



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago  
**MINISTRY OF FINANCE**

For immediate release

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **INACCURATE AND INCOMPLETE REPORTING BY THE TRINIDAD GUARDIAN ON THE STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE'S DELIBERATIONS ON THE THA'S 2025 BUDGETARY ALLOCATION**

The Minister of Finance has noted inaccurate and incomplete reporting by the Trinidad Guardian on the discussion on the Estimates of Expenditure for the Tobago House of Assembly.

The manner in which the Guardian has reported on the deliberations in yesterday's Standing Finance Committee meeting on the THA's 2025 budgetary allocation is clearly designed to create controversy and dissonance.

Regarding claims made by fishermen in Tobago for compensation for losses arising from the February 2024 oil spill in Tobago, the Minister of Finance made it clear in yesterday's Committee meeting that when he met with the THA team prior to the delivery of the 2025 Budget, in September 2024, to discuss the THA's 2025 budgetary allocation, he specifically requested the THA to submit the necessary documentation to him on claims for compensation made by Tobago fishermen, so that they could be forwarded via the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries to the International Oil Spill Compensation Fund.

However, to date, one month later, the THA has not submitted the required documentation to the Minister of Finance, and, therefore, the Minister of Finance is in no position to comment on or assist with these claims. That is the important point, not the fact that the Minister of Finance has no authority under the THA Act to make payments in Tobago, which is a known fact and does not need to be emphasised as if it were a point of contention.

Secondly, with respect to the operations of the Trinidad and Tobago Revenue Authority (TTRA) in Tobago and the collection of revenue in Tobago, the Minister of Finance did not say that no one is in charge of this activity in Tobago. That is absolute nonsense, clearly designed to create bacchanal.

What the Minister said was that under the present arrangements, which will continue until the TTRA is fully operational, revenue is collected in Tobago by the Inland Revenue Division and the Customs and Excise Division, both of which are Divisions of the Ministry of Finance, and this revenue is deposited into the THA's bank account in Tobago for its use.

The Minister went on to say that discussions are ongoing with the THA on the revenue collection mechanism that will be put in place when the TTRA becomes fully operational. This is quite different to saying that no one is in charge of revenue collection in Tobago, which the Guardian has falsely reported.

This type of inaccurate and sensationalist reporting is a recipe for confrontation and confusion and is to be deplored.

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The Honourable Colm Imbert, MP  
Minister of Finance