



Summary of Proceedings

Public Hearing

Joint Select Committee on Finance and Legal Affairs

Held on **Friday January 19th, 2018**

Subject matter: An Inquiry into certain aspects of the National Insurance System of Trinidad and Tobago.

Venue: A public hearing was held on Friday January 19th, 2018 from 10:36 a.m. to 12:01 p.m. at the J. Hamilton Maurice Meeting Room, Mezzanine Floor, Office of the Parliament, Tower D, The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre, 1A Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain. This was the third hearing pursuant to this inquiry.

Committee Members

The following Committee Members were present:

- Ms. Sophia Chote SC (Chairman)
- Mr. Clarence Rambharat (Vice-Chairman)
- Dr. Lester Henry, MP
- Mr. Taharqa Obika,
- Mr. Terrence Deyalsingh, MP
- Mrs. Cherrie-Ann Crichlow-Cockburn, MP

Witnesses who appeared

The following officials of the Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago appeared:

- Ms. Dhanoo Sookoo President
- Mr. Mohamed Hallim Vice-President
- Mr. Nazimul Ali Director
- Mr. Ryan Rampersad Director

The following officials of the Trinidad and Tobago National Union of Domestic Employees (NUDE) appeared:

- Ms. Ida Le Blanc General Secretary
- Ms. Marian Blackman Executive Member- Care Giver Organiser
- Ms. Carla Walcott Executive Member- Grievance Officer

Key Issues Discussed

The following are the main issues highlighted during discussions with the **Agricultural Society of Trinidad and Tobago (ASTT)**:

- i. a proposal was submitted in 2013 to the NIBTT by the ASTT however, the response by the NIBTT was unsatisfactory;
- ii. there are currently 75,000-80,000 persons who are classified as farmers in Trinidad and Tobago;
- iii. the challenges and advantages of including farmers for access to NIS benefits;
- iv. the inclusion of ‘crop-time’ employees into the NIS system;
- v. the impact of the financial constraints of the ASTT on the efficiency of the organisation in executing its duties;
- vi. the need for public awareness and sensitisation of Farmers on the importance of NIS and the benefits of contributing to NIS;

The following are the main issues highlighted during discussions with **Trinidad and Tobago National Union of Domestic Employees (NUDE)**:

- i. the support received from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to NUDE executing its responsibilities was in the form of training and the development of standards for domestic workers;
- ii. the action pursued by NUDE to assist domestic workers in applying for NIS and the consequential reduction in the burden placed on employers to register their employees. This resulted in an increase in the number of domestic workers who have access to NIS benefits;
- iii. the importance of NIS benefits to domestic workers;
- iv. 15, 000 domestic workers are covered under the NIS and a similar number is not covered by the NIS;
- v. The need for a mechanism to encourage/promote mediation between the Union and the employers;

- vi. It was suggested that Service Vouchers can be used in place of payment for the domestic workers and they may also be dispensed by the NIBTT to aid in the provision of proof of employment;
- vii. More domestic workers must register with the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development;
- viii. The need for better communication between foreign domestic workers and the union to treat with language barriers; and
- ix. The 9th Actuarial Review contains possible solutions/options for the inclusion of self-employed persons within the NIS.

This public hearing can be viewed on demand via our YouTube Channel.

<https://youtu.be/iz1n1VB7KI0>

Contact the Committee's Secretary

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Committees Unit

Friday January 24th, 2018.