

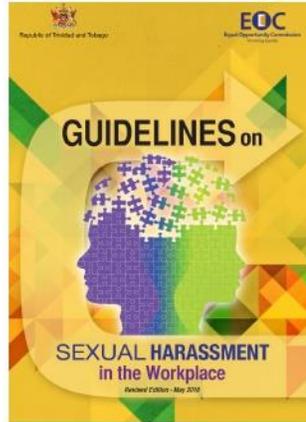
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HIGHLIGHTS 2017-2020



Built **links** with organisations



Published Guidelines on **Sexual Harassment** in the Workplace and Guidelines for **Employers on Disability** in Trinidad and Tobago

Website use increased to **12,000** users, with a total page view count reaching **43,857**



Received **403** complaints of alleged discrimination

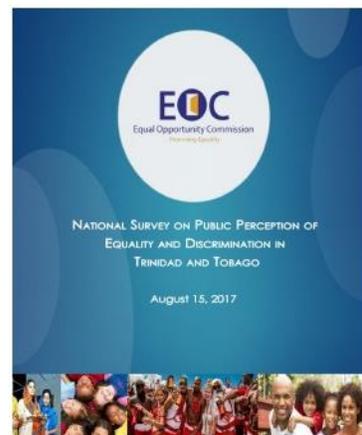
Held **6** successful **youth forums** with **189** participants to increase engagement with young people



Delivered **75** **Public Education** sessions with a total of **2,015** participants



Proposed Amendments to the **Equal Opportunity Act**



Conducted a **National Survey** on Public Perception of **Equality and Discrimination** in Trinidad and Tobago

64 matters were referred to Conciliation



Chairman's Report

In August 2017, the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Anthony Thomas Aquinas Carmona SCORTT, reconstituted the Equal Opportunity Commission (hereinafter referred to as 'the Commission') for another three (03) year term. It was with humility that I accepted my reappointment as Chairman of the Commission and embraced the opportunity to serve my country. It has been an honour to serve as the Chair of the Commission for the period under review and to lead a distinguished Commission comprised of fine and learned individuals. I am quite pleased to implicitly state that the Commission is dedicated to the effective enforcement of the nation's equal opportunity law, the Equal Opportunity Act (hereinafter referred to as 'the Act').

During the Commission's term, my fellow commissioners and I saw several changes at the organisation reflecting its constant growth and evolution in meeting its statutory obligations. This report highlights the Commission's achievements in advancing its mission to prevent and remedy unlawful discrimination practices within its remit and to advance equal opportunity for all. The changes that the organisation has undergone in recent times have placed us in a position that allows us to focus our energies on addressing and advocating for the important human rights issues that face us.

Among the Commission's highlights for the period under review are the following:-

- **Amendments to the Act** - The Commission has been advocating for and actively pursuing amendments to the Equal Opportunity Act in the areas of sex, sexual harassment, sexual orientation, and disability inter alia and in other relevant laws and policy reform in the area of domestic violence. In March 2016, the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs formed an ad hoc committee, comprising of officers of his secretariat, the Law Reform Commission, the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, and the Equal Opportunity Commission, to review proposed amendments to the Equal Opportunity Act and to prepare a report containing recommendations for his consideration. The report has been submitted to the Attorney General for his review.

Two (02) matters in recent times emphasised the need for amendments to the Act particularly in support of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) community:

1. Claim No. CV2017- 00720 Jason Jones -v- Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago

On becoming aware of the claim filed by Mr. Jason Jones, the Commission sought and received permission to support the matter as an interested party in Claim No. CV2017- 00720 Jason Jones -v- Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago. In 2014, the Equal Opportunity

Commission (the Commission) recommended to the Honourable Attorney General that the definition of sex in the Equal Opportunity Act, Chapter 22:03 the Act be amended to include sexual orientation as a status ground. The Commission has advocated for this amendment to enable the LGBTQI community to seek redress for complaints of discrimination under the four broad categories as stated in the Equal Opportunity Act.

The Commission hopes that the decriminalisation of sections 13 and 16 of the Sexual Offences Act would clear the way for positive remedies and avenues for combating discrimination, such as access to the complaints procedure at the Commission. We look forward to collaborating with the Attorney General on the legislative amendments needed to address this issue in pursuing the next steps to afford the LGBTQI community equal opportunities in Trinidad and Tobago.

2. Rishi Persad Maharaj (complainant) and Cascadia Hotel (respondent) on the basis of sexual harassment and victimisation in employment

The complainant worked in customer service with Banquet and Conference Centre Limited (BCCL), located on the property of the Cascadia Hotel. He claimed that his director of operations, a female, made inappropriate remarks and gestures toward him. In 2015, the complainant made a complaint to the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) of discrimination in employment based on sexual harassment and victimisation. The complainant's sexual orientation (He never disputed that he is a homosexual) was a major factor in the case being dismissed by the Equal Opportunity Tribunal (EOT) since the Act does not define 'sex' and the Tribunal claimed that they could not interpret the term to include homosexuals. Further, the Equal Opportunity Act does not cover sexual harassment nor does it include sexual orientation.

While the EOC holds that sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination, the decision of the EOT held that the Commission does not have the jurisdiction to receive such complaints. While said decision is before the Court of Appeal, there is an urgent need for direct legislation to resolve any ambiguities in identifying the remedies available to complainants of sexual harassment especially as they affect members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) communities.

One of the major high points has been the conduct of research to determine the public perception of discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago and the role of the EOC. In what became known as the

- **National Survey on Public Perception of Equality and Discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago.** The first national survey commissioned by the EOC unearthed new data and information that were pertinent to the work of the Commission. The findings of the survey provide the Commission with a strategic and evidence-based work agenda. The survey sought to determine the public perception of equality and discrimination in Trinidad and

Tobago and to uncover the types of discrimination that exist. Overall, the results revealed that the mandate of the EOC remains relevant, that the public overwhelmingly perceives discrimination to exist, that they have experienced discrimination, and they want something done about it. An academic critique co-hosted by the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) revealed that unquestionably there is need for further research on the complex issue of discrimination, and the survey provides a good foundational start.

The Commission continues seriously to view its statutory mandate to work towards the elimination of discrimination in all its manifestations. In that regard, we have been vocal on two (02) subjects: *sexual harassment in the workplace and domestic violence*. Our sexual harassment campaign has included the following activities:-

- In 2018, the Commission published its Guidelines on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace. This publication is a seminal publication of immense importance based on a number of general principles of sexual harassment law and case law, giving employers an overview of their legal obligations to eliminate sexual harassment in the workplace.
- We continue to offer expert advice to organisations on their sexual harassment workplace policy. This advice can make a huge difference and help determine the success of some life-changing cases.
- As a stakeholder dealing with issues of discrimination based on sex, we commented extensively on and recommended amendments to the proposed **Sexual Harassment Bill**.
- We also participated in the **Joint Select Committee's Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in the Workplace**
- I further participated as the guest speaker at the **12th Conference of Women Parliamentarians (CWP) of the Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region (CAA)** held in Port of Spain, on the topic of gender harassment.
- We produced a video titled, **Sexual Harassment and the EOC as a Vehicle for Recourse** to commemorate International Women's Day 2018.
- Public Education Sessions on Sexual Harassment offered to both public and private sector organisations.
- Interview series on MORE FM 104.7 – **Sense and Sensibility: Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and the EOC's Complaints Process**.

The Commission remained vocal on the issue of gender-based violence and repeatedly argued the case for amendments to the Domestic Violence Act and intervention programmes to address increasing reports of attacks on women and children. Our campaign strategy included:-

- Collaboration with the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) in hosting a public forum, and presented on **The DV Response in Trinidad and Tobago – Necessary Changes to the DV Act - Recommendations for Ending Violence against Women**. At this forum, the Commission outlined its proposed ten (10) legislative and policy amendments to the DV Act to ensure that zero tolerance is adopted and to provide further protection for victims and higher efficiency in enforcement.
- The completion of our **Position Paper on Domestic Violence** outlined the international framework and national statistics relating to domestic violence and provided a thorough analysis of the DV Act. The paper, forwarded to the Attorney General, played an important role in the discourse and actioning of amendments to the DV Act.
- Presented at the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago (LATT) and the Coalition against Domestic Violence (CADV) Seminar for police officers on **Strengthening the Legal Response to Domestic Violence**.
- Participated in a workshop for CSOs to reduce gender-based violence and LGBTQI discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago in 2018 - Cultural Rights to Promote Development and Health (DECIDES TT)
- Presented on **Operationalising and Amending the DV Act and Underlying Policy** as it relates to the role of the police at a stakeholders meeting with the police academy to constitute a course module and committee for DV.
- The Commission continued working with the TTPS on the **DV course module** after attending meetings with the training technical subcommittee to address the development of the DV course specifications for the induction programme and the Advanced Training Programme. We also participated in meetings with the Research and Evaluation Sub Committee to review the DV end of course evaluation reports conducted over the period 2015/2016/2018.
- Participated in a one-day symposium entitled, **Domestic Violence Policy and the Way Forward (2019) - Let Voices Be Heard** UWI Faculty of Social Sciences.
- **My Sister's Keeper EOC Rally** - The Equal Opportunity Commission successfully hosted 'My Sister's Keeper', a rally in Chaguanas, on March 6, 2020 in commemoration of the UN designated International Women's Day 2020 which had as its theme 'Each for Equal' in support of a stand against domestic violence. The rally brought together service providers, advocacy groups, governmental agencies, law enforcement agencies, private sector actors, and individuals, all under a common brand and a unifying symbol to make our communities and country free of violence against women and children, ensuring their safety, respect, and well-being.
- Commented comprehensively on the **DV Amendment Bill 2020** in February 2020.
- The Commission participated in two (02) meetings alongside stakeholders and the drafting team of the Office of the Attorney General in March 2020.

- As a key stakeholder in the DV Amendment campaign, the Commission joined civil society to push forward with recommendations for amendments to the Domestic Violence Act. In this regard, the Commission participated in and presented at the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago's (LATT) webinar on the topic, **Domestic Violence in the Time of COVID-19/Proposed Amendments to the Domestic Violence Act** held in April 2020.

The Commission also successfully enforced provisions of the Equal Opportunity Act in the undermentioned prominent actions before the Equal Opportunity Tribunal:-

- Between Vidya S. Maharaj (complainant) and the Immigration Division, Ministry of National Security (respondent) on the basis of familial origin, religion and ethnicity, and by reason of victimisation;
- Dindial Ragoos (complainant) and the Ministry of Food Production (respondent) on the basis of race discrimination in employment;
- Geeta Sahatoo (complainant) and the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development (respondent) on the basis of race discrimination in employment;
- Michael Mark Archibald (complainant) and the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force (respondent) on the basis of discrimination in religion;
- Desmond Noel (complainant) and the Auditor General of Trinidad and Tobago (respondent) on the basis of race in employment;
- Derek Salandy (complainant) and the Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago (respondent) on the basis of employment.

The Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago protects the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs) and provides the foundation for the Equal Opportunity Act, Chapter 22:03 (the Act). The Act protects persons from unfair treatment in many areas of public life, and disability is specifically identified as one of the seven (07) status grounds on which a person can rely to lodge a complaint of discrimination.

- The Commission's **Guidelines for Employers on Disability in Trinidad and Tobago** is based on the principles supporting national and international instruments and initiatives designed to promote the equal and safe employment of persons with disabilities (PWDs). It is part of a broader equality agenda for PWDs to have their rights recognised in the labour market, where they often remain in low status jobs or earn lower than average remuneration.
- The Commission formed an internal committee on disability in 2019 to advocate for inter alia legislation in the area of disability.

We continued to strengthen our focus on the proactive prevention of discrimination and gender inequality. We sustained our engagement with the community to raise awareness and

understanding of their rights and responsibilities under the Act. Our collaborative strategy included reinforcing the links made with the:-

- Legal fraternity, namely the **Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago (LATT)**;
- Academic institutions, for instance, the **Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS)** and the **Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES)**;
- Government agencies including the **Office of the Prime Minister (Gender Affairs Unit)**, the **Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development**, and the **Tobago House of Assembly (THA)** and
- Civil society - the **Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CADV)**, the **CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago (CCOTT)**, the **Network of NGOs** and **CAISO** on gender equality and to promote a culture which respects and values people regardless of their identity or their personal circumstances.

The Commission will continue to pursue these aims in a spirit of cooperation with government and non-government organisations, businesses, community groups, and individuals. Such partnerships enhance and strengthen important ties within our community and set the foundations for a fair and inclusive society.

The contents of this report feature these and other achievements.

On behalf of the Vice-Chairman Dr. Beverly Beckles, Commissioners Mr. James Chin Chuck, Mr. Eric Colin Cowie and Dr. Emanuel Hosein, I wish to thank the management and staff, partners and service providers of the EOC for their tremendous work and support over the term of our appointment. It is my sincerest hope that our continued best efforts will continue to expand the work of the Commission based on the ideals of equality of opportunity, fairness and human rights.

I am confident that as a nation and as a people we will resolve to fight the menace of discrimination in all its manifestations with resolution and tenacity as we continue to create and promote a society free from discrimination, to encourage equal opportunities and the fair treatment of all.

Lynette Seebaran-Suite



Chairman
Equal Opportunity Commission

Vision, Mission and Core Values

VISION STATEMENT

A society, which is free from discrimination and prejudice, where human rights and diversity are respected, and there is equal opportunity for all.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Equal Opportunity Commission works towards the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity through advocacy, public education, research, and conciliation of complaints.

CORE VALUES

- ❖ **Passion**
- ❖ **Fairness, Justice And Equality**
- ❖ **Customer-Centricity**
- ❖ **Empathy**
- ❖ **Respect For Diversity**
- ❖ **Timeliness**
- ❖ **Loyalty**
- ❖ **Integrity**
- ❖ **Autonomy**
- ❖ **Team Cohesiveness**
- ❖ **Best Practice**
- ❖ **People Development**
- ❖ **Recognition And Reward**

Our Commissioners



CHAIRMAN

Mrs. Lynette Seebaran-Suite has over thirty-five (35) years' experience as a litigator. Over the years, she has been a member of several statutory bodies, such as the Law Reform Commission and the National Commission on the Status of Women. Mrs. Seebaran-Suite continues to advocate for the rights of women and girls and is an avid supporter of the rule of law, due process, and social justice. At the 50th Independence Awards in 2012, Mrs. Seebaran-Suite was awarded the Medal for the Development of Women (Gold) for her contributions in the area of law.



VICE CHAIRMAN

Dr. Beverly Ann-Marie Beckles holds a doctoral degree in organisation and management from the University of Capella, Minneapolis, United States of America (USA) and a master's degree in rehabilitation administration from McLaren School of Business, University of San Francisco, USA. Dr. Beckles is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD). She has over thirty (30) years' experience in the field of disability. As a defender of inclusion of persons with disabilities in all lifestyles, her work has been key to the development of a national policy for persons with disabilities in seven (07) Caribbean countries.



COMMISSIONER

Dr. Emanuel Hosein is a medical practitioner with over forty (40) years of experience in the state sector. He is also a former Member of Parliament and government minister. An experienced advocate on behalf of persons with disabilities, Dr. Hosein was the first president of the Trinidad and Tobago Chapter of Disabled Peoples International (DPI), where he worked. He also served as a member of the panel of World Experts on Disability Advisory Board to the United Nations.



COMMISSIONER

Mr. Eric Colin Cowie is a retired career banker, having moved through the ranks at RBC Royal Bank. During this time, he amassed extensive experience in the banking industry, with specialised knowledge in regulatory compliance, money laundering and anti-terrorist financing. The Tobago House of Assembly appointed him as vice president of the Pigeon Point Heritage Park, as well as the Tobago Hotel Association. Mr. Cowie is an alumnus of Presentation College, San Fernando.



COMMISSIONER

Mr. James Chin Chuck holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Management Specialization from the University of the West Indies, St Augustine, with a focus in marketing, finance, and management information systems. He also holds a Master of Business Administration degree from the Australian Institute of Business. His experience spans the private sector of banking, insurance, credit unions, and one of the largest conglomerates in food and financial services. He has been able to contribute to the various companies in the areas of strategic direction, marketing strategies, the competitive intelligence of emerging technologies and driving customer satisfaction programmes.

Our Mandate

The Equal Opportunity Act

The Equal Opportunity Act (hereinafter referred as ‘the Act’), **Chapter 22:03 (Act No. 69 of 2000 as amended by Act No.5 of 2001)**. The Act seeks, *among other things, to prohibit certain kinds of discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different status*. It provides for the protection against discrimination in four (04) categories - employment, education, the provision of goods and services, and the provision of accommodation and on specified status grounds based on sex, race, ethnicity, origin (including geographic origin), religion, marital status, and disability. The Act also applies to discrimination by victimisation (section 06) and offensive behaviour (section 07).

The Equal Opportunity Commission

The Commission is a public body created in accordance with the provisions of the Equal Opportunity Act. The terms and provisions of the Act guide the Commission in its mandate. Section 27(1) mandates the Commission inter alia:-

- a) To work towards the elimination of discrimination;
- b) To promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different status generally;
- c) To keep under review the working of the Act and any relevant law and, when required or otherwise thinks it necessary, to draw up and submit proposals for amending them;
- d) To receive, investigate and, as far as possible, conciliate allegations of discrimination;
- e) To develop, conduct, and foster research and educational programmes for the purpose of eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different status;
- f) To prepare and publish appropriate guidelines for the avoidance of discrimination and
- g) To do any other thing conducive or incidental to the carrying out of its functions.

The Equal Opportunity Commission was established in 2000. Commissioners were appointed by the president in consultation with the prime minister and the leader of the opposition in April 2008 and became operational in 2010. The Commission is comprised of five (05) commissioners, including a chairman and a vice chairman. The current office holders for term 2017-2020 are -

- **CHAIRMAN** - Mrs. Lynette Seebaran-Suite (August 26, 2017 - Present)
- **VICE CHAIRMAN** - Dr. Beverly Ann-Marie Beckles (August 21, 2017 - Present)

➤ **COMMISSIONERS**

- Mr. Eric Colin Cowie (August 21, 2017 - Present)
- Mr. James Chin Chuck (August 21, 2017 - Present)
- Dr. Emanuel Hosein (November 21, 2017 – Present)

The current administrative head is the chief executive officer (CEO), who is responsible for planning, organizing, and coordinating activities and resources for the operational functions of the Commission. The following units carry out the work of the Commission:-

- Legal
- Conciliation
- Administration
- Human Resource
- Research
- Communications
- Information Technology

This report highlights the main achievements of the Commission for the period under review, 2017-2020. In recognition of our mandate, we have compiled our achievements under the following headings:-

- **Public Awareness and Seminars**
- **Publications and Research**
- **Complaints and Statistics**
- **Internal Improvements**

Public Awareness and Seminars

I. Corporate Communications

Section 27 (1) requires the Commission to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different status and further charges the Commission to develop aims to address discrimination and improve awareness through public education and advocacy. The Commission conducts public awareness and education workshops for both public and private sectors, including trade unions and secondary and tertiary level educational institutions. These workshops are contributing to raising the profile of both the Act and the Commission as they are evaluated to assess their effectiveness.

2017 Public Awareness, Stakeholder Engagement, Advocacy Programmes & Seminars

- Participation in the European Union and Faculty of Law UWI Human Rights Project Human Rights Open Day at the UWI, St. Augustine Campus
- Participation in the UWI Faculty of Law, Quality Assurance Review
- Production of a video titled ‘Sexual Harassment and the EOC as a Vehicle for Recourse’ to commemorate International Women’s Day
- Presentation by the Chairman to the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) International Women’s Day seminar themed ‘Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50:50 by 2030.’
- Courtesy call to the Tobago House of Assembly
- Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The EOC partnered with the Network of NGOs, the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) and Working Women for Social Progress in conjunction with the Women’s Human Rights Education Institute (WHRI), CWSE/OISE/University of Toronto to host ‘A Public Lecture to the Convention on the Elimination all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)’
- Courtesy call by Mr. Lester Ferguson, Executive Secretary (Head of Secretariat) of the Secretariat of The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Services & Community Development, Bahamas
- Monthly outreach in Tobago
- Facilitating dialogue through engagement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other critical stakeholders through a community of practice
- Bocas Lit Fest Human Rights Panel Discussion
- 7th Annual Mediation Symposium – Reframing Reality through Mediation
- Institute of Development and Gender Studies (IDGS) Legislative Changes to the DV Act

- IDGS Boardroom Bullies
- Public Education Session (PED): Point Lisas Nitrogen Limited
- PED: Bermudez Biscuits Company Limited
- PED: Nestle T&T Limited
- PED: Kapok Hotel
- PED: Massy Group and Distribution
- PED: T&T Chamber of Commerce
- PED: Association of Female Executives of Trinidad and Tobago (AFETT)
- PED: Mediation Symposium 2017
- PED: Conventus Consulting - Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
- PED: ROYTEC
- PED: UWI Faculty of Law (Gender & Law)

2018 Public Awareness, Stakeholder Engagement, Advocacy Programmes & Seminars

- AMCHAM National Youth Productivity Forum - targets secondary school students to become engaged in the human rights dialogue
- PAHO - Commission on Equity and Health Inequalities in the Americas, 23-25 January 2018
- PED: T&T Chamber of Industry and Commerce
- PED: NIPDEC
- PED: UWI Gender & the Law Class
- #PressforProgress the Launch of the EOC's Guidelines for Dealing with Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
- MCD, Victoria West Community Development Division
- PED: National Union of Government and Federated Workers (NUGFW)
- Invitation to Disabilities Workshop U.S. Embassy
- Chairman on TV 6 Morning Edition Programme on Friday 13 April
- PED: Network of Rural Women for a workshop
- PED: T&T Parliament sensitisation session
- Battle of the Sexes - 2 hour interview with Jessie-May Ventour | EOC Rep
- CAFRAT&T
- Notice of 2nd Voluntary Steering Committee on the National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGD)
- PED: TTR Welfare Department
- HRMATT's Request for EOC Panellist- May 18
- Symposium on Sexual Harassment in the World of Work
- Invitation to participate at ECA Session- Redefining the Business Case of Diversity and Inclusion, a Focus on Equal Opportunity
- Consultation on the Draft National Workplace Policy on Sexual Harassment

- PED: Phoenix Park Gas Processors Limited (PPGPL)
- OPM Sexual and Reproductive Health and Right (SRHR)
- ECA Protecting Your Organisation from Workplace Discrimination
- PED: TTDF Regiment
- PED: Consortium of Disability Organisations (CODO).
- PED: SM Jaleel request for sensitisation session
- EOA and its impact on First Citizens as an employer
- PED: UNICOMER Open Talk session on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.
- PED: Public Services Association of Trinidad and Tobago
- Reimagining Development on the Theme of Sexual Harassment in T&T
- Her Story Our Story...Paying it Forward - Inaugural Fundraiser
- Radio Interview on more FM 104.7 - Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and the EOC's Complaints Process
- CHAMBER T&T Draft Sexual Harassment Policy
- ILO Training - Decent Work Agenda and Equality
- Media Programme re: Partnership Between More FM, the EOC & Network of NGOs
- Invitation to a dialogue on the death penalty in T&T
- TTDF Developing Cohesion & Self Esteem for Men and Women of the TTDF
- Radio Programme: More 104.7 F.M. – ‘Sense & Sensibility’
- UWI Navigating the Work Environment
- UWI Student Guild’s Week of Non-discrimination. Invitation to participate UWI Guild Panel discussion
- PED: MILAT - Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force
- OPM Education Fair on International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women 2018
- Interacting with Special Interest Groups in Society- Sensitisation training for TTPS Police Officers
- SALISES Disability Forum-Empowering PWDs – Actions for Sustainable Development in Trinidad and Tobago
- The Victim & Witness Support Unit (VWSU): Ten Years of Making A Difference; To God Be The Glory TTPS
- Invitation to Youth Debate and Discussions with Nation Builders - Human Rights Day 2018
- The Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago (LATT) and the Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CADV) – ‘Strengthening the Legal Response to Domestic Violence’
- Cultural Rights to promote Development and Health (DECIDES TT) –Workshop for CSOs to contribute to reduce gender-based violence and LGBTQI discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago
- CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago (CCoTT) on ‘16-365 Collaborate for Impact...From Recommendations to Action’ Workshop.

- Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) – ‘16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Nov 25th – Dec 10th, 2018.’
- OPM Invitation to Seminar on Human Rights and Migration in commemoration of Human Rights Day 2018.

2019- Public Awareness, Stakeholder Engagement, Advocacy Programmes & Seminars

- PED: RAMPS Logistics
- PED: Scotiabank
- PED: AMCHAM T&T National Youth Productivity Forum 2019
- PED: Point Lisas Nitrogen Ltd.
- The EOC and SALISES National Survey Panel Discussion - An Academic Critique
- PED: UWI Gender & the Law class
- Women's Rights Rally and March
- Joint Select Committee - Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
- World Down Syndrome Day Event US Embassy
- UTC Public Education Labour Law Training Initiative
- Human Rights Youth Forum UWI Faculty of Law
- PED: Arima Borough Corporation
- One-day Symposium on Domestic Violence Policy and the Way Forward - Let Voices Be Heard UWI FSS
- Living Good: A Conversation About the Right to Dignified Lives and Just Communities EOC event
- Bocas Lit Fest
- ILO Breakfast Meeting - ‘The Future of Work in T&T: Why Does Decent Work Matter?’
- PED: First Citizens
- AGLA Open Day ‘Empower Me’
- ADD ALL 3 TO THE EOA: Champions Orientation - Sexual Culture of Justice
- In-service Orientation Training for Hugh Wooding Law students
- National Stakeholder Consultation on Recruiting of Workers Act, Chapter 88:10
- PED: TT Regiment Lecture Request
- ‘We can all Make a Difference: Community Approaches to Prevention of Domestic Violence’
- Trade and Investment Conference
- PED: TTUTA Sensitisation Session
- PED: TTMF
- Session on Gender-Based Harassment at the 12th Conference of Women Parliamentarians (CWP) of the Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region (CAA)
- PED: COSTAATT
- PED: First Citizens Bank

- Living Water Community ‘Know Your Rights’
- PED: Chaguanas North Secondary Staff members
- PED: Presentation College, Chaguanas
- Meeting on the Development of a Research Agenda on Disability Studies, SALISES
- PED: Public Service Association
- PED: Rotary Club of Central POS
- UWI Navigating the Work Environment
- OPM International Men's Day 2019
- PED: OPM IDEVAW Sensitisation session
- PED: OPM Public Education and Information Fair 2019
- Collaboration for Impact Part II with CCoTT ‘16-365...From Recommendations to Action.’
- LATT & EOC Seminar ‘Introduction the Equal Opportunity Act Remedy to the Legal Profession’

2020 Public Awareness, Stakeholder Engagement, Advocacy Programmes & Seminars

- PED: NEDCO I and II
- ‘My Sister’s Keeper’ EOC Rally - The Equal Opportunity Commission successfully hosted ‘My Sister’s Keeper’, a rally in Chaguanas, on March 6, in commemoration of the UN designated International Women’s Day 2020 which had as its theme ‘Each for Equal’ in support of a stand against domestic violence. The rally brought together service providers, advocacy groups, governmental agencies, law enforcement agencies, private sector actors, and individuals, all under a common brand and a unifying symbol, to make our communities and country free of violence against women and children, ensuring their safety, respect and well-being.

Table 1: Number of Public Education Sessions and Individuals who participated

	2017	2018	2019	2020*	
No. of PED Sessions	15	26	32	2	
No. of Individuals	329	743	902	41	
Total	329	743	902	41	2,015

Source: Research Unit, EOC

* Public Education Sessions done for the first quarter only due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Publications and Research

II. Research Unit

Section 27 (1) (e) of the Act mandates the Commission to develop, conduct, and foster research for the purpose of eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity between persons of different status.

The Commission identified in its first strategic plan 2015-2018 the need to conduct research to determine the public perception of discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago and the role of the Commission in this discourse. This came to fruition through the commissioning of the **National Survey on Public Perception of Equality and Discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago** and was undertaken by TER K Solutions in July 2017. The primary objectives of the survey were to:-

1. Determine the public perception of equality and discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago;
2. Uncover the types of discrimination that exist;
3. Determine the extent to which persons feel discriminated against.
4. Determine the extent of the public's awareness of the Commission and its effectiveness.

The survey was designed to provide fresh data on a range of issues and as far as was practicable provided for comparison with previously executed research. Overall the results revealed that the mandate of the EOC remains relevant, that the public overwhelmingly perceives discrimination to exist, that they have experienced it, and that they want something done about it.

Our **Guidelines on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (2018)** has influenced the re-evaluation of our public outreach as requests for sessions, particularly on sexual harassment in the workplace, increased. It is a guide to both private and public sectors, by providing information on understanding, preventing, and resolving workplace sexual harassment. Employers and employees are encouraged to apply these guidelines in their workplace and to be mindful of the practical guidance that it contains, to not only eliminate and prevent sexual harassment but to minimise the risk of liability for unlawful sexual harassment at work. This publication enabled us to amplify the voices of victims by instructing them on their rights and gave recommendations to bring about real change.

The Commission also published major research in the area of disability in the form of **Guidelines for Employers on Disability in Trinidad and Tobago (2018)**. This publication seeks to guide employers of public and private enterprises to adopt a positive response to manage disability related issues in their workplaces. The guidelines are designed to assist with the practical implementation of aspects of the Equal Opportunity Act relating to persons with disabilities (PWDs) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in the workplace.

Gender based violence has remained an important focal point for the Commission which continues to advocate for improvements in the domestic violence (DV) response. In 2017, the Commission collaborated with the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (UWI) to host a public forum. The Commission proposed ten (10) legislative and policy amendments to the DV Act to ensure that zero tolerance is adopted and to provide further protection for victims and higher efficiency in enforcement. In addition, in 2018, the Commission completed a **Position Paper on Domestic Violence**, which outlined the international framework, national statistics relating to domestic violence and provided a thorough analysis of the DV Act. The paper, forwarded to the Attorney General, played an important role in the discourse and actioning of amendments to the DV Act.

The Commission was requested to comment on the proposed amendments to the **Domestic Violence Amendment Bill 2020** in its capacity as a promoter of gender equality and an advocate to end gender-based violence. The Commission has commented extensively on the bill and has forwarded its comments to the Office of the Attorney General in April 2020.

As an organisation mandated to treat with issues of discrimination based on sex, we were requested to comment and suggest amendments to the proposed **Sexual Harassment Bill** in November 2019. In that regard, substantive proposed amendments as related to the Sexual Harassment Bill were made, which have been forwarded to the Attorney General for his consideration. It should be noted, that pursuant to its mandate under section 27 of the Equal Opportunity Act, the Commission has also proposed draft amendments to the Act to include sexual harassment as a standalone status ground of discrimination. The Commission's proposals for amendments to the Act are presently before the Office of the Attorney General for consideration.

The survey summary and the aforementioned publications can be accessed on the Commission's website at www.equalopportunity.gov.tt

In March 2016, the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs formed an ad hoc Committee, comprising of officers of his secretariat, the Law Reform Commission, the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and the Equal Opportunity Commission, to review **proposed amendments to the Equal Opportunity Act** and prepare a report containing recommendations for his consideration. This report was submitted to the Attorney General.

In addition, several reports informed the research agenda, inter alia:-

- Report on Statistical Data of Complaints for the period 2017-2019
- Reviewed and prepared responses for the preparation of the National Report on the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action
- Prepared a report on Trinidad and Tobago on Unratified Conventions and Recommendations of the ILO for 2021 General Survey concerning Decent Work for Care Economy Workers in a Changing Economy

- Completed a status report on the Central Statistical Office (CSO), the Population Council of Trinidad and Tobago, the Survey on Living Conditions in Trinidad and Tobago, Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB), and the GRB Toolkit
- Generic Poverty in Trinidad and Tobago for the Joint Select Committee on Human Rights and Equality – Inquiry into Persons Living in Poverty and Extreme Poverty in Trinidad and Tobago with Specific Focus on Vulnerable Groups
- Report on the Venezuelan Refugee Crisis
- Prepared research notes and four (04) papers for dissemination for the Director, Legal Services at the 11th Gathering of the ParLAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality: Achieving the Balance in the World of Work held in Mexico City. The session examined the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace as an obstacle to human rights and gender equality.
- Research on the Joint Select Committee of Parliament on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity – Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
- Commented on the National Policy on Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Development and Family Services
- Report on Laws and Treaty Obligations of Trinidad and Tobago governing refugees, deportees, and illegal migrants including the National Legal Framework, the International Legal Framework, statistics included from the UNHCR, the National Policy to Address Refugee and Asylum Matters
- Report on gender proportion as relates to the Judiciary, permanent secretaries, local government, the Tobago House of Assembly (THA), statutory authorities and state boards
- Review of the National Gender Policy of Trinidad and Tobago - 2009, 2012, 2018: Commented and made recommendations on the 2018 version
- Report on contract employment in the Trinidad and Tobago Public Service
- Report on Trinidad and Tobago's budgetary allocation and expenditure to vulnerable groups for fiscal years 2014 to 2017
- Report on gender policy in five (05) countries – United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, and Jamaica
- Comparison of equal opportunity commissions or similar organisations that exist in various jurisdictions with specific attention given to the organisation's ambit, mandate/role, areas of work, funding mechanism, composition of the organisation, level of autonomy and whether the organisation's role includes that of a human rights institution.
- The following jurisdictions were compared – United States, Canada and two provinces, Australia and two of its territories, and the United Kingdom.
- Research on Women's Participation Rates in Trinidad and Tobago.

Complaints and Statistics

III. Legal Unit

Section 27(1) (d) of the Act mandates the Commission ‘to receive, investigate and as far as possible, conciliate allegations of discrimination’ that are lodged with it by members of the public. The following represents an overview of the unit’s achievements for the period 2017-2019.

Overview of the Complaints Process

Part VII of the Act provides for the process by which complaints are handled. For convenience, the process can be broken down as follows:-

➤ **Lodging a complaint:** The process begins when a member of the public lodges a complaint, which must be in writing [*section 30(1)*]. This should be done within six months of the date of the offending action [*section 30(2)*], but the Commission may accept a complaint outside of this period if there are exceptional circumstances [*section 30(3)*].

➤ **Investigating complaint:** The Commission is mandated to investigate all complaints lodged [*section 32*]. The Commission is empowered to send a notice in writing to any party to furnish specified information by a specified date [*section 33*]. Where upon investigation, no evidence of discrimination has been found, the Commission shall write to the complainant and inform of this and the reasons for this finding [*section 34*].

➤ **Conciliating complaint:** However, where the Commission has found that the subject matter may be resolved by conciliation, it is obligated to make all reasonable steps to have same conciliated [*section 35*]. The Commission may by notice request the attendance of the complainant, respondent, and any other person having relevant information or who is likely to assist the resolution of the matter. If the parties are able to reach an amicable resolution at conciliation, an agreement is usually drawn up and signed, and it can be registered with the Equal Opportunity Tribunal where it becomes an order of the court [*section 38*].

➤ **Prosecuting defaulters:** Recall that the Commission may send a notice under section 33 to produce information and/or a notice under section 35 to attend conciliation. Section 36 provides for a process to criminally sanction parties who fail and/or refuse to comply with either of these notices. A summary complaint can be lodged before the Magistrates’ Court, and the party can be summoned to court as a defendant. If the party cannot advance reasonable justification for this failure or refusal, the party can be convicted and sentenced: in the case of an individual, to a fine of a thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) per day or in the case of a body corporate, to a fine of five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) per day for each and every day the party has failed and/or refused to comply.

- **Preparing and Publishing Reports:** In accordance with the provisions of section 39 if (a) attempts to resolve the matter by conciliation have not been successful, or if (b) after completing the investigation, the Commission felt that it was unlikely that the matter could have been resolved by conciliation, and as such, the matter was not so referred, but the Commission is satisfied that there was likely a breach of the Act, the Commission will:-
- (i) Prepare a report relating to the investigation with its recommendations;
 - (ii) Send a copy of the report to the parties to the complaint;
 - (iii) Publish the report, and
 - (iv) Make said report available for inspection by the public.
- If the matter remains unresolved, the Commission may, with the consent and on behalf of the complainant, refer the matter to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal for hearing and adjudication.

This section presents and discusses data on the following:-

1. Number of Complaints Received
2. Demographic Data on the Complainants: Sex, Age, Race/Ethnicity
3. Geographic Data on the Complainants
4. Category and Status of Discrimination Alleged
5. Types of Respondents
6. Geographic Data on Respondents
7. Complaints Referred to Conciliation
8. Summary Prosecutions for Non-Compliance

1. Number of Complaints Received

Table 2: Number of Complaints received by Month January 2017 to December 2019

Month	2019	2018	2017
January	07	14	03
February	09	07	12
March	04	09	15
April	09	08	14
May	05	08	16
June	10	13	17
July	12	17	11
August	11	13	05
September	11	07	07
October	09	11	14
November	12	11	13
December	09	06	02
Total	108	124	129

Table 1 indicates that the Commission received one hundred and eight (108) complaints in 2019 which is a decline from the number received in 2018 [one hundred and twenty-four (124)] and 2017 [one hundred and twenty-nine (129)]. When disaggregated by quarters and halves, the following were observed over the period 2017 to 2019:

- In 2017, more complaints were received in the first half of the year than the second half, but this was not the case in both 2018 and 2019. In 2017, there was a significant majority of about sixty percent (60%) being received in the first half; in 2018, the halves were more or less evenly split; the slight majority of fifty-two percent (52%) was in the second half, but in 2019, there was a significant majority of fifty-nine percent (59%) in the second half.
- In 2017 and 2019, there was an increase in the number of complaints received from the first quarter into the second quarter, but in 2018, there was a slight decline.
- In 2017, the highest number of complaints were received in the second quarter, but in both 2018 and 2019, the highest number was received in the third quarter.

- In all three (03) years, there is a consistency in the percentage of complaints received around the middle of the year that is the second and third quarter collectively: the percentage of complaints received during this period was fifty-four percent (54%) in 2017 and fifty-three percent (53%) in both 2018 and 2019.
- In all three (03) years, virtually the same number of complaints were received in the fourth quarter: twenty-nine (29) in 2017, twenty-eight (28) in 2018 and thirty (30) in 2019.

Table 3: Number of Complaints received by Quarter – 2017 to 2019

Quarter	2019		2018		2017	
	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total
1st (Jan to March)	20	19	30	24	30	23
2nd (Apr to June)	24	22	29	23	47	36.5
3rd (Jul to Sept)	34	31	37	30	23	18
4th (Oct to Dec)	30	28	28	23	29	22.5
Total	108	100	124	99	129	100

2. Demographic Data on the Complainants: Sex, Age, Race/Ethnicity

For the three (03)-year period January 2017 to December 2019, a total of three hundred and sixty-one (361) complaints were lodged, of which:-

- One hundred and seventy-five (175) were lodged by males, or about forty-eight percent (48%), and
- One hundred and eighty-six (186) were lodged by females, or about fifty-two percent (52%);
- In both 2017 and 2018, more complaints were lodged by males than by females unlike in 2019 where significantly twenty-eight (28%) or twenty-six percent (26%) more complaints were lodged by females;
- In 2017, only one more complaint was lodged by a male than female; however, the margin was widened in 2018 when thirteen percent (13%) more complaints were lodged by males.

Table 4: Sex of the Complainants - 2017 to 2019

Type	2019	2018	2017	Total for all 3 years
Male	40 (37%)	70 (56.5%)	65 (50.3%)	196 (48%)
Female	68 (63%)	54 (43.5%)	64 (49.6%)	155 (52%)
Group	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0
Total by year	108 (100%)	124 (100%)	129 (100%)	361

- Of the one hundred and eight (108) complaints received in 2019, twenty (20) or about eighteen percent (18%) of complainants, did not give information regarding their age, this being the lowest annual percentage over the three (03) years, and a significant decline from the year, 2017, when twenty-four percent (24%) of the complainants did not provide age information.

From those who gave information, the following can be noted:-

- In all three (03) years, the percentage of complaints lodged by persons under eighteen (18) years old has been relatively small, amounting to less than three percent (03%); in actuality, complaints from this group are normally complaints by students and are lodged by their parents.
- The other small group is the persons aged over sixty-five (65) years, who accounted for one percent (01%) or less in each year. As noted in the 2017 Annual Report:-
 “It may be that these persons are no longer in the labour market as employees, as they would be beyond mandatory retirement age, and as such, have passed the point of complaining about things like promotions and transfers. It must be noted that age is not a status ground that is protected under the Equal Opportunity Act. Consequently, if because of age, a person over 65 years is denied employment, or some benefit or facility associated with employment, he/she has no recourse for relief with the Commission.”
- One of the Commission’s core functions is to propose amendments to the Equal Opportunity Act, and one proposal that has been made is to add age as a status ground for protection. If and when this amendment is passed, it may be that there would be an increase in complaints from persons over 65 years.

- The number and percentage of complaints received from persons aged eighteen to twenty-five (18 to 25) years was highest in 2017 and steadily declined in the two (02) years thereafter; in 2017, eleven (11) persons, amounting to eight and a half percent (08.5%), were within this age group; in 2018, it was six (06) persons, amounting to four point eight percent (4.8%), and in 2019, it was three (03) persons, amounting to three percent (03%).
- Over the three (03) years, the super-cluster of persons aged twenty-six to forty-five (26 to 45) years accounted for the most number of complaints and rose consistently over the period: this group accounted for forty and a half percent (40.5%) of all complaints in 2017, increased to forty-three percent (43%) in 2018, from which it rose significantly to fifty-three percent (53%) in 2019.
- In 2017 and 2019, there was a drop in the number and percentage of complaints received from persons aged forty-six to fifty-five (46 to 55) as compared to the group in the preceding age bracket, thirty-six to forty-five (36 to 45), but in 2018, both groups accounted for the same number and percentage of complaints.

Table 5: Age of the Complainants – 2017 to 2019

Age group	2019		2018		2017	
	No. of Complaints	% of the Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of the Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of the Annual Total
Under 18	0	0	03	02.5	02	01.5
18-25	03	03	06	05	11	08.5
26-35	25	23	27	22	24	18.5
36-45	32	30	26	21	28	22
46-55	18	17	26	21	14	11
56-65	10	09	13	10	16	12.5
Over 65	01	01	03	2.5	03	02
Not Stated	19	18	20	16	31	24
Total	108		124		129	

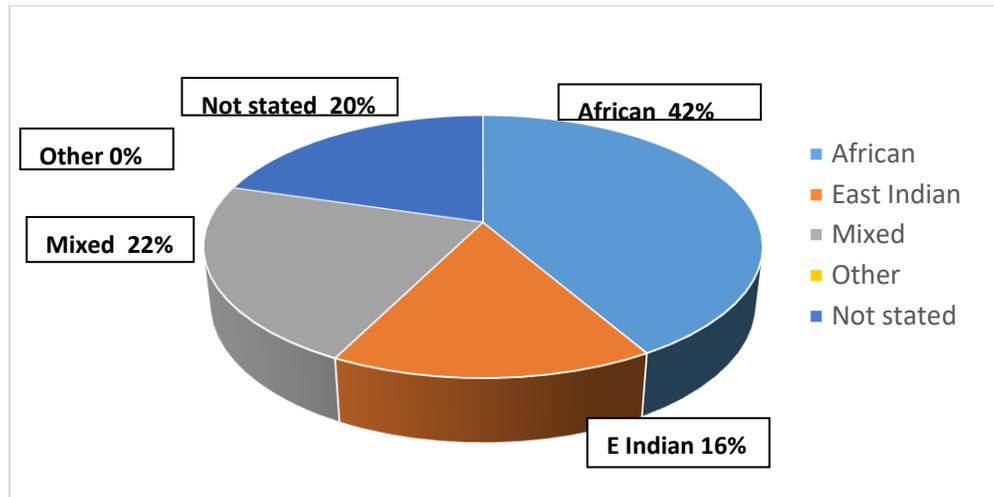
With respect to the racial background of persons who lodged complaints in 2019:

- Forty-five (45) persons self-identified as being of African origin, which was about forty-two percent (42%) of complainants received for that year. In both 2018 and 2017, this group also accounted for thirty-three percent (33%) of the complainants, so that it can be said that there has been a noteworthy increase in complaints in this group between 2018 and 2019.
- Seventeen (17) persons self-identified as being of East Indian origin, which was about sixteen percent (16%) of complainants received for 2019. This is lower than both 2017 and 2018 and is a significant decline from the 2018 peak of thirty-two percent (32%) which is twice the 2019 percentage.
- Twenty-four (24) persons self-identified as being of mixed origin, which is about twenty-two percent (22%) of complaints received. This is notably higher than the two previous years: eighteen (18%) percent in 2017 and fourteen percent (14%) in 2018.
- There were zero (0) persons who self-identified as being of White/ French Créole, Chinese, Portuguese or Syrian/ Lebanese origin, there being a decrease from 2018 where there were two (02) persons amounting to one and a half percent (1.5%). In 2017, no person so identified. Over the three-year (03) period, complaints from this group have been relatively low.
- Twenty-two (22) persons did not provide any data about their origin; this amounted to twenty percent (20%). This percentage is more or less consistent with the previous two (02) years: nineteen percent (19%) in 2018 and twenty-two and half percent (22.5%) in 2017.

Table 6: Percentage of Complaints Received by Racial Groups – 2017 to 2019

Racial Group	Percentage of complaints lodged in 2019	Percentage of complaints lodged in 2018	Percentage of complaints lodged in 2017
African	42%	33%	33%
East Indian	16%	32%	26.5%
Mixed	22%	14%	18%
White/ French Créole, Chinese, Portuguese or Syrian/ Lebanese	0%	01.5%	00
No Data Provided	20%	19%	22.5%

Figure 1: Racial Background of Complainants - 2019



According to the 2011 National Population and Housing Census published by the Central Statistical Office, the following groups account for the following percentage composition of the population of Trinidad and Tobago:-

- Persons of East Indian origin – 35.4%
- Persons of African origin – 34.2%
- Persons of Mixed origin – 23.3%
- Persons of the following origins: White/French, Créole, Portuguese, Chinese and Syrian/Lebanese – 01%

Using the data from the national census as a baseline, it can be said that in 2019 there was a lesser tendency for persons of East Indian origin and persons of other origins to lodge complaints, and a greater tendency for persons of African origin and mixed origin to lodge complaints. That is-

- Persons of African origin surpassed their composition in accessing the Commission’s complaints services, as this group accounted for thirty-four percent (34%) of the national population and forty-two percent (42%) of complainants.
- Persons of East Indian origin under-utilised the Commission’s complaints services, as this group accounted for thirty-five percent (35%) of the national population but only sixteen percent (16%) of complainants.
- Persons of mixed origin about equivalently accessed the Commission’s complaints services in 2019, as this group accounted for twenty-three percent (23%) of the national population and twenty-two percent (22%) of complainants.
- As noted previously, persons of White/French Créole, Portuguese, Chinese, and Syrian/Lebanese ancestry did not utilise the Commission’s complaints services.

3. Geographical Origin of the Complainants

This data is based on the home address that each Complainant would have provided on their complaint form. The collation of this data helps to indicate the extent to which persons throughout Trinidad and Tobago are aware of the Commission and have utilised its services. The information as provided was grouped according to the regional corporations and municipal corporations.

- **The North-West Region** [this comprises of Port-of-Spain and Diego Martin]: persons who lived in this region lodged about thirteen percent (13%) of all complaints received in 2019. This is an increase from nine and half percent (09.5%) in 2018 and is relatively consistent with the 2017 amount of twelve percent (12%). The percentage of complaints coming from this region has been fairly consistent – between nine and thirteen percent (09% to 13%) – and is somewhat consistent with the national baseline, as derived from the 2011 National Population and Housing Census published by the Central Statistical Office. According to the 2011 National Census, this area accounts for ten point six percent (10.6%) of the total population of Trinidad and Tobago. consequently, it can be said that in 2017 and 2019 there was a somewhat higher tendency for persons from this region to lodge complaints, though not by a significant amount. In 2018, there was a slightly lower tendency for persons from this region to lodge complaints, though not by a significant amount.
- **The North-East Region** [this comprises San Juan/Laventille, Tunapuna/Piarco, Arima and Sangre Grande]: The percentage of complaints coming from this cluster has been relatively higher than other regions in all three (03) years: forty-six percent (46%) in 2019, thirty-three percent (33%) in 2018, and thirty-three and a half percent (33.5%) in 2017. However, in 2018 and 2017, it was lower than the national baseline; per the 2011 National Census, this area accounts for 36.3% of the total population of Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore, it can be said that in 2019 there has been a significant increase in persons from this region to lodge complaints, with a differential of approximately thirteen percent (13%).
- **The Central Region** [this comprises Chaguanas and Couva/ Talparo/ Tabaquite]: In 2019, twenty-one percent (21%) of all complaints came from this region; this is somewhat consistent with the 2018 amount of twenty percent (20%) but is a decrease from the 2017 amount of twenty-five and a half percent (25.5%). Over the period, there has been a slight fluctuation of complaints coming from this region, of about four to five (4 to 5) percent points each year. Despite this, these regions are still above the national baseline; according to 2011 National Census Data, this area accounts for nineteen point seven percent (19.7%) of the total population of Trinidad and Tobago. Consequently, it can be said that in 2019 and 2018, there was an almost equivalent tendency for persons from this region to lodge complaints, but in 2017, there was a greater tendency.

- **The Southern Region** [this comprises of San Fernando, Point Fortin, Penal/ Debe, Princes Town, Siparia, and Mayaro/ Rio Claro]: In 2019, about seventeen percent (17%) of all complaints came from this area. This is a significant decrease of about twelve percent (12%) points from 2018 [about twenty-nine percent (29%)] and a slight decrease of about two percent (02%) points from 2017 [about nineteen and a half percent (19.5%)]. Per the 2011 National Census, this area accounts for twenty-eight point eight percent (28.8%) of the total population of Trinidad and Tobago. Using this as a baseline, it can be said that in both 2017 and 2019, this region was significantly below the national baseline, but in 2018, it was consistent with it.

- **Tobago:** In 2019, three percent (03%) of all complaints came from Tobago; this is significantly lower than both 2018 and 2017 where the amount was in the region of seven percent (07%) in both years. According to the 2011 National Census, the island of Tobago accounts for four point six percent (4.6%) of the total population. Therefore, it can be said that in 2017 and 2018 there was a greater tendency for persons from Tobago to lodge complaints, and in 2019, there was a lesser tendency, but in all three (03) years, the margin is not significant (less than three (03) percent points).

**Table 7: Geographical Origin of Complainants 2017 to 2019
(By Regional and Municipal Corporations)**

AREA	2019		2018		2017	
	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No of Complaints	% of Annual Total
<i>Port-of-Spain</i>	08	07	09	07	08	06
<i>Diego Martin</i>	07	06	03	02.5	08	06
<i>San Juan/ Laventille</i>	11	10	10	08	10	07.5
<i>Tunapuna/Piarco</i>	20	19	21	17	20	15.5
<i>Arima</i>	12	11	06	05	09	07
<i>Toco/Sangre Grande</i>	06	6	04	03	04	03

Chaguanas	12	11	15	12	22	17
Couva/Talparo/Tabaquite	11	10	10	08	11	08.5
San Fernando	06	06	20	16	11	08.5
Penal / Debe	0	00	06	05	05	04
Siparia	03	03	03	02.5	0	0
Point Fortin	01	01	02	01.5	01	<01
Princes Town	04	04	04	03	05	04
Mayaro/Rio Claro	03	03	01	<01	03	02.5
Tobago	03	03	09	07	10	07.5
Not Stated	01	01	01	<01	02	01.5
Total	<u>108</u>		<u>124</u>		<u>129</u>	

- In all three (03) years, persons living in the Tunapuna/ Piarco region accounted for the single highest number of complaints lodged, with persons from the Chaguanas Borough placing second in 2017 and 2019, but in 2019, it tied for second place with Arima. Over the three (03) years, the numbers received from Chaguanas decreased, and the numbers received from Tunapuna/Piarco were about equivalent. The amount of complaints received from persons in San Fernando, which were the third highest in 2017 [eight and a half percent (8.5%)] and the second highest in 2018 [sixteen percent (16%)], has significantly declined in 2019 [six percent (06%)]. On the other hand, the amount of complaints received from persons living in Arima increased between 2018 and 2019, and as noted, it has tied for second place.

In previous annual reports, it was noted that the number and percentage of complaints received from persons in the extreme tips of Trinidad continued to be low, and this trend continued in 2019:

- Complaints from Toco/ Sangre Grande accounted for three percent (03%) in both 2018 and 2017 but has increased in 2019 to six percent (06%);
- Complaints from Mayaro/ Rio Claro were consistently three percent (03%) or below in all three (03) years and was less than one percent (<01%) in 2018, and
- Complaints from the regions of Siparia and Point Fortin were consistently below three percent (03%) in all three (03) years.
- Added to this, in 2019, no complaints were received from persons living in Debe/Penal, so that it could be said that it was not just the south-east and south-west tips of Trinidad that presented with low complaints, but the entire southern region below San Fernando, in the stretch from Icacos to Mayaro.

4. Category and Status of Discrimination Alleged

In order to understand the information presented under this heading, it is important to appreciate the kinds of behaviour that the **Equal Opportunity Act**, and by extension, the Commission, is concerned about. In Parts II to V, the Act defines ‘discrimination’ and specifies the fields in which the Act is and is not to apply.

According to section 4, the Act is concerned with discrimination in relation to the following **four broad categories**:-

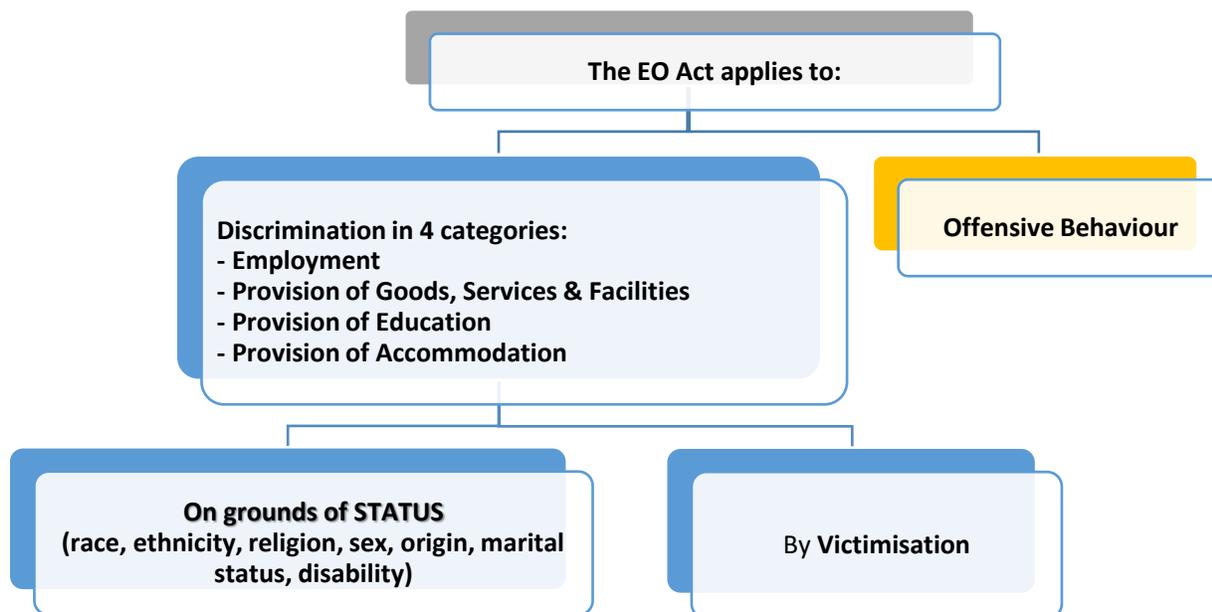
- **Employment**
- **The Provision of Goods, Services, and Facilities**
- **The Provision of Education**
- **The Provision of Accommodation**

But it only applies if that discrimination is:-

- i. discrimination on the **grounds of status** as defined in section 5, or
- ii. discrimination by way of **victimisation** as defined in section 6.

The Act is also concerned with a separate category of action known as ‘**offensive behaviour**’ as defined in section 7.

Figure 2: Summary of Discrimination as stated in the EOA



A ‘status’ is a personal characteristic that the Act gives protection to. Currently there are seven (07) status grounds that are protected: sex, race, ethnicity, religion, marital status, origin (including geographic origin), and disability.

Category of Discrimination:

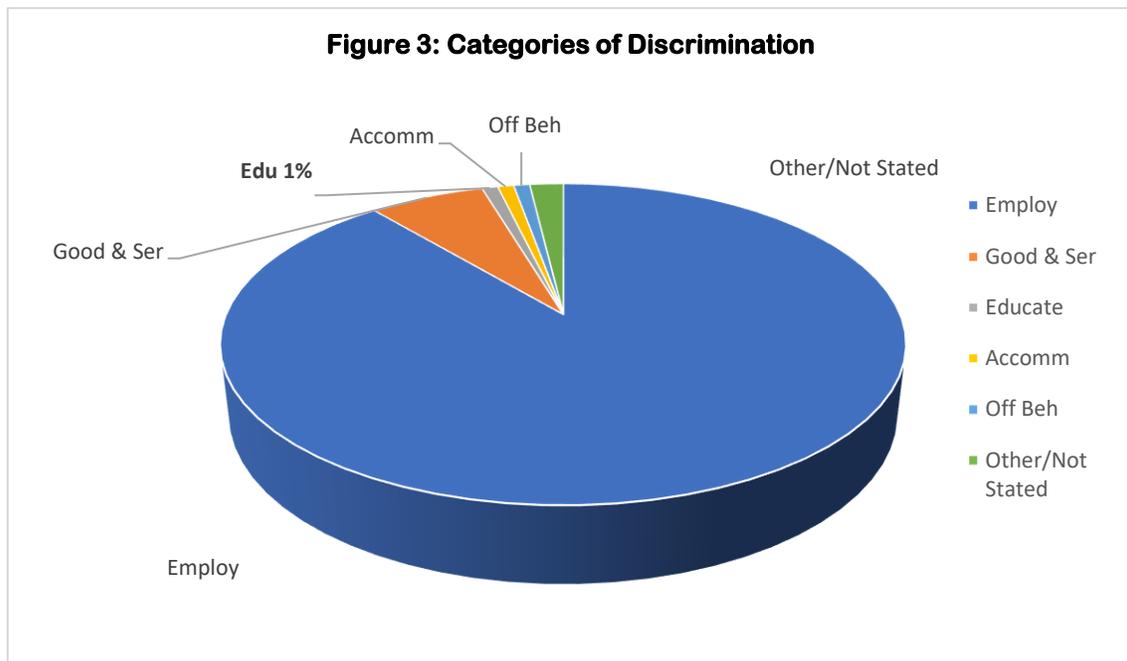
- In all three (03) years, complaints of discrimination in employment significantly outweighed the complaints in the other categories, accounting for over eighty percent (80%), and peaking at eighty-nine percent (89%) in 2019.
- In all three (03) years, the second highest number of complaints was lodged in the category of goods and services, but the percentage share has about halved from eleven percent (11%) in 2017 to six and a half percent (06.5%) in 2019.
- Over the period, the number of complaints of discrimination in education has remained small, though there was a great drop from eight (08) in 2018 to one (01) in 2019.
- In each of the three (03) years, only one (01) complaint was received of discrimination in accommodation, so that the number has been consistent.

Table 8: Category of Discrimination Alleged 2017 to 2019

Category	2019		2018		2017	
	No. of complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total
Employment	96	89	100	80.5	107	83
Goods, Services, and Facilities	7	06.5	08	06.5	14	11
Education	1	0.9	08	06.5	06	04.5
Accommodation	1	0.9	01	<01	01	<01
Offensive Behaviour	1	0.9	06	05	0	0
Not Stated	2	1.9	01	<01	01	<01
Total	108		124		129	

Status/ Victimization Alleged

Of the one hundred and eight (108) complaints lodged in 2019:-



- Twenty-five (25) complainants identified no ground under the Equal Opportunity Act. This means their claims were not based on any of the following grounds:
 - (i) One (01) or more of the seven (07) grounds under status,
 - (ii) victimisation or
 - (iii) offensive behaviour.

This is the same number as 2018 and is less than the number from 2017 which was thirty-three (33) and possibly indicates that the public is gradually becoming more aware of the Commission’s mandate. Of the twenty-five (25) in 2019, two (02) identified age, which is not a status ground covered by the Act. However, as noted previously, the Commission has proposed that the Act be amended to include age, but unless and until this happens, the Commission cannot treat with such complaints.

- Eighty- three (83) complainants identified one (01) or more grounds (status, victimisation or offensive behaviour). This amounts to about seventy-seven percent (77%) of all complaints lodged. This is more than 2017 [seventy-four and a half percent (74.5%)] but less than 2018 [eighty-three percent (83%)].

- Of the eighty- three (83) complaints that alleged a recognised ground:
 - Forty-seven (47) complaints, or about fifty-seven percent (57%), were taken to have been based on one (01) ground alone. (As explained below, race and ethnicity are treated as one (01) ground.)
 - The remaining thirty-six (36) persons alleged two (02) or more grounds.

Table 9: Total Number of Complaints that alleged a recognised ground – 2017 to 2019

	2019	2018	2017
Total number of complaints received	108	124	129
Of which, total number that alleged one or more grounds	83 (77%)	103 (83%)	96 (74.5%)

Table 10: The eighty-three (83) complaints where persons alleged one (01) or more recognised ground can be analysed as follows:-

<p>Race and/or Ethnicity</p>	<p>Although the study of anthropology recognises a difference between race and ethnicity, the ordinary Trinidadian or Tobagonian sees these two words as interchangeable, and oftentimes complainants tick both categories when their complaint may really be with respect to one (01), and in instances, may tick one (01) of the categories, when their complaint is really about the other. For this reason, race and ethnicity are treated as one (01) ground for the purposes of analysis. In 2019, twenty-six (26) complaints or about thirty-one percent (31%) of all complaints received, involved an allegation of racial and/or ethnic discrimination. This was relatively consistent with 2018 [thirty-two percent (32%)] and was an increase from 2017 [twenty-eight and a half percent (28.5%)]. In 2017 and 2018, as in all previous years of the Commission’s operations, this combined ground was the single largest status alleged, but in 2019, for the first time, it was second to another ground (victimisation). Of the twenty-six (26) complaints received in 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Six (06) persons alleged race alone; no one alleged ethnicity alone. ➤ One (01) person alleged race and ethnicity together. ➤ The remaining nineteen (19) persons alleged race and/or ethnicity along with other status grounds. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One (01) person alleged race and/or ethnicity along with sex. • Three (03) persons alleged race and/or ethnicity along with sex and religion. • Two (02) persons alleged race and/or ethnicity along with origin and offensive behaviour. • One (01) person alleged race and/or ethnicity along with disability and victimisation. • One (01) person alleged race and/or ethnicity and victimisation together with offensive behaviour and religion. • Two (02) persons alleged race and/or ethnicity with victimisation and offensive behaviour. • One (01) person alleged race and offensive behaviour. • One (01) person alleged race and origin. • One (01) person alleged race, sex, and victimisation. • One (01) person alleged race, sex, victimisation, and offensive behaviour.
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Achievements and Highlights

Sex	<p>Twenty-one (21) complaints, which is about twenty-five percent (25%) of all complaints received in 2019, involved an allegation of discrimination on the grounds of sex (either by itself, or in conjunction with other grounds). This is less than 2018 [twenty-seven (27) complaints, or about 25%] but significantly more than 2017 [seventeen (17) complaints, or about thirteen percent (13%)]. In 2019, sex was the second highest ground of complaint. Of the twenty-one (21) complaints received in 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nine (09) persons alleged sex alone. ➤ Two (02) persons alleged sex along with race and/or ethnicity. ➤ Two (02) persons alleged sex along with offensive behaviour and victimisation. ➤ One (01) person alleged sex along with offensive behaviour and race. ➤ One (01) person alleged sex along with race and victimisation. ➤ One (01) person alleged sex along with marital status and origin. ➤ One (01) person alleged sex along with race, victimisation, and offensive behaviour. ➤ One (01) person alleged sex along with offensive behaviour. ➤ One (01) person alleged sex along with victimisation.
Religion	<p>Eight (08) complaints, or about ten percent (10%) of all complaints received in 2019, involved an allegation of discrimination on the grounds of religion (either by itself, or in conjunction with other grounds). This is less than 2018 [thirteen (13) complaints, or about ten and a half percent (10.5%)] which in turn was less than 2017 [twenty (20) complaints or about fifteen and a half percent (15.5%)] so that it can be said that there has been a steady decline of complaints of this nature over the three (03) year period. Of the eight (08) complaints received in 2019:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Four (04) persons alleged religion on its own. ➤ Of the remaining four (04) persons, two (02) went on to allege ethnicity; one (01) went on to allege marital status and victimisation. The remaining one (01) person alleged race, ethnicity, victimisation, and offensive behaviour.
Origin	<p>Three (03) complaints, or about four percent (04%) of all complaints received in 2019, involved an allegation of discrimination on the grounds of origin (either by itself, or in conjunction with other grounds). This was significantly less than what was received in both 2018 [twelve (12) complaints, or about ten percent (10%)] which in turn was slightly less than what was received in 2017 [fifteen (15) complaints, which is about eleven and a half percent (11.5%)]. Of the three (03) complaints received in 2019:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ One person (01) person alleged origin alone. ➤ One (01) person alleged origin along with sex and marital status. ➤ One (01) person alleged origin along with race.
Disability	<p>Eleven (11) complaints or about thirteen percent (13%) of all complaints received in 2019, involved an allegation of discrimination on the ground of disability (either by itself, or in conjunction with other grounds). This is an equivalent to the number of complaints received in 2018 and almost equivalent to 2017 [ten (10) complaints or about eight percent (08%)]. Of the eleven (11) complaints received in 2019:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Six (06) complainants alleged disability on its own. ➤ One (01) person alleged disability along with offensive behaviour. ➤ Four (04) persons alleged disability and victimisation.

Achievements and Highlights

Marital Status	<p>Only three (03) persons, or about four percent (04%) of all complaints received in 2019, alleged discrimination on the grounds of marital status (either by itself, or in conjunction with other grounds). A similar but slightly lower number of persons alleged this status in both 2018 and 2017, that being two (02) complaints, which was about one and half percent (1.5%) in 2018, and two (02) complaints, which was about two percent (02%) in 2017 of all complaints received.</p>
Victimisation	<p>Thirty-nine (39) complaints, which is about forty-seven percent (47%) of all complaints received in 2019, involved an allegation of discrimination by way of victimisation (either by itself, or in conjunction with other grounds). This was a significant increase from 2018 [twenty-six (26) complaints or about twenty-one percent (21%)] which itself was a much larger increase from 2017 [twenty-two (22) complaints, or about seventeen percent (17%)]. Of the thirty-nine (39) complaints received in 2019:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nineteen (19) complaints alleged victimisation on its own. ➤ The other twenty (20) complaints alleged victimisation along with another status grounds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four (04) persons alleged victimisation along with disability. • Three (03) persons alleged victimisation along with offensive behaviour. • Two (02) persons alleged victimisation along with sex and offensive behaviour. • Two (02) persons alleged victimisation along with sex. • Two (02) persons alleged victimisation along with race and/or ethnicity and offensive behaviour. • Two (02) persons alleged victimisation along with race and/or ethnicity. • One (01) person alleged victimisation along with race and/or ethnicity, religion, and offensive behaviour. • One (01) person alleged victimisation along with race and/or ethnicity, and offensive behaviour. • One (01) person alleged victimisation along with race and sex. • One (01) person alleged victimisation along with religion and marital status • One (01) person alleged victimisation along with sex, race, and offensive behaviour
Offensive Behaviour	<p>Sixteen (16) complaints, or about nineteen percent (19%) of all complaints received in 2019, involved an allegation of discrimination on the grounds of offensive behaviour (either by itself, or in conjunction with other grounds). This is an increase from 2018 [eleven (11) complaints or about nine percent (09%)], which in turn was a significant increase from 2017 when there were no such complaints for that year, so that it can be said that there has been a steady increase of complaints of this nature over the three (03) year period. Of the sixteen (16) complaints received in 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ One (01) complaint related to offensive behaviour on its own and could be considered as true complaints for reasons explained below. ➤ The remaining fifteen (15) complaints were mixed with other status grounds such as sex, disability, and victimisation, and these complaints fell within one of the broad categories of discrimination.

	<p>Offensive behaviour, as created by section 7 of the Equal Opportunity Act, is intended to provide a remedy for what, in the colloquial sense, can be termed ‘hate speech’, that is words, action or conduct said or done in the public domain with the intention of inciting hatred based on race, gender, or religion. The action giving rise to offensive behaviour does not have to bear any connection to the four (04) broad areas of discrimination (employment, goods and services etc.) that the Act is concerned. However, some of the persons who complained about offensive behaviour did so in the context of employment (or in one (01) case, the provision of goods, and services), and mistook it to mean behaviour that was offensive to them because they felt insulted. For example, they felt that their supervisor talked down to them, or in one case, a public officer spoke harshly to them) as opposed to behaviour that was done with the intention of inciting public hatred, ridicule and scorn based on race, gender, or religion.</p>
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5. Types of Respondents (The person or entity against whom the complaint was lodged)

Unlike the ombudsman, who is concerned with actions or decisions of public authorities, or the Integrity Commission, which is concerned with persons in public life, the provisions of the Equal Opportunity Act and the jurisdiction of the Commission extend to both the public and private sectors. The Commission is empowered to enquire into matters originating from both sectors that may arise under the broad categories of employment, the provision of goods and services, education, and the provision of accommodation.

Of the one hundred and eight (108) complaints lodged in 2019:-

- Sixty-nine (69), which is about sixty-four percent (64%), were against state/public sector entities. This is a relatively consistent percentage (though less in number) to that in 2018 [eighty-two (82) complaints or about sixty-six percent (66%)] and a decrease from that in 2017 [one hundred and two (102) complaints or about seventy-nine percent (79%)] and
- Thirty-nine (39), which is about thirty-six percent (36%), were against private sector entities. This is a relatively consistent percentage (though less in number) to that in 2018 [forty-two (42) or about thirty-four percent (34%)] and an increase from 2017 [twenty-seven (27) complaints or about twenty-one percent (21%)].

In 2017, complaints against state/public entities accounted for almost eighty percent (80%) of complaints lodged in that year, but this declined to under seventy percent (70%) in both 2018 and 2019, and in both of these years, there was an increase in private sector complaints.

By state/public sector, we mean all entities, departments, offices, and agencies that are part of, owned by, or connected to the state. These would include-

- Ministries or departments of the central government, for example, the Ministry of Education, the Board of Inland Revenue, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service;

- Service commissions, such as the public service, police service, teaching service, and statutory authority service commissions;
- Regional administrative and municipal bodies, in particular, regional corporations and regional health authorities (RHAs);
- Public authorities, that is, bodies that exist by or under any statute or law and/or exercise public and/or regulatory powers, for example, the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, the Chaguaramas Development Authority;
- Educational and vocational institutions that are funded by the public purse, for example, The University of the West Indies, The University of Trinidad and Tobago;
- Enterprises that are owned and/or controlled by the state (as defined by section 119(9) of the Constitution), for example, National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Limited, Trinidad and Tobago National Petroleum Marketing Company Limited;
- Special purpose entities that are set up, wholly owned and financed by the state, and perform functions on behalf of the state (typically project-management, property-management or procurement), for example, the Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Limited, Education Facilities Company Limited.

Table 11: Types of Respondents 2017 to 2019

CATEGORY	2019		2018		2017	
	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total
State/ Public Sector	69	64	82	66	102	79
Private (including NGOs And Individuals)	39	36	42	34	27	21
Total	108		124		129	

Of the sixty-nine (69) complaints that are considered state/public sector:-

- Twenty-one (21) complaints were lodged against a government ministry or a department, office or division of a ministry. This is a decrease from thirteen (13) in 2018.
- Two (02) complaints named the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service as a respondent. This was a decrease from seven (07) in 2018.
- A further four (04) complaints were lodged against a protective service, that is the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, Fire Service or Prison Service.
- Eight (08) complaints were lodged against statutory bodies. Of these, there were four (04) complaints against a service commission. This is equivalent to the number received in 2018.

- One (01) complaint was lodged against a public body that regulates the telecommunications sector.
- Four (04) complaints were lodged against public bodies that operate in the aviation sector; this is double the number received in 2018.
- Four (04) complaints were lodged against regional health authorities based in Trinidad. This is a slight increase from the two (02) that were lodged in 2018.
- Two (02) complaints were lodged against municipal corporations based in Trinidad (that is, regional corporations, city corporations, and borough corporations); this is a decrease from the five (05) received in 2018.
- Two (02) complaints were lodged against regional and administrative bodies that operate in Tobago;
- Seven (07) complaints were lodged against public sector educational institutions; this is a decrease from seventeen (17) in 2018. Of the seven (07) public sector institutions:-
 - ✓ One (01) complaint was lodged against a secondary school that falls under the purview of the Ministry of Education.
 - ✓ Two (02) complaints were lodged against tertiary level institutions, including a regional university that has a campus in Trinidad, and a university wholly based in Trinidad and Tobago;
 - ✓ Four (04) complaints were lodged against institutions that provide specialised and/or vocational training.
- Fourteen (14) complaints were filed against corporations and enterprises owned by the state, apart from those that would fall into one (01) of the categories above. This is a decline from seventeen (17) in 2018. Of the fourteen (14) complaints:-
 - ✓ Five (05) were against one (01) specific public utility, and one (01) was against another utility.
 - ✓ Three (03) were against state companies that operate in the oil and gas sector.
 - ✓ Five (05) were against a company that provided security and janitorial services.

Of the thirty-nine (39) complaints that were lodged against private sector entities:-

- Two (02) complaints were lodged against named individuals which related to issues of offensive behaviour.
- Two (02) complaints were lodged against entities in the transport – aviation sector.
- Three (03) complaints were lodged against entities in the financial sector, one (01) against an insurance company and two (02) against a credit union.
- With respect to the chemicals, and oil and gas sector, two (02) of the two (02) complaints were lodged against producers/ manufacturers with revenues in excess of one billion dollars (TT\$1,000,000,000.00).
- With respect to the manufacturing sector, three (03) complaints were lodged against mid-sized manufacturers, and one (01) was lodged against a paint manufacturer.

- With respect to the retail goods and merchandise sector, one (01) complaint was lodged against a mid-sized distributor, one (01) against a small-sized distributor, and two (02) against a seller/ distributor of new automobiles.
- One (01) complaint was lodged against a church board.
- The rest of the complaints were lodged against entities involved in the services sector, for example:-
 - ✓ With respect to the restaurant, nightclub and entertainment sub-sector, one (01) complaint was lodged against an events organisation.
 - ✓ With respect to professional services, one (01) complaint was lodged against a dental practice.
 - ✓ Two (02) complaints were lodged against medical institutions of which, one (01) was a private hospital and the other a medical research entity.
 - ✓ Five (05) complaints were lodged against private security companies.
 - ✓ One (01) complaint was lodged against a private school.
 - ✓ Two (02) complaints were lodged against an entity providing computing services.
 - ✓ One (01) complaint was lodged against a tile company.
 - ✓ One (01) complaint was lodged against a mall.
 - ✓ One (01) complaint was lodged against a funeral home.
 - ✓ One (01) complaint was lodged against a lotto booth.
 - ✓ One (01) complaint was lodged against a hardware.
 - ✓ One (01) complaint was lodged against a courier service.

It is important to emphasise that the above information is presented to illustrate the nature and range of complaints that are lodged with the Commission; it does not mean that there has been finding for or against any party.

6. Geographic Data on the Respondents

This data is based on the corporate addresses of the respondents. In the case of a respondent with multiple offices or branches (for example, a commercial bank or a restaurant chain), this may not necessarily be the address where the alleged actions might have taken place. In presenting this information, addresses were grouped into economic and commercial cluster zones and not in accordance with regional and municipal corporations. The following is a brief explanation of the cluster zones, and the table thereafter presents the number of individual respondents that are based in said zones.

Table 12: Geographic Data on Respondents

Cluster Zone	Brief Explanation of Zone
Port-of-Spain	This comprises of the city of Port-of-Spain and environs (for example, Sea Lots, East Dry River, St Ann’s, Maraval, St James)
North-West	This comprises of areas west of Port-of-Spain, such as Diego Martin, Diamond Vale, Carenage, Chaguaramas
San Juan	This comprises of San Juan, El Socorro, Aranjuez
St Joseph/ St Augustine	This comprises of areas from St Joseph to Curepe
Macoya/Trincity	This comprises of areas from Tunapuna to Piarco
Arima	This comprises of the Borough of Arima and environs (O’Meara)
North-East	This comprises of areas east of Arima, such as Valencia, Toco, and Sangre Grande
Caroni/ Chaguanas	This comprises of areas from Frederick Settlement in Caroni to Munroe Road to Charlieville to Chaguanas and environs (such as Lange Park, Edinburgh, Felicity)
Couva/Point Lisas	This comprises of Couva and environs (for example, Balmain, McBean, Freeport) and the Point Lisas Industrial Estate
Claxton Bay/Pointe-à-Pierre	This comprises of areas such as Plaisance Park, Forres Park, and the industrial centres around Claxton Bay and Pointe-à-Pierre
San Fernando	This comprises of the city of San Fernando and environs (for example, Marabella, Union Park, La Romain)
La Brea/ Point Fortin	This comprises of areas from Otaheite to the industrial centres at La Brea and Point Fortin
South-West`	This comprises of areas south and west of the La Brea/Point Fortin cluster and includes Icacos, Cedros, Chatham, Erin, Palo Seco, and Santa Flora
Penal/ Debe/ Princes Town	This comprises of areas east of the San Fernando, La Brea and south-west clusters, and includes places like Fyzabad, Penal, Debe, Princes Town, and Moruga
Manzanilla/Mayaro	This comprises of areas of East Trinidad south of Sangre Grande
Tobago	This comprises of the island of Tobago

**Table 13: Geographical Origin of Respondents 2017 to 2019
(By Economic/ Commercial Cluster Zones)**

Cluster Zone	2019		2018		2017	
	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Annual Total	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Annual Total	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Annual Total
Port-of-Spain	45	42	51	38	69	53.5
North-West	04	04	03	2.25	02	01.5
San Juan	09	08	09	07	05	04
St Joseph/ St Augustine	09	08	13	10	11	08.5
Macoya/Trincity	17	16	12	09	05	04
Arima	03	03	09	06.75%	03	02.5
North-East	02	02	01	0.75%	02	01.5
Caroni/ Chaguanas	04	04	05	03.75%	07	05.5
Couva/Point Lisas	06	06	03	02.25%	03	02.5
Claxton Bay/Pointe-à-Pierre	0	0	06	04.5%	03	02.5
San Fernando	02	02	04	03%	07	05.5
La Brea/ Point Fortin	0		0	0%	01	0.77%
South-West`	01	0.9	04	03	01	0.77
Penal/ Debe/ Princes Town	03	03	01	0.75%	01	0.77
Manzanilla/Mayaro	01	0.9	01	0.75%	01	0.77
Tobago	01	0.9	08	06 %	08	06
Not Stated	0	0	02	2.25%		
TOTAL	108		132			

- In 2017 and 2018, more than fifty percent (50%) of the respondents were based in Port-of-Spain. In 2019, this area still accounted for the largest share of respondents, but it has dropped to forty-five percent (45%) of respondents; in fact, there has been a steady decline from the high of sixty-nine percent (69%) in 2017, and it will be interesting to see if this trend continues in coming years.

- Twenty-six percent (26%) of the respondents were from the St Joseph to Trincity area, which is a steady increase from twelve and half percent (12.5%) in 2017 and nineteen percent (19%) in 2018. In both 2018 and 2019, this cluster was the second highest source area for respondents after Port-of-Spain. If one were to add in the outlying regions of San Juan and Arima, this stretch accounted for thirty-five percent (35%) of the respondents in 2019 and slightly under thirty-three percent (33%) in 2018.
- The Central stretch from Caroni to Pointe-à-Pierre accounted for ten percent (10%) of the respondents in 2019, which is consistent with 2018 and 2017 when it was ten and a half percent (10.5%) in both years.
- There has been a steady decline in complaints against respondents based in San Fernando, from the high of five and a half percent (05.5%) in 2017 to two percent (02%) in 2019.
- In all three (03) years, the percentage of respondents from the entire southern region below San Fernando, in the stretch from Icacos to Mayaro, has been relatively small and consistently under five percent (05%).
- In 2019, about eight percent (08%) were based in the energy belt from Pt. Lisas to Pt. Fortin; this is less than 2018 [ten percent (10%)] which in turn was less than 2017 [fourteen percent (14%)].
- If one were to compare the 2019 data on the geographical location of the respondents with the geographical location of the complainants that was presented earlier one may observe the following:-
 - Nineteen percent (19%) of the complainants resided in the Tunapuna/Piarco region and twenty-four percent (24%) of the respondents were located in the same region.
 - Only seven percent (07%) of the complainants live in Port-of-Spain, but forty-five percent (45%) of the respondents are based there.
 - On the other hand, eleven percent (11%) of the complainants live in Arima, but only three percent (03%) of the respondents are based there.
 - Also twenty-one percent (21%) of the complainants live in the regions of Chaguanas and Couva/Tabaquite/ Talparo, but only ten percent (10%) of the respondents are based in the Caroni to Pointe-à-Pierre cluster.

- Eleven percent (11%) of the complainants live in the entire southern region below San Fernando, in the stretch from Icacos to Mayaro, but slightly under five percent (05%) of the respondents are based there.

In short, there is no correlation between where persons live and where they work. Persons may live in Arima or Chaguanas but work in St Joseph or Port-of-Spain.

7. Complaints Referred to Conciliation in 2019

The **Equal Opportunity Act, Chap. 22:03** empowers the Commission to refer a matter to conciliation where it finds that the subject matter of the complaint may be resolved by this process. The Conciliation Unit at the Commission facilitates conciliation in-house. There is no cost attached to this process at the Commission, unless the disputing parties opt to hire representation.

Nine (09) matters were referred for Conciliation in calendar year 2019.

Table 14: Summary of Complaints 2019

No. and Code	Brief Description of Matter	Status as of 31 st December 2019
1. (JB)	The complainant claimed discrimination in employment based on her race in the way she was bypassed for acting promotions on three (03) occasions: Manager, Financial Services; Manager, Exchequer Services; and Manager, Management Services Department.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit
2. (FH)	The complainant claimed discrimination in employment by victimisation in the way she had been reassigned to a different work unit after she made complaints of sexual harassment against her supervisor.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit
3. (CR & Ors)	A group of five (05) complainants claimed discrimination in employment because of their race in the way they were terminated during the term of their employment contracts for no given reason.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit
4. (CT)	The complainant claimed discrimination in employment firstly on the grounds of her sex in the way they failed to treat with an allegation of sexual harassment she made against a senior officer and secondly by victimisation in the way she was demoted/ reverted after making said complaint.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit

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5. (KH)	The complainant claimed offensive behaviour because of a Facebook post in which the respondent labelled him a 'half pint house negro'.	Matter was not resolved and is to be referred to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal. The Commission has to publish its report.
6. (AS)	The complainant claimed discrimination in employment because of her race and ethnicity after she was transferred from her department on the basis that she was 'not a good culture fit' and later suspended pending investigation into an alleged incident.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit
7. (KM)	The complainant alleged discrimination in employment based on his race in the manner which he was overlooked for the promotion.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit
8. (AG)	The complainant claimed discrimination in employment because of his race, religion and by way of victimisation in the way he was made to do physical activity, which he complained, resulted in injury, which complaint the employer deemed to be false.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit
9. (KR)	The complainant discrimination in employment based on his race in the manner in which he was denied a promotion despite being qualified for same.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit

- Eight (08) out of the nine (09) matters were based on the category of employment. Of these, three (03) were related to instances of non-promotion. Two (02) concerned victimisation arising out of a sexual harassment complaint made to the employer. One (01) matter dealt with the issue of termination by an organisation.
- The matter that was not based on employment was concerned with the issue of offensive behaviour against a private individual based on a Facebook post.
- Seven (07) of the above matters were against state/public sector respondents: three (03) were against organisations that fell within the remit of the Ministry of National Security and one (01) was against an organisation in the transport and maintenance of government buildings and facilities sector. One (01) was against a public utility; one (01) complaint was against an organisation in the petroleum sector, and one (01) complaint was against a company functioning as a special purpose state enterprise focusing on providing project management services to the government.

8. Summary Prosecutions for Non-Compliance

The Commission is authorised to lay complaints before the Magistrates' Courts pursuant to section 36 of the Equal Opportunity Act, which provides that:

A person who without reasonable excuse refuses or fails to comply with any requirement of a notice under sections 33 and 35(2) is liable on summary conviction:-

(a) in the case of an individual, to a fine of one thousand dollars;

(b) in the case of a body corporate, to a fine of five thousand dollars,

for every day that the individual or body corporate refuses or fails to comply with any requirement.

The cause of action in these cases was the alleged non-compliance with a notice issued by the Commission under section 33 to provide information with respect to an on-going investigation. In 2019, no matters were laid before any Magistrates' Court. In 2018, the Commission laid a summary complaint in the Couva Magistrates' Court against Trinidad Cement Ltd. As at 31st December 2019, the matter is ongoing.

IV. Conciliation Unit

The Act empowers the Commission to refer a matter to conciliation where it finds that the subject matter of the complaint may be resolved by this process. The Conciliation Unit at the Commission facilitates conciliation in-house. There is no cost attached to this process at the Commission, unless the disputing parties opt to hire representation.

In 2017, nine (09) cases were referred for conciliation, with twelve (12) cases brought forward from the previous year. Of the twenty-one (21) cases, which were handled by the Conciliation Unit for 2017, three (03) cases were resolved with a formal agreement, and these agreements were registered with the Equal Opportunity Tribunal. Eight (08) cases were unresolved and six (06) of these were referred to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal for adjudication at the request of the complainants, and two (02) cases were withdrawn at the request of the complainants. Four (04) cases were in progress as at the end of the year. In six (06) of the cases received, the conciliation process had not begun as at the end of December 2017.

In 2018, six (06) cases were referred for conciliation with ten (10) cases brought forward from the previous year. Of the sixteen (16) cases at the Conciliation Unit for 2018, seven (07) cases were referred to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal for adjudication at the request of the complainants, and two (02) cases were withdrawn at the request of the complainants. Seven (07) cases were in progress as at the end of December 2018.

Of the eighteen (18) matters handled at the Conciliation Unit for 2019, three (03) matters were resolved with a signed agreement, and these agreements were registered with the Equal Opportunity Tribunal. Eight (08) matters were unresolved and referred to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal for adjudication at the request of the complainant. Six (06) matters were in progress as at the end of 2019. In one (01) of the matters received, the conciliation process had not begun as at the end of December 2019.

A statistical representation in tabular format illustrates the above.

Table 15: Conciliation Statistics for the Period 2017-2020					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	
Details					
No. of Cases Received for the Period	9	6	9	2	
Case Brought Forward from Previous Year	12	10	9	7	
Total	21	16	18	9	
Cases Completed with Signed Agreements	3	0	3	0	
Cases Completed – Unresolved. Referred to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal	6	7	8	0	
Cases Completed with No Further Action – Withdrawn by the Complainant	2	2	0	0	
Cases in Progress	4	7	6	8	
Cases not yet Started as at 31-12-2019			1		
Total	21	16	18	9	

Source: Equal Opportunity Commission

Internal Improvements

V. General Administration and Accounts

The purpose of the unit is to provide daily support for all members of the Equal Opportunity Commission, commissioners, and staff, and by extension, the external clients and the public.

Table 16: Releases and Expenditure 2017-2019

YEAR	RELEASES(\$)	EXPENDITURE JAN.-DEC.*
2017	6,092,467	6,504,553
2018	6,898,960	7,236,096
2019	7,564,628	6,895,259

Source: Annual Reports, EOC

*Surplus on expenditure due to the financial year being from Oct. -Sept. which differs from the calendar year Jan.-Dec. which the annual report covers.

VI. Human Resources

Training and development continue to be of high priority for members of staff at the Commission to build institutional capacity and enable a higher standard of performance. Despite the economic circumstances that have affected operations, training was sourced from the Public Service Academy, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications and in-house training provided by the various units of the Commission.

Training and Development

Training and Development were offered in the following areas to staff during 2017-2020:-

- Office 365 – 2017 and 2018
- Word Processing and Desktop Publishing; Using and Creating Spreadsheets; Creating Multimedia Presentations; Computer Usage and Email Usage
- Customer Service – Telephone Etiquette
- Australian Investigating Process
- Introduction to Sign Language I
- Freedom of Information
- Public Procurement

- Critical Thinking Skills
- Orientation for Legal Unit
- Internal Lecture on Social Media and Mental Health (Cyber Safety)
- Financial Literacy Session
- Sensitisation Session and Training on Survey Administration
- HIV Workshop
- Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
- Introduction to Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Content Management System
- Breakfast Workshop on Disaster Recovery
- Global Equality & Diversity Conference 2018 & 2019
- Conference (Online)
- Freedom of Information
- Human Interaction - Modules I & II - Senior Executive Development Programme
- Office Etiquette for Administrative Support
- Cabinet Note Writing
- Supervisory Management
- SharePoint 2016 Administration
- Advocacy Planning and Legal Literacy for Civil Society Organizations in Trinidad and Tobago
- Workplace Discrimination
- Microsoft Workshop
- Workshop – Civil Society Collaborating on Human Rights: Strengthening Domestic Machinery and International Accountability
- Introduction to Human Rights and the ILO Decent Work Agenda and Various Aspects of Equality
- Empowering Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs (Foreign Training)
- Facilitating for Equality - Using Facilitation to Change Mindsets (Foreign Training)
- Equal Opportunities in Germany (foreign training)
- Human Resource and Gender Equity in the Workplace
- The CEDAW South to South Institute Capacity-Building Program for Women's Human Rights Defenders
- Training on Customer Service and Telephone Etiquette
- Conflict Resolution
- Communication for Effective Customer Service
- Presentation Skills for Senior Managers
- Improving Workplace Productivity
- Ethics in Procurement
- Ethical Issues in the Public Service

- Emotional Intelligence
- HR for Non-HR Professionals
- SQL Server Features and Administration
- Human Resource Management and Gender Equity in the Workplace
- Firewall Security Training
- Active Directory Troubleshooting
- Shared Incident Database, Legal Literacy and Advocacy Validation
- Managing Remote Employees
- Supervisory Management
- Disciplinary Procedures - One Man Tribunal
- Introduction to Sign Language II
- The Decriminalisation of Marijuana and the Impact on the Workplace
- Investigating Workplace Wrongdoings a Step by Step Guide for Management
- Business, Non-Discrimination and Gender Equality in the time of COVID-19 (Webinar)
- Domestic Violence in the Time of COVID-19/Proposed Amendments to the Domestic Violence Act (Webinar)
- Coping with a Global Pandemic - The Mental Health Impact (Webinar)
- EOC Website Training
- COVID-19 and Gender Equality: What Private Sector Can Do? (Webinar)
- Domestic Violence during COVID-19: Supporting your Employees (Webinar)

The Commission has been on a work from home arrangement since March 18, 2020; nevertheless, the HR Unit has continued to provide services as practically as it can under the circumstances.

Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures provide guidance, consistency, accountability, efficiency, and clarity on how an organisation operates. The following policies and procedural guidelines were completed during the period 2017-2020:-

- **Completion of the Recruitment, Selection and Resignation Procedures**
- **Approval of the Training and Development Policy**
- **Approval Guidelines for the Application of Compensatory Time**
- **Review of the Presence of Staff at the Office after Working Hours, the Automatic Renewal of a Contract of Employment and the Training and Development Policy**
- **Grievance and Sexual Harassment Policy**
- **Procurement Procedure Policy**
- **A 10-Point Complaint Handling Procedure**
- **HIV Workplace Policy**
- **EOC Guidelines for Staff on Return to Work and while at the Office during COVID-19**
- **Policy Guidelines on Work from Home during COVID-19**

VII. Information Technology (IT)

The ICT Unit has continued to strengthen its capabilities and has offered much needed operational support to the Commission through the development of the Commission’s ICT infrastructure and ensuring its social media presence is effectively maintained.

- **Reduction in Printer Maintenance Costs** - reduce expenditure by leasing printers to include consumables rather than make a direct purchase. By leasing printers, the Commission has reduced its operating costs by approximately sixty-one thousand, seven hundred and five dollars and ninety cents in TT dollars (TT \$61,705.90).
- **Reduction in Monthly Rental Costs in Respect of our Telecommunication (Phone) Service** - reduced the costs from seven hundred and twenty-five TT dollars (TT\$725.00) per month to five hundred and twenty-five TT dollars (TT\$525.00) per month.
- **Cost Effective Consolidation of Licenses with Office 365** - the organisation saved a total of forty-eight thousand, five hundred and ninety dollars and thirty-one cents in TT dollars (TT \$48,590.31) over two (02) years, with the purchase of the licenses from an external vendor.
- **Reduction in Internet Costs** - re-negotiated our contract terms with our internet service providers and reduced the Commission’s monthly cost from one thousand, two hundred in TT dollars (TT\$1200.00) per month to seven hundred and fifty TT dollars TT \$750.00 per month. Operational costs of the Commission has provided an overall savings of four hundred and fifty TT dollars (TT\$450.00) per month or five thousand, four hundred in TT dollars (TT\$5,400.00) per year.
- **In-House Training of Microsoft Office and Compliance with Computer Literacy Policy**
- **Greater Collaboration through a Common Platform for all Units to Access Data Securely** – the ITU leveraged a cloud solution called Microsoft Teams (available as a feature of Office 365) as the main collaborative platform for all units and staff members. It has given the staff the flexibility to create ad hoc teams and committees to collaborate effectively with each other. The benefits of this system would be keeping all information current and centrally accessible to all members of teams within the organisation.
- Development and Implementation of Company Policies
- Development and Implementation of Mobile Device and Usage Policy
- Development and Implementation of Internet, Email, and New Media Policy

- Development and Implementation of Computer Literacy Policy
- Development and Implementation of Business Continuity Policy

- **Consolidation of Mobile/Internet Services to Eliminate the Cost of Mobile Handsets** – negotiated with the provider to have the Commission receive complimentary handsets for all its mobile-users, in the amount of twenty-five thousand TT dollars TT\$25,000.00 in credit. This credit can be drawn down throughout the three (03) year period to replace older phones with newer ones based on purpose and fitness for use. This type of agreement has saved the organisation twenty-five thousand TT dollars TT\$25,000.00 in capital expenditure.

- **Migration of the Commission’s Website to a Newer Platform** - the Commission’s existing website has been earmarked to be migrated to a newer platform in 2019, for which newer features of the site can be leveraged for better overall interaction with the public.

- **Implementation of a Legal Workflow Case Management System for Tracking Complaints**

- **Improving the Website to Increase Interactivity with the General Public** – the Commission has leveraged social media to effectively disseminate information to the public with much success. The Commission will continue its hybrid approach of integrating the Commission’s new website in 2019 with our social media platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter, to reach the wider public.

- **Renewal of Veritas Backup Exec Software Licenses** - the organisation was given the option of renewing its Veritas Backup Exec software licenses for a further three (03) years for the period (April 2019 – April 2022), in the sum of thirteen thousand, three hundred and fifty dollars and thirty-eight cents in TT dollars (TT\$13,350.38) from Digi-Data Systems Ltd. The Commission has utilised this software for the automation of our tape backups since September 2015, and this solution has proven to be a reliable tool for our business continuity/disaster recovery implementation of our on premise data.

- **Purchase of Live Streaming Equipment** – to improve social media presence.

Working from home became a requirement as a measure to mitigate against the spread of COVID-19. The ICT Unit implemented and executed a few immediate initiatives that have facilitated a relatively easy transition to working remotely. These included:-

- **Use of Cloud Technology** - the use of the corporate Microsoft Office 365 cloud platform is available to all staff to securely access their email services and documents.
- **Document Sharing and Collaboration Tools** - members of staff utilised a combination of both Skype for Business and Microsoft Teams. These form part of the suite of cloud applications used to safely and effectively share commonly used files and collaborate within departments.
- **Laptop Distribution** - ten (10) laptops were distributed to members of staff to assist in executing their duties as officers for the Commission while remote working.
- **PBX Call Handling and Mobile Handset Distribution** - the forwarding of the Commission's incoming calls to employees with EOC owned mobile numbers ensured that an EOC officer who can assist answers calls from the public.
- **Introduction of Virtual Sessions to the Public for Public Education and Conciliation Sessions as well as Virtual Meetings with Clients** – the Commission has begun offering online conciliation and public education sessions to organisations.