



Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

**EOC**

**Equal Opportunity Commission**

*Promoting Equality*

ANNUAL  
**REPORT**

2017





Republic of Trinidad and Tobago



Equal Opportunity Commission  
*Promoting Equality*

ANNUAL  
REPORT | 2017

**“Research, Evaluation  
and Monitoring  
in the field of  
Equal Opportunity and  
Non-Discrimination”**

## ANNUAL REPORTING

The Equal Opportunity Commission submits its eighth Annual Report on its activities for the year ended 31st December 2017. This Report is prepared pursuant to the provisions of Sections 53 and 54 of the Equal Opportunity Act, Chapter 22:03, cited hereunder:

### Section 53

“The Commission shall within three months after the end of each calendar year submit to the Minister a report of its operations during that year.”

### Section 54

“The Minister shall cause the report of the Commission to be laid before Parliament.”

## CONTENTS

<b>Annual Reporting</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The Term in Review 2014 - 2017</b>	<b>7-13</b>
<b>Chairman's Statement</b>	<b>14-15</b>
<b>Remarks of the Chief Executive Officer</b>	<b>16-18</b>
<b>Landmark Judgements - Equal Opportunity Tribunal (EOT)</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>The Equal Opportunity Act</b>	<b>20-22</b>
About the Equal Opportunity Commission	20-22
Legislative Framework	20
Establishment and Composition	20
Appointments	20
Functions	20
Administrative Framework	20-21
Support System	20-21
Organisational Structure	21
Strategic Overview	22
Mandate	22
Vision	22
Mission	22
Priorities	22
Core Values	22
<b>Profile of Commissioners</b>	<b>23-27</b>
<b>Review of the Equal Opportunity Act</b>	<b>28-31</b>
Amendments proposed in the 2011 Bill that should be pursued	28
Amendments proposed in the 2011 Bill that should no longer be pursued	29
Amendments proposed in the 2011 Bill that ought to be reformulated	29
New or additional amendments that ought to be included	30
<b>Reports</b>	<b>32-87</b>
Report from the Legal Unit	32-54
Complaints Received by The Commission in 2017	32-54
Overview of the Process	32-54
Complaints Received and Investigated in 2017	33-47
Number of Complaints Received	33-34
Demographic Data on the Complainants: Sex, Age, Race/Ethnicity	34-37
Geographic Data on the Complainants	37-38
Category and Status of Discrimination Alleged	38-43
Types of Respondents	43-45
Geographic Data on the Respondents	45-47
Complaints Referred to Conciliation in 2017	48-49
Summary Prosecutions for Non-Compliance	49
Reports on Matters Published for Public Inspection	49-54
Initiating Proceedings before the Equal Opportunity Tribunal	54

**Reports 32-87** *(continued)*

<b>Report from the Conciliation Unit</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Report from the Communications Unit</b>	<b>56-76</b>
New Term of Commissioners	56
Public Awareness and Advocacy Programmes	56-57
Youth Education	57
Major Stakeholder Engagement Projects for 2017	57-61
Courtesy Calls	61-62
Press Releases, Interviews and Public Engagements	62-64
Human Rights Advocacy	64
Facilitating the General Public	64-65
Research and Assessment	65
Promotional Campaigns 2017	65
Media Statement - In Commemoration of International Women's Month	66-67
Social Media	68
Digital Engagement	69-70
Internal Communications	71
Budgeting	71
Recommendations	71
Staffing	71
Training and Capacity-Building	71
EOC External Events	72-76
<b>Report from the Research Unit</b>	<b>77-79</b>
Research Agenda	77-79
Proposed Activities for the period January to December 2018	79
<b>Report from the General Administration Unit</b>	<b>80-81</b>
Accounts Section	80-81
Financial Expenditure	80-81
<b>Report from the Human Resource Unit</b>	<b>82- 85</b>
Functions of the Human Resource Unit	82
Staffing at the Commission in 2017	82
Recruitment and Selection	82
Training and Development	82-85
Internal Training	83
External Training	83-84
Conferences/Seminars	84-85
Developing and Implementing Policies and Procedures at the EOC	85
Performance Management	85
<b>Report from the Information Technology Unit</b>	<b>86-88</b>
Overview	86
ICT Project Achievements for 2017	86-87
Outstanding Projects, Challenges and Direction for 2018	87-88
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	<b>89-90</b>
<b>Preparation and Publication of Guidelines</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Submission of Report</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Internal Events</b>	<b>92-93</b>

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AGLA</b>	Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs
<b>AMCHAM</b>	American Chamber of Commerce of Trinidad and Tobago
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>COP</b>	Communities of Practice
<b>ECA</b>	The Employers Consultative Association
<b>EOA, the Act</b>	Equal Opportunity Act
<b>EOC, the Commission</b>	Equal Opportunity Commission
<b>EOT, the Tribunal</b>	Equal Opportunity Tribunal
<b>GATE</b>	Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses
<b>GISL</b>	Government Information Services Limited
<b>GoRTT</b>	Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
<b>HASC</b>	HIV/AIDS Workplace Advocacy and Sustainability Centre
<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>HR</b>	Human Rights
<b>IACHR</b>	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
<b>ITU</b>	Information Technology Unit
<b>LGBTI</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
<b>MORI</b>	Market and Opinion Research International
<b>NCPD</b>	National Centre for Persons with Disabilities
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NIBTT</b>	National Insurance Board of Trinidad and Tobago
<b>NODES</b>	UWI Network and Outreach for Disability Education and Sensitisation
<b>PGA</b>	Parliamentarians for Global Action
<b>PMCD</b>	Public Management Consulting Division
<b>SALISES</b>	Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies
<b>TTUTA</b>	Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCRPD</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>UWI</b>	The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus
<b>WINAD</b>	Women's Institute for Alternative Development







The TERM  
in **REVIEW**

2014  
2017

## EOC's Recommendations for Legislative and Policy Amendments to the Domestic Violence Act

The Domestic Violence Act, Chapter 45:56, is a progressive piece of legislation but there is need to amend the Act or enforce its provisions to zero tolerance to provide further protection for victims and higher efficiency in enforcement. The following is a list of some of the proposed legislative and policy amendments to the Domestic Violence Act developed by the EOC:

- Remove the perpetrator from the home not the victim (Amend Section 23(1) and Section 23(A))
- Police must respond to all complaints (Sec. 21)
- Amend definition of cohabitant to include same-sex relationships (Sec. 3)
- Police must charge for assaults and other crimes committed in domestic situations (Sec. 25(1)), and for breaches of Protection Order (Sec. 20)
- No bail for persons charged with breaches of Protection Order (Sec. 27(1))
- Provide network of support to persons who have a protection order – observers must have a duty to report (new section)
- Create intervention for perpetrators threatening to kill (new section)
- Create inter agency protocols among police, magistrates, prosecutors, social workers and shelters (new section)
- Create mandatory programs for victims and perpetrators (Sec. 6(1) (c) (VIII))
- Resuscitate Police Domestic Violence Register (Sec. 21(2)).

## Public Awareness and Seminars 2014 -2017

- **The 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), University of Toronto, and collaboratively hosted the following:

- A Public Lecture on the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- A three (3)-day intensive training workshop on the role of CEDAW in the promotion of women's equality.

The training targeted: organisations promoting Women's Human Rights, generally; more specifically, organisations focused on rural women, LBT women, disabled women, immigrant women, women living in poverty, disadvantaged and marginalised women of all ethnicities, and other groups, as appropriate to the local context.

- Participated in the European Union and UWI Faculty of Law Human Rights Project, Human Rights Open Day at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus
- Participated in the UWI Faculty of Law Quality Assurance Review exercise
- Produced 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"
- Participated in the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) OPM's International Women's Day on the Promenade
- Courtesy Call on His Excellency, Anthony Aquinas Carmona, ORTT, SC, President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago by Her Honour, Senator Kerry Ann Ifill, President of the Senate of Barbados
- Courtesy Call on Senator the Honourable Christine Kangaloo, President of the Senate of Trinidad and Tobago by Her Honour, Senator Kerry Ann Ifill, President of The Senate of Barbados
- Courtesy Call on the Honourable Faris Al-Rawi, Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs
- Courtesy Call on the Chief Secretary of the Tobago

- House of Assembly, the Honourable Kelvin Charles
- Courtesy Call on the Honourable Camille Robinson-Regis, Minister of Planning and Development
- Courtesy Call on the Mayor of Chaguanas, His Worship, Mayor Gopaul Boodan
- Courtesy Call on Senator the Honourable Jennifer Baptiste-Primus, Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development
- Courtesy Call on the Equal Opportunity Commission by The United States Embassy, with visiting United States Judge G. Helen Whitener, in celebration of Caribbean American Heritage Month and the promotion of human rights and tolerance by the US Embassy
- Courtesy Call on the EOC by Mr. Lester Ferguson, Executive Secretary (Head of Secretariat) of the Secretariat of The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Services and Community Development, The Bahamas
- Hosted over sixty (60) public awareness and education workshop sessions for both the private and public Sectors 2014 to 2017
- Completed monthly outreach in Tobago
- Press Interviews, public appearances, and media releases
- Expanded the EOC's Public Outreach to include four new monthly office days at the different Regional Corporations throughout Trinidad and Tobago
- Published the EOC's Strategic Plan Handbook
- Developed the Strategic Corporate Communications Work Plan
- Launched the "Did you know?" on Offensive Behaviour public education campaign
- Formulated protocol for dealing with external stakeholders
- Formulated a training programme titled – Customer Service: Telephone Etiquette
- Participated in the National HIV/AIDS Workplace Advocacy and Sustainability Centre (HASC), Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development Consultation
- Participated in the Trade and Investment Conference 2014 and 2015
- Hosted a seminar and workshop on 'Human Rights and Disability' on the Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago
- Participated in the American Chamber of Commerce of Trinidad and Tobago(AMCHAM) Health and Safety Conference and Secondary School Debate
- CEDAW Press Briefing –in collaboration with the Network of NGOs, the EOC hosted a press briefing to discuss the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on Human Rights Day
- Distributed over five thousand (5,000) informational brochures
- Launched a Public Education Campaign themed 'The Equal Opportunity Commission and You'
- Published a Handbook on 'Guidelines for Employers in Trinidad and Tobago' to inform employers about the Equal Opportunity Commission and anti-discrimination law in employment,
- Hosted Seminar on 'Human Rights and Gender' to commemorate the United Nations 16 days of Activism against Gender Based Violence Against Women and the United Nations Human Rights Day.

## Publications and Research 2014-2017

- Commenced work on "Guidelines on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace - 2017" Handbook
- Compiled the EOC's Statistical Data Report on Complaints 2016
- Compiled the Research Unit's Annual Report submission for the EOC's Annual Report 2016
- Evaluated all Public Awareness Programmes
- Researched and developed the following:
  - A Research Paper/Report on Contract Employment in the Trinidad and Tobago Public Service
  - Trinidad and Tobago Budget Allocation and Expenditure to Vulnerable Groups 2014-2017
  - A Comparison of Gender Policies: New Zealand, United Kingdom, Canada, Sweden, Jamaica

*The Term in Review 2014 - 2017 (continued)*

- Statutory Authorities and Other Bodies in Trinidad and Tobago
- Domestic Violence in Trinidad and Tobago – A Position Paper
- Media Statement on Sexual Harassment
- Sexual Harassment in the Workplace – Code of Conduct
- Researched the following:
  - Human Rights: A Disability Issue
  - Women Participation Rates in Trinidad and Tobago
  - Sexual Harassment in the Workplace - Ethical and Legal Issues of Midwifery
- Analysed Newspaper Articles 2016
- Reviewed eight (8) publications
- Commenced organisation of the EOC's resource library
- Commenced the National Survey on Equality and Public Perception of Discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago
- Reviewed with the Corporate Communications Unit the EOC's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Statement 2016
- Evaluated the Public Awareness Programmes held in 2016
- Developed the Employment Application Form
- Formulated the EOC's Evaluation Forms that were used to conduct the specific in-evaluations for 2015
- Developed a report on the Content Analysis of Newspaper Articles for the period January 2014 to March 2015
- Collaborated with the Legal Unit in the 'Compilation of complainant data information for the period 2008 to 2012
- Completed research paper on the 'Impact of Age Discrimination on Society – Regionally and Internationally'
- Compiled the EOC's statistical data of complaints on:
  - Tobago, for the period 2008 to 2015
  - Complaints data for 2014
  - Age discrimination 2008 to 2015
  - Gender/Sex Discrimination 2008 to 2015
- Provided statistical data for the following:
  - 'The Perception and Awareness of the EOC'
  - An Assessment of the public awareness programmes 2013 to 2015
- Provided input into the EOC's Strategic Plan 2015 to 2018 and the Research Unit's Work Plan 2015 to 2016
- Undertook an 'Evaluation and Review of the Age of Consent for Sexual Activity in the regional and international sphere'
- Submitted the 'Draft Report on Mapping Study on the relevant actors on Human Rights in Trinidad and Tobago'
- Conducted research for the Commission's Seminar on 'Human Rights and Gender'
- Designed research documents on Equality and Public Perception on Discrimination Issues in Trinidad and Tobago
- Evaluated the Public Awareness Programmes of the EOC
- Compiled a Statistical Report of the Commission's Complaints data 2014
- Compiled a Report on the Evaluation of the Public Awareness Programmes conducted by the Commission in 2014
- Compiled the Statistical Analysis of data on Tobago 2008 to 2014
- Drafted documents relating to: -
  - Guidelines on Formulating an Operational Plan
  - The Procurement Criteria for Consulting Services to conduct an Impact Assessment 2014
  - Cell Phone Usage Policy.

The Equal Opportunity Commission, through its Legal Unit, continues to work assiduously with its other significant Units (Administration, Conciliation, Research, Communications and IT) towards achieving its mandate to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity through advocacy, public education, research and the conciliation of complaints.

The following represents an overview of the Legal Unit's Achievements and Highlights for the period 2014 to 2017:

Year	Number of Complaints Received and Investigated	Number of Complaints Referred to Conciliation	Number of Summary Prosecutions for Non-compliance	Number of Matters Referred to Tribunal	Number of Reports Published	Litigation	Internal Improvements
2017	129	08	Nil	18	20		As at March 2017 the Legal Unit received its full complement of staff comprising: 1 Senior Legal Officer, 2 Legal Officers, 2 Investigating Officers
2016	98	25	1	4	4	Nil	
2015	102	13	3		6		
2014	126	24	Nil	3		Interpretation Summons HC Matter against Director of Personnel Administration and the AG	Completion of workflow

Table 01

*The Term in Review 2014 - 2017 (continued)*

## Internal Improvements 2014 - 2017

### Legal and Conciliation Workflows; Strategic Plan 2015 – 2018; Policies; Recruitment and Selection; Training and Development; Information Technology

The workflow of the Legal Unit was reviewed and formalised in 2015. This enabled the EOC to identify realistic standards for service delivery and to measure performance going forward. In 2015, the Commissioners and all members of staff participated in a re-visioning retreat which contributed to the development of a Strategic Plan for the period 2015 - 2018. The undermentioned three (3) main goals were identified in the Strategic Plan:

- To work towards the elimination of discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago;
- To become an autonomous institution; and
- To maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission.

A Human Resource Committee, comprising the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Chief Executive Officer and the Human Resource Specialist, was set up in 2015.

A Policy Review Committee comprising the Chairman, Vice Chairman, One (1) Commissioner, the Senior Legal Officer and a member of the Human Resource Unit was also formed in 2015. The Committee has responsibility for drafting, reviewing and implementing policies and procedures at the Commission. Some of the policies and procedures which have been implemented are as follows:

- A Confidentiality Agreement
- Recruitment, Selection and Resignation Procedures
- Dress Code Policy
- Vacation Leave Policy
- Training and Development Policy
- Automatic Renewal of a Contract of Employment Policy
- Performance of Supervisory Duties by Non-Supervisory Staff
- Breast Pumping Policy
- Internet, Email and New Media Usage Policy
- Policy on exceptional circumstances

- A Protocol for dealing with protestors
- Computer Literacy Policy.

A policy on HIV/Aids in the Workplace is in progress. Also, The Commission is awaiting feedback from the Permanent Secretary Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs on a Disciplinary Policy.

A Performance Management and Appraisal System (PMAS) was implemented in 2015 and Performance Appraisal Reports for all members of staff have been completed up until 2016.

Recruitment and Selection have been ongoing and are managed by the Human Resource Unit at the EOC under the guidance of the Chief Executive Officer and HR Committee.

The conciliation process was standardised during the year 2016 in the form of a workflow to capture the main steps in conciliation, the ideal timeframes and the relevant documentation.

The Human Resource Unit, in collaboration with the North West Regional Health Authority (NWRHA), conducted Annual Health Fairs for members of staff. Members of staff received vaccination, blood pressure screening, cholesterol testing, blood glucose testing, HIV testing and counselling, Body Mass Index (BMI) and nutrition discussions, and mental health screening.

Training and Development – members of staff were trained both internally and externally during the period 2014 – 2017. Members of staff received training in the following areas:

- Global Equality and Diversity (online Conference)
- Mediator's Forum Part I – Mediation Unscripted
- An Introduction to Sign Language
- Cabinet Note Writing
- Advanced Writing Skills for Professionals
- Certificate in Industrial Relations
- Certificate in Legal Studies
- Conflict Resolution
- Inventory Management
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Labour Laws in Trinidad and Tobago
- IGovTT in Window Server

- Inter American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)
- Customer Service Telephone Etiquette
- Microsoft Excel (Basics, Formulas and Functions and Working with Data)
- Complaints and Investigation of the EOC.

The Commissioners and members of staff participated in an Executive Coaching and Team Building Exercise conducted by DRA Consulting in 2016.

In Information Technology, the following were achieved 2014-2017:

- Relocation to Chaguanas of all IT equipment and systems
- Improvement of E-Mail Services and migration to a Microsoft cloud base
- Reduction of the monthly operational and rental cost of our landline service by 80%
- Reduction of the monthly operational and rental cost of our mobile service by 25%
- Reduction of the monthly operational and rental cost of our internet service by 69%
- Update of the EOC's computer software, using upgrades, including business continuity and disaster recovery procedures
- Installation of a Surveillance System for the EOC Building for 24/7 monitoring
- 2016 – Improvement of the interactivity with the general public through social media by posting all our final information to our website and leveraging social media sites, such as Facebook, to reach the wider public
- Integration of all solutions on a common collaborative portal for all departments to access securely, using a cloud solution called Office 365 from Microsoft.

## CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

The year 2017 saw several changes at the Commission reflecting its constant growth and evolution in meeting its statutory obligations. There were several highlights for the reporting period, one of which was the reappointment/appointment of the Commissioners in August of that year. It is with self-effacement that I accepted my reappointment by the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago as Chairman of the Equal Opportunity Commission. In so doing, I would like to acknowledge the sterling contribution of Dr. Indira Rampersad to the work of the Commission during her tenure as Commissioner and warmly welcome to the EOC family Dr. Emanuel Hosein, the newest Commissioner.

One of the major highpoints 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.

Indeed, the Survey, coupled with the induction of the latest Commissioners, was opportune, as the Commission's first priority was to identify and operationalise a new programmatic agenda to chart the way forward. The Commissioners and management wasted no time in reviewing the Commission's first Strategic Plan 2015-2018. The review process initiated the development of our second Strategic Plan 2018-2020.

The Commission continues to view its statutory mandate to work towards the elimination of discrimination, in all its manifestations, seriously. In that regard, we have been vocal on two subjects – domestic violence and sexual harassment in the workplace. We completed our position paper on domestic violence, which prompted the identification of ten recommended amendments to the Domestic Violence Act. To this end, collaboration with the Institute of Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) was established, as we lobbied the Attorney General to have those recommendations implemented to effectively broaden and strengthen the scope of the Act. The Commission also



commenced work on a publication to address sexual harassment in the workplace, given the recent plethora of sexual harassment allegations levelled against some of the most powerful and well-known establishments and individuals in the world. This document, in the form of Guidelines and Code of Conduct is expected to be completed in 2018. It will be 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.

Having regard to the foregoing, it became necessary that greater sensitisation take place on a sustained level. New and expanded areas of concern, including domestic violence and sexual harassment in the workplace, effected changes in the demand and delivery of our public education sessions. These sessions have



not only grown in terms of demand but they have been designed to deliver targeted messages to targeted demographic groups. This is in keeping with a recommendation which emanated from the aforementioned Survey to target and assess the knowledge levels among the youth population in particular.

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 Ragoo (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.

Our networking activities continued apace, in part, to build institutional capacity and enhance the skills and capabilities of our staff. Several members of the EOC staff participated in a Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Committee training workshop, on issues of human rights principles and obligations and applying such principles practically to support women's equality and empowerment.

We hold a broad and difficult but not impossible charter. The changes that the organisation has undergone in recent times have placed us in a position that allows us to better focus our energies on addressing and advocating on the important human rights issues that face us. The Commission will continue to pursue these aims in a spirit of cooperation with Government and Non-Government Organisations, business, community groups and individuals. Such partnerships enhance and strengthen important ties within our community and set the foundations for a fair and inclusive society.

On behalf of the Vice-Chairman Dr. Beverly Beckles, Commissioners Mr. James Chin Chuck, Mr. Eric Colin Cowie and Dr. Emanuel Hosein, and on my own behalf, I wish to thank the staff, partners and service providers of the EOC for their excellent work and support over the reporting period.

I look forward to a productive 2018. Undoubtedly, there will be challenges, but I am confident that we will resolve to meet them with perseverance and determination, as we continue our best efforts to eliminate discrimination in all its forms and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different status.



Lynette Seebaran Suite  
Chairman  
Equal Opportunity Commission

## REMARKS of the CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Equal Opportunity Act, Chapter 22:03, mandates the Commission to work towards the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity between persons of different status. Moreover, Section 27 (1) (e) charges the Commission to develop, conduct and foster research...for the purpose of eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity between persons of different status. This being said, the link between the theme of the 2017 Annual Report, 'Research, Evaluation and Monitoring in the field of Equal Opportunity and Non Discrimination', and the mandate of the EOC, is an obvious one.

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 EOC in this discourse. This strategic item came to fruition through the National Survey on Public Perception of Equality and Discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago, which was commissioned by the EOC and undertaken by TER K Solutions, between May and 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 2017 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 and strong. The results indicate overwhelmingly that the public perceives discrimination to exist; that they have experienced it and they want it to be addressed.

I encourage the public to avail themselves of the Survey findings by visiting the EOC's website at [www.equalopportunity.gov.tt](http://www.equalopportunity.gov.tt). Strengthening the Commission's programmatic agenda



remained a priority, as was reflected in its second Strategic Plan 2018-2020. The National Survey on Public Perception of Equality and Discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago was conducted at an appropriate time, since the Survey's findings and recommendations influenced a reassessment of the Commission's first Strategic Plan.

The Equal Opportunity Commission's Strategic Plan 2018-2020 was the outcome of a number of processes that began in October 2017. These processes facilitated consensus and ownership in the design of the Plan and its implementation process. A review of the achievements of the Commission was undertaken as the first step. This was followed by the adoption of the recommendations that were identified in the National Survey, resulting in a reassessment of the Commission's work and an evaluation of its progress over the period of the first Strategic

Plan 2015-2017. It allowed the Commission to identify where we were and what prevented certain action items from being achieved, and determine how the Commission could better deliver its services while moving forward with its mandate.

The Commissioners and management of the EOC continued the revision process by updating the SWOT and PEST analytical instruments towards the conduct of an environmental scan, owing to the rapid changes taking place both in the internal and external environments. Proposed initiatives were then developed, which resulted in the Strategic Action Plan 2018-2020. The previous Strategic Goals remained the same with a variation in Goal Two (2). Therefore, our three (3) main Strategic Objectives identified hereunder continue to support our initiatives:

1. To work towards the elimination of discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago, in keeping with our statutory mandate set out in the Equal Opportunity Act;
2. To become the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) for Trinidad and Tobago;
3. To maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission.

Our Strategic Plan 2018-2020 describes what we believe are the key operational, legislative, technological and social trends that will influence the Commission's direction over the next three years. It also highlights the improvements that will be required in our organisation and operations to respond to those trends. The implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2020 is expected to render the EOC a progressive national institution, as we continue to engage in a productive discourse about equality and human rights in Trinidad and Tobago and our role in the development of a society based on dignity, respect and fair opportunity.

On the issue of strengthening the internal technical capacity of the EOC, in regard to its core function of receiving and conciliating complaints of discrimination, we embarked on a human resource recruitment exercise in the first half of 2017 to fill the vacant positions in the Legal Unit. The following key positions were subsequently advertised and filled: Senior Legal Officer, two (2) Legal Officers and two (2) Investigating Officers. The filling of those positions was welcomed, as the Legal Unit then became better equipped to fully execute its mandate, improve its service delivery and operationalise the legal workflow, which was previously formalised.

Training of our human resource remained important to the Commission, as strengthening the institutional capacity of the organisation retained its priority. Staff benefitted from in-house training conducted in the areas of Office 365, Word Processing and Desktop Publishing, Using and Creating Spreadsheets, Creating Multimedia Presentations, Computer and Email Usage, Telephone Etiquette and the Australian Investigating Process. External training was conducted in the areas of Introduction to Sign Language, Freedom of Information, Public Procurement and Critical Thinking Skills. Details of the activities are presented in the Report from the Human Resource Unit on pages 82 - 85.

We have continued to make use of every opportunity afforded us to raise awareness and campaign strongly for equality and non-discrimination through our public advocacy programme. The National Survey on the Public Perception of Equality and Discrimination required a re-evaluation of our public outreach programme. The Survey identified the youth population as a group to be targeted by the Commission, and thus provided an opportunity to assess knowledge among the youths on discrimination and the work of the EOC.

The Commission also commenced work on a publication to address 'Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: Detailed Guidelines and Code of Conduct', which also influenced the re-evaluation of our public outreach. This Handbook would serve as a guide to both the private and public sectors, by providing information on understanding, preventing and resolving workplace sexual harassment. These Guidelines are a significant instrument to eliminating all forms of discrimination, while promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different status at different levels in a workplace organisation. Consequently, requests for public education sessions, particularly on sexual harassment in the workplace, have increased.

The year 2017 was not without its challenges. All sectors, including the EOC, felt the effects of the economic decline. Perhaps, the greatest challenge has been in the reduction in allocation by the Central Government and obtaining timely releases, as compared with previous years. This notwithstanding, we managed to re-prioritise where necessary and utilise available funds to the best of our ability. I must take this opportunity to thank the management and staff of the Commission, who were able to accomplish much, despite the financial challenges of 2017.

Above all, 2017 was a successful year for the Commission. The new Commissioners were duly re-appointed / appointed in August 2017, for a three (3)-year term, allowing for a smooth transition without serious interruption to the work of the Commission. I would like to extend the Commission's thanks and best wishes to former Commissioner, Dr. Indira Rampersad, whose appointment ended in 2017. At the same time, I would like to acknowledge and welcome Dr. Emanuel Hosein as Commissioner.

As we progress, let us be mindful of our obligations to strive to do our utmost to create and promote a society free from

discrimination, to protect and enable the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to encourage equal opportunities for and the fair treatment of all.



Devanty Dianne Maraj-Ramdeen  
Chief Executive Officer

# LANDMARK JUDGEMENTS



If after the investigation and conciliation of a complaint of discrimination by the EOC and the matter still remains unresolved, the Commission, with the consent of the complainant, can initiate proceedings before the Equal Opportunity Tribunal.

The EOT is a superior court of record with status similar to that of the High Court and the Industrial Court, with powers to impose fines, make orders for compensation and grant injunctions to persons who feel they are being discriminated against. It is important to note that the Equal Opportunity Tribunal is not the same as, nor is a part of, the Equal Opportunity Commission. Its functions are judicial, and are independent and distinct from the role and functions of the Equal Opportunity Commission.

The following are summaries of major Judgements made by the Equal Opportunity Tribunal in 2017:

1.

**Vidya S Maraj and the Immigration Division, Ministry of National Security**

**CONCLUSION** 'It is clear from the foregoing evidence that the Complainant was treated in a discriminatory manner – which is not contested by the Respondent. And he therefore must be compensated' (*Delivery of Judgement 7th April, 2017*)

2.

**Dindial Ragoo and the Ministry of Food Production**

**CONCLUSION** '...the Respondent by its servants and or agents treated the Complainant less favourably on the basis of his race.' (*Delivery of Judgement 21st July, 2017*)

3.

**Geeta Sahatoo and the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development**

**CONCLUSION** '...it is evident on a balance of probabilities that the Complainant was treated less favourably on the basis of her race...' (*Delivery of Judgement 31st July, 2017*)

5.

**Desmond Noel and the Auditor General of Trinidad and Tobago**

**CONCLUSION** '...it is evident on the balance of possibilities that the Respondent treated the Complainant less favourably on the basis of his race...' (*Delivery of Judgement 15th September, 2017*)

4.

**Michael Mark Archibald and the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force**

**CONCLUSION** '...it is evident that the Respondent discriminated against the Complainant on the basis of his religion.' (*Delivery of Judgement 13th September, 2017*)

The full judgements can be viewed at:  
<http://www.tteot.org/judgments.html>

## The EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT

The Equal Opportunity Act, Chapter 22:03 of the Laws of Trinidad and Tobago, was created in the year 2000 ‘to prohibit certain kinds of discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different status, to establish an Equal Opportunity Commission and an Equal Opportunity Tribunal and for matters connected therewith.’

## ABOUT the EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

### Legislative Framework

#### Establishment and Composition

The Equal Opportunity Commission was established under the provisions of section 26 (1) of the Act, cited hereunder, with composition as described therein:

‘26. (1) There is established a body to be known as the Equal Opportunity Commission (hereinafter referred to as “the Commission”) which shall comprise five Commissioners including a Chairman and a Vice- Chairman appointed by the President after consultation with the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition.’

#### Appointments

In accordance with the stated provisions of the said Act, as well as section 28 (1), which provides that:

‘... a Commissioner shall be appointed for a period not exceeding three years, but is eligible for reappointment’,

the undermentioned five (5) persons were re-appointed/ appointed Commissioners for a period of three (3) years (2017 to 2020), as indicated:

*(Re-appointed from 26th August 2017)*

Mrs. Lynette Seebaran Suite – Chairman

*(Re-appointed from 21st August 2017)*

Dr. Beverly Ann – Marie Beckles – Vice-Chairman

Mr. Eric Colin Cowie

Mr. James Chin Chuck

*(New Appointment from 21st November 2017)*

Dr. Emanuel Hosein.

Dr. Hosein was appointed in lieu of Dr. Indira Rampersad (former Commissioner), whose term of office expired on 20th August 2017.

#### Functions

The functions of the Commission, as set out in section 27 (1) of the Act, are:

- 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 this Act and any relevant law and, when so required by the Minister, or otherwise thinks it necessary, draw up and submit to the Minister 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 and other programmes for the purpose of eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different status;
- f) to prepare and to publish appropriate guidelines for the avoidance of discrimination;
- g) to do any other thing conducive or incidental to the carrying out of its functions.

### Administrative Framework

#### Support System

The Act also makes provision for the Commission to obtain administrative support in the execution of its duties. Section 29 states that “the Commission may appoint such officers and

other staff to assist in the performance of its functions.’ In that regard, the current administrative head is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who is responsible for planning, organising and coordinating activities and resources for the operational functions of the Commission.

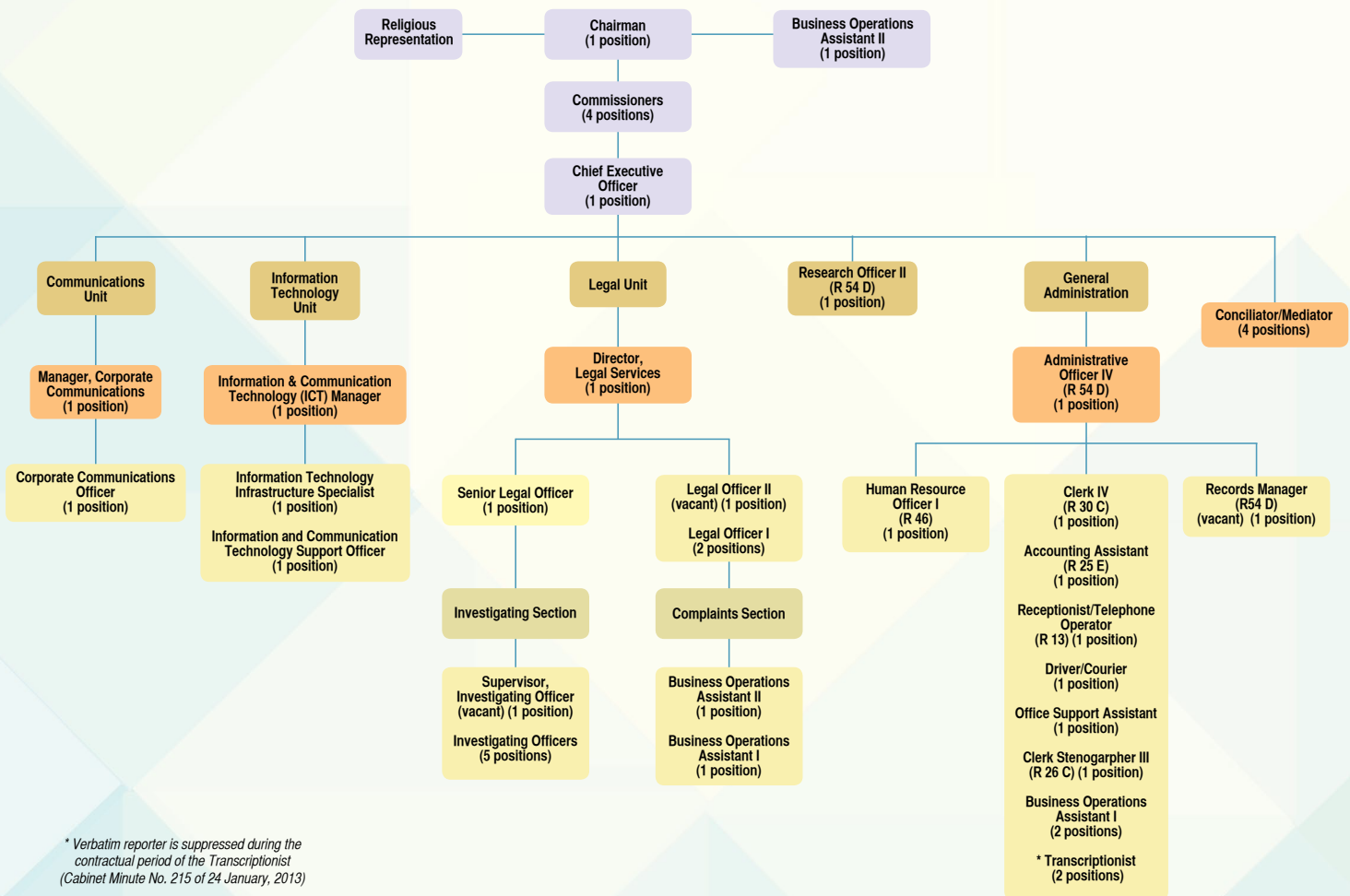
### Organisational Structure

The work of the Commission is carried out within the following main areas, under the supervision of the CEO:

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <b>Legal</b>   | <b>Communications</b>         |
| <b>General Administration (Including Human Resource)</b> | <b>Information Technology</b> |
| <b>Conciliation</b>                                      | <b>Research.</b>              |

The appropriate staff has been recruited to provide the necessary support. A copy of the Organisational Chart of the Commission is presented in the figure which follows.

### Organisational Chart of the EOC



\* Verbatim reporter is suppressed during the contractual period of the Transcriptionist (Cabinet Minute No. 215 of 24 January, 2013)

Figure 01

*The Equal Opportunity Act (continued)*

## Strategic Overview

### Mandate

The mandate of the EOC is to promote and advocate for mutual respect between groups based on understanding and appreciation of diversity and on shared respect for equality and human rights.

### Vision

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

### Mission

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

### Priorities

- To secure an effective legislative and regulatory framework for equality and human rights;
- To build a society without prejudice, promote good relations and foster a vibrant equality and human rights culture;
- To promote understanding and awareness of rights and duties and deliver timely and accurate advice and guidance to individuals and employers;
- To build an authoritative and responsive organisation.

### Core Values

#### Passion

We are committed to what we do, knowing that it makes a difference to the lives of many, and when it is done right, we can make Trinidad and Tobago a better place for everyone.

#### Fairness, justice and equality

We adhere at all times to due process and are impartial in our procedures.

#### Customer-centricity

We are sensitive to the needs of our stakeholders as we continuously strive to create a positive client experience.

#### Empathy

We seek to understand people's situations from their perspective and we are focused on exercising compassion.

#### Respect for diversity

We promote respect for people's differences.

#### Timeliness

We deliver our services promptly, in keeping with our commitments and protocols, and we address situations with a sense of urgency. We are an on-time and pro-active organisation.

#### Loyalty

We strongly support and are committed to the EOC and its mission.

#### Integrity

We operate with honesty, uprightness and honour.

#### Autonomy

We operate independently, in accordance with the law, and we are free from unnecessary external influence.

#### Team cohesiveness

We strive to communicate effectively, work together efficiently and we focus on the EOC's mission and activities that unite us.

#### Best practice

We consistently adopt methods and technologies to achieve superior results, and we keep our practices under continuous review.

#### People development

We continuously update and improve our knowledge and skills so that we develop the EOC's human capital.

#### Recognition and reward

We acknowledge the work and efforts of our team and reward them.



## PROFILE of COMMISSIONERS



### CHAIRMAN

**Mrs. Lynette Seebaran Suite** has over thirty-five (35) years' experience as a litigator. She is currently the principal of her own firm, Lynette Seebaran and Company. Mrs. Seebaran Suite has been an advocate for the rights of women and girls, and an avid supporter of the rule of law, due process and social justice. She was highly influential in the national discourse which led to the passage of the Sexual Offences Act in 1986, and spearheaded the national debate leading to the passage of the Domestic Violence Act in 1986, and its amendment in 1991. She also headed the public debate which highlighted the mischief of sexual harassment in the workplace and which has led to the adoption in many workplaces of codes of behaviour.

Over the years, Mrs. Seebaran Suite has been a Member of several statutory bodies, such as, the Law Reform Commission, the National Commission on the Status of Women and the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP), and is a past Chairman of the Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago. For many years, she was Legal Advisor to the Cooperative Credit Union League of Trinidad and Tobago and acted as a Director of the League's Stabilisation Fund. She was a Member of the Board of the Trinidad Publishing Company Limited (publisher of the Guardian Newspaper) for more than a decade and during that period served as its Legal Advisor.

She has also been a Member of various ethics committees of the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC). She heads Advocates for Safe Parenthood: Improving Reproductive Equity (ASPIRE), which partners with the Family Planning Association in promoting the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women, girls and men in Trinidad and Tobago and regionally. She is the author of many reports and papers on women's and children's issues and has attended and presented at numerous international and regional conferences.

Mrs. Seebaran Suite acted as Secretary of the Bar Association for several terms in the 1980s and is currently engaged in establishing a Family Law Association. She currently sits on the Council of the Law Association and was its nominee on the Medical Council of Trinidad and Tobago over the period 2010 to 2013. 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. She is married to Engineer, Professor Emeritus Winston Suite and is the mother of a daughter, Dara-Chameli, who recently graduated in the United Kingdom (UK) as a medical doctor.



## VICE CHAIRMAN

**Dr. Beverly Ann-Marie Beckles** holds a Doctoral degree in Organisation and Management (with Honours) from the University of Capella, Minneapolis, United States of America (USA) and a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Administration from Mc Laren 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 walks of life, her work has been key to the development of National Policy for Persons with Disabilities in seven (7) Caribbean countries. Her work involves close contact with governments, international agencies and civil societies in the promotion of equal opportunity for persons with disabilities.

Dr. Beckles is highly respected in her field, as demonstrated by her involvement in a multiplicity of public and private scenarios. She is a past Director of the Global Applied Disability Research and Information Network on Employment and Training (GLADNET), an international organisation based at Cornell University, USA, and past Chair and Member of the National Coordinating Committee on Disability. Dr. Beckles has received several acknowledgements for her work in the field of disability nationally, regionally and internationally.

In 1993, she received a National Award in recognition of community service for persons with disabilities and an International Award from Goodwill Industries Inc. in recognition of extensive contributions to persons with disabilities in the Caribbean. She has also received awards from other internationally recognised institutions and has the distinction of being the first (1st) recipient of the Inter-American Development Bank's Award for Social Entrepreneurship (1999).

## COMMISSIONER

**Dr. Emanuel Hosein** is a medical practitioner with over 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's record of achievements is highly acclaimed. On numerous occasions, he successfully campaigned for improved conditions at State, quasi-governmental and private institutions for persons who are disabled.

Despite being afflicted with polio at the tender age of eight years, he became a doctor and a good table tennis player and was the President of the Tunapuna Tigers Tennis Club (5 times National Champions). He 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 .

Dr. Hosein is the holder of a Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) degree from the University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona, Jamaica and was the first medical student to be elected President of the Guild of Undergraduates. During his tenure, he represented the entire student body in selecting the Vice-Chancellor of the University.

In the professional sphere, he was employed as a Medical Intern at the Port of Spain General Hospital, Trinidad, and subsequently assumed the position of House Officer in the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Unit. He later functioned as District Medical Officer at Caroni (1975) Limited. He was also an Acting District Prison Medical Officer at the Ministry of Health.

Dr. Hosein served as Member of Parliament for the constituencies of Naparima and Tunapuna, respectively. He also served as a Member of the Cabinet, having been appointed Minister of Health, Welfare and Women's Affairs and Minister of Social Development, respectively, during the period 1986 to 1991. As the then Minister with responsibility for Health, he oversaw the commissioning of the Eric Williams Medical Sciences Complex (Mt. Hope Hospital). Also, in Parliament, he piloted the Domestic Violence Bill.

For his work in support of community-building, and his advocacy and other efforts on behalf of persons with disabilities and the disadvantaged in society, Dr. Hosein has been the recipient of numerous awards. These include a United Nations Award for Service to the Disabled; Super Lion Award from Chancellor Hall, UWI Jamaica; Paul Harris Fellow Award from the Rotary Club of St. Augustine West and an Award from the Tunapuna Hindu Primary School for service to the Community.



The positions held by Dr. Hosein in the public and private sectors include Chairman of the North American and Caribbean Region of DPI; Medical Officers Delegate to the Public Services Association (1977); Chairman of the Hospital Doctors Committee, Port of Spain General Hospital (1976 to 1978); and Chartered Member of the Rotary Club of St. Augustine West (for over 33 years), where he was responsible for the induction of the first female member of the Club.

From 1970 to 1975, Dr. Hosein served as Coach of the Jamaican Paraplegic Table Tennis Team (including Commonwealth and Pan American Champions). His passion for table tennis led to his selection as Captain of the UWI Table Tennis Team and Chairman of the East Zone of the Trinidad and Tobago Table Tennis Association..

Dr. Hosein has provided medical advice and assistance to the National Women's Hockey Team and the National Volleyball Teams in local and international tournaments; and served on the Medical Officers Panel of the Trinidad and Tobago Cricket Board for over 25 years. He has also provided medical support at numerous local karate and judo tournaments.

Dr. Hosein has been married to Claudette Marcia Riley-Hosein for 41 years, and they have four children and five grandchildren.



## 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.

He was also appointed by the Tobago House of Assembly 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** was a Senior Product Specialist with the Telecommunications Service of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT). This portfolio ranged from managing existing products to generating products and services from inception to commercialisation.

His experience spans the private sector of banking, insurance, credit union 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.

Mr. Chin Chuck holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Management Specialisation 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.

## REVIEW of the EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT

In accordance with the provisions of section 27(1)(c) of the **Equal Opportunity Act, Chapter 22:03**, the Commission is mandated 'to keep under review the working of the Act and any relevant law and, when so required by the Minister, or otherwise thinks it necessary, draw up and submit to the Minister proposals for amending them.'

Following a review in 2010, proposals were initially sent to the Attorney General, under cover of letter dated 19th July 2010. An Amendment Bill was drafted and laid during the 1st Session of the 10th Parliament on 1st June, 2011 as the **Equal Opportunity Amendment Bill (No 2), 2011**. The Bill lapsed on 17th June 2011 and has not been re-laid. The Commission took the opportunity to reassess the proposals and, by letter dated 26th February 2014, advised the then Attorney General that:

- some of the proposed amendments should be pursued
- some of the proposed amendments should no longer be pursued
- some of the proposed amendments should be reformulated,
- other new amendments were proposed and, respectfully, should be included.

A report was attached in which these recommendations were detailed. In summary, the major proposals are:

### Amendments proposed in the 2011 Bill that should be pursued

- **Include cohabitants in marital status:** The Act provides for protection from discrimination on the ground of 'marital status' and this is defined to mean being one of the following: single, married, married but separated, divorced or widowed. The 2011 Bill proposed an amendment to include half-blood relationships and Cohabitants (as defined in the Co-Habitational Relationship Act, Chapter 45:55) in the definitions of 'family' and 'marital status', which the Commission felt was still relevant and necessary.

- **Change the threshold for receiving late complaints:** Section 30 of the Act provides that a complaint of discrimination shall be lodged within 6 months of the alleged act of discrimination, but the Commission may accept a complaint outside of this time 'in exceptional circumstances'. The 2011 Bill proposed an amendment to change the words 'in exceptional circumstances' to 'if it is reasonable to do so', and to add a new subsection (4) to empower the Commission to accept complaints that relate to matters that occurred between January 2001 to April 2008. The Commission supports this.
- **Include a duty to assist:** The 2011 Bill proposed the inclusion of a new section 30B which provided that the Commission has a duty to assist persons who wish to lodge a complaint. The Commission supports this.
- **Allow the Tribunal to grant interim injunctions:** The 2011 Bill proposed the inclusion of a new section 32A which allowed the Commission to apply to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal (the 'Tribunal') for an interim injunction. The Commission supports this.
- **Allow for appeals to the Tribunal:** Under the present schemata of the Act, if upon investigating a complaint, the Commission found no evidence of discrimination, it informs the complainant accordingly and closes off the matter. This brings the matter to an end. The 2011 Bill proposed an amendment to allow a complainant to request that his/her matter be referred to the Tribunal if he/she disagrees with the Commission's decision that there is no evidence of discrimination. The Commission supports this.
- **Allow the Commission to institute contempt proceedings:** Under the existing provisions of the Act, if a matter has been referred to conciliation and an agreement has been reached, the agreement is drawn up, signed and registered with the Equal Opportunity Tribunal. The 2011 Bill proposed an amendment to allow the Commission to initiate contempt proceedings before the Tribunal where there has been a breach of an agreement. The Commission supports this.

## Amendments proposed in the 2011 Bill that should no longer be pursued:

- **Remove the proposed prescribed forms:** The 2011 Bill proposed that the form on which a complaint should be lodged should be provided for in an Appendix to the Act, but the Commission did not think it desirable that the forms to be used should be cemented in statute, as this would not allow for flexibility in revising and restructuring the form.
- **Remove the proposed requirement that the Commission inform a Respondent that there was no case of discrimination:** The 2011 Bill proposed that where the Commission has found no evidence of discrimination to support the complainant's allegations, the Commission should be mandated to write to a respondent and inform him/her of this. While the Commission felt that this should be part of a good customer-relations process, it was not felt desirable that this be mandated in statute. Firstly, this may be useless, as there are instances when, based on the existing information supplied by a complainant, the Commission was able to dispose of a complaint without ever writing to a respondent, and secondly, there may be instances where the Commission may think it appropriate and necessary to revisit an earlier decision, and it should have the freedom so to do.
- **Remove the proposed extra steps in sanctioning a party for non-compliance:** Under the provisions of the present Act, the Commission is empowered to send a notice to any person to provide information by a certain date and a notice to a party to attend conciliation. If someone fails and/or refuses to comply with either such notice, the Commission can institute a summary prosecution before the Magistrates Court. The 2011 Bill proposed that in the case of non-compliance by a respondent, the Commission would issue a certificate, apply to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal for an ex parte order and then thereafter file a summary complaint before the Magistrates Court. The Commission did not see the need to encumber the process with the extra steps of issuing a certificate and applying to the Tribunal for an order and recommended that this be removed.

- **Remove the proposal that conciliation is deemed unsuccessful after 28 days:** The 2011 Bill proposed that conciliation should be deemed unsuccessful if a matter is unresolved after twenty-eight days. While the Commission agreed that the process should be done with due expedition, it was not felt that a limitation period should be cemented in statute. Conciliation is a voluntary process where the parties seek to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution between themselves, and the parties may need more than 28 days to consider proposals, respond, and have meaningful dialogue.

## Amendments proposed in the 2011 Bill that ought to be reformulated:

- **HIV/AIDS as well as other illnesses ought to be included as part of disability:** The 2011 Bill proposed that HIV/AIDS ought to be added as a status ground. However, Disability Discrimination Legislation in other countries (in particular, the **Americans With Disability Act, 1990** (as amended in 2008) and **United Kingdom Equality Act, 2010**) provides for HIV/AIDS as a disability rather than a separate status ground, and the Commission believes that this approach should be favoured. Further, these other pieces of legislation provide that certain other diseases ought to be deemed disabilities as well, in particular, cancer and multiple sclerosis; and for reasons of public policy, certain conditions, such as paedophilia, kleptomania and compulsive gambling, ought not be given protection. The Commission favoured this approach.
- **A more comprehensive definition of disability:** The definition of disability ought to be amended to bring it closer to what is contained in the two aforementioned pieces of legislation, where emphasis is placed on the day-to-day and long-term effects of disability on a person, rather than on his/her medical condition. Concurrently, the proposed amendments with respect to 'reasonable adjustment/ accommodation' would have to be revisited, given that to some extent it already exists via the exception for 'unjustifiable hardship'.

## New or additional amendments that ought to be included:

- **Status should not be limited to only one protected characteristic:** “Status” as defined in the existing section 3 suggests that it must be an individual characteristic (for example, a person’s race, a person’s religion). The Commission recommended that “status” should mean any one or more of the listed characteristics, given that in our society, a person may be discriminated against not because of an individual characteristic, but because of a combination of characteristics that apply to him/her.
- **Age ought to be added as a status ground, and hand-in-hand certain exceptions ought to be provided for:** The Commission had previously proposed that age be added as a “status” and this has been incorporated into the 2011 Bill. However, it was recognised that there are instances when it is acceptable for legislation or policy to provide for an entitlement or obligation to be based on a person’s age, for example, the minimum age to obtain a driving permit or purchase cigarettes or alcohol. In the absence of a specified minimum or maximum age, decisions would have to be made by some person or entity on a case-by-case basis; this opens the door to subjectivity and arbitrariness even in the best of cases and corruption and abuse in less-altruistic situations. The Commission recommended that using sections 33 to 43 of the Australian Age Discrimination Act, No 68 of 2004 as a guide, provision ought to be made for exceptions where decisions or considerations based on age would not be considered discriminatory. Additionally, provision ought to be made exempting employment promotions based on seniority and mandatory retirement ages.
- **Allowing the Commission to discontinue an investigation where it is frivolous, vexatious or has already been adequately dealt with:** The current section 32 mandates the Commission to investigate all complaints lodged with it. Read in conjunction with section 34, it would seem that a matter can only be discontinued where, after an investigation, the Commission has found no evidence of discrimination. The Commission recommended that it should be empowered to discontinue an investigation where it is of the opinion that the complaint is:
  - I. trivial, frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith, misconceived or lacking in substance
  - II. involves a subject matter that has been adequately dealt with by another court, tribunal, public body, entity or forum
  - III. involves a subject matter that would be more appropriate for another court, tribunal, public body, entity or forum.
- **Power to request documents:** The current section 33 empowers the Commission to request information via notice in writing. Given that information may be contained in documents, the Commission has regularly requested documents and has not had a difficulty receiving any. However, the Commission recommended that for the sake of clarity, it should also be expressly empowered to request documents as well.
- **Expanding the range of persons who may be convicted:** The current section 36 provides that persons who have failed and/or refused to provide information to the Commission can be summarily convicted, but only either an individual or a body corporate could be sentenced by way of fine. There are, however, many entities that are regularly asked to provide information that are neither individuals nor bodies corporate, for example, Ministries, Government Departments, Service Commissions, Faith-Based Organisations, Community-Based Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations. The Commission has expressed concern that if the Act is not modified to capture all of these entities then the Act itself becomes discriminatory, in that, while it recognises where the offence can be committed by anyone, only some are subjected to sanction, while others may escape with impunity. The Commission recommended that all entities be brought under sanction.
- **‘Referring’ a matter to the Tribunal, rather than ‘initiating proceedings’:** The current section 39(2) provides that where a complaint before the Commission is unresolved (and the Commission has taken certain steps), the Commission shall ‘initiate proceedings’ before the Equal Opportunity Tribunal on behalf and



with the consent of the complainant. The Commission would prefer that the section be amended to task the Commission with 'referring' the matter rather than 'initiating proceedings', as the latter has led to a number of practical difficulties.

- **Empowering the Commission to give assistance to persons before the Tribunal:** While the Commission does not want to bear the obligation to institute proceedings in all matters, it would like to give effect to the intent of the framers of the Act and provide assistance to some complainants in taking their matter before the Tribunal. It is to be noted that Commissions in other jurisdictions do this (for example, Hong Kong). The Commission would like to have this power expressly stated in the Act. The mechanics as to how it should be exercised should be left to the Commission to formulate and modify over time.
- **Extending the non-admissibility of evidence in conciliation proceedings to all other Courts:** The current section 40 provides that evidence of anything said or done in the course of conciliation proceedings shall not be admissible in proceedings before the Tribunal. The Commission has recommended that the **non-admissibility of evidence in conciliation proceedings** extend to all other Courts and not just be limited to the Tribunal, as there are unresolved complaints that the complainant would prefer to take to another Court, for example, the Industrial Court (through a Trade Union) or the High Court, rather than to the Tribunal, as the complainant may be of the opinion that the other Courts may offer a more appropriate resolution.

Subsequent to these proposals being sent, the Commission, by letter dated 15th October 2014, sought to include the following additional proposal:

- **Sexual Orientation ought to be added as a status ground for protection:** The Act currently protects against discrimination based on certain personal and inherent characteristics known as status grounds.

There are seven status grounds protected under the EOA - race, ethnicity, religion, marital status, disability, sex and origin, including geographical origin. However, sexual orientation is not included as a status ground and is, in fact, excluded, as the Act provides that "sex" does not include sexual preference or orientation.

In December 2014, the then Attorney General referred the proposals of the EOC to the Law Reform Commission. That Commission sent the proposals out to select stakeholders for consultation and feedback. In March 2016, the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs formed an ad hoc Committee, comprising Officers of his Secretariat, the Law Reform Commission, the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and the Equal Opportunity Commission, to review the amendments and prepare a report containing recommendations for his consideration. The Equal Opportunity Commission looks forward to a prompt resolution of that process, the drafting of the necessary amendment Bill, and the tabling of such Bill in Parliament.

## REPORTS

### Report from the Legal Unit

#### Complaints Received by The Commission in 2017

At section 27(1) (d) of the Act, the Commission is mandated *“to receive, investigate and as far as possible, conciliate allegations of discrimination”* that are lodged with it by members of the public.



#### Overview of the 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 take 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 with 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 \$1,000.00 per day or
  - In the case of a body corporate to a fine of \$5,000.00 per dayfor each and every day that the party has failed and/or refused to comply.
- **Preparing and publishing Reports:** Pursuant to the provisions of section 29, if:
  - (a) attempts to resolve the matter by conciliation have not been successful, or
  - (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 of the Report presents information on complaints received and handled in 2017, using the following processes, that is:

- (A) Complaints Received and Investigated in 2017;
- (B) Complaints referred to Conciliation in 2017;
- (C) Summary Prosecutions for Non - Compliance
- (D) Reports on Matters published for Public Inspection.
- (E) Initiating Proceedings before the Equal Opportunity Tribunal

### A. Complaints Received and Investigated in 2017

In this section, we will present and discuss 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.

#### 1. Number of Complaints Received

The Commission received one hundred and twenty-nine (129) complaints in 2017, which is an increase of thirty (31) in both numbers and percentage from what was received in 2016 [ninety-eight (98)]. It is also an increase from the number received in 2015 [one hundred and two (102)].

**Number of Complaints received by Month January 2015 to December 2017**

Month	2017	2016	2015
January	03	09	10
February	12	05	09
March	15	09	07
April	14	10	04
May	16	11	09
June	17	06	08
July	11	05	07
August	05	05	14
September	07	09	13
October	14	08	07
November	13	09	04
December	02	12	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>102</b>

Table 02

When disaggregated by quarters, it is observed that over the period 2015 to 2017, there has been:

- a steady increase in the percentage of complaints received in the second quarter (up from twenty and half percent (20.5%) in 2015 to thirty-six and half percent (36.5%) in 2017) and,
- a steady decrease in the percentage of complaints received in the third quarter (down from thirty-three

percent (33%) in 2015 to eighteen percent (18%) in 2017).

In 2017, the majority of complaints were received in the first half of the year - fifty-nine and half percent (59.5%) – whereas in 2016 they were more-or-less evenly split, and in 2015, more complaints were received in the second half of the year – fifty-three and half percent (53.5%).

**Number of Complaints received by Quarter – 2015 to 2017**

Quarter	2017		2016		2015	
	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total
1st (Jan to March)	30	23	23	23.5	26	25.5
2nd (Apr to June)	47	36.5	27	27.5	21	20.5
3rd (Jul to Sept)	23	18	19	19.5	34	33
4th (Oct to Dec)	29	22.5	29	29.5	21	20.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 03

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

For the three-year period January 2015 to December 2017, a total of three hundred and twenty-nine (329) complaints were lodged, of which:

- One hundred and eighty-six (186) were lodged by males, or about fifty-six and half percent (56.5%)
- One hundred and forty-two (142) were lodged by females, or about forty-three percent (43%) and

- One (01) was lodged by a group, which is less than one percent (<01%).

In each of the three years, more complaints were lodged by males than by females. However, while in 2015 the percentage males had a twenty percent (20%) margin over females in the number of complaints lodged, in 2017, they were virtually even, and in fact, the differential was only one (01) complaint more, which was less than one percent (<01%).

**Sex of the Complainants 2015-2017**

Type	2017	2016	2015	Total for all 3 years
Male	65 (50.3%)	61 (62%)	60 (59%)	<b>186</b> <b>(56.5%)</b>
Female	64 (49.6%)	37 (38%)	41 (40%)	<b>142</b> <b>(43%)</b>
Group	0 0	0 0	01 (<01%)	<b>01</b> <b>(&lt;01%)</b>
<b>Total by year</b>	<b>129</b> <b>(100%)</b>	<b>98</b> <b>(100%)</b>	<b>102</b> <b>(100%)</b>	<b>329</b> <b>(100%)</b>

Table 04

Of the one hundred and twenty-nine (129) complaints received in 2017, thirty-one (31) or about twenty-four percent (24%) of complainants, did not give age information. This was a steady increase over the three years – from sixteen and half percent (16.5%) in 2015 up to twenty percent (20%) in 2016, and then up again in 2017. There has been a consistent increase over the three years in the numbers and percentages of persons who do not provide this information. From those who gave information, the following can be noted:

- In all three years, the percentage of complaints lodged by persons under eighteen (18) years old has been relatively small; in actuality, complaints from this group are normally complaints by students and are lodged by their parents.
- In 2015 and 2016, the percentage of complaints lodged by persons aged eighteen to twenty-five (18 – 25) years was relatively small, accounting for three percent (03%) or less, but there was a significant increase by this group in 2017 to eight and half percent (8.5%). From mid-2016 onwards, the Commission has attempted to increase its presence on social media, and it may be that as a result, this demographic (which is most associated with social media than any other group) has become more aware of the Commission and sought to access its services.
- Over the three years, the super-cluster of persons aged twenty-six to forty-five (26 to 45) years accounted for the most number of complaints: this group amounted to forty-eight percent (48%) in 2015, they increased to fifty-one percent (51%) in 2016 but dropped to forty and half percent (40.5%) in 2017. Despite this drop, they are still the single largest group of complainants.
- The percentage of complaints lodged by persons aged forty-six to fifty-five (46 – 55) years declined steadily over the period, from eighteen and half percent (18.5%) in 2015 to eleven percent (11%) in 2017.
- Over the three years, the percentage of complaints lodged by persons over sixty-five (65) years has also been consistently small, accounting for three percent (03%) or less. 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.

**Age of the Complainants 2015-2017**

Age group (by years)	2017		2016		2015	
	No. of Complaints	% of the Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of the Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of the Annual Total
Under 18	02	01.5	0	0	01	01
18-25	11	08.5	03	03	01	01
26-35	24	18.5	38	39	24	23.5
36-45	28	22	12	12	25	24.5
46-55	14	11	12	12	19	18.5
56-65	16	12.5	10	10	12	12
Over 65	03	02	03	03	03	2.5
Not Stated	31	24	20	20	17	16.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 05

With respect to the racial composition of persons who lodged complaints in 2017:

- Forty-three (43) persons self-identified as being of African origin, which was about thirty-three percent (33%) of complainants. In 2016, this group accounted for thirty-four percent (34%) of complainants, so there was a slight decrease;
- Thirty-four (34) persons self-identified as being of East Indian origin, which was about twenty-six and half (26.5%) of complainants. In 2016, this group accounted for forty-three percent (43%) of all complainants, so there was a significant decrease;
- Twenty-three (23) persons self-identified as being of mixed origin, which is about eighteen percent (18%). In

2016, this group accounted for twelve percent (12%) of all complainants, so there was a noticeable increase;

- No person self-identified as being of White/ French Créole, Chinese, Portuguese or Syrian/ Lebanese origin. In 2016, persons from these groups accounted for three percent (03%) of all complainants, so there was a decrease.
- Twenty-nine (29) persons did not provide any data about their origin; this amounted to twenty-two and half percent (22.5%). In 2016, persons who did not self-identify amounted to seven percent (07%) of all complainants, so there has been a significant increase in the number of persons who have chosen not to give this information.

**Racial Background of Complainants - 2017**

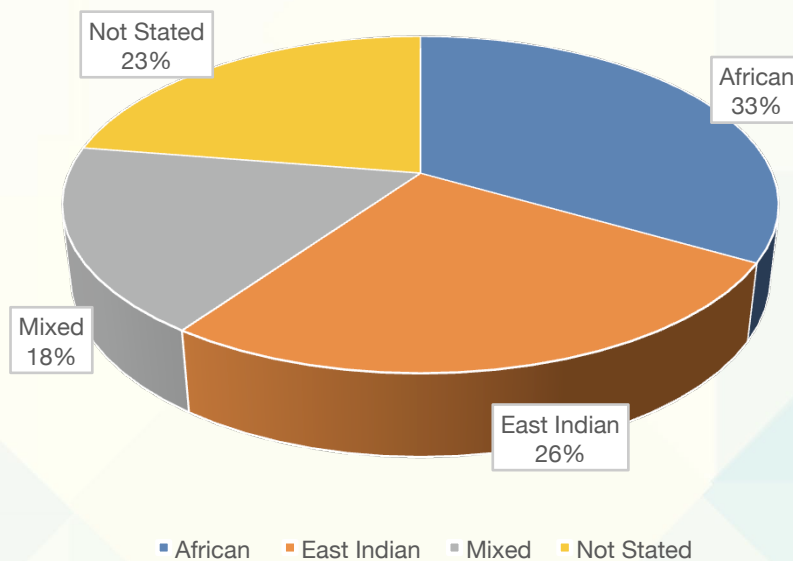


Figure 02

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%

Compared with national statistics, in 2017, there was a lesser tendency for persons of East Indian origin and Mixed origin to lodge complaints and an equivalent tendency for persons of African origin to lodge complaints. That is:

- Persons of African origin about equivalently accessed the Commission's complaints services, as this group accounted for thirty-three percent (33%) of complainants, and about thirty-four percent (34%) of the national population;

- 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 about twenty-six and half (26.5%) of complainants;
- Persons of Mixed origin made up about eighteen percent (18%) of complainants, whereas they accounted for about twenty-three percent (23%) of the national population. Although this group under-utilised the Commission's services, there was an increase in the percentage of this group from twelve percent (12%) in 2016 to eighteen percent (18%) in 2017, so that this group is increasing its access to the Commission;
- Persons of White/French Créole, Portuguese, Chinese and Syrian/Lebanese ancestry did not utilise the Commission's complaints services in 2017.

### 3. Geographic Data on the Complainants

This data is based on the 'home addresses' that the complainants provided on their complaint form. This 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.

- About twelve and half percent (12.5%) of all complaints received in 2017 were lodged by persons living in the North-West region of Trinidad [Port-of-Spain and Diego Martin]. In 2016, this region accounted for about thirteen percent (13%) of complaints lodged, so this trend is fairly consistent. According to 2011 National Census Data published by the Central Statistical Office, this region accounts for 10.6% of the total population of Trinidad and Tobago; consequently, it can be said that in both years there was a slightly higher tendency for persons from this region to lodge complaints.
- About thirty-three and half percent (33.5%) of all complaints received were lodged by persons living in the North-East Region [San Juan/Laventille, Tunapuna/Piarco, Arima and Sangre Grande]. In 2016, this region accounted for about thirty-three percent (33%) of complaints lodged, so this trend is fairly consistent. According to 2011 National Census Data, this region accounts for 36.3% of the total population of Trinidad

and Tobago; consequently, it can be said that in both years there was a lesser tendency for persons from this region to lodge complaints, but the differential is not large (about three percent points).

- About twenty-five and half percent (25.5%) of all complaints received in 2017 were lodged by persons living in the Central Region [Chaguanas and Couva/Talparo/Tabaquite]. In 2016, this region accounted for thirty and half percent (30.5%) of complaints lodged, so that there has been a decrease in the percentage of complaints received from this region. Despite this decrease, this region is still above the national average. According to 2011 National Census Data, this region accounts for 19.7% of the total population of Trinidad and Tobago; consequently, it can be said that there is a greater tendency for persons from this region to lodge complaints. The differential is about six percent points above the national population (that is, national population is 19.7%, but complaints received in 2017 is 25.5%).
- About nineteen and half percent (19.5%) of all complaints received were lodged by persons living in the Southern Region [San Fernando, Point Fortin, Penal/Debe, Princes Town, Siparia and Mayaro/Rio Claro]. In 2016, this region accounted for eighteen and half percent (18.5%) of complaints lodged, so this trend is fairly consistent. According to 2011 National Census Data, this region accounts for 28.8% of the total population of Trinidad and Tobago; consequently, it can be said that in both years there is a much lesser tendency for persons from this region to lodge complaints. The differential is about nine percent points below the national population (that is, national population is 28.8%, but complaints received in 2017 is 19.5%).
- About seven and half percent of all complaints received in 2017 were lodged by persons from Tobago. In 2016, this region accounted for three percent (03%) of complaints lodged, so there has been a significant increase. According to 2011 National Census Data, Tobago accounts for 4.6% of the total population of our twin-island Republic; consequently, it can be said that in 2016 there was a lesser tendency for persons from Tobago to lodge complaints, but this changed in 2017 where there was a greater tendency for persons from this region to lodge complaints; but in both situations, the differential is less than three percent points.

**Geographical Origin of Complainants 2015-2017 (By Regional and Municipal Corporations)**

Area	2017		2016		2015	
	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total
Port-of-Spain	08	06	07	07	06	06
Diego Martin	08	06	06	06	03	03
San Juan/ Laventille	10	07.5	08	08	05	05
Tunapuna/Piarco	20	15.5	13	13	12	12
Arima	09	07	10	10	20	19.5
Toco/Sangre Grande	04	03	01	01	02	02
Chaguanas	22	17	26	26	14	14
Couva/Talparo/Tabaquite	11	08.5	04	04	06	06
San Fernando	11	08.5	10	10	12	12
Penal/Debe	05	04	02	02	01	01
Siparia	0	0	02	02	01	01
Point Fortin	01	<01	02	02	02	02
Princes Town	05	04	01	01	06	06
Mayaro/Rio Claro	03	02.5	01	01	04	04
Tobago	10	07.5	03	03	07	07
Not stated/ Other	02	01.5	02	01	01	01
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>		<b>98</b>		<b>102</b>	

Table 06

In both 2016 and 2017, the Chaguanas Borough accounted for the single highest number and percentage of complaints lodged, with the Tunapuna/ Piarco region placing second. However, Chaguanas decreased from twenty-six percent (26%) in 2016 to seventeen percent (17%) in 2017, whereas Tunapuna/ Piarco increased over the three-year period from twelve percent (12%) in 2015 to fifteen and half percent (15.5%) in 2017. In both 2016 and 2017, the number and percentage of complaints received from persons in the extreme tips of Trinidad continued to be low:

- Complaints from Toco/ Sangre Grande were consistently at three percent (03%) or less, but in 2017, it was at its highest, of three percent (03%);
- Complaints from Mayaro/ Rio Claro were consistently at four percent (04%) or less, and in 2017, it was at two and half percent (2.5%);

- Complaints from Siparia and Point Fortin were consistently at four percent (04%) or less, and in 2017, it was at its lowest, at less than one percent.

**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 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**:

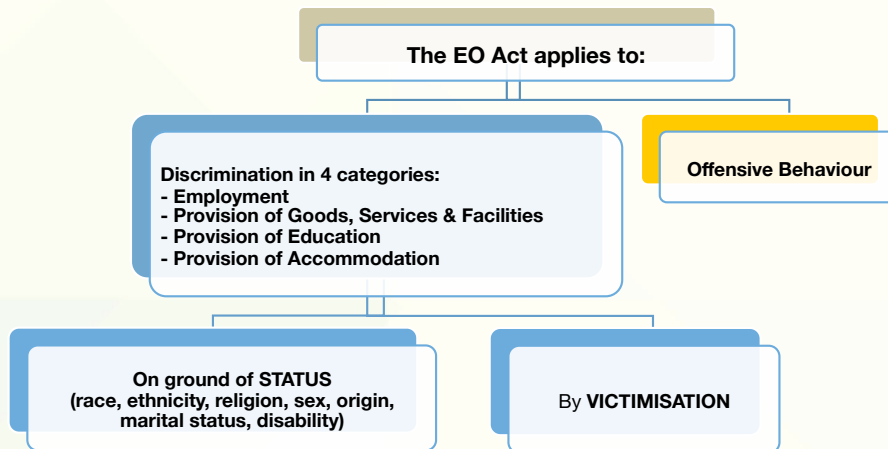
- **Employment**
- **The Provision of Goods, Services and Facilities**
- **The Provision of Education**
- **The Provision of Accommodation,**



but it only applies if that discrimination is:

- i. discrimination on the **ground 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.



A ‘status’ is a personal characteristic that the Act gives protection to. Currently there are seven (7) status grounds that are protected: Sex, Race, Ethnicity, Religion, Marital Status, Origin, (including geographic origin) and Disability.

Figure 03

**Category of Discrimination:**

In 2017, employment continued to occupy the largest share of categories of discrimination alleged. Between 2015 and 2016 there was a decline in its percentage share of the annual total, from seventy-three and half percent (73.5%) in 2015, down to sixty-seven percent (67%) in 2016, and conversely, there was an increase in the share of complaints based on the provision of goods and services, from twenty and half percent (20.5%) in 2015, up to twenty-five percent (25%) in 2016.

However, this trend reversed in 2017: employment rebounded to eighty-three percent (83%), which is its highest over the period, and goods and services dropped to eleven percent (11%), which is its lowest over the period. Complaints based on education and on accommodation both remained fairly consistent, accounting for about five percent (05%) and one percent (01%), respectively.

**Category of Discrimination Alleged 2015 -2017**

Category	2017		2016		2015	
	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total
Employment	107	83	67	67	75	73.5
Goods, Services and Facilities	14	11	25	25	21	20.5
Education	06	04.5	05	05	03	03
Accommodation	01	<01	01	01	01	01
Offensive Behaviour	0	0	03 <sup>⊗</sup>	02	01	01
Other/ not stated	01	<01	0	0	01	01
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>101<sup>⊗</sup></b>	<b>100</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 07

⊗ In 2016, the three persons who alleged Offensive Behaviour also alleged discrimination in other categories with respect to the same incident.

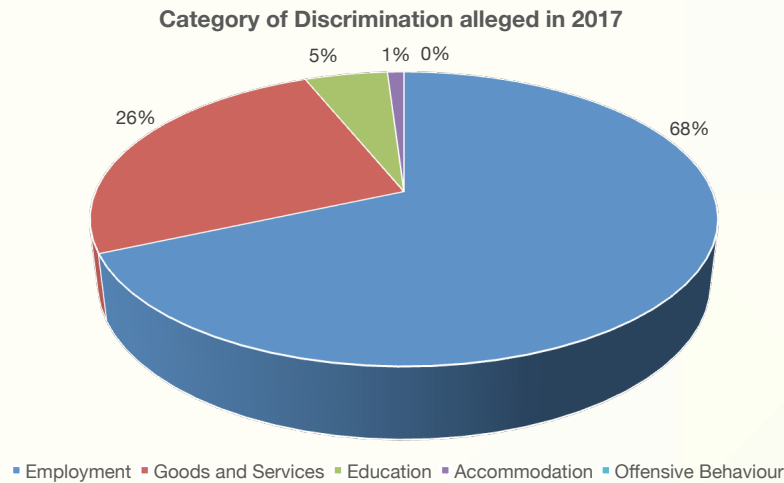


Figure 04

### Status/ Victimisation Alleged

Of the one hundred and twenty-nine (129) complaints lodged in 2017:

- Thirty-three (33) identified no status under the Equal Opportunity Act. Of this number, one (01) identified age, which is not a status ground covered by the Act, and thirteen (13) identified 'some other reason' which included reasons not covered by the Act, including favouritism, nepotism and political affiliation.

- Ninety-six (96) complaints lodged identified one or more status grounds (including victimisation). This amounts to about seventy-four and half percent (74.5%) of all complaints lodged. In 2016, a higher percentage of complaints lodged alleged one or more status grounds, eighty-nine percent (89%); but in terms of actual numbers, the 2017 number was the highest over the three-year period 2015 to 2017, and in fact, is almost double the 2015 number (fifty-one (51)).

### Total Number of Complaints that Alleged a Status Ground 2015 to 2017

	2017	2016	2015
Total Number of complaints received	129	98	102
Of which, total number that alleged one or more status grounds	96 (74.5%)	87 (89%)	51 (50%)

Table 08

Of the ninety-six (96) that alleged a status ground:

- Seventy-seven (77) of the complaints that were lodged, which amounts to fifty-nine and half percent (59.5%), were taken to have been based on one status ground:
  - I. Sixty-seven (67) complainants alleged discrimination on the basis of only one status ground (or victimisation);
  - II. A further three (03) alleged one status ground, as well as a ground that was not recognised (political affiliation or 'some other reason'), so that their complaint was treated as being based on the recognised status ground only;

- III. Seven (07) persons alleged discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity together. Although race and ethnicity are different concepts, and in the Equal Opportunity Act they are listed as separate status grounds, the ordinary citizen perceives these as being identical, and complaints of discrimination are generally lodged on both grounds. For the purpose of this report they are dealt with together as one ground.
  - The remaining nineteen (19) persons alleged two or more grounds.

**The ninety-six (96) complaints where persons alleged a status can be dissected as follows:**

<p><b>Race and/or Ethnicity</b></p>	<p>Thirty-seven (37) complaints, or about twenty-eight and half percent (28.5%) of all complaints received, involved an allegation of racial and/or ethnic discrimination. This was an increase from 2016 in both numbers and percentage share: in 2016, the number of complaints of this nature was twenty-two (22), which represented about twenty-two and half percent (22.5%) of all complaints received. Of the 37 received in 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nine (09) persons alleged race alone, and a further one (01) person alleged race along with a status ground that is not recognised (political affiliation) so that his claim was treated as being based on race only;</li> <li>• Five (05) persons alleged ethnicity alone and a further one (01) person alleged ethnicity along with ‘some other reason’ so that her claim was treated as being based on race only;</li> <li>• Seven (07) persons alleged race and ethnicity together;</li> <li>• The remaining persons alleged race and/or ethnicity along with other status grounds. For example:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Eight (08) persons alleged race and/or ethnicity along with origin, and of these:                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Three (03) persons alleged these grounds only;</li> <li>- One (01) person went on to add disability;</li> <li>- Two (02) persons went on to add religion, and of this, one (01) went on to add marital status;</li> <li>- Two (02) persons went on to add sex, and of this, one (01) person went on to add marital status;</li> </ul> </li> <li>◦ In total, four (04) persons alleged race and ethnicity along with religion. Of this, two (02) persons were presented in the list above as persons who alleged origin additional to religion. Of the remaining two (02) not covered in the list above, one (01) went on to add disability;</li> <li>◦ In total, four (04) persons alleged race and/or ethnicity along with sex. Of this, two (02) persons were presented in the list above as persons who alleged origin additional to sex. The remaining two (02) not covered in the list above did not allege any additional status grounds;</li> <li>◦ Two (02) persons alleged race and/or ethnicity along with victimisation;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Religion</b></p>	<p>Nineteen (19) complaints, or about fifteen and half percent (15.5%) of all complaints received, involved an allegation of discrimination on the ground of religion. This was more than double both the number and percentage share of complaints of religious discrimination received in 2016: six (06) complaints were received in that year, which represents about six percent (06%) of all received for the year. Of the 19 received in 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thirteen (13) persons alleged religion on its own and a further one (01) person alleged religion along with ‘some other reason’ so that his claim was treated as being based on religion only;</li> <li>• Four (04) persons alleged religion along with race and/or ethnicity, and of these:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Two added origin, of which, one (01) went on to add marital status;</li> <li>◦ One (01) person went on to add disability.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Two (02) persons added sex, of which, one (01) went on to add marital status;</li> </ul>

<p><b>Sex</b></p>	<p>Seventeen (17) complaints, which is about thirteen percent (13%) of all received, involved an allegation of sex discrimination. This was an increase in the number of complaints received in 2016, but the percentage share remained the same: in 2016, thirteen (13) complaints of sex discrimination were received, which is about thirteen percent (13%) of all received for that year. Of the 17 received in 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eight (08) persons alleged sex alone;</li> <li>• Four (04) persons alleged sex along with race and/or ethnicity, of which, two (02) persons added origin, and of this, one (01) person went on to add marital status;</li> <li>• Three (03) persons alleged sex along with victimisation;</li> <li>• Two (02) persons alleged sex along with religion, and of this, one (01) person went on to add marital status.</li> </ul> <p>Quite apart from the numbers, it is worth mentioning that five (05) complaints involved allegations of sexual harassment: three (03) persons complained of harassment that they suffered on the job, which the employer failed and/or refused to treat with. One person complained of being terminated by his/her employer after he/she made an allegation of sexual harassment, and one (01) person complained that he/she was the victim of an unfounded allegation, that is, that an allegation was made against him/her, and he/she was treated with unfairly by his/her employer, in the attempts to treat with the allegation;</p>
<p><b>Origin</b></p>	<p>Fifteen (15) complaints, which is about eleven and half percent (11.5%) of all complaints received, involved an allegation of discrimination on the ground of origin. This was an increase from 2016 in both numbers and percentage share: in 2016, there were eight (08) complaints of origin discrimination, which is about eight percent (08%) of all received. Of the 15 received in 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seven (07) persons lodged complaints based on origin alone;</li> <li>• Eight (08) persons alleged origin along with race and/or ethnicity: the discussion under 'race and ethnicity' above where this is dissected further is relevant;</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disability</b></p>	<p>Ten (10) complaints, which is about eight percent (08%) of all complaints received, involved an allegation of disability discrimination. This was decreased from 2016 in both numbers and percentage share: in 2016, twenty (20) disability complaints were received, which is twice the number received in 2017, and this accounted for twenty and half percent (20.5%) of all complaints received that year. Of the 10 received in 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eight (08) complainants alleged disability on its own;</li> <li>• Two (02) persons alleged disability along with race and/or ethnicity, and of this, one (01) went on to add origin, and the other one (01) went on to add religion.</li> </ul> <p>The following is some information on the nature of the complaints lodged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three (03) complaints were lodged by parents on behalf of their children, and they alleged discrimination by the schools which their children were either attending, or in one case, had applied to;</li> <li>• One (01) person alleged discrimination on the basis of being HIV-positive, which the Commission has recognised as falling within the definition of 'disability' under the Equal Opportunity Act;</li> <li>• Three (03) persons alleged discrimination on the basis of non-physical disabilities, which are also recognised as disabilities under the Act: two persons claimed that they were diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder ('ADHD'), and one person claimed to have hylophobia (fear of forested areas);</li> </ul>

<b>Marital Status</b>	<p>Three (03) complaints, which is about two percent (02%) of all complaints received, involved an allegation of discrimination on the ground of marital status; this is an increase over 2016, when no complaints were lodged on this basis. Of the 03 received in 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None alleged marital status on its own, and those that did allege it, did so in conjunction with multiple statuses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ One (01) alleged in conjunction with origin and race and/or ethnicity and sex;</li> <li>◦ One (01) alleged in conjunction with origin and race and/or ethnicity and religion;</li> <li>◦ One (01) alleged in conjunction with sex and religion.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Victimisation</b>	<p>Twenty-two (22) complaints, which is about seventeen percent (17%) of all complaints received, involved an allegation of victimisation. This was an increase from 2016 in both numbers and percentage share: in 2016, there were ten (10) complaints of victimisation, which is less than half of what was received in 2017, and this amounted to ten percent (10%) of all complaints received that year. Of the 22 received in 2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seventeen (17) complaints alleged victimisation on its own;</li> <li>• The other five (05) complaints alleged victimisation along with another status ground: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Three (03) persons alleged victimisation along with sex;</li> <li>◦ Two (02) persons alleged victimisation along with race and/or ethnicity.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Table 09

It is to be repeated that nineteen (19) persons alleged two (02) or more status grounds. As such, the numbers presented in the table above will not easily tally and there are obvious overlaps, for example, under the heading “Religion”, the two (02) persons who alleged discrimination because of religion along with sex, would be the same two (02) persons who, under the heading “Sex”, alleged discrimination based on sex along with religion.

## 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 twenty-nine (129) complaints lodged in 2017:

- One hundred and two (102), which is about seventy-nine percent (79%), were against State/ Public Sector entities, and
- Twenty-seven (27), which is about twenty-one percent (21%), were against Private Sector entities.

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, Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago 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, Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Limited, Education Facilities Company Limited.

### Types of Respondents 2015 to 2017

CATEGORY	2017		2016		2015	
	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total
State/ Public Sector	102	79	75	76.5	82	80.4
Private (including NGOs and Individuals)	27	21	23	23.5	20	19.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 10

For the period 2015 to 2017, complaints against State / Public entities have consistently accounted for more than seventy-five percent (75%) of complaints lodged in each year. These complaints accounted for about eighty percent (80%) in both 2015 and 2017. Moreover, there has been a consistent increase in the number of Private Sector complaints over the period, from, twenty (20) in 2015 to twenty-three (23) in 2016 up to twenty-seven (27) in 2017.

Of the one hundred and two (102) complaints that are considered State/ Public Sector:

- Twenty-six (26) complaints were lodged against a Government Ministry or a Department, Office or Division of a Ministry. This is an increase from twenty-three (23) in 2016;
- Five (05) complaints named the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service as a Respondent. This was a decrease from six (06) in 2016;
- A further five (05) complaints were lodged against a protective service, that is, the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, Fire Service or Prison Service;
- Six (06) complaints were lodged against a Service Commission. This is an increase from four (04) in 2016;
- Six (06) complaints were made against public bodies that have regulatory and/or investigative functions. This is an increase from two (02) in 2016;
- Fourteen (14) complaints were lodged against Regional Health Authorities based in Trinidad. This is a significant increase over the five (05) that were lodged in 2016;
- Four (04) complaints were lodged against Regional Corporations based in Trinidad;
- Two (02) complaints were lodged against regional and administrative bodies that operate in Tobago;
- Eleven (11) complaints were lodged against Public-Sector educational institutions, of which:
  - Four (04) complaints were lodged against primary or secondary schools that fall under the purview of the Ministry of Education. This is an increase from two (02) in 2016;
  - Six (06) 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. This is an increase from four (04) in 2016;

- One (01) was lodged against an institution that provided vocational training;

(It is to be noted that among the Private Sector complaints, two (02) were lodged against privately-owned schools.)

- Twenty-one (21) complaints were filed against corporations and enterprises owned by the State, apart from those that would fall into one of the categories above. Of these:
  - Five (05) were against a utility that provides water;
  - Five (05) were against State companies that operate in the oil and gas sector;
  - Two (02) were against a company that provides maintenance and security services;
  - Two (02) were against a corporation that provides public transport.

Of the twenty-seven (27) complaints that were lodged against Private Sector entities:

- With respect to the Oil and Gas Sector, one (01) complaint was lodged against a producer/ manufacturer with revenues in excess of One Billion Dollars, and three (03) complaints were lodged against smaller companies that provide supplies and services in this Sector;
- With respect to the Manufacturing Sector, two (02) complaints were lodged against mid-sized manufacturers;
- With respect to the Retail - goods and merchandise - Sector, two (02) complaints were lodged against a chain of supermarkets, and two (02) were lodged against distributors;
- The rest of the complaints were lodged against entities involved in the Services Sector, of which:
  - With respect to the Restaurant, Nightclub and Entertainment sub-sector, two (02) complaints were lodged against restaurants, one of which was part of a franchise chain, one (01) complaint was lodged against the owners of a multiplex cinema,

and one (01) against the owner of a shopping mall;

- Two (02) complaints were lodged against private security companies;
- Two (02) complaints were lodged against private schools, one (01) was lodged against an individual who provided private education services, and one (01) was lodged against a home and school for children with disabilities;
- Three (03) complaints were lodged against banks;
- One (01) complaint was lodged against a large media house that is part of an even larger conglomerate. It is to be noted that one of the mid-sized manufacturers mentioned above is also a company in the same conglomerate;
- One (01) complaint was lodged against a trade union.
- Two (02) complaints were lodged against a national association that governs a particular sport.

Twenty-six (26) of the twenty-seven (27) Private Sector entities were from Trinidad; one (01) was from Tobago.

It is important to emphasise that the information presented above simply indicates against whom the complaints were lodged; 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, 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 Table presents these cluster zones and the number of individual respondents that are based in said zones.

**Geographical Origin of Respondents 2016 and 2017  
(By Economic/ Commercial Cluster Zones)**

Cluster Zone	Brief Explanation of Zone	2017		2016	
		No. of Respondents	% of Annual Total	No. of Respondents	% of Annual Total
<b>Port-of-Spain</b>	This comprises the City of Port-of-Spain and environs (for example, Sea Lots, East Dry River, St Ann's, Maraval, St James)	69	53.5	58	59
<b>North West</b>	This comprises areas west of Port-of-Spain, such as Diego Martin, Diamond Vale, Carenage, Chaguaramas	02	01.5	02	02
<b>San Juan</b>	This comprises San Juan, El Socorro, Aranjuez	05	04	02	02
<b>St Joseph/ St Augustine</b>	This comprises areas from St Joseph to Curepe	11	08.5	10	10
<b>Macoya/Trincity</b>	This comprises areas from Tunapuna to Piarco	05	04	05	05
<b>Arima</b>	This comprises the Borough of Arima and environs (O'Meara)	03	02.5	03	03
<b>North-East</b>	This comprises areas east of Arima, such as Valencia, Toco and Sangre Grande	02	01.5	0	
<b>Charlieville/ Chaguanas</b>	This comprises areas from Frederick Settlement in Caroni to Munroe Road to Charlieville to Chaguanas and environs (such as Lange Park, Edinburgh, Felicity)	07	05.5	03	03
<b>Couva/ Point Lisas</b>	This comprises Couva and environs (for example, Balmain, McBean, Freeport) and the Point Lisas Industrial Estate	03	02.5	01	01
<b>Claxton Bay/ Pointe-à-Pierre</b>	This comprises areas such as Plaisance Park, Forres Park, and the industrial centres around Claxton Bay and Pointe-à-Pierre	03	02.5	02	02
<b>San Fernando</b>	This comprises the City of San Fernando and environs (for example, Marabella, Union Park, La Romain)	07	05.5	07	07
<b>La Brea/ Point Fortin</b>	This comprises areas from Otaheite to the industrial centres at La Brea and Point Fortin	01	0.77	02	02
<b>South West</b>	This comprises areas south and west of the La Brea/ Point Fortin cluster, and includes Icacos, Cedros, Chatham, Erin, Palo Seco and Santa Flora	01	0.77	0	
<b>Penal/ Debe/ Princes Town</b>	This comprises areas east of the San Fernando, La Brea and South West Clusters, and includes places like Fyzabad, Penal, Debe, Princes Town and Moruga	01	0.77	0	
<b>Manzanilla/ Mayaro</b>	This comprises areas of East Trinidad south of Sangre Grande	01	0.77	0	
<b>Tobago</b>	This comprises the island of Tobago	08	06	03	03

Table 11



In both 2016 and 2017, more than fifty percent (50%) of the Respondents were based in Port-of-Spain, but the percentage share dropped from fifty-nine percent (59%) in 2016 to about fifty-three percent (53%) in 2017. A further twenty percent (20%) of complaints were against entities based in the East-West corridor (that is, from Arima to Diego Martin, but not including Port-of-Spain). In total, seventy-three and half percent (73.5%) of Respondents were from the East-West corridor (including Port-of-Spain); this is a decrease from 2016, when eighty-one percent (81%) were from this region.

In both 2016 and 2017, seven percent (07%) of Respondents were from San Fernando. In 2016, this was the third highest source area for Respondents, after Port-of-Spain and St Augustine/ St Joseph; in 2017, these two areas were still first and second respectively, but Tobago was now in third place, and San Fernando tied with Chaguanas/ Charlieville for fourth place. In 2016, complaints against entities based in Tobago and entities based in Chaguanas/ Charlieville both amounted to three percent (03%), but this increased in 2017: complaints against Tobago entities doubled to six percent (06%) in 2017, and complaints against Chaguanas/ Charlieville entities almost doubled to five and half percent (05.5%). In both 2016 and 2017, a remarkably low number of complaints was lodged against entities based in the energy belt, that is the area stretching from Point Lisas to Point Fortin, and would include Claxton Bay, Pointe-à-Pierre and La Brea (but for the purpose of this analysis, would not include San Fernando). This belt only accounted for five percent (05%) of the complaints in 2016 and about six percent (06%) in 2017, but this belt accounts for a significantly higher percentage of the employed population of Trinidad and Tobago.

If one were to compare the geographical location of the Respondents with the geographical location of the Complainants, that was presented earlier, one may observe the following:

- Twenty-two percent (22%) of the Complainants reside in the Chaguanas region, but only eight percent (08%) of the Respondents are based in the area stretching from Charlieville to Point Lisas.;
- Only eight percent (08%) of the Complainants live in Port-of-Spain, but almost fifty-four (54%) of the Respondents are based there;
- On the other hand, an equal percentage of Complainants – eight percent (08%) – live in the Diego Martin area, but only one and half percent (01.5%) of Respondents are based there;
- Eleven percent (11%) of the Complainants live in the area stretching from Siparia to Mayaro (including Penal, Debe, Princes Town and Rio Claro), but only one and half percent (01.5%) of the Respondents are based there;
- Seven percent (07%) of the Complainants reside in Arima, but only two and half percent (02.5%) of the Respondents are based there.;
- Three percent (03%) of the Complainants live in the North-East regions, but half that amount – one and half percent (01.5%) – 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.

## B. Complaints Referred to Conciliation in 2017

**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. Conciliation is facilitated in-house by the Conciliation Unit at the Commission. There is no cost attached to this process at the Commission, unless the disputing parties opt to hire representation.

**Eight (09) matters were referred for Conciliation in calendar year 2017. A summary of the complaints is as follows:**

No. and Code	Brief Description of Matter	Status as at December 31, 2017
1. (TJ)	The Complainant claimed discrimination in <i>employment</i> on the ground of his <i>race and/or ethnicity</i> when his contract was not renewed by a National Security agency after his employment came to an end.	Matter was not resolved; a report was prepared and published as required by section 39, and proceedings were initiated before the Equal Opportunity Tribunal
2. (SJG)	The Complainant claimed discrimination in the <i>provision of goods and services</i> on the ground of <i>sex</i> , when she was denied free admission into a lounge and bar, because she was told that she presented as a male, and free admission applied only to females.	Complainant opted to withdraw complaint and matter was closed.
3. (VGA)	Three persons collectively claimed discrimination in <i>employment</i> on the ground of <i>sex</i> , when their apprenticeship at a public authority was terminated. They said their manager allegedly said that she preferred to work with males, in part, because of the physical demands of the job.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit
4. (PH)	The former Finance Manager at a large manufacturing entity claimed discrimination in <i>employment</i> based on <i>origin</i> , when foreign-based expatriates who were hired to work at the entity were paid a higher salary than the Complainant, and he claimed <i>victimisation</i> when his employment was terminated after his Attorney wrote to the entity and alleged discrimination under the Equal Opportunity Act.	Matter was referred back to investigation
5. (MS)	The Complainant claimed discrimination in <i>employment</i> by way of <i>victimisation</i> , when, after he had made written allegations that his employer had breached the Equal Opportunity Act, he was denied acting opportunities in higher positions that were temporarily vacant, in the Information Technology Department of the Public Authority where he worked.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit
6. (RR)	The Complainant claimed discrimination in <i>employment</i> on the ground of <i>race</i> , when an academic institution did not hire him for an advertised position, and instead hired someone who was of a different race, and whose writings and research were focused towards a race different from that of the Complainant.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit
7. (RD)	The Complainant claimed discrimination in <i>employment</i> on the ground of <i>race</i> , when the owner of a private tutoring business told him that she was not going to hire him as a Mathematics teacher because he was of a race different from that of the students who were in her class.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit
8. (MM)	The Complainant, who suffers from spina bifida and uses a wheelchair, claimed discrimination in <i>employment</i> on the ground of <i>disability</i> , when her contract as an out-sourced distributor for a private media company was not renewed.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit
9. (DB)	The Complainant, who at the material time was a student at a secondary school, alleged <i>offensive behaviour</i> , when a teacher of that school conducted a morning assembly in which she condemned homosexuality, and the following day, during one of her classes, engaged in a rant in which she labelled the Complainant's parents as 'screw-ups' because they were atheists, and said that if given a gun, she would fix them and their offspring.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit.

Six (06) out of the eight (08) matters were based on the category of employment. Of these, three (03) related to non-employment, that is, not being hired into a position (nos. 5 and 6) and not being re-hired at the end of a contract (no. 7), and two (02) related to termination of employment (nos. 2 and 3). Four (04) out of the eight (08) were against State/Public Sector respondents, and four (04) were against Private Sector; there was an even split, which is a change from 2016 when seven (07) of the nine (09) complaints that were sent to conciliation in that year, were against State/Public Sector bodies.

### C. Summary Prosecutions for Non-Compliance

In the 2016 Annual Report, it was reported that there were ongoing summary complaints before the Magistrates Courts against:

- Eco- Industrial Development Company of Tobago Limited (E-IDCOT) and
- The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) [two (02) matters]

The first was before the Scarborough Magistrates Court, and the two against UTT were before the Arima Magistrates Court. All three (03) matters were discontinued in 2017, and no new complaints were laid.

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-*

- in the case of an individual, to a fine of one thousand dollars;*
- 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.

### D. Reports On Matters Published For Public Inspection

According to section 39(1) of the Equal Opportunity Act, where the matter cannot or has not been resolved by Conciliation the Commission shall:

- prepare a report relating to the investigation with its recommendations;*
- send a copy of the report to the parties to the complaint;*
- publish the report; and*
- make the report available for inspection by the public.*

**Pursuant to the provisions of section 39 (1) of the EOA, the Commission prepared and published twenty (20) Reports in calendar year 2017, in the following matters:**

	File No.	Complainant	Respondent	Category/ Status	Date of Report	Further Status of Matter as at 31st December 2017
1	EOC 024/2014	Garvin P Douglas	Housing Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago ("HDC")	Employment/ Religion	30th January 2017	Matter was referred to EOT. However, Complainant died days after referral
2	EOC 114/2014	Ndele McDonald	Property Secure Services Plus Co Ltd ("Property Secure")	Employment/ Origin (geographical) and Victimisation	30th January 2017	Matter was referred to EOT. No date has been set for hearing

	File No.	Complainant	Respondent	Category/ Status	Date of Report	Further Status of Matter as at 31st December 2017
3	EOC 033/2015	Coreen Isaac	North Central Regional Health Authority ("NCRHA")	Employment/ Sex and Race	30th January 2017	Matter was referred to EOT. No date has been set for hearing
4	EOC 01/2016	Gail Ann Baptiste	Public Transport Service Corporation ("PTSC")	Employment/ Race (also Offensive Behaviour indirectly)	30th January 2017	Matter was referred to EOT. No date has been set for hearing
5	EOC 045/2016	Patty-Ann Adena Dick Williams	Ministry of Rural Development and Local Gov't ("Min-Local Gov't")	Employment/ Sex (Woman who was pregnant)	30th January 2017	Matter was referred to EOT. No date has been set for hearing
6	EOC 090/2015	RPM	Cascadia Hotel Ltd ("Cascadia")	Employment/ Sex (sexual harassment)	31st January 2017	Matter was referred to EOT. No date has been set for hearing
7	EOC 030/2013	Burton Baptiste	University of Trinidad and Tobago ("UTT")	Employment/ Race	30th March 2017	Matter was referred to EOT. No date has been set for hearing
8	EOC 060/2014	Clarise Jupiter	Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago Ltd ("Petrotrin")	Employment/ Victimisation	31st March 2017	Matter was referred to EOT. No date has been set for hearing
9	EOC 077/2014	Earle Baccus	Eco Industrial Development Company of Tobago Ltd and Tobago House of Assembly ("E-IDCOT")	Employment/ Origin (geographical)	31st March 2017	Matter was referred to EOT. No date has been set for hearing
10	EOC 025/2016	Hugh Russell Ian Roach	Teaching Service Commission ("TSC")	Provision of Goods and Services/ Disability	31st March 2017	Matter was referred to EOT. No date has been set for hearing
11	EOC 009/2015	Nicole G Cowie	Employers Consultative Association of Trinidad and Tobago ("ECA")	Employment/ Disability	20th July 2017	Matter was referred to EOT. No date has been set for hearing
12	EOC 016/2016	Fuad Abu Bakr	Trinidad and Tobago Police Service ("TTPS")	Provision of Goods and Services/ Origin (family/ parentage)	20th July 2017	Matter was referred to EOT. No date has been set for hearing
13	EOC 078/2016	LAJ	Lake Asphalt Trinidad and Tobago (1978) Ltd ("Lake Asphalt")	Employment/ Sex (sexual harassment)	20th July 2017	Matter was referred to EOT. No date has been set for hearing

	File No.	Complainant	Respondent	Category/ Status	Date of Report	Further Status of Matter as at 31st December 2017
14	EOC 181/2013	Lennard Applewhite	Water and Sewerage Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (“WASA”)	Employment/ Ethnicity and Religion	28th July 2017	Matter was referred to EOT. No date has been set for hearing
15	EOC 086/2014	Angela Solomon	Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago Ltd (“Petrotrin”)	Employment/ Victimisation	28th July 2017	Matter was referred to EOT. No date has been set for hearing
16	EOC 010/2015	Carlisle Roopchand	PCS Nitrogen Trinidad Ltd (“PCS”)	Employment/ Disability	28th July 2017	Matter was referred to EOT. No date has been set for hearing
17	EOC 012/2015	Takechand Jaisarie	Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force (“TTDF”)	Employment/ Race and Victimisation	28th July 2017	Matter was referred to EOT. No date has been set for hearing
18	EOC 028/2015	Nicole Olivierre	National Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago Ltd (“NGC”)	Employment/ Victimisation	17th August 2017	No further developments
19	EOC 117/2013	Dr Oscar Noel Ocho	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health (“Min-Health”)	Employment/ Race	13th December 2017	Matter was not referred to EOT as at 31st Dec 2017 (but it was referred in 1st quarter of 2018)
20	EOC 041/2017	Aisha Sabur	National Maintenance Training and Security Company Ltd (“MTS”)	Employment/ Religion (Muslim woman who wears hijab)	18th December 2017	Matter was not referred to EOT as at 31st Dec 2017 (but it was referred in 1st quarter of 2018).

Table 13

In each of these matters, copies of the reports were sent to the parties, and are available for viewing by members of the public at the Commission’s office.

The following are summaries of the allegations made by the Complainants in these matters:

**1. Complaint lodged by Garvin P Douglas against HDC**

The Complainant, who is Muslim and who began employment with HDC (through its predecessor, the NHA) since 2000, and has been a permanent employee since September 2003, and who was, at the time, a Carpenter I, has alleged discrimination in employment on the basis of his religion,

when (as per his allegations) colleagues who were employed within the same period as he was and others who were junior to him, all of whom are not Muslim, were promoted ahead of him.

**2. Complaint lodged by Ndele McDonald against Property Secure**

The Complainant, who was employed with the Respondent as a Security Officer during the period July to November

2014, has alleged victimisation, when (as per his allegations) his services were terminated after he complained of geographical discrimination, in that he felt that Officers who were from a certain geographical area would not be disciplined for refusing to work at particular locations, but Officers from other areas would be reprimanded or forced to work at these locations.

**3. Complaint lodged by Coreen Isaac against NCRHA**

The Complainant, a Human Resource Officer III, has alleged discrimination in employment on the grounds of her race and her sex, when (as per her allegations) she was bypassed for acting opportunities in the position of Facility Manager, whereas a person who is of a different race and sex to her, and does not hold the same qualifications as she holds, was selected.

**4. Complaint lodged by Gail Ann Baptiste against PTSC**

The Complainant, who was the Executive Assistant to the General Manager, alleged that on 28th August 2015, an employee made racially abusive statements towards her, that would amount to Offensive Behaviour under section 7 of the Equal Opportunity Act, but when she complained to management, they did not take any meaningful action to investigate and remedy same, and their effective condoning of the other employee's action was an act of discrimination against her on the ground of her race.

**5. Complaint lodged by Patty-Ann Adena Dick Williams against Min-Local Gov't**

The Complainant, who was employed as a Disaster Management Coordinator, on a contract for three years from September 2012, and which, thereafter was renewed on a short-term basis for three months, has alleged discrimination in employment on the ground of her sex, when (as per her allegations) she was told that she would not receive a renewal of her short-term contract for another three months because she proceeded on maternity leave during her first short-term contract.

**6. Complaint lodged by RPM against Cascadia**

The Complainant, who was employed with Cascadia as Customer Service/Quality Assurance Coordinator from September 2014 to October 2015, has alleged discrimination in employment on the ground of his sex, when (as per his allegations) he received unwanted advances of a sexual

nature from a senior manager, during the period of his employment.

**7. Complaint lodged by Burton Baptiste against UTT**

The Complainant, who has been employed with UTT since 2007 as a Research Associate and then as an Instructor II, has alleged discrimination in employment on the ground of his race, when (as per his allegations), UTT paid another Research Associate a higher salary, they demoted him to the position of Instructor II and did not consider him for the position of Senior Instructor.

**8. Complaint lodged by Clarise Jupiter against Petrotrin**

The Complainant, who was employed with Petrotrin as a Reservoir Engineer (Grade 11), has alleged victimisation, when (as per her allegations) after she expressed concerns at a staff meeting about ethnic discrimination in recruitment, she received less-favourable treatment from her Supervisor, which included things like not being promoted into vacant posts that arose in 2011 and 2012, and not having her performance appraisals completed from 2008 to the date of her retirement in 2013.

**9. Complaint lodged by Earle Baccus against E-IDCOT**

The Complainant, who is of Trinidadian origin, and who was Chief Executive Officer ('CEO') of E-IDCOT, on contracts between 2009 and 2013, has alleged discrimination, when (as per his allegations) his contract was not renewed because of an expressed desire that he be replaced by a suitably qualified and experienced person of Tobagonian origin.

**10. Complaint lodged by Hugh Russell Ian Roach against TSC**

The Complainant, who is an Attorney-at-Law, and a person with a physical disability, and who at the material time was representing Teachers against whom the Service Commission had preferred disciplinary charges, and which charges were being heard by a Tribunal, has alleged discrimination in the provision of goods and services on the ground of his disability, when (as per his allegations) it was reported to him that on a date that he was absent, the Chairman of the Tribunal commented that his disability was affecting the progress of the hearing, and asked the Teachers whether they wanted to make arrangements to be represented by alternate Counsel.

**11. Complaint lodged by Nicole G Cowie against ECA**

The Complainant, who was employed at the ECA as a Library/ Research Officer on a contract for two years, has alleged that she was constructively dismissed, when (as per her allegations) knowing that she had experienced two deaths in her family, the employer created a toxic and unduly stressful work environment, which led to her effectively abandoning the job four months into the contract, and this amounted to discrimination in employment on the basis of her disability.

**12. Complaint lodged by Fuad Abu Bakr against TTPS**

The Complainant, who is an Attorney-at-Law, businessman and politician, and who is also the son of Imam Yasin Abu Bakr, the leader of the Jamaat-al-Muslimeen, alleged discrimination on the ground of his family origin, when (as per his allegations), despite having graduated from the civilian rider programme of the TTPS Mounted and Canine Branch, and in this capacity was told he could participate in TTPS Sports Day in May 2016, on the day of the event, he was told that instructions were given to not allow him to participate, because of who his father was.

**13. Complaint lodged by LAJ against Lake Asphalt**

The Complainant, who is a Labourer in the Casual Pool, has alleged discrimination in employment on the ground of her sex, by way of sexual harassment, when (as per her allegations) her Supervisor asked her for sexual favours in order for her to be further employed.

**14. Complaint lodged by Lennard Applewhite against WASA**

The Complainant, who is of the Ethiopian Orthodox faith and who wears his hair in dreadlocks, and who applied to WASA to become a licensed plumber under the provisions of the Water and Sewerage Act, 1965, has alleged discrimination in employment on the ground of his ethnicity and religion, when (as per his allegations) WASA did not license him because he did not hold Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) Level II plumbing certification, but other persons who are not of his faith and/or do not have dreadlocks, who, as far as he is aware, also do not hold CVQ, were licensed by WASA.

**15. Complaint lodged by Angela Solomon against Petrotrin**

The Complainant, who has been employed with Petrotrin since 1982 and is currently a Senior Materials Analyst, has alleged victimisation, when (as per her allegations), after having complained in writing to her Manager of

discrimination in not being promoted to positions in the past, and after having cited the Equal Opportunity Act, she was not promoted into the post of Head, Supply Chain, and instead, a person junior to her was promoted into said post.

**16. Complaint lodged by Carlisle Roopchand against PCS**

The Complainant, who has worked in the Oil and Gas Sector since 1992, and who worked for PCS from 1992 to 2002, has alleged discrimination on the basis of his disability, when (as per his allegations) PCS refused or deliberately omitted to offer him employment in the position of Maintenance Supervisor, which they advertised, and which he applied for, and for which he was assessed as the top candidate, because they were concerned about his past diagnosis of Hairy Cell Leukaemia, for which he is in full remission.

**17. Complaint lodged by Takechand Jaisarie against TTDF**

The Complainant, who was employed as a Fleet Chief Petty Officer ('FCPO') with the TTDF, on a series of contracts, the last having ended in January 2015, has alleged discrimination in employment on the ground of his race, and by way of victimisation, when (as per his allegations) his contract was not renewed, but other officers who were of a race different from him had their contracts renewed.

**18. Complaint lodged by Nicole Olivier against NGC**

The Complainant, who had previously lodged a complaint with the Commission against NGC of discrimination in employment on the ground of her race, and which matter is currently before the Equal Opportunity Tribunal, has alleged victimisation, when (as per her allegations) after having lodged the previous complaint, she suffered a series of incidents of less-favourable treatment, including: delay in getting approval for the purchase of a vehicle, refusal to acknowledge her authority when she acted as Head of Department, refusal to approve the reimbursement of her professional membership fees, reluctance to allow her to attend the Energy Conference, and her eventual retrenchment.

**19. Complaint lodged by Dr. Oscar Noel Ocho against the Ministry of Health**

The Complainant, who has been a civil servant employed with the Ministry of Health since 1987, initially as a Nurse, and who eventually moved up to Chief Nursing Officer, has alleged discrimination in employment on the basis of his

race, when (as per his allegations) upon being interviewed for the advertised post of Director, Health Policy Research and Planning, he was scored as the preferred candidate by three of the four panellists, but the fourth, a now retired senior officer with the Ministry, scored him disproportionately low, and scored another candidate disproportionately higher, resulting in the other candidate amassing a higher total score, and being hired into the post.

#### **20. Complaint lodged by Aisha Sabur against MTS**

The Complainant, who is a Muslim woman who wears a hijab, and who applied to MTS to be employed as a Security Guard, has alleged discrimination in employment on the ground of her religion, when (as per her allegations), MTS told her that she could not be hired unless she was willing to remove the hijab while on duty, as it does not conform to their dress code policy for Security Officers.

It must be emphasised that the foregoing are merely summaries of the allegations made by the respective Complainants. They are not to be taken as statements of facts. In many of the cases, the Respondents have denied what has been asserted, and in some cases, they have offered a different version of the events. In many of the preceding matters, there are disputes of facts which are ideally best resolved in a hearing before a Court or Tribunal.

To get a more complete understanding of each of the preceding matters, it is advised that persons read the reports, which are available for inspection by members of the public at the Commission's office.

### **E. Initiating Proceedings Before The Equal Opportunity Tribunal**

After the Commission has taken the steps listed at section 39(1), it is for the Complainant to consider whether he/she would like to have his/her matter referred to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal for hearing and adjudication. The Tribunal is created by section 41 of the Act as a Superior Court of Record, and is vested with all powers inherent in such a Court, in addition to the jurisdiction and powers conferred on it by the Act. It consists of a Chairman, who enjoys a status equal to that of a Judge of the High Court. The Chairman may be assisted by two lay-assessors appointed by The President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The Tribunal is independent from the Commission. It is charged with

hearing and adjudicating on complaints that are referred to it by the Commission. The Tribunal can make a finding as to whether or not the Complainant was subjected to discrimination and/or victimisation, as would have been alleged.

Based on section 39(2) of the Act, only where a Complainant consents to his/her matter being initiated in the Tribunal can the Commission then proceed to initiate same. As such, once a Report is published, a matter may either be discontinued or initiated in the Tribunal based on the Complainant's ultimate decision.

In matters Nos. 1 to 17 listed above, the Complainants have consented, and the Commission has initiated proceedings before the Tribunal on their behalf.

Additionally, the following matter was instituted before the Tribunal in respect of a report that was prepared and published in calendar year 2016:

- Complaint lodged by Mr. Nigel Meltz against the Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service.

In total, eighteen (18) matters were instituted before the Tribunal in 2017.



## Report from the Conciliation Unit

As part of its mandate, the EOC is required to investigate and conciliate complaints of discrimination. The EOC has an in-house Conciliation Unit which has been staffed with one (1) Conciliator/Mediator, who is a certified Mediator, registered with the Mediation Board of Trinidad and Tobago and one (1) Business Operations Assistant II, to provide administrative support.



In the year 2017, nine (9) cases were referred for conciliation, with twelve (12) cases being brought forward from the previous year. The conciliation sessions for these matters were held at the EOC's office at Nos. 55 to 57 Manic Street, Chaguana.

Of the twenty-one (21) cases which were handled by the Conciliation Unit for 2017, three (3) cases were resolved with a formal Agreement and these Agreements were registered with the Equal Opportunity Tribunal. Eight (8) cases were unresolved and six (6) of these were referred to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal for adjudication at the request of the complainants and two (2) cases were withdrawn at the request of the complainants. Four (4) cases were in progress as at the end of the year. In six (6) of the cases received, the conciliation process did not begin as at the end of December 2017.

### Conciliation Unit Report

January - December 2017					
	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	Totals for 2017
Details	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	
No. of Cases received for the period	3	0	1	5	9
Cases Brought Forward from previous year	12	-	-	-	12
<b>Total</b>					<b>21</b>
Cases Completed with written Agreements	1	2	0	0	3
Cases Completed – Unresolved. Referred to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal	1	3	1	1	6
Cases Completed with No Further Action – Withdrawn by the Complainants	0	1	0	1	2
Cases in Progress	-	-	-	-	4
Cases not yet started as at 31-12-2017	-	-	-	-	6
<b>Total</b>					<b>21</b>

Table 14

## Report from the Communications Unit

This report provides details of the Commission's activities in 2017 with respect to *“Work towards the elimination of Discrimination, Promotion of Equality of Opportunity generally and Public Education and Research Programmes.”*



### New Term of Commissioners

Section 26 (1) of the EOA states that there is established a body to be known as the Equal Opportunity Commission (hereinafter referred to as “the Commission”) which shall comprise five Commissioners including a Chairman and a Vice Chairman appointed by the President after consultation with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. The current office holders were re-appointed/appointed for a period of three (3) years over the term 2017 – 2020, and are as follows:

#### COMMISSIONERS

**Mr. Eric Colin Cowie** (date of reappointment - 21st August, 2017)

**Mr. James Chin Chuck** (date of reappointment - 21st August, 2017)

**Dr. Emanuel Hosein** (date of appointment - 21st November, 2017).

**Mrs. Lynette Seebaran Suite - CHAIRMAN**

(date of reappointment - 26th August 2017)

**Dr. Beverly Ann-Marie Beckles - VICE CHAIRMAN**

(date of reappointment - 21st August, 2017)

The term of office of Dr. Indra Rampersad, who was appointed Commissioner for a period of three (3) years, with effect from 21st August 2014, expired on 20th August 2017.

### Public Awareness and Advocacy Programmes

In the continuation of broadening and intensifying the Commission's advocacy and awareness programmes in 2017, the EOC hosted approximately twenty (20) public awareness and education workshop sessions across Trinidad and Tobago for both the private and public sectors.

The beneficiaries of these sessions included:

Point Lisas Nitrogen Limited, Bermudez Biscuits Company Limited, Nestle T&T Limited, KAPOK Hotel, Massy Group and Distribution and T&T Chamber of Commerce.

Along with these sessions, the EOC was also invited to participate in the following;

- Association of Female Executives of Trinidad and Tobago (AFETT)
- Mediation Symposium 2017

- National Symposium on Midwifery – Equal Rights of the Unborn – Black, White or Grey areas: Ethno-legal Issues
- Conventus Consultinc - Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
- Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs)- International Women's Day-theme “Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50:50 by 2030”.

The Commission offers advice on issues relating to discrimination and human rights in Trinidad and Tobago.

Employers are encouraged to create an Equal Opportunity Workplace Policy and, in some instances, have taken the added step of introducing such an initiative. In this regard, the workshops have clearly established the Commission as an authoritative source of information and counsel on workplace policies and procedures.

“This session was very informative. I think sessions should be done in more establishments to educate and make people aware.”

– Public Education Participant

These stakeholder sessions engaged a significant number of Human Resource personnel and generated heightened awareness of the work of the Commission among employers and prospective employers. After each session was conducted, a questionnaire was distributed for feedback to determine the effectiveness of the session.

The data was analysed and the findings showed that over 94% of participants indicated that in the year under review the awareness sessions met with their expectations. This signifies that stakeholder workshops are contributing significantly to raising awareness of the EOA in the workplace.

It has been noted that a growing number of employers and managers are engaging the services of the Commission in the preparation of human resource manuals and other policies and procedures.

The EOC, in its efforts to support capacity-building among stakeholders, has laid the foundations to encourage heightened levels of cooperation. This has stimulated further initiatives by the Commission to empower stakeholders to implement the principles identified by the EOA.

## Youth Education

Furthermore, the EOC has been working with the Faculty of Law and the Institute of Gender and Development Studies (The UWI) and The UWI School of Business and Applied Studies (trading as ROYTEC) to facilitate informational sessions and participate in exhibitions related to human rights and non-discrimination. These included:

- the European Union and UWI Faculty of Law - Human Rights Project, Human Rights Open Day at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus
- the UWI Faculty of Law Quality Assurance Review Exercise
- the UWI School of Business and Applied Studies (trading as ROYTEC) Business Ethics Course.

## Major Stakeholder Engagement Projects for 2017

Under the chairmanship of suffragette Mrs. Lynette Seebaran Suite, a litigator with over 35 years' experience, and an avid supporter of legal reforms to protect against discrimination and promote human rights, the EOC has benefitted from her reputation and expertise as an influential advocate for the rights of women and girls. This has influenced the strategic direction of the EOC.

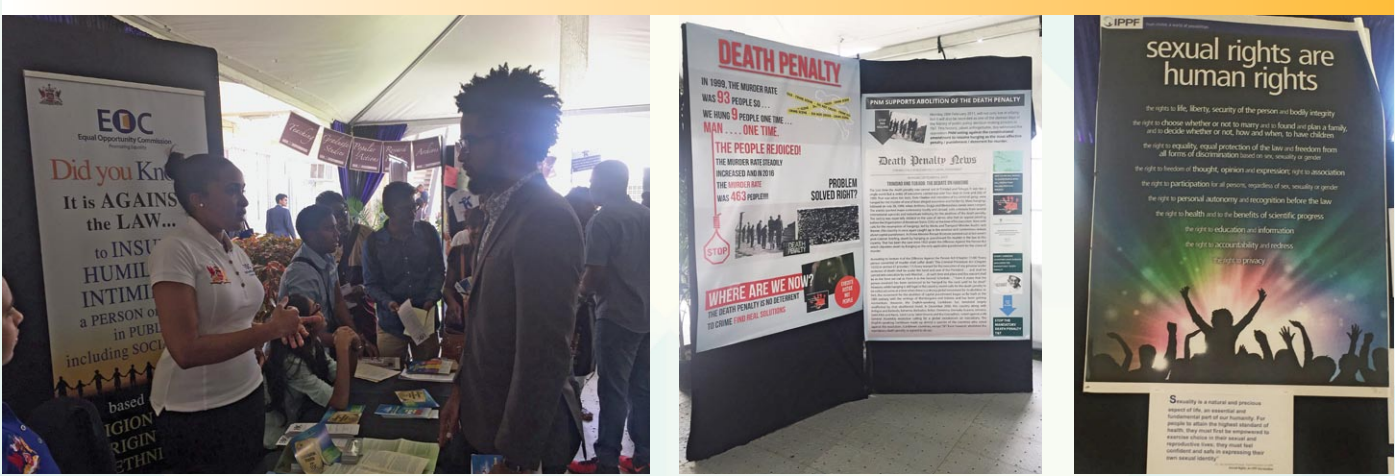
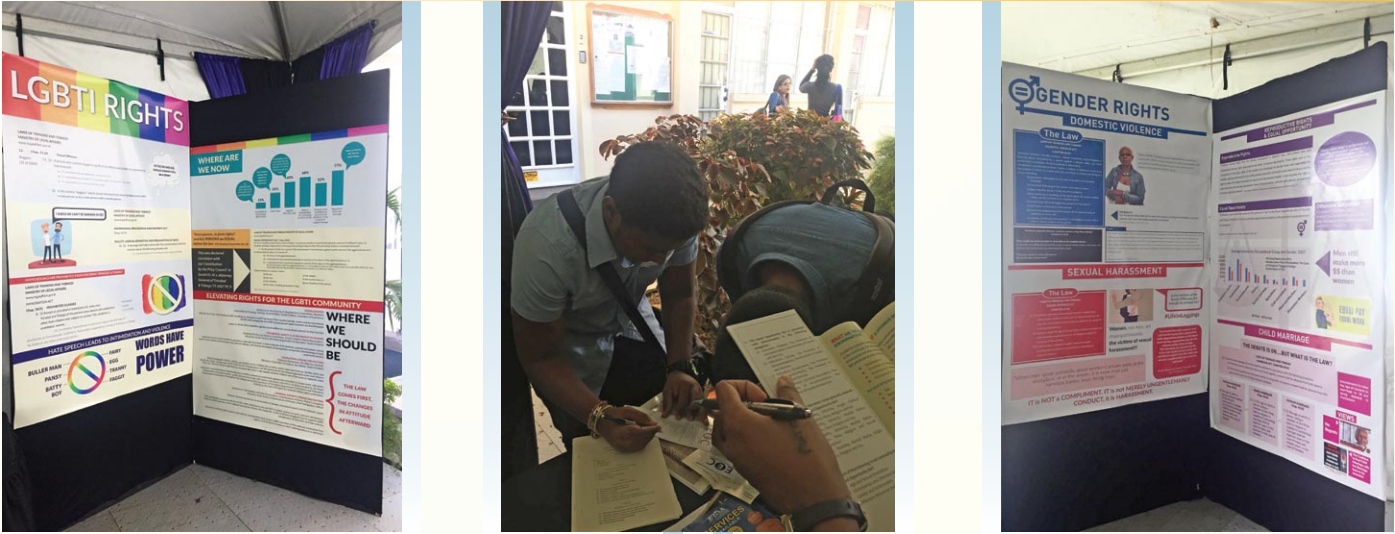
The Commission identified major strategic priorities for the year 2017 as part of its planning process. These also targeted areas of public interest that were on the agenda for dialogue and policy reform.

Concerted focus and high visibility helped the Commission to reach, directly and indirectly, vast and diverse audiences to facilitate informed dialogue. The Commission conducts three (3) major projects per year, subject to the availability of resources.

The three (3) major stakeholder sessions held during the year 2017 included panel discussions on:

1. **10 Necessary Changes to the Domestic Violence Act: Recommendations for Ending Violence Against Women**
2. **CEDAW For Change Public Lecture and Training Workshop**
3. **Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.**

## Human Rights Open Day at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus



## 10 Necessary Changes to the Domestic Violence Act: Recommendations for Ending Violence Against Women.

### Gender-based Violence

In 1993, the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women offered the first official definition of the term “Gender-based Violence”: “Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.” Gender-based violence has become an umbrella term for any harm that is perpetrated against a person’s will, and that results from power inequalities that are based on gender roles. Around the world, gender-based violence almost always has a greater negative impact on women and girls. For this reason, the term “Gender-based Violence” is often used interchangeably with the term “Violence against Women” (VAW) and Domestic Violence (DV).

### EOC’s Position Paper on the Domestic Violence Act

The Commission noted the rise in incidents of domestic violence especially in relation to the prevalence of acts of violence against women.

The Commission undertook a comprehensive review of the Domestic Violence Act of Trinidad and Tobago, Chapter 45:56, and published the ‘Position Paper on the Domestic Violence Act’, with 10 recommendations for changes to the Act, which it is hoped would aid in the transformation and improvement of the legal system remedies in dealing with this issue affecting women and girls in Trinidad and Tobago.

### 10 Necessary Changes to the Domestic Violence Act: Recommendations for Ending Violence Against Women

The Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS), in partnership with the EOC, presented ‘10 Necessary Changes to the Domestic Violence Act: Recommendations for Ending Violence against Women’.

This collaborative event was launched at the beginning of the United Nations Days of Activism on Ending Gender-Based Violence. The goal was to engage with civil society organisations, researchers, activists, and others in a conversation about these recommendations and provide an opportunity to discuss the proposed amendments. This call to action was further advanced when non-governmental and civil society organisations came together to launch a letter writing campaign in support of the

EOC’s recommendations. The event was streamed live on Facebook. Several local news outlets also carried stories on the discussion.

The letter, with the signatures of the stakeholders, was sent to the Attorney General in a bid to action legislative change in seeking to end gender-based violence in Trinidad and Tobago.



The proposed amendments to the Domestic Violence Act, Chapter 45:56, are as reproduced hereunder:

1. Remove the **perpetrator** from the home **not the victim** (Amend Sec 23(1) and 23(A).
2. Police **must** respond to **all** complaints (Sec. 21).
3. Amend definition of **cohabitant** to include **same-sex relationships** (Sec. 3).
4. Police **must charge** for **assaults** and other crimes committed in domestic situations (Sec. 25(1)), and for **breaches** of Protection Order (Sec. 20).
5. **No bail** for persons charged with breaches of Protection Order (Sec. 27(1)).
6. Provide **network of support** to persons who have a protection order – observers must have a **duty to report** (new section).
7. Create intervention for perpetrators **threatening to kill** (new section).
8. Create **inter agency protocols** among police, magistrates, prosecutors, social workers and shelters (new section).
9. Create **mandatory programs** for victims and **perpetrators** (Sec. 6(1) (c) (VIII)).
10. Resuscitate **Police Domestic Violence Register** (Sec. 21(2)).

## CEDAW for Change Public Lecture and Training Workshop

In 2017, the EOC collaborated with the Network of NGOs, the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs), Working Women for Social Progress, and the Women's Human Rights Education Institute (WHRI), University of Toronto to host two (2) major events intended to educate the public on the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The following are the two (2) events held on the respective dates:

1. Sunday 23rd April, 2017 - A Public Lecture on the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
2. Tuesday 24th to Thursday 26th April, 2017 - A three (3) - day intensive training workshop on the role of CEDAW in the promotion of women's equality.

The training workshop targeted organisations promoting women's human rights, with a focus on:

- LBT women
- rural women
- disabled women
- immigrant women
- women living in poverty
- disadvantaged and marginalised women of all ethnicities, and
- other groups, as appropriate to the local context.

The three-day training targeted over thirty (30) gender focal points in the State and NGO sectors, and attracted, among others, representatives of the Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs), the Institute of Gender and Development Studies (The UWI), and the International Law and Human Rights Unit of the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs.

The key objective of this program is to provide training participants (women's organisations representatives, human rights advocates, government representatives, researchers, grassroots community leaders, educators, lawyers, and more) with an understanding of human rights principles and obligations, in the context of the international human rights system, and to prepare participants to understand CEDAW and to apply its principles, practically, to support women's equality and empowerment.

## Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

### Call to Action

A World Health Organisation survey, conducted in 2015, reported that at least 2 billion (75%) of the world's estimated 2.7 billion women over the age of 18 had been victims of sexual harassment. The Commission noted this serious problem, and recognised a need for the generation of information on sexual harassment and access to such information. A public education campaign began in 2017, with the commemoration of International Women's Day, when the EOC produced and published a video titled "Sexual Harassment and the EOC as a vehicle for recourse". The EOC's Chairman, Mrs. Lynette Seebaran Suite also acknowledged sexual harassment as sex discrimination and a violation of human rights in a subsequent media statement published in the local newspapers.

This resulted in the Chairman being interviewed by various news outlets, where she discussed the need for employers to have a comprehensive policy on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.



**The EOC Chairman at Power 102Fm'**

Over the past year, the EOC also conducted education sessions about the Equal Opportunity Act, inclusive of the categories and statuses covered, the complaints mechanism and the general promotion of inclusive, tolerant workspaces and places in Trinidad and Tobago. It was noted that employers needed to be further sensitised to sex discrimination, particularly the sub category of sexual harassment, given the climate and the cultural idiosyncrasies of 'Trini' culture.

Over the past three (3) years, the increasing frequency of public high-profile cases of sexual harassment involving prominent celebrities, politicians and CEOs in the United States of America resulted in the resurgence of the #MeToo movement and the establishment of the #TimesUp movement.

This led to many victims, survivors and witnesses coming forward to publicly discuss sexual misconduct perpetrated against them in various settings.

The EOC sees itself as a critical stakeholder in the conversation regarding sexual harassment in Trinidad and Tobago. Whilst there is no specific legislation enacted in Trinidad and Tobago to prohibit sexual harassment, the identification of sexual harassment as a form of sex discrimination makes it possible for the Commission to receive, investigate and conciliate complaints of sexual harassment.

**'Guidelines for Employers on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace' Handbook**

In April 2017, the Chairman, with the support of other Commissioners and Management, commissioned the EOC's 'Guidelines on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace' to complement the EOC's 2014 publication 'Guidelines for Employers in Trinidad and Tobago'.

The document was researched and compiled by an internal committee, comprised of staff of the Legal and Research Units, supported by the Communications team. Advice was sought from Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine of The UWI's Faculty of Law and the Chief Executive Officer of PEAPSL Consultancy Limited, Mr. Neil Parsanal. The team finalised the Guidelines for release for International Women's Day on 8th March 2018.

The EOC has focused on building capacity amongst team members, whilst developing strong working relationships with stakeholders in the public, private and civil society sectors, via local, regional and international alliances.

**Courtesy Calls**



**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 and Community Development, The Bahamas**

The Chairman and other Commissioners of the EOC received a courtesy call from Mr. Lester Ferguson, the Executive Secretary of the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Services and Community Development, The Bahamas, on Friday 5th May 2017, to discuss matters related to disability, discrimination and human rights in both Trinidad and Tobago and The Bahamas.

Mrs. Lynette Seebaran Suite, EOC's Chairman, discussed the role and functions of the EOC in working towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago, and she also expressed the Commission's commitment to assisting in the advancement of human rights in the region.

Mr. Ferguson expressed an interest in learning more about the EOC's Complaints and Investigation Processes.

The Commissioners stressed the importance of working together in the promotion of equality of opportunity and human rights in Trinidad and Tobago and the region, and reiterated the necessity for organisations like the EOC and The Bahamas Secretariat, National Commission for Persons with Disabilities to promote equality in the region.

The Commissioners and guest also exchanged some of their strategies and best practices in advancing the human rights of persons with disabilities and their families. Mr. Ferguson attended the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Workshop (CRPD), a regional workshop, facilitated by the United Nations Development Programme in Trinidad and Tobago.



### ***Courtesy Call on the Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly***

The Equal Opportunity Commission took the opportunity at the time of its Board meeting held in Tobago on Friday 28th April 2017 to pay a courtesy call to the Chief Secretary of the Tobago House of Assembly, the Honourable Kelvin Charles.

The Commissioners, namely, Chairman Mrs. Lynette Seebaran Suite, Vice Chairman Dr. Beverly Beckles, Dr. Indira Rampersad, Mr. Eric Cowie, and Mr. James Chin Chuck, met with the Chief Secretary to discuss the continued collaboration with the THA on issues related to equal opportunity, discrimination, and human

rights. The work of the EOC in investigating and conciliating cases of alleged discrimination filed in Tobago was one of the main subjects of discourse.

Chairman Seebaran Suite highlighted the EOC's commitment to serving Tobago through its monthly outreach sessions held at the Office of the Ombudsman, Tobago, where complaints are received and processed.

In addition, Mrs. Seebaran Suite brought the Chief Secretary up-to-date on the EOC's current thrusts in advocacy and public education, including the topic of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Also discussed was the need for all stakeholders, including the THA, to work together in implementing the Concluding Recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), following Trinidad and Tobago's Country Report reviewed in Geneva in July, 2016.

The Honourable Kelvin Charles, Chief Secretary, expressed his appreciation of the insights gained from the meeting with the Commissioners and conveyed the THA's willingness to collaborate with the EOC in promoting equality of opportunity and non-discriminatory practices in Trinidad Tobago.

### **Press Releases, Interviews and Public Engagements**

**Media Monitoring** – in the period under review, the EOC and Commissioners were featured and/or mentioned in over twenty-eight newspaper articles.

**Media Interviews** – the Chairman and other senior members of staff, including the Manager, Corporate Communications and the Director, Legal Services, were featured on several local television and radio programmes as well as in the newspapers. The topics discussed included:

- the Equal Opportunity Act and the Commission
- sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence
- amendments to the Equal Opportunity Act and other legislation, including the Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act.



**Committees/Other Interests** – The EOC has membership or representation on several Committees, as well as plays an advisory role in/contributes to other interests, as discussed hereunder:

***CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago***

The Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is a United Nations Treaty of which The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is a signatory.

The CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago (CCoTT) is a volunteer non-governmental organisation focused on advocacy and public awareness on and for CEDAW, committed to ensuring that the Convention mandates are upheld, and the Concluding Recommendations of the United Nations Committee are implemented. CCoTT is committed to partnering with all stakeholders – State and civil society - with transparency and accountability in fulfillment of its mission.

The Commission's membership assures input in an advisory capacity in influencing human rights development in Trinidad and Tobago. Members of the Commission's staff, inclusive of members of the Communications team, are active members of CCoTT.

***United Nations Communities of Practice (CoP) - Committee on the Adoption of the National Gender Policy in Trinidad and Tobago***

The EOC is an active stakeholder on this UN convened Committee in discussions to facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive National Policy on Gender and Development in Trinidad and Tobago.

The purpose of this Committee is to:

- Receive advice from groups with expertise in a particular field
- Participate in discussions, contribute ideas or discuss challenges
- Find key documents and updates in one's area of expertise and share with others in the community
- Consult and comment on text documents, without having to send them by email.

***Committee on Amendments to the EOA***

In March 2016, the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs formed an ad hoc Committee, comprising 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.

***HASC Committee - Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development***

In December 2016, the HIV/AIDS Workplace Advocacy and Sustainability Centre (HASC) Committee facilitated internal training for the staff of the EOC, who committed to working with the Committee to end HIV/AIDS - related discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago.

In March 2017, the CEO of the EOC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development to formalise the Commission's commitment to addressing HIV and AIDS as a workplace issue, and provide a clear structure for continued engagement and collaboration.

The EOC currently works with the HASC Committee, receiving advice, participating in discussions and consulting with the Ministry on issues related to HIV and AIDS in the workplace.

***Police Training Academy Course Committee***

The EOC is currently represented on the Police Training Academy Course Committee, working to develop training modules for the following courses at the Academy:

- Domestic Violence and Gender-based Violence
- Special Interest Groups In Society.

***Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs Committee on the Draft CARICOM Bill on Sexual Harassment***

The EOC was invited by the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs to participate in discussions with senior officials of the Legal Affairs Committee (SOLAC) on the draft CARICOM Sexual Harassment Bill. The Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs noted that no local legislation existed

to address sexual harassment, and it was suggested that the draft CARICOM Sexual Harassment Bill could act as a model for Member States in drafting similar legislation.

***'A Sexual Culture of Justice' Project: Strengthening LGBTQI and GBV Partnerships, Capacity and Efficacy to Promote and Protect Rights in Trinidad and Tobago***

The EOC acts as an advisory stakeholder on this project. 'A Sexual Culture of Justice' Project is a project of the University of the West Indies – Institute of Gender and Development Studies (IGDS), in collaboration with several local LGBTQI and human rights advocacy groups, to reduce the violence, legal discrimination, bullying and homelessness related to pervasive attitudes in society about sexuality, gender norms and stereotypes in Trinidad and Tobago. The projected activities are intended to educate several groups, with the aim of changing attitudes and beliefs about gender norms, enacting human rights legislation and improving the capacity for advocacy/lobbying among human rights groups.

In 2017, the Commission collaborated with the project team on the following:

- Boardroom Bullies? What to do to end Sexual Harassment?
- 10 Necessary Changes to the Domestic Violence Act: Recommendations for Ending Violence Against Women

The EOC also works with the following stakeholders and contributes to working groups on the following:

- Committee on the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development
- National Policy on Persons with Disabilities Committee
- Office of the Prime Minister – Gender and Child Affairs on International Women's Day
- Commemoration of International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (IDEVAW)
- CEDAW Review and Implementing CEDAW Concluding Recommendations
- National Policy on Gender and Development.

## Human Rights Advocacy

### Jason Jones vs the Attorney General

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

The Commission has been advocating for and actively pursuing amendments to the Equal Opportunity Act and other relevant laws and policy reform in the areas of sexual harassment, domestic violence, disability and sexual orientation.

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 the year 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 LGBTI 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 (SOA) would clear the way for positive remedies and avenues for combating discrimination such as access to the complaints procedure at the EOC.

The Commission stands ready to work alongside policy makers at every level to appropriately address this issue of equality of persons of different status. We applaud the Honourable Attorney General for the support he has always given to the work of the Commission and look forward to collaborating with him on the legislative amendments needed to address this issue in pursuing the next steps to afford the LGBTI community equal opportunities in Trinidad and Tobago.

## Facilitating the General Public

### Tobago Outreach

The Commission continues to deepen its relationship with the public by becoming more geographically and physically accessible. This has assisted in enhancing relations with its various stakeholders.

The EOC has a monthly presence in Tobago to facilitate the receipt of complaints from the public, as well as engage in and respond to inquiries related to the Equal Opportunity Act and the work of the Commission.

The Office Day in Tobago is held every fourth Friday of each month at the Office of the Ombudsman, Ground Floor, Caribana Building, Bacolet Street, Scarborough from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The objective is to heighten awareness of the Commission and its work in Tobago, not only through its presence, but also through media interviews on updates of equal opportunity matters.

## Research and Assessment

### National Survey on Equality and Public Perception of Discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago

As suggested by the theme 'Research, Monitoring and Evaluation', the year in review focused on finalising the three-year action plan strategised by the team of Commissioners for the years 2015 to 2017. A major component of this plan was to collect data, analyse and make recommendations for the way forward with respect to how the Commission engages the public and other major stakeholders in the sphere of human rights.

The commencement and finalisation of a National Survey that measured the public's perception on matters related to discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago was a major milestone in the Commission's operations, as this added time specific data which added to feedback from public education sessions. Media reporting and complaints received also assisted the Communications Unit in understanding internal and external factors contributing to gaps in communicating messages to key target groups and their level of knowledge of the Act, the Commission and their role in the national sphere.

The following information was noted from the Survey results:

1. 69.36% of the surveyed audience never heard of the EOC;
2. Employment and the provision of goods and services are areas where it was reported that it is perceived that discrimination occurs more frequently;
3. The males and females surveyed perceived discrimination differently;
4. It was felt that discrimination was more likely to occur in familial and close interpersonal settings as

compared with education and employment settings or the provision of goods and services and the provision of accommodation.

The results of the Survey also made it possible for the Communications Unit to directly target specified stakeholder segments with messages tailored to prevent instances of discrimination, by educating and informing the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago to promote equality of opportunity and change attitudes and mindsets as relate to prejudice.

The Communications Unit seeks to take into consideration the following recommendations from the National Survey Report 2017:

1. Implementing policies and strategies to increase the visibility of the Commission to the public;
2. Implementing culturally relevant anti-discrimination campaigns, programmes and outreach exercises;
3. Accessing collaborative partnerships to promote equality and non-discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago;
4. Implementing focused interventions targeting the youth and other special interest groups;
5. Promoting and highlighting resolved cases of discrimination.

### Evaluations from Public Education Sessions

Prior to the results of the National Survey, the Unit relied on and continues to rely on the data collected from public education sessions. This data is compiled into a report completed by the Research Officer II.

Overall, the data collected from 2017 has shown that the EOC needs to increase and promote its role and functions as a sector leader in the human rights arena across Trinidad and Tobago.

## Promotional Campaigns 2017

**Did You Know? Offensive Behaviour** – this campaign continued from an already existing campaign aimed at educating the public on Offensive Behaviour as covered by the Equal Opportunity Act.

**Did You Know? Sexual Harassment** – this Facebook campaign was designed to highlight that Sexual Harassment is a form of 'sex discrimination' and those affected can seek redress by lodging a complaint with the Equal Opportunity Commission.



55-57 Manic Street, Chaguanas, 500621, Trinidad and Tobago, W.I  
Phone: (868) 672-0928 • Fax: (868) 671-8826 • E-mail: eoc@gov.tt • Website: www.equalopportunity.gov.tt

## **MEDIA STATEMENT IN COMMEMORATION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S MONTH**

13 March, 2017

### **THE EOC AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE**

#### **Did You Know?**

Sexual Harassment is a form of Sex Discrimination, and the EOC is an avenue for making a complaint.

#### **1. What is the definition of sexual harassment in the Workplace?**

Sexual harassment is the unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in the workplace, at an unwilling victim to whom that misconduct is offensive, disturbing, upsetting, worrying and/or psychologically harmful. Sexual harassment may be severe or pervasive enough to affect the person's ability to cope in what may become an increasingly hostile work environment.

#### **2. Who are victims of sexual harassment?**

- Sexual harassment in the workplace refers to harassment when it occurs at work, at work related events, amongst persons sharing the same workplace or between colleagues when outside of work.
- Often we tend to think of sexual harassment in terms of a male boss-female subordinate consequence. It can, however, be many variations and combinations.
- Sexual harassment can be perpetrated by male to female, female to male and between or among individuals of the same sex. Sexual harassment may be directed towards a particular person, persons or group. An employer, a supervisor, a fellow employee, or even a client connected with the workplace can be a perpetrator.
- Bear in mind, that sexual harassment can also affect men, however, when it comes to the Caribbean it affects women more so than men.

#### **3. Different categories of sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment is characterised as being subtle and can take the form of physical, verbal, and/or visual harassment. Examples of behaviour, which may constitute sexual harassment, includes but are not limited to:

- Verbal behaviour, which is sexual in nature and unwelcomed, e.g., epithets, jokes, comments or slurs, repeated requests for dates which are unsolicited. Nonverbal behaviour which is sexual in nature and unwelcomed, e.g., staring, leering, lewd gestures.
- Physical conduct which is sexual in nature and unwelcomed, e.g., assaults, sexual advances such as touching, patting, or pinching, impeding or blocking, movement or any physical interference with normal work or movement.

- Visuals which are sexual in nature and unwelcomed, e.g., posters or signs, letters, poems, graffiti, faxes, cartoons or drawings, pictures, calendars, electronic mail and computer programs.
- Emerging forms involve using the workplace to send offensive images via telephone, electronic mail, Instagram or Facebook, etc.

#### **4. Is there a profile for a typical harasser?**

Perpetrators of sexual harassment are found in all types of occupations, at all organisational levels repetitive pervades all ethnic and religious groups. Those who sexually harass are not distinguishable from their colleagues who do not harass with respect to gender, age, marital status, rank, job title, occupation or national origin.

#### **5. If I ignore sexual harassment, will it stop?**

Simply ignoring sexual harassment will not stop it. Ignoring such behaviour may be taken as a sign of encouragement or tacit consent. Many report that when they directly tell the harasser to stop, the harassment often, but not always, ends. It is important to understand that sexual harassment is abusive. It is not done in jest or "good fun"; rather, it is done to intimidate and hurt others. All persons have a right to be treated professionally with respect, decency, and consideration. Sexual harassment is an expression of hostility and aggression. It is an abuse of power using sexual behaviour as the vehicle, and it is against the law.

#### **6. Is there any recourse for victims of sexual harassment in Trinidad and Tobago?**

- Although Trinidad and Tobago has not specifically legislated for sexual harassment, there are several avenues for redress. The Industrial Court judgment in the matter of BIGWU versus Republic Bank Limited clearly identified that sexual harassment is offensive and punishable behaviour in the workplace and upheld the dismissal of an employee for inappropriate gestures and touching. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), to which Trinidad and Tobago is a signatory, has classified sexual harassment in the workplace as a form of gender discrimination. Trinidad and Tobago ratified this Convention in 1989, and so the Government has a responsibility to create remedies and prevent its occurrence. Furthermore, the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago itself prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.
- Most importantly, the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) provides the ideal avenue for redress. The EOC is empowered to receive, investigate and conciliate complaints of discrimination in the workplace for which sex/sexual harassment in the workplace is an explicit

ground for protection. This service bears no cost, and if there is no resolution at conciliation, it can be referred to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal which has all the powers of the High Court to award damages, reinstatement, injunctions, etc.

- The EOC is available to assist:
  1. through its public education programme which involves training workshops.
  2. organisations in formulating guidelines and codes for their manual/policy on sexual harassment in the workplace, emphasising the strengthening of remedies for victimisation.

#### **7. Can anything be done about sexual harassment?**

Many steps can be taken to prevent sexual harassment and to respond appropriately when it does occur. Developing strong policies and effective procedures which are communicated to and understood by all employees are critical for prevention. Several large employers in Trinidad and Tobago in the banking and conglomerate sector, the public sector and the energy sector have already enacted codes to provide a channel for lodging complaints and seeking redress. A very clear message must be sent to all employees that sexual harassment is not permissible and there is a "zero tolerance" policy in the workplace. This should involve training and retraining ideally conducted by human resource departments, which are usually well equipped to conduct training of this nature.

#### **8. Why should prevention include putting a stop to unprofessional behaviour?**

Unprofessional behaviour, leads to many problems including sexual harassment. If unprofessional behaviour is ignored or allowed to flourish, it can easily get out of hand. While one off coloured remark may not meet the legal definition of sexual harassment, it is rare that one remark comes alone. If others, see that it is tolerated they may well assume that they too can participate in this type of behaviour. One remark leads to another and soon the organisation is filled with sexual innuendos, abuse or insults. The purpose of prevention is to stop the behaviour before it reaches this point.

#### **9. What can employers and employees do?**

- Every employee has the right to work in a safe environment free of discrimination, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unacceptable and should not be tolerated in the workplace. It should be the policy of all employers to provide a workplace in which all individuals are treated professionally with respect and dignity.
- Everyone should recognise that the elimination of sexual harassment in the workplace would create a better work environment, increase productivity, and improve relationships amongst employees.

## MEDIA STATEMENT IN COMMEMORATION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S MONTH *(continued)*

- Sexual harassment can incur high costs to both employer and employee. Employers are affected by loss of productivity, diminished human resources, an increased employee turnover, high cost of recruitment, risk of reputational damage and scandal, engagement of disciplinary resources and a stressful work environment. Conversely, victims run the risk of jeopardising their own employment through an unwillingness to go to work, frequent absenteeism and less job satisfaction. They may experience psychological effects, isolation in the organisation and even risk victimisation.
- It is imperative for employers, therefore, to not only create policies that allow us all to feel safe at work, but to uphold them and to specifically guard against victimisation of complainants.

### 10. What can I do to prevent sexual harassment in my workplace?

- Read and understand your organisation's Sexual Harassment Policy, if one exists. If one does not exist clamour for one.
- Understand what behaviour constitutes sexual harassment.
- Conduct ongoing education for your employees about what is sexual harassment and ensure that they understand the sexual harassment policy and how to report sexual harassment.
- Monitor the conduct and environment of the workplace.
- Encourage dialogue regarding the work environment, including problems regarding sexual harassment.
- Let your employees know that you will not tolerate sexual harassment in the workplace and demonstrate your commitment to "zero-tolerance" by taking immediate action, when appropriate.
- Post the sexual harassment policy in a prominent place, distribute the policy to all employees, and suggest discussing in a staff meeting.
- Be both neutral and objective during an investigation of an incident.
- During the investigation of a complaint and possible subsequent discipline of the perpetrator, co-workers may feel anger or threatened by the complainant and his or her supporters. Stop rumours and offensive actions by co-workers immediately if an incident occurs. It is important to demonstrate that this type of activity will not be tolerated.
- If tension between co-workers is a problem, consider having a workshop on team building or communication (not, however, about a particular incident!).

### 11. What is the procedure for making a complaint to the Equal Opportunity Commission?

Complaints can be made to the EOC online via our website [www.equalopportunity.gov.tt](http://www.equalopportunity.gov.tt) or by visiting our offices centrally located at 55-57 Manic Street,

Chaguanas. The complaint will be investigated by an Investigating Officer, and the employer can be compelled to respond on the pain of criminal prosecution. Once the investigation is completed, the matter is forwarded to the Conciliation Unit which facilitates the parties to reach an agreement. If no agreement is reached, the complainant has the option to request the matter be referred to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal where one can have the matter heard and adjudicated by a Judge.

### 12. Tips to prepare your complaint It is important for the person experiencing sexual harassment to

- Document incidents and unwanted behaviour as they occur by noting: -
  - ✓ What happened,
  - ✓ Where and when it happened,
  - ✓ Who witnessed it (if anyone),
  - ✓ How your physical condition has changed as a result of this behaviour (i.e., sleeplessness, crying bouts, weight loss/gain, etc.), and
  - ✓ What, if anything, you did about it at the time and thereafter.
  - ✓ Lodge complaints early and place all complaints in writing.
  - ✓ Secure, where possible the cooperation of other persons who have witnessed the harassment.
  - ✓ Seek extended support.
  - ✓ Share with colleagues as it happens.

**Document, document, document:** The importance of this employer's responsibility cannot be over emphasised. You should document your conversations with the parties involved in the complaint, keep any evidence of harassment and make this evidence available to investigators, and document what actions you took to resolve the harassment situation, if any. Document what you witness, what you did, what you said and who witnessed any conversations or behaviour. If you are ever called upon later to defend your actions, it is important that you can demonstrate you took appropriate action. Also, encourage the complainant to document all incidents of harassment and to make those records available to investigators. With any incident of sexual harassment, it is important to document the behaviour by noting:

- what happened,
- where and when it happened,
- who witnessed it (if anyone),
- how your physical condition has changed as a result of this behaviour (i.e., sleeplessness, crying bouts, weight loss/gain, etc.), and
- what, if anything, you did about it at the time and thereafter.

## ABOUT THE EOC

The primary task of the EOC is to oversee implementation of the Equal Opportunity Act Chapter 22:03, which prohibits certain kinds of discrimination and seeks to promote equal opportunity between persons of different status.

- The Act is concerned with discrimination in four broad categories - employment, education, provision of goods and services, and provision of accommodation - where someone has suffered less-favourable treatment because of their:
  - ✓ status, that is, because of one of the following personal characteristics: race, ethnicity, religion, sex, marital status, origin or disability;
  - ✓ Or by way of victimisation, that is, in retaliation for doing certain actions that are protected under the Act, for example, lodging a complaint with the Commission or giving evidence in support of someone who has lodged a complaint.
- A person who believes that they have been subjected to discrimination in any of the above areas may lodge a complaint with the EOC. The EOC is mandated to receive, investigate and as far as possible conciliate complaints.
- If the matter is unresolved, the complaint can be referred to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal (the 'EOT'). The EOT is a superior court of record, and its mandate is to hear and adjudicate on matters referred to it by the EOC. The EOT has the power to make orders, declarations, and awards of compensation as it determines to be appropriate.

The EOC would urge all persons to be mindful of these provisions and to refrain from discriminatory practices which infringe the human rights of others.

For more information, please visit

[www.equalopportunity.gov.tt](http://www.equalopportunity.gov.tt).

Contact:

**Ria Mohammed-Pollard (Mrs.)**

**Manager, Corporate Communications**

**Equal Opportunity Commission**

**Central Courtyard**

**55-57 Manic Street**

**Chaguanas**

**Tel:(868) 672-0928 Ext: 231**

**Mobile: (868) 388-1187**

**Fax: (868) 671-8826**

**E-mail: [ria.mohammedpollard@eoc.gov.tt](mailto:ria.mohammedpollard@eoc.gov.tt)**

Lynette Seebaran Suite,  
Chairman, Equal Opportunity Commission


## Social Media

The Commission intensified its efforts to 'connect' with the public, using its "Did You Know" campaign (launched in 2016) which focused on the area of Offensive Behaviour as outlined in the EOA. This was done via the EOC's Facebook Page.

The data collected at the EOC's public education sessions showed with respect to its first "Did You Know" campaign that there was an improvement in the public's knowledge of 'offensive behaviour' being a provision under the Act as opposed to the data collected in 2016. This influenced the Commission's decision to launch its second, "Did You Know" campaign via the EOC's Facebook Page, which focused on Sexual Harassment as a form of 'sex-based discrimination'.

It is quite apparent that the new forms of media, including the internet, have altered the way in which the 'information society' conducts business and interacts socially in today's world.

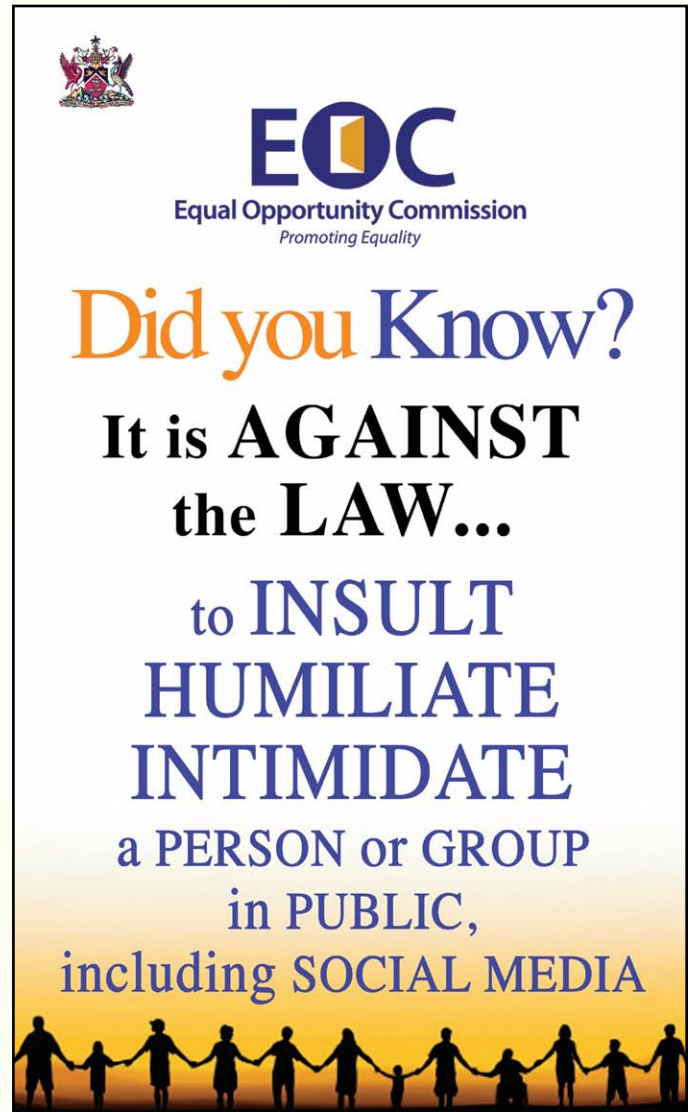
In this context, the objectives of the campaigns were to sensitise and raise awareness that, under the provisions of section 7 of the Equal Opportunity Act, it is prohibited to discriminate in all public spaces, inclusive of social media.



The **EOC** and Sexual Harassment  
in the Workplace

**Did you Know?**  
**SEXUAL HARASSMENT**  
is a form of **SEX DISCRIMINATION**  
and the **EOC** is an avenue  
for making a complaint.


[www.equalopportunity.gov.tt](http://www.equalopportunity.gov.tt)



**EOC**  
Equal Opportunity Commission  
*Promoting Equality*

**Did you Know?**  
**It is AGAINST**  
**the LAW...**  
**to INSULT**  
**HUMILIATE**  
**INTIMIDATE**  
**a PERSON or GROUP**  
**in PUBLIC,**  
**including SOCIAL MEDIA**

**based on their**  
**RELIGION • GENDER**  
**ORIGIN • RACE**  
**ETHNICITY**



[www.equalopportunity.gov.tt](http://www.equalopportunity.gov.tt)

## Digital Engagement

### Website

The website is the most viable communication tool for obtaining knowledge on the EOC. An analysis of 2017 statistics showed that the number of visitors doubled from the year 2014 to 2017. Internal data for 2017 indicated approximately 43 percent of persons obtained their knowledge of the EOC via the EOC’s website.

The Communications Unit hopes to increase its digital presence in 2018 by engaging stakeholders across other social media platforms other than Facebook and the corporate website. The use of social media is an integral part of informing and engaging with all stakeholders, especially the public.

A tally of public visitors to the EOC’s website revealed a total of **13,724** users, each averaging approximately 2 minutes and 15 seconds of time spent on the website, with a total page view count reaching **51,618**. November 2017 showed the highest page view at a total count of **10,919**.

It is hoped that funds would become available for the rebranding and restructuring of the website to allow for information on the website to be pushed through Facebook and other social media platforms, enabling and increasing direct digital engagement. An updated website would provide more interactive methods for all our target audiences to receive information about categories and status grounds of discrimination covered by the Equal Opportunity Commission.

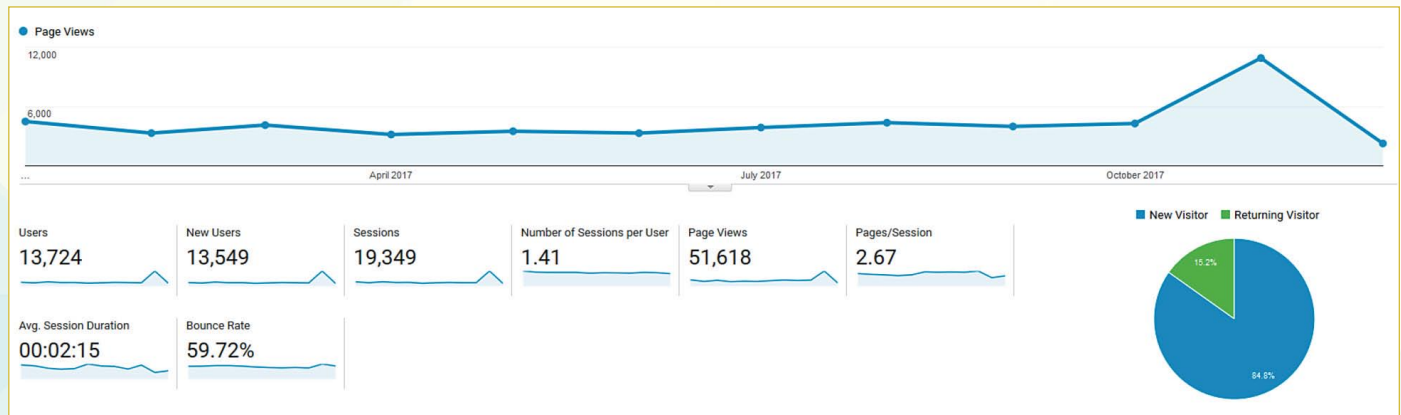


Figure 05

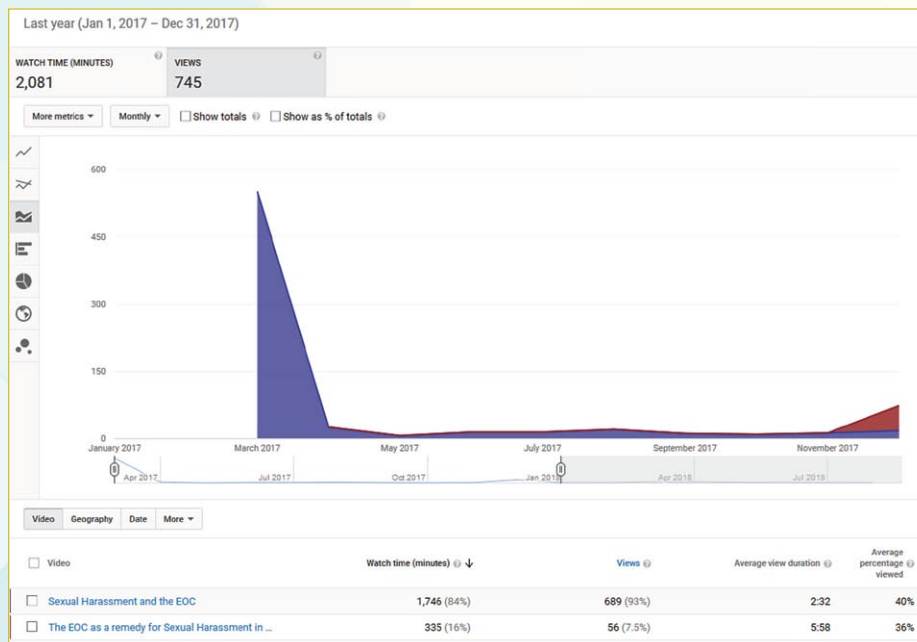


Figure 06

### YouTube

The EOC’s YouTube channel received 745 views for the period 8th March to 31st December, 2017, of which “Sexual Harassment and the EOC” gained the most with 689 views, while “The EOC as a remedy for Sexual Harassment in the workplace” gained 56 views. The total watch time of the Commission’s posted videos is 2,081 minutes, with the highest peak occurring on 9th March, 2017, for 656 minutes or 10 hours and 56 minutes on “Sexual Harassment and the EOC”.

**Facebook**

The EOC's Facebook page has received a total of **524-page likes**, with the highest peak observed on 1st May, 2017 and **541-page followers** up until the end of December 2017.

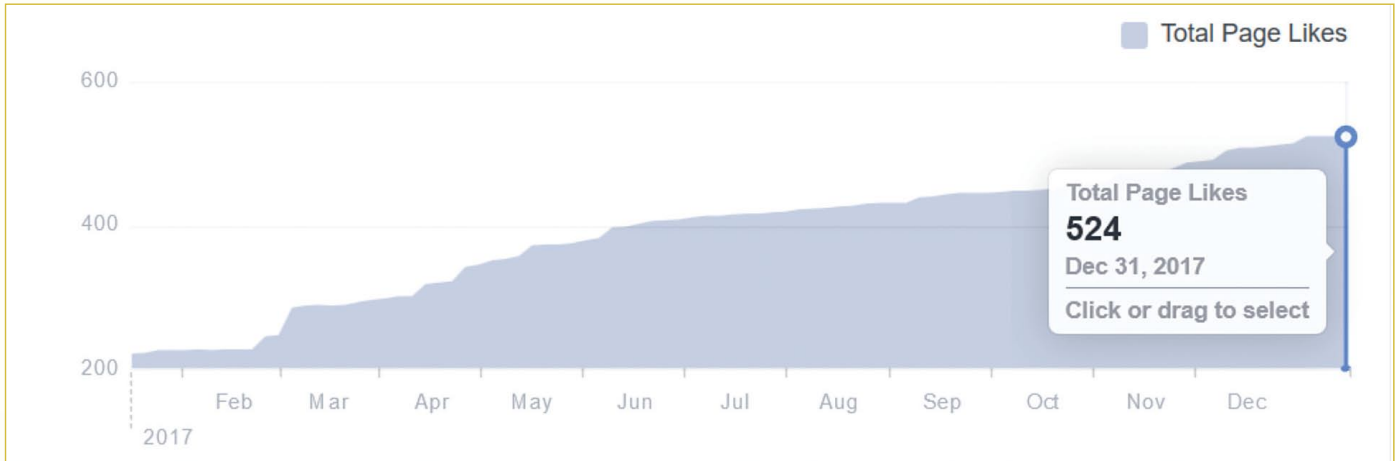


Figure 07



Figure 08

The aggregated demographic breakdown about the people who like the Commission's page by age and gender of their profiles shows 64% women, 35% men. The highest percentage age group who like our page is between 25 to 34 years, with 26% female and 14% male. The next big age group is 35 to 44 years, with 22% female and 11% male.

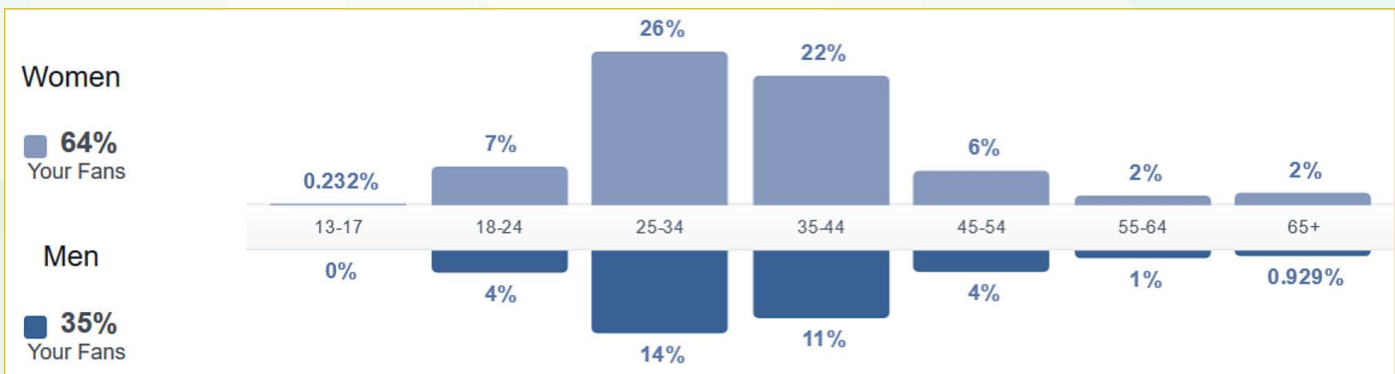


Figure 09



## Internal Communications

The Unit disseminated relevant information from the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs and details on United Nations Days and national celebrations to staff through email. The Communications Officer also worked with the members of the Staff Initiatives Committee to host staff events in celebration of staff achievements and to commemorate national holidays.

From a communications perspective, the work of the Committee is expected to foster teamwork, facilitate camaraderie and educate staff on the historical significance and context of commemorating United Nations Days and national holidays in Trinidad and Tobago.

## Budgeting

The Unit, as with all Government entities, has had to operate with a significant decrease in finances. As such, the Unit has been relying on collaborations and partnerships to carry out the Commission's functions and fulfil the strategic goals set by the Commissioners. It is hoped that, in 2018, the Unit would be able to access releases under the appropriate votes of the Estimates of the Expenditure (Items 62 and 66, respectively), to produce materials needed to facilitate public education and host seminars and workshops targeted to specific stakeholders in 2018 and beyond.

## Recommendations

### Increased Engagement on Social Media

As stated by the consulting firm hired to conduct the National Survey, the EOC needs to target specific marketing to the 18 to

25 years age group. Other research has shown that this group is very active on several social media platforms. It is hoped that with an upgraded and rebranded website, together with the requisite training and technical expertise, the Unit could capitalise on and use these relatively cheap-to-access channels to engage this demographic, along with other stakeholders, to heighten awareness of the Commission and the services offered.

## Staffing

A Manager, Corporate Communications and a Corporate Communications Officer staffed the Communications Unit for the period under review. The Unit was assigned an On-the-Job Trainee who performed in the capacity of a Business Operations Assistant II for a short time in the period under review. It is hoped that the Unit could become fully functional with the addition of technical and/or administrative team members with the requisite technical skills in graphic design, social media management and/or film/video editing.

## Training and Capacity-Building

It is hoped that the members of the Unit could access training and other capacity-building tools to strengthen their skills base in areas such as:

- Social Media Management
- Graphic Design
- Human Rights
- Industrial and Labour Law.

## The EOC External Events - Public Education/Awareness Sessions

### JANUARY 2017



16th - Bermudez Biscuit Company Ltd



26th - ROYTEC



26th - UWI Faculty of Law & the European Union's Human Rights Open Day

### FEBRUARY 2017



16th - AFETT



20th - UN Communities of Practice

### MARCH 2017



6th - UWI Faculty of Law (Gender & Law)



8th - International Women's Day (OPM-GCA)



The EOC External Events - Public Education/Awareness Sessions

APRIL 2017



ARE someone's sexual advances in the workplace causing you discomfort but you are unclear as to whether a case for harassment exists?

The Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC), in commemoration of international women's month for March 2017, issued a series of guidelines to assist citizens in defining and determining whether an act or continuing actions may qualify as sexual harassment.

8th - Sexual Harassment Campaign



11th - Choice HR Limited and Conventus Consulting - Sexual Harassment in the Workplace



21st - Massy Group



24th - 26th CEDAW for Change Workshop



27th - 28th Tobago House of Assembly



30th - BOCAS Lit Fest Human Rights Panel Discussion

## The EOC External Events - Public Education/Awareness Sessions

### MAY 2017



4th - National Symposium on Midwifery



9th - MOU Ministry of Labour



Courtesy Call - Lester Ferguson, Bahamas

### JULY 2017



4th -5th - Massy Distributions



20th -21st - KAPOK



Re-appointment of Commissioners

### SEPTEMBER 2017



11th - 13th, 7th Annual Mediation Symposium – Reframing Reality through Mediation



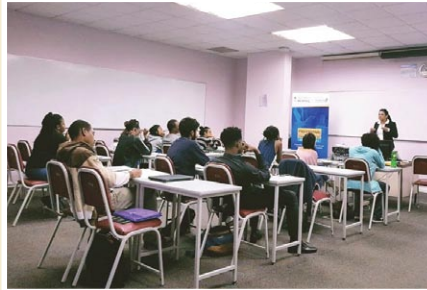
Caribbean Security Forum

## The EOC External Events - Public Education/Awareness Sessions

### OCTOBER 2017



23rd -24th TTCIC



25th ROYTEC



31st EOC/UWI Film Production  
Partnership Project

### NOVEMBER 2017



8th UWI Film Programme



14th AMCHAM



24th - IDGS Legislative Changes to the DV Act



New Commissioner - Dr Emanuel Hosein

## The EOC External Events - Public Education/Awareness Sessions

### DECEMBER 2017



6th - IDGS-Boardroom Bullies



19th - CCOTT Presentation ant UN House

## Report from the Research Unit

The Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) has a legal duty to *monitor and evaluate progress towards equality and human rights, taking into account age, disability, ethnicity and employment status, gender and religion*. The EOC undertakes and supports work across the range of equality grounds to facilitate evidence-based policy formulation and to support the work of the Commission in general.



Section 27 (1) (e) of the Equal Opportunity Act lists one of the functions of the Commission which is relevant to research, as follows, **“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.”**

More specifically, the Unit has the responsibility to:

- Review patterns and trends in complaint cases with a view to identifying discriminatory practices and make recommendations to combat such practices;
- Assess the inequalities experienced by vulnerable groups in the country and research and present suggestions to combat such inequalities;
- Conduct research on issues relevant to discrimination and equal opportunities to guide the operations of the EOC in terms of policies and priorities;
- Keep abreast of public policy issues and international developments affecting equal opportunities, examining these issues and recommending solutions or way forward;
- Maintain effective relationships with relevant stakeholders on policy and research issues;
- Build and strengthen relationships with local and international organisations and bodies advocating human rights.

### Research Agenda

The EOC’s Strategic Plan informs the Research Agenda that includes four (4) priority areas, as follows:

- Public Awareness - An assessment of public awareness programmes;

- Formative research, which includes data collection and statistical analysis of data;
- The conduct of investigative reports and surveys;
- The monitoring and evaluation of on-going and completed programmes and projects.

For the year 2017, the Research Unit’s work consisted of:

#### 1. Reports

- Report on Statistical Data of Complaints 2016
- Annual Report of the Research Unit 2016 for inclusion in the EOC’s 2016 Annual Report
- 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 (5) Countries – United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden and Jamaica
- Compilation of the EOC’s Position Paper on Domestic Violence
- Preparation of a Media Statement on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace in Commemoration of International Women’s Day 2017
- Report on the Research Unit’s Achievements for the period August 2014 to June 2017
- Report to the Commissioners on the Post Meeting Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Training held at the Equal Opportunity Commission, September 12, 2017

- Report on ‘Decent Work Diagnostics’ for Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Shingo Miyake, Labour Law and International Labour Standards Specialist, International Labour Organisation (ILO) requested information for the preparation of a “Decent Work Diagnostics” for Trinidad and Tobago, which is an inventory of data and information on matters related to the Decent Work Agenda
- Report on the proceedings from the Public Forum on Necessary Changes to the Domestic Violence Act: Recommendations for Ending Violence against Women and Launch of 16 Days of Activism
- Prepared the EOC’S Action Template for the MOAGLA’s Strategic Planning Exercise. The document included the EOC’s mandate, the role the EOC plays in the Ministry, current activities/ programmes/projects being undertaken to fulfil the mandate, the factors affecting the implementation of the mandate (SWOT) and activities/ programmes/projects to be undertaken for the period 2018 to 2020
- Compilation of a listing of all Statutory Authorities, State Enterprises, Commissions, Parliamentary Committees and Regulatory Bodies in Trinidad and Tobago
- Compilation of a listing of all State and Non-State Human Rights Actors in Trinidad and Tobago
- Preparation of the (Draft) Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: Detailed Guidelines and Code of Conduct
- Preparation of power point presentation on ‘Domestic Violence Response in Trinidad and Tobago: Necessary Changes to the Domestic Violence Act: Recommendations for Ending Violence against Women’ for the 16 Days of Activism 2017

### 3. National Survey on Public Perception of Discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago

- Sought Requests for Quotations for the National Survey on Equality and Public Perception of Discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Assisted in reviewing the Survey instrument
- Formulated the aforementioned Survey schedule
- Conducted the logistical arrangements for the Focus Group Sessions
- Attended Focus Group Sessions
- Reviewed the Survey Report

### 4. Reports for Publication

- Reviewed eleven (11) Reports for publication

### 5. Evaluation of Stakeholder Consultations

- Input and evaluated data on fifteen (15) Stakeholder Consultations for 2017

### 6. Strategic Plan Review

- Participated in the EOC’s Strategic Plan Review exercise. This review was undertaken in the context of the National Survey on Equality and the Public Perception of Discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago
- Prepared a power point presentation based on the review that was presented to the Management Team

## 2. Research Papers

- 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 United Kingdom
- Research on Women’s Participation Rates in Trinidad and Tobago for the Chairman’s address to the female staff of the Office of the Prime Minister in recognition of International Women’s Day 2017
- Research on ‘Sexual Harassment in the Workplace’ for a presentation at a forum hosted by the Association of Female Executives of Trinidad and Tobago (AFETT)
- Research on ‘Advancing Midwifery in the Caribbean’
- Research on the theme selected for the National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) AGM 2017, ‘Human Rights – A Disability Issue’



- Prepared a power point presentation on the Research Unit's status review of the Strategic Plan and the Unit's proposed plan/programme for 2018

## 7. Workplace Policy on HIV and AIDS

- Liaised with the Manager, National HIV/AIDS Workplace Advocacy and Sustainability Centre (HASC), Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development for the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) re National Workplace Policy on HIV and AIDS. Reviewed the MOU in collaboration with the Legal Unit
- Attended the signing of the MOU on 11th May 2017 and signed as a Witness to the proceedings
- Liaised with Ms Chamika Ward, HIV/AIDS Advocacy Officer, National HIV/AIDS Workplace Advocacy and Sustainability Centre (HASC), Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development to begin preparatory work on the EOC's Internal Workplace Policy on HIV and AIDS
- Procured persons of interest to be represented on the Internal Committee for the HIV and AIDS Workplace Policy
- Made logistical arrangements for the Committee's inaugural meeting
- Reviewed the KAPB Survey as provided by the HIV and AIDS Sustainability Centre (HASC) and submitted feedback to the Focal Point

## 8. Training

- Participated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Training 23rd to 26th April, 2017
- Participated in training on 'Survey Administration'
- Participated in the 'Introduction to Sign Language' training
- Finalised a training proposal from the EOC to the International Labour Organisation (ILO)

## 9. Other Activities

- Commenced the organisation of the EOC's Resource Library:
  - Compiled the EOC's Resource Library collection
  - Sourced new books for the EOC's Library
  - Prepared the Accession Book re Library Collection for auditing purposes
- Attended pre trials, hearings and judgements of the EOT
- Provided research assistance to an International Relations postgraduate student for her thesis towards a Master of Arts degree, which was based on gender inequality in the workplace in Trinidad and Tobago, with a specific focus on occupational segregation and the gender wage gap. The thesis also sought to examine the international obligations to which Trinidad and Tobago is signatory and its ability to adhere to those obligations (CEDAW and ILO Conventions)
- Reviewed the EOC'S Policy Manual

## Proposed Activities for the period January to December 2018

- Compilation of the EOC's Statistical Data Report on Complaints 2017
- Compilation of the Research Unit's Annual Report submission for the EOC's Annual Report 2017
- Compilation of the Statistical Data Report on Stakeholder Consultations 2017
- Input of data and derivation of Report on Stakeholders Consultations on a quarterly basis
- Establishment of collaborative partnerships at the National level with various statistical agencies including the CSO, UNDP, Government agencies, NGOs, tertiary institutions, etc., with the aim of strengthening the research capacity of the EOC
- In collaboration with the Legal Unit, publication of quarterly research papers on the EOC's website and the national newspapers
- Analysis of Newspaper Articles 2017
- Provision of assistance to the various Units of the EOC in the development of programme targets and indicators.

## Report from the General Administration Unit

This report provides details of the work of the General Administration Unit of the Equal Opportunity Commission in 2017.



The General Administration Unit is currently staffed by the following officers:

- **Administrative Officer IV (Acting)**
- **Clerk IV**
- **Accounting Assistant (Acting)**
- **Receptionist/Telephone Operator**
- **Driver/Messenger**
- **Office Support Assistant**
- **Hospitality Attendant.**

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, the public.

The activities of the Unit involve administrative and accounting support to the Chairman and other Commissioners, Chief Executive Officer, internal Managers and support staff of the Legal, Corporate Communications, Information Technology, Human Resource, Research and Conciliation/Mediation Units.

### Accounts Section

#### Financial Expenditure

During the period January to December 2017, the Equal Opportunity Commission obtained Releases in the sum of six million, ninety-two thousand, four hundred and sixty-seven dollars (TTD \$6,092,467.00) from the Budgets Division, Ministry of Finance. This sum was in relation to Goods and Services (02/003) only.

Out of these Releases, the sum of six million, five hundred and four thousand, five hundred and fifty-three dollars (6,504,553.00) was spent under 02/003 – Goods and Services (this consisted of Fixed Cost \$1,637,679.00 and Variable Cost \$4,866,874.00).

A total of six million, five hundred and four thousand, and five hundred and fifty-three dollars (\$6,504,553.00) was utilised by the Equal Opportunity Commission for 2017.

It is to be noted that the Releases for the Financial Year 2017 represented \$6,092,467.00; however, the actual Expenditure incurred was (\$6,504,553.00). This excess in Expenditure is due to the financial year (October – September) being different from the calendar year (January – December), which the Annual Report covers.

Expenditure from October – December of the previous year was paid in the calendar year of the Annual Report, which resulted in the financial report showing an excess in Expenditure when compared to Releases.

<b>STATEMENT OF EXPENSES FOR FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED - 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2017</b>	
<b>Goods and Services (02/003)</b>	
<b>Fixed Cost</b>	<b>TT \$</b>
Rent/Lease Office Accomodation	1,518,750.00
Janitorial Services	118,929.00
<b>Total Fixed Cost</b>	<b>1,637,679.00</b>
<b>Variable Cost</b>	
Travelling & Subsistence	51,330.00
Electricity	115,258.00
Telephone	148,790.00
Rent /Lease Vehicles & Equipment	13,290.00
Stationery & Supplies	50,830.00
Books & Periodicals	8,164.00
Maintenance of Vehicle	8,374.00
Maintenance of Equipment	64,868.00
Contract Employment	3,552,812.00
Training	5,738.00
Official Entertainment	2,000.00
Repair and Maintenance of building	3,643.00
Other Contracted Services	139,727.00
Security Services	387,428.00
Postage	120.00
Medical Expenses	0.00
Travelling -Direct charges	110,986.00
Promotion/Publicity/Printing	167,073.00
Hosting of Conference	31,990.00
Fuel & Lubricants	4,453.00
<b>Total Variable Cost</b>	<b>4,866,874.00</b>
<b>Minor Equipment</b>	
Office Equipment	0.00
Furniture & Furnishings	0.00
Other Minor Equipment	0.00
<b>Total Minor Equipment</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>6,504,553.00</b>

Table 15

## Report from the Human Resource Unit

This report provides a summary of the work of the Human Resource Unit within the General Administration Unit of the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) during the year 2017.



During the year 2017, the Human Resource Unit continued to focus on delivering consistent and reliable service to the members of staff of the Commission, in accordance with the mandate outlined in the 2015/2018 Strategic Plan of the EOC.

### Functions of the Human Resource Unit

The core functions of the Human Resource Unit are:

- **Recruitment and Selection**
- **Leave Management**
- **Training and Development**
- **Performance Management**
- **Human Resource Planning**
- **Employee Relations**
- **Strategic Human Resource Management; and**
- **Development and Implementation of Policies and Procedures.**

### Staffing at the Commission in 2017

There were no changes to the organisational structure of the Commission during 2017. The thirty (30) existing contract positions approved in November 2014 continued to be filled until the expiration of the Six (6)-year Contract Plan, which will expire on 5th November, 2020.

The second part of the Six (6)-Year Contract Plan in respect of ten (10) new contract positions continues to be on hold, pending further instructions from the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs.

Four (4) fixed-term contracts expired in 2017 and were renewed for further periods of employment. There was no short-term contract employment at the Commission at the end of July 2017. Among the ten (10) staff establishment positions, six (6) positions

were filled with permanent and acting staff, two (2) positions remained suppressed, two (2) positions remained vacant and there were no retirements or resignations. In total, at the end of 2017, there were twenty-five (25) members of staff, inclusive of staff on the establishment and staff on contract.

### Recruitment And Selection

The recruitment and selection process which commenced in 2016 to fill five (5) vacant contract positions was completed in 2017. The new members of staff assumed duty during the period February to April, 2017 in the following positions:

No.	Position
One (1)	Senior Legal Officer
Two (2)	Legal Officer I
Two (2)	Investigating Officer.

An orientation exercise was completed, prior to the assumption of duty by the new members of staff.

Recruitment for the position of a Driver/Courier, which was also advertised in 2016, was completed in 2017. Interviews were held on 5th April, 2017 and approval was sought for the top scoring applicant. The Driver/Courier assumed duty in July 2017.

Figure 01 under the heading 'Administrative Framework' (page 21) depicts the Organisational Structure of the EOC.

### Training and Development

Training and development continue to be of high priority for members of staff at the Commission, to enable a higher standard of performance. The sum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000.00) was allocated to the Commission in 2017 for training and development.

However, owing to austere economic circumstances nationwide, only six thousand dollars (\$6,000.00) were made available towards training, for an introductory course in Sign Language, in which sixteen (16) members of staff were trained. The training was facilitated at the Commission, to save on cost and enable more members of staff to access the opportunity.

The other fourteen thousand dollars (\$14,000.00) were budgeted for a team-building event for all members of staff. Approval was conveyed for the event by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry

of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs; however, the funds released were transferred to another vote to facilitate urgent needs. The team-building event is currently on hold, pending release of funds.

Despite the economic circumstances throughout the country, training was sourced from the Public Service Academy, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications. The Commission also relied on in-house training provided by the various Units of the Commission.

Training and development provided to members of staff during 2017 were as follows:-

INTERNAL TRAINING			
Area / Name of Training	Institution/Facilitator	Participants (Positions)	No. of Persons Trained
Office 365	Information and Technology Unit	Legal Officer; and Investigating Officers	3
Word Processing and Desktop Publishing; Using and Creating Spreadsheets; Creating Multimedia Presentations; Computer Usage; and Email Usage	Information and Technology Unit	All Members of Staff	19
Customer Service – Telephone Etiquette	Manager, Corporate Communications	Investigating Officers and Temporary Clerk I	3
Australian Investigating Process	Director, Legal Services	Legal Unit, Administrative Officer IV and Conciliator/Mediator	8

EXTERNAL TRAINING			
Area / Name of Training	Institution/Facilitator	Participants (Positions)	No. of Persons Trained
Introduction to Sign Language	National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD)	ICT Support Officer; Business Operations Assistant I; Telephone Operator/Receptionist; Investigating Officers; Manager, Corporate Communications; ICT Manager; Business Operations Assistant II; Driver/Courier; Administrative Officer IV (Ag.); Corporate Communications Officer; Conciliator/Mediator; Legal Officer I; Research Officer II; and Office Support Assistant	16

EXTERNAL TRAINING			
Area / Name of Training	Institution/Facilitator	Participants (Positions)	No. of Persons Trained
Freedom of Information	Public Service Academy, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications	Manager, Corporate Communications	1
Public Procurement	Public Service Academy, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications	Manager, Corporate Communications; Administrative Officer IV	2
Critical Thinking Skills	Public Service Academy, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications	Investigating Officers	2

CONFERENCES / SEMINARS			
Area / Name of Training	Institution/Facilitator	Participants (Positions)	No. of Persons Trained
Orientation for Legal Unit	Chairman and Chief Executive Officer	Managers; Senior Legal Officer; Legal Officers I; Investigating Officers; Research Officer II; Corporate Communications Officer; IT Infrastructure Specialist; IT Support Officer	17
Internal Lecture on Social Media and Mental Health (Cyber Safety)	Daren Dhoray Managing Director CyberSafeTT.com	All Members of Staff	18
Financial Literacy Session	Financial Services Ombudsman, Office of Financial Services Ombudsman	All Members of Staff	19
Sensitization Session and Training on Survey Administration	Ter K Consultants	ICT Support Officer; Business Operations Assistant I and II; Telephone Operator/Receptionist; Investigating Officers; Manager, Corporate Communications; Senior Legal Officer; Director, Legal Services; CEO; Corporate Communications Officer; Conciliator/Mediator; Legal Officer I; and Office Support Assistant	14
HIV Workshop	Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs	Legal Officer I and Investigating Officer	2
Sexual Harassment in the Workplace	Choice HR Limited and Conventus Consulting	Human Resource Officer I; and Business Operations Assistant I	2

CONFERENCES / SEMINARS			
Area / Name of Training	Institution/Facilitator	Participants (Positions)	No. of Persons Trained
Introduction to Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	CEDAW	All Members of Staff	19
Information Session on fast forward, the Draft National ICT Plan	Ministry of Public Administration and Communications	ICT Manager	1
Content Management System	Mr. Isaac Ali, Managing Director of iFusion TT	Manager, Corporate Communications; Corporate Communications Officer; IT Infrastructure Specialist; ICT Support Officer and Office Support Assistant	5
A Breakfast Workshop on Disaster Recovery	Microsoft Office	ICT Manager	1

Table 16

## Developing and Implementing Policies and Procedures at The Equal Opportunity Commission

The Policy Review Committee completed the Recruitment, Selection and Resignation Procedures, which commenced in 2016.

### Performance Management

Performance Appraisal Reports were completed up until December 2017. The next set of appraisals will be due in 2018. The year 2017 was a productive year for the Human Resource Unit, despite the austere economic challenges. The Unit will continue to serve the staff of the EOC as effectively and efficiently as possible, going forward in 2018.

## Report from the Information Technology Unit

This report provides details on the work of the Information Technology Unit (ITU) for the Equal Opportunity Commission in 2017.



### Overview

During the year 2017, the IT Unit (ITU) maintained its staff of an ICT Manager (joined February 2015) and its technical staff of Information and Communication Technology Support Officer (ICTSO) and an Information Technology Infrastructure Specialist (ITIS).

The previous Annual Report (2016) mentioned the use of Cloud platforms, such as Microsoft Office 365, which has allowed the Commission to take advantage of leveraging a highly available infrastructure to provide basic backup and recovery services for individual data. It provided :

- **A robust platform in which staff conducted their day- to- day operations**
- **A version control of personal documents**
- **Real-Time editing of documents among multiple users**
- **Increased productivity and collaboration among staff members**
- **Remote management of controlled devices belonging to the Commission.**

However, given the economic climate in Trinidad and Tobago, funding for our operational costs have been difficult. Similar to other Units within the Commission, the ITU faced the challenge of not having financial releases available to pay for some its operational activities. Therefore, the ITU continued to find new ways to reduce cost, while trying to maintain its comparable levels of service to the Commission.

On a positive note, since its migration to Office 365, the Commission's ITU has experienced a significant reduction in the number of ticket support issues. This system (that is, Office 365) has addressed the main Information Technology challenges

of the organization and the ITU has now moved from a reactive environment to a proactive one, with a greater focus on leveraging the Cloud technology to help improve the operations of all Units within the Commission.

### ICT Project Achievements for 2017

The following lists some of the achievements of the ITU towards improving the operations of the EOC:

#### Reduction in Printer Maintenance Costs

The owning and maintaining of printers have always been very costly functions for any organisation, and as such, the ITU has sought to 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 TT \$61,705.90.** The lease (consisting of one (1) Colour and One (1) Black/White printer, inclusive of ink consumables) was entered into at a total cost of TT \$91,440.09 over a three-year period, and was deemed to be more cost effective than the capital expense of purchasing the equipment at a cost of TT \$153,145.99, including the same consumables. The lease also eliminated the need for administrative approvals from our line Ministry and removed the usual long waiting periods for fund releases and purchase orders. The organisation gained by benefitting from reduced downtime and greater productivity.

#### Reduction in Monthly Rental Costs in respect of our Telecommunication (Phone) Service

In 2015, the ITU procured fixed cost services to replace the high cost of per minute billing from the Commission's landlines providers. At the time of procurement, four (4) fixed cost SIMS were provisioned by the ITU at a cost of \$725 per month for making outgoing calls. The ITU has now further reduced the costs from \$725 per month to \$525 per month. These changes



were made effective during the new fiscal year and are expected to **save the organization \$800 per month or \$9,600 per year.**

### **Cost Effective Consolidation of Licences with Office 365**

The organization was given the option of renewing its Office 365 licences from the National Information and Communication Technology Company Limited (iGovTT) at a cost of TT \$160,382.85 or from an external vendor at a cost of TT \$55,895.97 per year. Given that the licences from iGovTT would only last until the end of the Microsoft Agreement, that is, June 2019, it was recognized that the organization would save a total of TT \$48,590.31 over two years, with the purchase of the licenses from an external vendor.

### **Reduction in Internet Costs**

Given the competitive pricing of internet services from all Internet Service Providers, the ITU has re-negotiated our contract terms with our internet service providers to reduce the Commission's monthly cost from TT\$1200 per month to TT \$750 per month. This reduces the operational costs of the Commission and has provided an overall savings of TT \$450 per month or TT \$5,400 per year.

### **In-House Training of Microsoft Office and Compliance with Computer Literacy Policy**

The ITU recognized the importance of having staff comfortable with the technological tools and the online services used by the Commission. Our ICTSO, Mr. Zameer Hosein, designed and conducted a number of hands-on training sessions in the use of Microsoft Office and Office 365 for the Commission's staff, pursuant to the requirements outlined in the Commission's Computer Literacy Policy. The said Policy was intended to recommend a skillset that each staff member should have at three (3) different levels (that is Basic, Intermediate, Advanced). Mr. Hosein repeated these training courses throughout the year and provided the staff with a working knowledge of how to effectively integrate these tools in their day-to-day duties. This training has brought Business Value to the Commission in two (2) ways:

1. by improving the staff's comfort with the tools when performing their duties (that is, greater productivity);
2. by reducing the cost of outsourcing to provide the same level of training to staff members.

### **Greater Collaboration through a Common Platform for all Units to Access Data Securely**

The ITIS, Mr. Navindra Narine, 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. This solution has been operating for a few months and 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 organization.

### **Development and Implementation of Company Policies**

The IT Unit spent time researching, developing and improving the following policies to serve as guidelines for the Commission:

- 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.

### **Outstanding Projects, Challenges and Direction for 2018**

Budget cuts and inaccessibility to funding continue to impact the Commission's ICT operations. While the IT Unit recognizes that this is a common problem for all Ministries, Agencies and State Enterprises, it has hindered the Unit's ability to procure more cost effective solutions and reduce the annual operating costs of the Commission owing to the inability to pay the rental and service costs.

The following remain outstanding projects for the Commission:

#### **Implementation of a Legal and Case Management System for tracking complaints of the Commission**

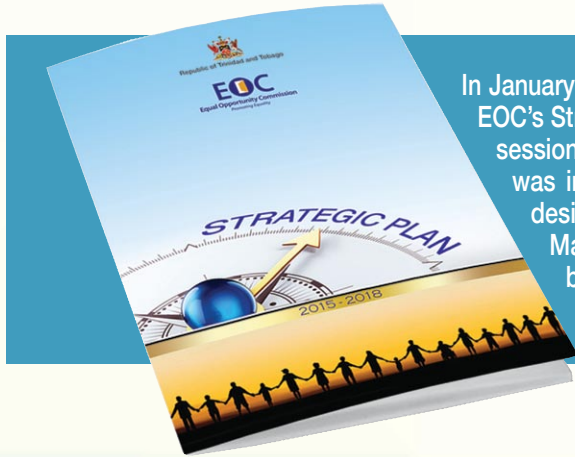
As a consequence of budgetary constraints, the acquisition of a Legal and Case Management System has been put on hold. The ITU continues to look for cost effective solutions that would not only address the needs of the organization, but also provide the features and functions that are in line with the Commission's processes.

### **Improving the Website, making it more interactive with the General Public**

The Commission recognized the use of social media as an effective way to disseminate information and to make its interaction with the public more effective. Instead of spending constrained financial resources on adding expensive features to our website to be more interactive, the Commission has utilized a hybrid approach for posting information. This hybrid approach includes integrating the Commission's existing website and leveraging social media sites such as Facebook to engage the wider public. To deliver such a strategy, Units within the Commission are working closely together to bridge their expertise and to deliver these new types of services to the public. These services will bring to the public a greater awareness of the operations of the Commission and its process of receiving complaints and a better understanding of the Equal Opportunity Act (EOA).

In 2018 and moving forward, The ITU of the Equal Opportunity Commission will keep to its strategic direction of leveraging technology to help improve the operations of all Units within the Commission and seek ways to optimize these services to ensure that the technological demands of the Equal Opportunity Commission are met.

## Strategic Objectives



In January 2015, the Commissioners and the Management Team began work on the EOC's Strategic Plan 2015-2018. There was a series of meetings and brainstorming sessions in developing the Strategic Plan. This process, with a Re-Visioning Retreat, was intended to ensure consensus-building and ownership of the Plan in its design and implementation process. During the period March to April 2015, the Management Team developed a first draft of the main goals and objectives to be implemented during the stated period. This was subsequently reviewed and approved by the Commissioners.

### The strategic objectives are as follows:

#### To work towards the elimination of discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago, in keeping with our statutory mandate as set out in the Equal Opportunity Act, Chapter 22:03

- The Equal Opportunity Commission in fulfilling its mandate will focus on building a compelling brand through public awareness of the work of the Commission among local, regional and international stakeholders.
- The Commission, through dialogue with human rights actors in Trinidad and Tobago and abroad, will seek to build strategic relationships which will facilitate a deeper understanding of the impact of regional and international developments on the Commission, and on anti-discrimination law in Trinidad and Tobago.
- The Commission will continue its efforts in pursuing the passage of legislation to amend the Equal Opportunity Act which will enable the Commission to take action against discrimination on the basis of age and gender.
- The Commission will continue its advocacy and outreach activities in order to further its mandate to work towards the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity.

#### To become an autonomous institution

- The Commission aims to transition into an operationally and financially independent organisation in order to be truly effective in the elimination of discrimination and the

promotion of equality of opportunity. The Commission has to be a stand-alone body, accountable to the people of Trinidad and Tobago, through the Parliament.

- In order for this transition to be seamless, the Commission has identified a process for the said transition which would include benchmarking similar Public Service transitions; the development of an approved Accounting Unit and the implementation of organisational changes which may become necessary in the wake of a transition.
- It is hoped that once the necessary mechanisms are put in place, the Commission will be able to complete the transition by 2018.

#### To maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission

- The Commission believes that we are obligated to deliver excellent and consistent service through a competent and diverse team of dedicated professionals.
- The Commission, through its re-visioning retreat held at the end of January 2015, has begun the work necessary in order to create an organisational culture that supports and reflects the core values of the Commission.
- The Commission will initiate change management activities to bolster confidence in its leadership team and will work towards the refining of policies and procedures that reflect best practice.

- The Commission will also focus on the training and development of its human resources to ensure that it nurtures a cadre of professionals who are able to deliver exceptional service to the people of Trinidad and Tobago.
- The Commission continues to strive towards developing the organisation into a technology-driven entity. Through the new and evolving technologies, the Commission will be able to intensify its outreach and advocacy and to liaise with regional and international organisations through video-conferencing and other enhanced technologies.
- The Commission will continue to develop and strengthen its research and monitoring roles and function through the use of public perception polling, some of which may be done through the use of the new technologies being considered.
- The Commission reiterates its commitment to its critical function of handling public complaints. The Commission will drive the creation of customer-centric complaints handling procedures which will ensure excellent and consistent levels of service to all persons who come to the Commission seeking redress.

## Preparation and Publication of Guidelines

Under section 27(1) (f) of the Equal Opportunity Act, Chapter 22:03 [Act No 69 of 2000, as amended], the Commission is mandated “to prepare and publish appropriate guidelines for the avoidance of discrimination.”

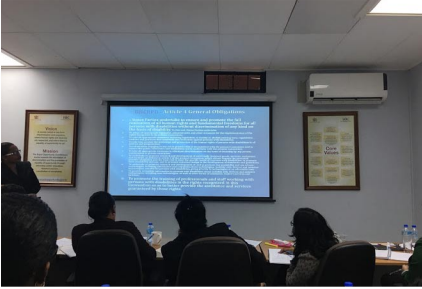
Under the guidance of the Commissioners and the Chief Executive Officer, the Legal Unit and the Communications Unit will work together to create and publish additional appropriate guidelines for dissemination to all stakeholders in 2018.

## Submission of Report

This Report is submitted to the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, pursuant to the provisions of Section 53 of the Equal Opportunity Act, Chapter 22:03 [Act No. 69 of 2000, as amended].

## Internal Events

MARCH



Disability Awareness Training

APRIL



Easter

AUGUST



Survey Report Presentation



Policy Training



Easter



Survey Report Presentation



Gender Training



World Autism Day



Emancipation



World Down Syndrome Day - Lots of Socks



World Autism Day



Independence

## Internal Events

### OCTOBER



Customer Service Week

### NOVEMBER

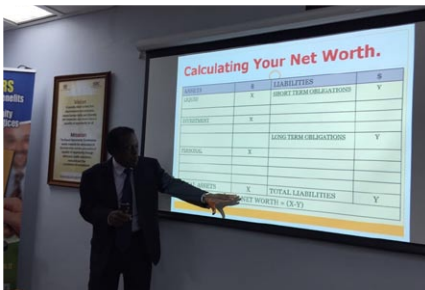


Strategic Planning Exercise

### DECEMBER



CEDAW and You



Financial Literacy



Strategic Planning Exercise



International Day of  
Persons with Disabilities



First Peoples Day and Divali



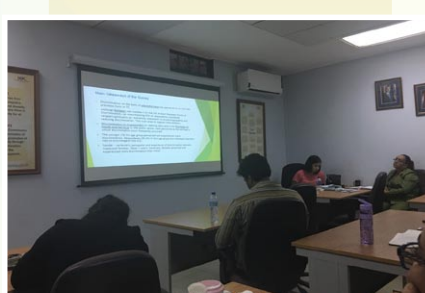
Strategic Planning Exercise



World AIDS Day



First Peoples Day and Divali



Strategic Planning Exercise



Secret Santa





INSIDE BACK COVER



**Equal Opportunity Commission**  
*Promoting Equality*

ANNUAL  
REPORT | 2017

Equal Opportunity Commission  
55-57 Manic Street,  
Chaguanas, 500621  
Trinidad and Tobago, WI

Phone : (868) 672-0928

Fax : (868) 671-8826

**E-mail: [eoc@gov.tt](mailto:eoc@gov.tt)**