



Public Hearing Summary
Wednesday February 12, 2020

Inquiry Subject:

Follow - up on the implementation of the recommendations in the Fifteenth Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Examination of the Audited Financial Statements of the Water and Sewerage Authority of Trinidad and Tobago for the years 2008 to 2013.

Committee Members:

The following Committee Members were present for the meeting:

- Dr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie - Chairman
- Mr. Taharqa Obika - Vice-Chairman
- Ms. Charisse Seepersad - Member
- Mr. Adrian Leonce - Member
- Dr. Lester Henry - Member
- Mr. Randall Mitchell - Member
- Mrs. Paula Gopee-Scoon - Member

Witnesses who appeared:

Ministry of Public Utilities

- Ms. Beverly Khan - Deputy Permanent Secretary
- Ms. Sara Jade Govia - Water Sector Specialist
- Ms. Janette St. Hilaire - Financial Analyst
- Ms. Arlene Collis - Senior Economist

Water and Sewerage Authority

- Mr. Romney Thomas - Chairman
- Mr. Alan Poon King - Chief Executive Officer
- Mr. Dion Abdool - General Counsel and Corporate Secretary
- Ms. Rachelle Wilkie - Director of Finance
- Mr. Sherland Sheppard - Director of Operations
- Ms. Denise Lee Sing- Pereira - Director Programmes and Change Management
- Mr. Aldwin Browne - Director of Corporate Services
- Mr. Ronnie Spences - Head, Workforce Planning and

Water and Sewerage Authority

		Organizational Development
• Ms. Sherry Dumas-Harewood	-	Director, Customer Care
• Ms. Arlene Johnson- Lawrence	-	Head ,Procurement
• Mr. Robert Subryan	-	Head, Internal Audit and Compliance
• Mr. Rajindra Gosine	-	Head, Water Resources Agency

Key Topics Discussed:

1. The mandate of the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA);
2. The major achievements of the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA);
3. The challenges experienced by the WASA in terms of service delivery, costing and funding;
4. The collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB);
5. The oversight role of the Ministry of Public Utilities;
6. The sources of the water provided by the WASA;
7. The challenges of the demand and supply for water;
8. The issue of leakages in the system and the percentage of water loss;
9. The percentage of leaks that were repaired;
10. The challenges of detecting leakages and repair initiatives conducted by the WASA;
11. The new technologies used by the WASA to detect leakages;
12. The status of the Authority's outstanding financial statements since FY 2014;
13. The infrastructural challenges affecting water loss by the WASA;
14. The annual losses incurred by the WASA;
15. The breakdown of the WASA's annual expenditure and revenue on a cash basis;
16. The water conservation public education initiatives carried out by the WASA;
17. The status of the WASA's staffing expenditure;
18. The scheduling strategies implemented by the WASA to meet the challenges created by extreme dry weather;
19. The provisions of the Water and Sewerage Act Chap 54:40 regarding the WASA's power to temporarily prohibit or restrict use of hosepipes;
20. The enforcement measures implemented by WASA to ensure compliance with its restrictions;
21. The measures in place to strengthen the conservation initiatives through legislative amendments;
22. The expenditure control measures implemented by the Authority and the resulting savings;
23. The increase in the WASA's Age Receivable Accounts;
24. The status of the WASA's debt collection initiatives including the sale of property;
25. The logistical challenges faced by WASA in carrying out disconnections;
26. The cost and estimated timeframe of the Authority's plans to implement nationwide metering;
27. The importance of encouraging greater customer usage of the e-billing facility;
28. The need to improve the Authority's customer service initiatives;
29. The challenges leading to delays in road repair works;

Water and Sewerage Authority

30. The coordination of road works initiatives by the WASA and the Ministry of Works and Transport;
31. The status of the Authority's project management function;
32. The cost of desalinated water and the revenue derived therefrom;
33. The lost revenue associated with non-revenue water and the initiatives being conducted to address this issue;
34. The approaches to non-revenue water elsewhere in the Caribbean region;
35. The per capita water consumption in Trinidad and Tobago;
36. The risk assessment mechanisms used by the WASA;
37. The challenges of investigating suppliers of illegal truck borne water;
38. The Authority's register of Licensed Sanitary Constructors;
39. The criteria used to determine which customers pay their bills in US dollars;
40. The Authority's plans for increasing the water supply;
41. The optimal staffing levels needed at the WASA; and
42. The status of the WASA's Accounts Payable.

View the Hearing:

The hearing can be viewed on our YouTube page via the following link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnjRxszMhzo>

**PAC Secretariat
February 12, 2020**