



**Summary of Proceedings
Public Hearing**

*Joint Select Committee on Local Authorities, Service Commissions and Statutory Authorities
(including the THA)*

held on

Wednesday April 26th, 2017

Subject matter: Inquiry into the efficiency and effectiveness of the Statutory Authorities Service Commission.

Objectives of the inquiry

The objectives of the inquiry were:

- i. To evaluate the performance of the SASC in executing its mandate.
- ii. To determine whether the resources, systems and procedures of the SASC is sufficient to allow it to operate efficiently.
- iii. To determine the challenges affecting the operations of the SASC and the possible solutions for alleviating these challenges.

Venue: The hearing was held on Wednesday April 26th, 2017 from 12:08 p.m. to 12:53 p.m. in the J. Hamilton Maurice Room, Mezzanine Floor, Office of the Parliament, Tower D, The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre, 1A Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain.

Committee members

The following committee members were present:

- i. Mr. H. R. Ian Roach (Chairman)
- ii. Ms. Ramona Ramdial, MP (Vice-Chairman)
- iii. Mr. Nigel De Freitas
- iv. Ms. Khadijah Ameen

Witnesses who appeared

The following officials of the Statutory Authorities Service Commission appeared before the Committee:

- Mrs. Utra Ali Executive Officer
- Mr. Jagdeo Maharaj Chairman
- Ms. Gracelyn Bholá-Jordan Administrative Officer IV
- Mr. Djallon Frederick, State Counsel II
- Mr. Robert Giuseppi Member
- Ms. Gayatri Ramoutar Administrative Assistant

The following officials of the Office of the Prime Minister were also in attendance:

- Ms. Sandra Jones Permanent Secretary
- Ms. Nicha Cardinez-Rostant Director, Legal Services

Officials of the Ministry of Public Administration were also in attendance:

- Ms. Joan Mendez Permanent Secretary
- Mr. Kurt Meyer Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.)

Key Issues Discussed

The following are the key subject areas/issues discussed during the hearing:

- i. The relevance of the SASC;
- ii. The efforts of the SASC to improve the timeframe for the managers of Statutory Authorities to submit Staff reports;
- iii. The SASC's collaborations with the other Service Commissions;
- iv. The Office of the Prime Minister's relationship with the SASC;
- v. The Ministry of Public Administration and Communication's relationship with the SASC;
- vi. There are twelve (12) entities which fall under the portfolio of the SASC;
- vii. The Cocoa and Coffee Board was removed from under the purview of the SASC purview and transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries;
- viii. The inadequate financial allocations to the SASC. The SASC was allocated \$5.1Mn in this fiscal year;
- ix. The archaic Information Technology equipment and systems at the SASC which are over ten years old;
- x. The status of the vacant positions for Assistant Commissioner and two Senior Superintendent (Municipal Police);

- xi. Whether there are plans to harmonise training rendered to Municipal Police of the four (4) Corporations under the remit of the SASC with the other ten (10) local government bodies falling under the Public Service Commissions;
- xii. The shortage of persons to fill vacancies;
- xiii. There are no officers serving on contract at the SASC;
- xiv. The complement of contract workers within the various Statutory Authorities;
- xv. The delays in the reporting of issues affecting Children's Homes to the SASC;
- xvi. The procedure for treating with a situation involving a worker at a Children's Home under the SASC's remit;
- xvii. The proposal to use the resources of the Children's Authority including investigators to reduce the time taken to prepare investigative reports;
- xviii. The protracted nature of investigations concerning employees at the various Statutory Authorities;
- xix. The challenges with identifying investigators who are willing to investigate their peers;
- xx. The SASC's proposal to train investigators to prepare reports;
- xxi. The failure of the NLCB to respond to the SASC in a timely manner with regards to the alleged misconduct of the two (2) NLCB employees;
- xxii. The status of investigations into the alleged misconduct of the two (2) NLCB employees;
- xxiii. The feasibility Children's Homes remaining under the purview of the SASC in light of suggestions that the Authority was no longer fit to oversee these institutions;
- xxiv. The inability of the current executive of the SASC to account for the funding which was previously allocated for a website. The officials admitted to be recent appointees to the Commission and could not account for this matter;
- xxv. The SASC has had five Executive Officers in the past five (5) years;
- xxvi. The dual role of the Executive Officer in also performing the duties of an Accounting Officer;
- xxvii. The need to plan for the future and to determine the ideal structure for the SASC.

The hearing can be viewed on our YouTube channel via the following link:

<https://youtu.be/LIPkSV2TZQg?t=7195>

Contact the Committee's Secretary

You may contact the Committee's Secretary at jsclasasc@tpparliament.org or 624-7275 Ext. 2283

Committees Unit

Friday 28th April 2017