, to Syria and Iraq, are also receiving both Global and National attention.”*

According to Ms. Francois, *“This MOU with Liberia is an Information-sharing arrangement and the aim is to foster the widest possible co-operation between our FIUs - Trinidad and Tobago and Liberia.*

The FIU of Liberia has investigative powers, and so when the FIUTT provide information and intelligence to Liberia it would also be providing assistance in their investigations.

Co-operation and information exchange on the basis of reciprocity promote an effective AML/CFT regime.

The signing and implementation this MOU will redound to the benefit of both jurisdictions and I am confident that we will continue to find ways to further advance and enhance our co-operative efforts to fight the scourge of Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism and related crimes.”

In his comments, Mr Alex Cuffy, Director of the FIU Liberia said *“in searching for information on other FIUs, the FIUTT appeared several times”*. According to Mr Cuffy, *“This inspired the journey of myself and my Corporate Affairs Manager, Mr Stanley Ford to come to Trinidad in the spirit of information exchange and collaboration. The FIUTT was very receptive to hosting the FIU Liberia for this purpose”*.

The FIU Liberia Director Mr Cuffy, further stated, *“Our stay in Trinidad has been very rewarding. The professionalism of the FIUTT is very impressive. We learnt a lot in Trinidad. This information will be used to enhance the operations of the FIU Liberia. The signing of the MOU with the FIUTT was the culmination of our four day work/study visit In Trinidad.”*



FIU OBTAINS COURT ORDER AGAINST A LISTED BUSINESS

The Financial Intelligence Unit (the FIU) has successfully obtained its third High Court Order against Listed Businesses. This Order however, is the first of its kind for enforcement of Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism deficiencies against one of its Supervised Entities under Section 18H (8) of the Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago Act (“FIU Act”) for breaches of the Financial Obligations Regulations, 2010 (“FORs”) as amended.

In late 2016, the Honourable Mr. Justice James C. Aboud made an order in favour of the FIU and directed Varona Limited inter alia to:-

1. Develop a training plan and provide training for directors and members of staff in accordance with Regulation 6 of the FORs within two (2) months;
2. Amend its compliance programme to include policies, procedures and controls for the matters prescribed to Regulation 7 (1) and (2) of the FORs;
3. Implement internal reporting rules in support of its compliance programme to mandate employees, who know or suspect that a transaction involves the use of proceeds of crime to report the matter to the Compliance Officer in writing and keep copies of the

said report in accordance with Regulation 8 (1) of the FORs;

4. Implement appropriate measures to determine whether an applicant for business or a beneficial owner is a politically exposed person in accordance with Regulation 20 (2) of the FORs; and
5. Implement a system to conduct due diligence on all existing accounts within the next three (3) months in accordance with Regulation 37 of the FORs.

Varona Limited was subject to an FIU Directive issued on 21st July 2015 identifying a number of breaches of the Financial Obligations Regulations specifying timelines to remedy. Upon the failure of Varona Limited to comply with the Directive, the FIU, in accordance with Section 18H (8) of the FIU Act, applied to the High Court for an Order to compel compliance.

The granting of this Order further enhances the FIU’s efforts to effectively supervise businesses to ensure compliance with the Financial Obligation Regulations 2010 which is aimed at the effective implementation of systems and controls for the identification and mitigation of risk for money laundering and financing of terrorism occurring through the Listed Business sectors.

THE FIU HOSTS OUTREACH SESSION IN ORTOIRE MAYARO

The Financial Intelligence Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (“the FIU”) recently hosted an outreach session for members of the community of Ortoire, Mayaro. Participants were invited through the use of public address systems, and interactions with the Village Council and the Community Development Division. The session was held in the Ortoire, Community Centre in Mayaro. It was the first time that the FIU held such an outreach event in Mayaro. The FIU is expanding its outreach programmes to include a wider cross section of the country. This expansion is inclusive of rural areas which can be vulnerable to money laundering activities, due their close proximity to coastal areas.

The theme of the outreach session was “Fighting against money laundering and the financing of terrorism”. The

sharing of this information with the villagers helped to create a greater awareness and understanding of:

- the role and function of the FIU in combatting money laundering and the financing of terrorism;
- what is the extent of the powers of the FIU;
- what methods can be used to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism and
- how can individuals report suspicions to the FIU?

The session was well received by participants.

The FIU plans to host other outreach sessions in rural areas of Trinidad in the near future. This will be a means to increase knowledge regarding, fighting against money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

Ministry of Finance co-hosts High Level Caribbean Forum November 2016

On Wednesday 2nd November 2016, Caribbean Prime Ministers, Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors gathered in Port of Spain for the fifth High Level Caribbean Forum. The region's leaders

joined representatives from the private sector and international organizations to discuss how countries in the region can respond to a complex international economic outlook that involves lower commodity prices, a softer than expected recovery in the United States, Cuba's opening on the region, and the threat of losing financial relations with global banks.

The high level conference, "Shifting Tides: Challenges and Opportunities," was coorganized by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. "Global economic developments, such as low oil prices, have major implications for the Caribbean," said IMF Deputy Managing Director Tao Zhang, who delivered the conference's opening speech.



Prime Ministers, Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors at High Level Caribbean Forum

"Commodity exporting countries like Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago have been hit hard."

At the same time, lower prices have benefited many of the region's oil importers. Jamaica has eliminated much of its double-digit current account deficit in just three years. And Guyana is experiencing its first external current account surplus in decades. Mr. Zhang added that the IMF is deeply committed to helping Caribbean countries navigate these challenges.

"The Caribbean will not be able to achieve faster economic growth and sustainable development unless the problem of debt overhang is addressed in a comprehensive way," Trinidad & Tobago Prime Minister Keith Rowley lamented in his welcome speech.

View the full article - prepared by the IMF Communications Department - [here](#).

The Financial Management Branch – Sub-Accounting Training



Participants and organizers of the training session

The Financial Management Branch of the Treasury Division conducted Training Sessions for Ministries and Departments on the accounting operations on all aspects of Sub-Accounting Unit functions in the month of November 2016. The areas covered were the Overview of the Government Accounting Cycle, The Payroll System, lhrIS, M&M Insurance, National Insurance System, The Maintenance of Registers and Ledgers, The Preparation and Maintenance of Voucher System and The Vote Control System.

The target audience for this Training were the Heads of the Sub-Accounting Units and their support staff. The objectives were to provide guidance on procedures to be followed on all Sub-Accounting functions by adherence to Exchequer and Audit Act Chapter 69:01, Financial Regulations, Financial Instructions

1965 and all relevant circulars and the recommendations of the Auditor General's Report.

One Hundred (100) participants were in attendance for the duration of the Training and upon completion participants were presented with certificates distributed by the Comptroller of Accounts.

The management and staff of the Treasury Division would like to express appreciation to all the participants who were in attendance and do hope that the knowledge gained and information received would contribute to improving the quality of output and promote transparency and accountability in the Public Service of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.



The Gambling (Betting and Gaming) Control Bill of Trinidad and Tobago

In early 2016, the Ministry of Finance hosted a series of consultations across Trinidad and Tobago with approximately 38 stakeholder groups with the aim of obtaining comments on the Ministry's proposal for a regulatory framework that features the following:

- A Gambling Control Commission
- A Gambling (Gaming & Betting) Control Act; and
- Regulations supporting the Act.

Specifically identified interest groups/organisations were invited to share their views and assist the Ministry in ensuring that the regulatory framework covers all facets of this lucrative industry.

With the establishment of this regulatory framework, citizens and the nation at large can realise:

- Economic expansion
- The establishment of a safety net for vulnerable persons
- The maximisation of gaming tax revenue
- Quality gaming for consumers
- Long-term viability of the industry
- Managing Anti-Money Laundering / Countering Financing of Terrorism

- Attraction of Foreign Investment

Some Objectives of the proposed Legislation are to:

- Prevent gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder; or being used to facilitate/support crime or illegal activity;
- Ensure compliance with international standards, re: anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing amongst others;
- Ensure that all gambling activities are brought into the taxation net, in line with the laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago;
- Ensure that gambling is conducted in a fair and responsible manner;
- Protect children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed;
- Ensure consumer choice and protection.

The Gambling Control Bill 2016 is currently before the Parliament. At the end of his presentation in the Lower House, The Honourable Minister of Finance has stated that the Bill will be placed before a Joint Select Committee of the Parliament.



MINISTRY OF FINANCE
BLOOD DRIVE
2016



be a
hero

This Ministry of Finance in collaboration with the Friends of the Blood Bank Association (FBBA) hosted its bi-annual Blood Donation Drive on Thursday 1st December, 2016. There were a total of 15 successful donors from both the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning and Development.

There is no substitute for blood and persons often lose blood from surgery or injury. Their contribution of one pint of blood have surely helped save lives and for that we salute them as heroes.

You are encouraged to visit the [Ministry of Health's website](#) to find out more about becoming a hero yourself.



Economic Management Division staff enjoying a glass of wine.



The Honourable Stuart Young - Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister and Minister in the Office of the Attorney General & Legal Affairs, strikes a pose with staff members from the Corporate Communications Unit.

Budget Reception



Staff members showing off their African wear in commemoration of Emancipation Day 2017.



Staff members of level 7 come together to celebrate Emancipation day and Eid-ul-Fitr 2016.

EMANCIPATION AND EID



Demonstration of how to use the Fire Extinguisher



Mrs. Hassanali performing First Aid

Fire Warden Training



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Ministry of Finance

IMPORTANT NOTICE



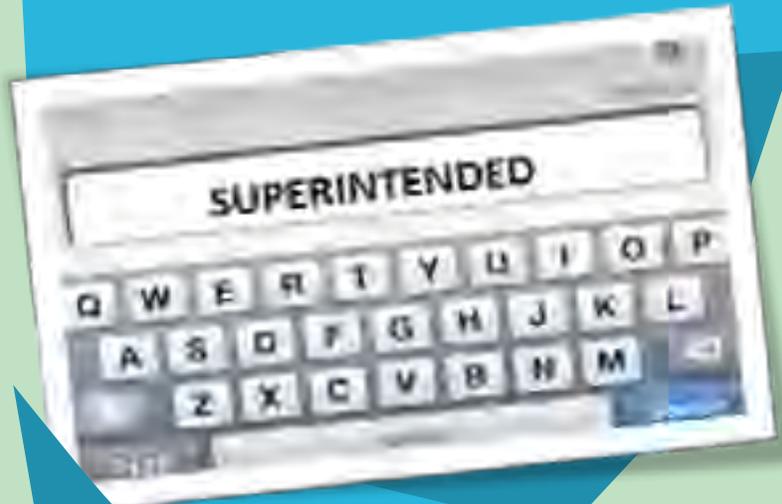
SOME OF OUR PORT OF SPAIN TELEPHONE NUMBERS HAVE CHANGED

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We look forward to hearing from you!!
www.finance.gov.tt

LET'S PLAY A BRAIN GAME!

Let's see how many words you can make. Test your skills! Test your friends! Time it! Player that crosses 30 words win. Minimum 3 letter words. GO!



Taxpayers

it's time to file your 2016 Tax Returns!

You are reminded that you can use e-Tax to file your Tax Return **online**.

Just visit our website at www.ird.gov.tt and file a paperless return!



Use e-Tax....it's safe, easy to use and convenient! Act Now!

Courtesy: Inland Revenue Division

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We would like to receive your comments and any questions that you have!

To have your event featured please contact the Communications Unit at

612-9700 ext: 2805-9 or comm.finance@gov.tt.

Persons interested in contributing articles please contact us.

We reserve the right to edit articles based on space constraints.

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