



Republic of Trinidad and Tobago



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## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

17 June 2015

### Visiting U.S. Judge Helen Whitener meets with the Equal Opportunity Commission

The Chairman and Commissioners of the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) and The Chairman and Lay Assessors of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal (EOT), received a courtesy call from visiting United States Judge G. Helen Whitener on Wednesday 17 June, 2015 at the EOC's office in Chaguanas. Her visit stems from the U.S. Embassy's celebration of the Caribbean-American Heritage Month and of the promotion of human rights and tolerance during the month of June.

The gathering discussed working together in the promotion of equality of opportunity and human rights in Trinidad and Tobago and the region. The Chairman of the EOC, Mrs. Lynette Seebaran-Suite shared that the Commission is working towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago. Mrs. Seebaran-Suite also pointed out that one of the first acts of the newly constituted Board of Commissioners was to recommend to the Attorney General that sexual orientation be included as a prohibited ground of discrimination in the Equal Opportunity Act.

Judge Rajmanlal Joseph, Chairman of the EOT gave the visitor an insight into the workings of our specialist court, the Equal Opportunity Tribunal.

Judge Whitener generally shared of her experience and expertise in advancing the human rights of all vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including the LGBT community.

Judge Whitener who was born in Trinidad and Tobago now sits on the Pierce County Superior Court, the highest trial court in the State of Washington.

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### About the EOC

The primary task of the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) is to oversee implementation of the Equal Opportunity Act No. 69 of 2000, which prohibits certain kinds of discrimination and seeks to promote equal opportunity among all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

### What are the functions of the Commission?

The key functions of the Commission are to receive, investigate and as far as possible conciliate allegations of:

COMMISSIONERS: Mrs. Lynette Seebaran-Suite (Chairman)  
Dr. Beverly Ann Marie Beckles (Vice Chairman) • Dr. Indira Rampersad  
Mr. Eric Colin Cowie • Mr. James Chin Chuck

- Discrimination on the grounds of status
- Discrimination by victimisation or
- Offensive behaviour lodged with it by members of the public; to work towards the elimination of discrimination; and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different status generally.
- Develop, conduct and foster research and education programmes and other programmes for the purpose of eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different races, ethnicities, religions, geographical origins, marital status, gender or physical disabilities.
- Prepare and publish appropriate guidelines for the avoidance of discrimination.

For more information, please visit [www.equalopportunity.gov.tt](http://www.equalopportunity.gov.tt).

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