



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

**MINISTRY OF FINANCE**

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 20<sup>th</sup> 2017

**PRESS RELEASE**

**CORRECTING THE RECORD**  
**MEETINGS WITH CASINO OWNERS AND WORKERS**

The Ministry of Finance wishes to clarify certain misconceptions regarding the increase in taxes on gambling and gaming devices and meetings with stakeholders to discuss same.

In the first instance, the Minister of Finance made it clear in the 2018 Budget Statement that the increased taxes in the gambling industry **would take effect on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2018**, which is more than two months away.

Secondly, on October 5<sup>th</sup> 2017, three days after the presentation of the 2018 Budget, the Ministry of Finance received two letters requesting meetings to discuss the increased taxes, one from the Trinidad and Tobago Members Club Association, who purport to represent the owners of Casinos, and another from the Union of Members Clubs and Lottery Workers, who purport to represent Casino workers.

As a result, cognisant of the fact that the increased taxes on gambling and gaming devices would not take effect for several months, the first meeting was scheduled with the Trinidad and Tobago Members Club Association for Friday October 20<sup>th</sup> 2017, **since it is the owners and not the workers who will be required to pay the increased taxes.**

It is noteworthy that this meeting with Casino owners was scheduled **before** the group of protesters, purporting to be Casino workers, came to the private residence of the Minister of Finance on Wednesday, October 18<sup>th</sup> 2017, complaining that he was refusing to meet with the industry.

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It should also be noted that contrary to newspaper reports, the group of protesters who came to the Minister's home did not visit the Minister's constituency office prior to their protest to seek a meeting with him nor did they have any prior encounter with him outside or inside the Parliament building during the Budget Debate.

Finally, after the protest at the Minister's home on Wednesday October 18<sup>th</sup> 2017, officials of the Ministry contacted the representatives of the Union of Members Clubs and Lottery Workers and invited them to attend today's meeting at the Ministry with the Trinidad and Tobago Members Club Association. However, the workers' representatives declined to attend this meeting, saying that they had prior commitments.

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