



Republic of Trinidad and Tobago



Equal Opportunity Commission
Promoting Equality

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

CHANGE & CONTINUITY





Equal Opportunity Commission

2019
ANNUAL
REPORT



CHANGE
&
CONTINUITY



Annual Reporting

The Equal Opportunity Commission submits its tenth Annual Report on its activities for the year ended 31st December 2019. 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.”



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Acronyms

AGLA	Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs
AMCHAM	American Chamber of Commerce of Trinidad and Tobago
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
COP	Communities of Practice
CSO	Central Statistical Office
ECA	The Employers Consultative Association
EOA, the Act	Equal Opportunity Act
EOC, the Commission	Equal Opportunity Commission
EOT, the Tribunal	Equal Opportunity Tribunal
GoRTT	Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
HASC	HIV/AIDS Workplace Advocacy and Sustainability Centre
HR	Human Rights
IACHR	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITU	Information Technology Unit
LATT	Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
NYPF	National Youth Productivity Forum
NCPD	National Centre for Persons with Disabilities
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIBTT	National Insurance Board of Trinidad and Tobago
SALISES	Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies
TTUTA	Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers Association
THA	Tobago House of Assembly
UTC	Unit Trust Corporation
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UWI	The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus
WINAD	Women's Institute for Alternative Development

Table 01



Chairman's Statement

When the Equal Opportunity Act (2000) was introduced, there was an expectation it would contribute to educating the community about the benefits of treating people with respect and dignity as well as provide an accessible mechanism for investigating and resolving complaints of unlawful discrimination. The Commission's charter is not only to administer our Act but equally, to play a leadership role in eliminating discrimination and promoting equality. The Commission has continued its good work in 2019 in a climate of financial constraints and limited resources. These constraints have had a significant impact on our ability to deliver on our statutory function, to work towards the elimination of discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different status.

The Board continued its regular activities of keeping the subject of discrimination relevant through the co-hosting of a very successful panel discussion on the Commission's National Survey on Public Perception of Equality and Discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago. A number of important issues were raised and analysed and provoked thoughtful dialogue among academia. We pursued a number of initiatives to improve links with other human rights agencies and with stakeholders in the community. The Commission initiated and participated in a number of high profile events such as the public forum Living Good: A Conversation About the Right to Dignified Lives and Just Communities which was well received and provided an opportunity for the discourse on the right to a dignified life, the



Chairman's Statement *(continued)*



protection of human rights and just communities from different perspectives. The insightful seminar Introduction of the Equal Opportunity Act Remedy to the Legal Profession held in collaboration with the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago to commemorate International Human Rights Day provided a valuable forum to coordinate our work and improve our networking relations with fellow agencies.

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

We have been at the forefront in highlighting the scourge of sexual harassment in several categories of discrimination, of which employment is one of four. For many young women beginning their careers, sexual harassment is extremely stressful and can have an impact on the pursuit of their chosen career paths. I want to remind employers that sexual harassment is unlawful and very much a discrimination and occupational health and safety issue. This means employers must take responsibility for creating a workplace culture in which such behaviours are unacceptable and, where they do occur, for providing appropriate, confidential and thorough processes for investigating incidents and repairing the harm caused. I want to remind our publics that the Commission's Guidelines on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, provides a comprehensive point of reference. The Commission, as a stakeholder dealing with issues of discrimination based on sex, commented on and recommended amendments to the proposed Sexual Harassment Bill. We also participated in the Joint Select Committee's Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in

the Workplace, and I further participated as the guest speaker on the topic of gender harassment at the 12th Conference of Women Parliamentarians (CWP) of the Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region (CAA) held in Port-of-Spain.

Pursuant to its mandate under section 27 of the Act, the Commission has also proposed draft amendments to include sexual harassment as a standalone status ground of discrimination. An adhoc Committee established in 2016 by the Attorney General, and comprising of officers of his Secretariat, the Law Reform Commission, the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and the Equal Opportunity Commission, to review proposed amendments to the Equal Opportunity Act has prepared and submitted its report to the Attorney General. We are still awaiting the Government's formal response to the recommendations as we look forward to the advancement of this issue in the coming year.

Even as our work continued with respect to our major stakeholders, we maintained a focus on consolidating the institutional integrity of the Commission and strengthening areas of greatest need. I am pleased to state that preparatory work has begun on the Commission's strategic goal of becoming an autonomous institution. We hope to progress with the completion of the process in the near future.

It is clear that, as levels of public awareness grow and our effectiveness heightens in the public view, there will be new and expanded areas of concern that will continue to be placed before us. This will call for a high degree of inter-agency cohesion and an expanded reach, involving all areas of civil society engagement and increased activism.



Chairman's Statement *(continued)*



Public outreach continues to develop through working partnerships with a diverse range of organisations to increase community awareness of discrimination, human rights and the Act. Our public education reflected the recommendation made in the National Survey to target the youth population as a means of promoting equality and preventing discrimination. To this end, we hosted three (03) youth forums with a total reach of sixty-three (63) youth participants. The forums proved to be highly effective in reaching large numbers of young people to raise awareness, prevent discrimination and promote equal opportunity. Demand continues to be strong for our tailored outreach services which include expert advice on preventing discrimination and sexual harassment and supporting victims of domestic violence.

We also continued to organise and participate in events to celebrate International Women's Day, Human Rights Day and International Day of People with Disabilities. The migration of the Commission's website to a newer platform with newer features continued apace, and my fellow Commissioners and I anticipate greater advantage for more effective interaction with the public.

The year ahead promises to be one of growth and challenge. We will be looking to revise the way we manage complaints and improve on our public engagement. As in previous years, we have been fortunate to have the support of our Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs and other members of the Ministry. It is my great pleasure to extend my thanks and appreciation to them. However, it is to the members of the Board, senior management and staff of the Commission that I express my particular gratitude for all their hard work and dedication.

We will continue to collaborate and strengthen our partnerships with all relevant stakeholders who can assist us in extending our reach to move towards the goal of reducing, if not eliminating, discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago. I am looking forward to harnessing the expertise and energy of the staff, and of my fellow Commissioners, to implement the strategies towards achieving this goal.

Lynette Seebaran Suite

Chairman,
Equal Opportunity Commission



The Chief Executive Officer's Remarks



I have the pleasure of presenting the Annual Report of the Equal Opportunity Commission (the Commission) for the year ending 2019. The report has been prepared pursuant to section 53 of the Equal Opportunity Act 2000 (the Act). The Commission is an independent statutory body reporting to the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago whose core functions are to prevent and provide redress in situations of unlawful discrimination. The Commission is a small organisation, tasked with an important mandate to provide services to our nation's diverse population. In my role as the Chief Executive Officer of the Equal Opportunity Commission, I hold administrative accountability for managing the operations of the organisation and implementation of

the Equal Opportunity Act 2000 (the Act) to prevent discrimination and promote equal opportunity, ensuring the participation of all citizens in the economic and social life of our nation. It is both a huge privilege and a significant responsibility to hold such a role and to work in collaboration with my enterprising team to deliver on this responsibility to the best of our ability with our very limited resources.

This report reflects the theme of Change and Continuity and demonstrates the Commission's effort at continuing to provide high quality service in its core business areas, with a modest staff of twenty-one (21) persons, in spite of staff having been critically reduced



The Chief Executive Officer's Remarks *(continued)*



in the strategic areas of communications, information technology and human resources. This unforeseen circumstance has affected our ability to undertake our core functions; nevertheless, to mitigate staff losses, some of the Commission's staff have taken on additional roles outside their core duties and our work continued unabated.

Since my appointment in 2012, I have reviewed all the operations of the Commission and implemented substantial changes to increase efficiency and better performance in existing services as well as to develop new partnerships and opportunities to deliver the Commission's functions. Budget restrictions have continued to be imposed *inter alia* across the state sector, and this has affected the Commission's ability to fulfil its mandate. Yet, 2019 has been a year where we managed to do much with a reduced staff complement and very limited financial resources. I now give a very brief synopsis for 2019 of our main functions:

Discrimination complaint numbers dropped slightly in 2019 to one hundred and eight (108); however, the number of complaints has remained relatively stable over the longer term. Interestingly, in 2019 females made a significantly higher proportion of complaints (62%) as compared to 2017 and 2018. Race/Ethnicity, victimisation and sex discrimination were the most frequent grounds of complaint for the period under review. Complaints remain an important mechanism for achieving change on an individual level however. The Commission is also aiming to address more systemic issues through increasing community engagement.

As part of its mandate, the EOC is required to investigate and conciliate complaints of discrimination. Of the eighteen (18) matters that were referred for conciliation, nine (09) matters were brought forward from the previous year; three (03) matters were resolved

with a signed agreement, and those agreements were registered with the Equal Opportunity Tribunal. Eight (08) matters were unresolved and were referred to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal for adjudication at the request of the complainant. A further six (06) matters were in progress as at the end of 2019.

There has been a positive trend in the area of public education and advocacy. Thirty-two (32) sessions were conducted which benefited nine hundred and two (902) individuals. Evaluations demonstrated high rates of satisfaction and professionalism in the services we provided in our public education and outreach.

Throughout 2019, work continued apace by the ICT and Communications Unit on the re-branding of the Commission's website. This will strengthen our community presence by attracting more visitors to the page and allow for information on the website to be published via Facebook and other social media platforms, enabling and increasing direct digital engagement. The use of social media continues to be an integral part of informing and engaging with all stakeholders and publics. A tally of public visitors to the EOC's website revealed twelve thousand (12,000) users, each averaging approximately two (02) minutes of time spent on the website, with a total page view count reaching forty-three thousand, eight hundred and fifty-seven (43,857). Our Facebook page has received a total of one thousand, five hundred and seven (1,507) page likes and one thousand, five hundred and sixty-eight (1,568) page followers up until the end of the year.

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



The Chief Executive Officer's Remarks *(continued)*



of opportunity and good relations between persons of different status.” To this end, several reports have informed the research agenda and are identified in this review.

Training and development continue to be of high priority for members of staff at the Commission, to build institutional capacity and enable a higher standard of performance. Despite the economic circumstances that has affected operations, training, sourced mainly from the Public Service Academy, the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications, and the use of in-house capabilities were fully utilised. The Commission also continued its policy and procedure process in the development of the Guidelines for the Application of Compensatory Time Presence of Staff at the Office after Working Hours and Dealing with Irate Customers.

In our role as the promoter of anti-discriminatory practices, we hear many stories of everyday discrimination - though most will never come to our office as a formal complaint. We are cognisant of the hurt unthinking comments or behaviour can create, let alone deliberate discrimination. At the heart of our desire for equal opportunity and greater inclusion must be a respect for the inherent dignity and value of each person regardless of their sex, origin, race,

ethnicity, age, marital status or religion. It is about treating all people fairly and allowing them to make free choices about how to live their lives. That is the very foundation of a harmonious society.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work and vision of our Commissioners for their continued support and commitment throughout the year towards helping create a more equitable and fair Trinidad and Tobago.

I am very proud of the high-quality work the Commission's small team undertakes in promoting equal opportunity and preventing discrimination, offensive behaviour and victimisation. I am also extremely appreciative of the strong support that we get for our work from our strategic partners, businesses, community leaders and the general community. I look forward to continuing this work in the coming year, and I am sure that you will appreciate our work as I invite you to peruse the following pages of our 2019 Annual Report.

Devanty Dianne Maraj-Ramdeen

Chief Executive Officer



The Equal Opportunity Commission 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 (EOC) 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 (05) persons were reappointed/ appointed Commissioners for a period of three (03) years.

(2017 to 2020), as indicated:

(Reappointed from 26th August 2017)

Mrs. Lynette Seebaran Suite – Chairman

(Reappointed 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.



About the Equal Opportunity Commission *(continued)*

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:

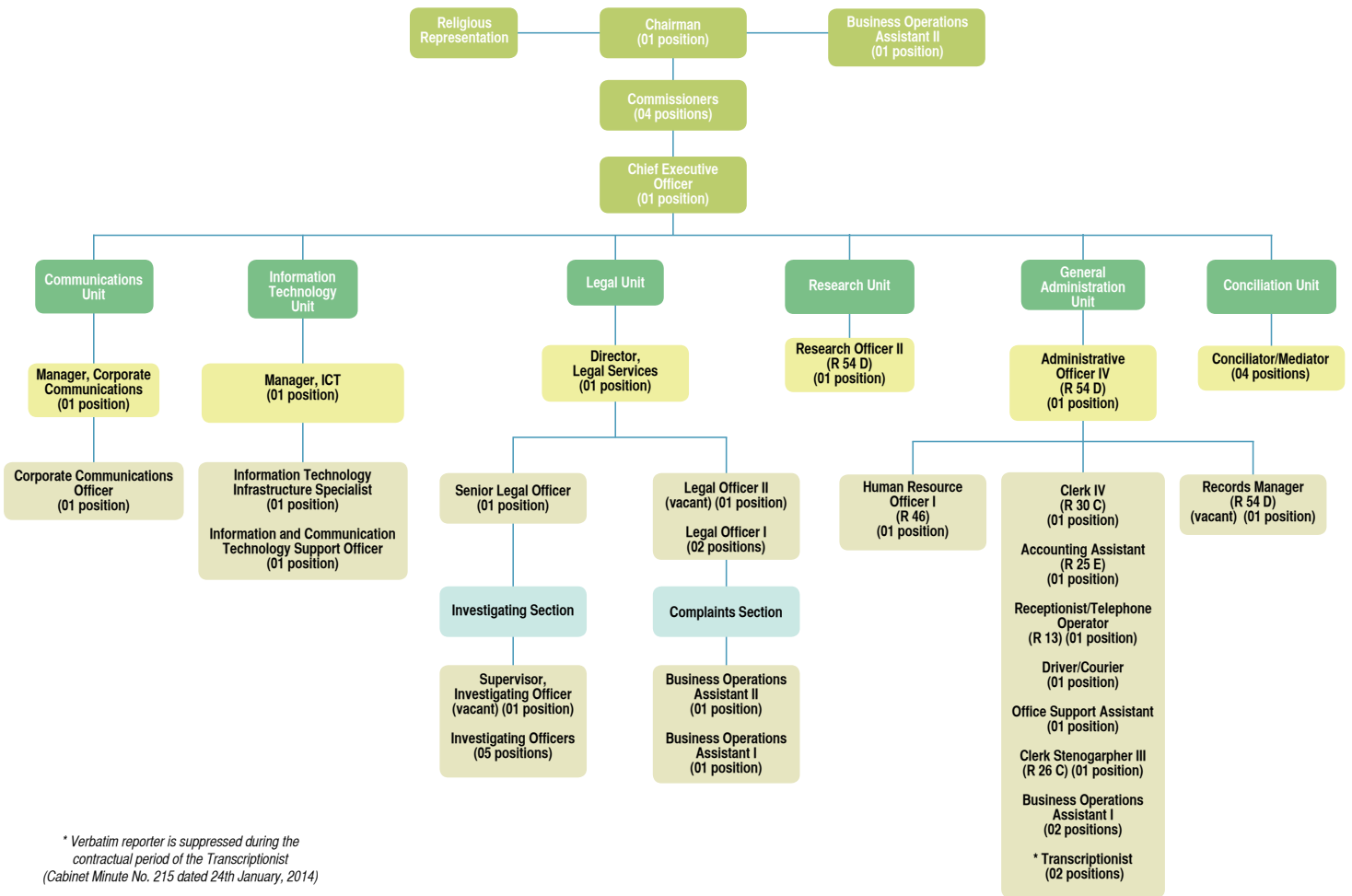
- Legal
- General Administration (Including Human Resources)
- Conciliation
- Communications
- Information Technology
- Research

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.



About the Equal Opportunity Commission *(continued)*

Organisational Chart of the



* Verbatim reporter is suppressed during the contractual period of the Transcriptionist (Cabinet Minute No. 215 dated 24th January, 2014)

Figure 01



About the Equal Opportunity Commission *(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.



About the Equal Opportunity Commission *(continued)*

Core Values

Passion	Customer-Centricity
<p>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.</p> <p>Fairness, justice and equality.</p> <p>We adhere at all times to due process and are impartial in our procedures.</p>	<p>We are sensitive to the needs of our stakeholders as we continuously strive to create a positive client experience.</p>
Empathy	Respect for Diversity
<p>We seek to understand people's situations from their perspective, and we are focused on exercising compassion.</p>	<p>We promote respect for people's differences.</p>
Timeliness	Loyalty
<p>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 proactive organisation.</p>	<p>We strongly support and are committed to the EOC and its mission.</p>
Integrity	Autonomy
<p>We operate with honesty, uprightness and honour.</p>	<p>We operate independently, in accordance with the law, and we are free from unnecessary external influence.</p>
Team Cohesiveness	Best Practice
<p>We strive to communicate effectively, work together efficiently, and we focus on the EOC's mission and activities that unite us.</p>	<p>We consistently adopt methods and technologies to achieve superior results, and we keep our practices under continuous review.</p>
People development	Recognition and Reward
<p>We continuously update and improve our knowledge and skills so that we develop the EOC's human capital.</p>	<p>We acknowledge the work and efforts of our team and reward them.</p>



Profile of Commissioners

Mrs. Lynette Seebaran Suite has over thirty-five (35) years of 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.



Chairman

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.

Profile of Commissioners (*continued*)

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.

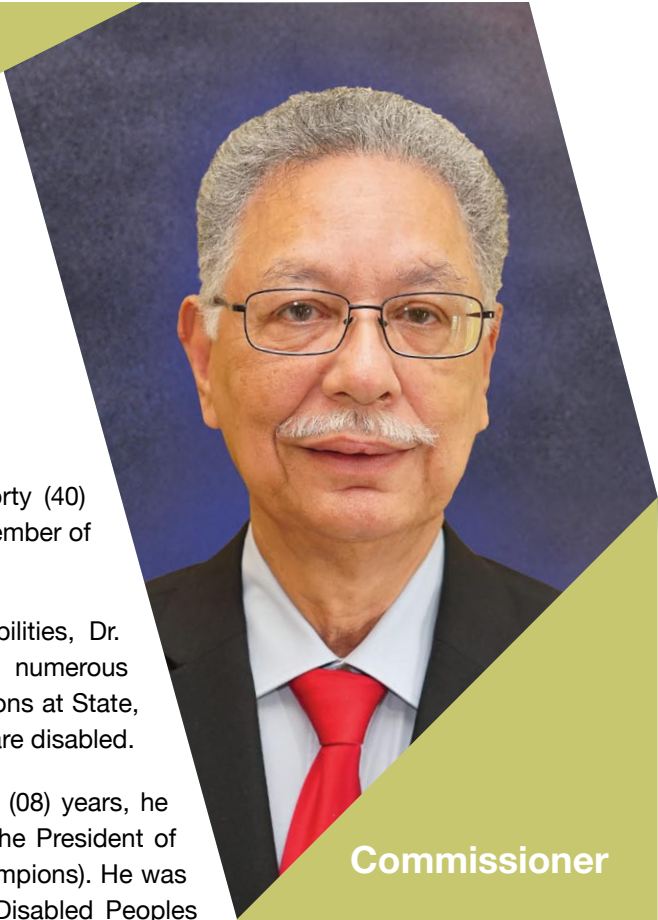
Dr. Beckles is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD). She has over thirty (30) years of experience in the field of disability. As a defender of inclusion of persons with disabilities in all walks of life, her work has been key to the development of National Policy for Persons with Disabilities in seven (07) 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 recipient of the Inter-American Development Bank's Award for Social Entrepreneurship (1999).



Profile of Commissioners (continued)



Commissioner

Dr. Emanuel Hosein is a medical practitioner with over forty (40) years of experience in the State sector. He is also a former Member of Parliament and Government Minister.

An experienced advocate on behalf of persons with disabilities, Dr. Hosein'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 (08) years, he became a doctor and a good table tennis player and was the President of the Tunapuna Tigers Tennis Club (five (05)-time 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; the Super Lion Award from Chancellor Hall, UWI, Jamaica; the 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.



Profile of Commissioners *(continued)*



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 thirty-three (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 twenty-five (25) years. He has also provided medical support at numerous local karate and judo tournaments.

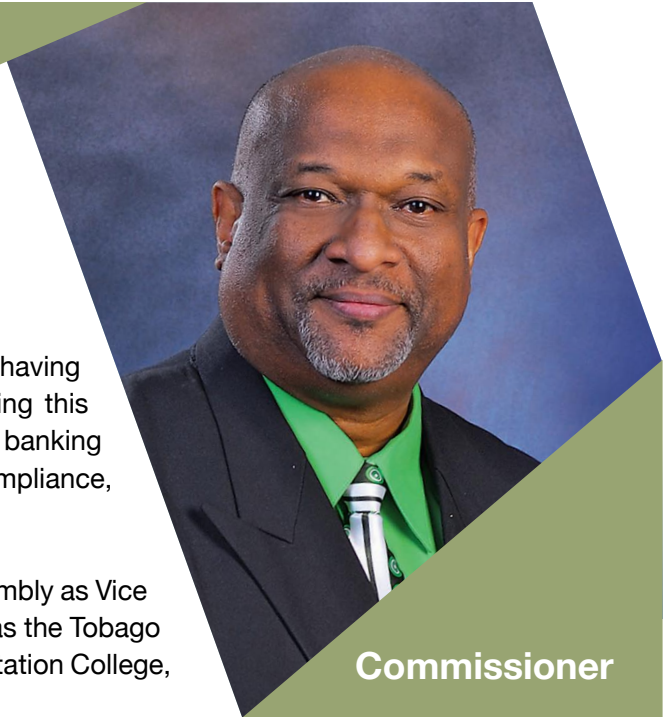
Dr. Hosein has been married to Claudette Marcia Riley-Hosein for forty-one (41) years, and they have four (04) children and five (05) grandchildren.



Profile of Commissioners (*continued*)

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 Services 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 unions and one of the largest conglomerates in food and financial services. He has been able to contribute to the various companies in the areas of strategic direction, marketing strategies, the competitive intelligence of emerging technologies and driving customer satisfaction programmes.



Commissioner

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.



Reports



Report from the Legal Unit

Complaints Received by the Commission in 2019

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 (06) 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]. If 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].



Report from the Legal Unit (*continued*)

- **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 \$TT1,000.00 per day; or
 - In the case of a body corporate to a fine of \$TT5,000.00 per day;

for 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:

- prepare a report relating to the investigation with its recommendations;
- send a copy of the report to the parties to the complainant;
- publish the report, and;
- 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 2019, using the above processes, that is:

- (a) Complaints Received and Investigated in 2019;
- (b) Complaints Referred to Conciliation in 2019;
- (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 2019

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.**



Report from the Legal Unit (continued)

1. Number of Complaints Received

The Commission received one hundred and eight (108) complaints in 2019 which is a decline from the number received in 2018 [one hundred and twenty-four (124)] and 2017 [one hundred and twenty-nine (129)].

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

Table 02

When disaggregated by quarters and halves, the following was observed over the period 2017 to 2019:

- In 2017, more complaints were received in the first half of the year rather than the second half, but this was not the case in both 2018 and 2019. In 2017, there was a significant majority of about sixty per cent (60%) being received in the first half; in 2018, the halves were more or less evenly split; the slight majority of fifty-two per cent (52%) was in the second half, but in 2019, there was a significant majority of fifty-nine per cent (59%) in the second half.
- In 2017 and 2019, there was an increase in the number of complaints received from the first quarter into the second quarter, but in 2018, there was a slight decline.
- In 2017, the highest number of complaints was received in the second quarter, but in both 2018 and 2019, the highest number was received in the third quarter.
- In all three (03) years, there is a consistency in the percentage of complaints received around the middle of the year, that is, the second and third quarter collectively: the percentage of complaints received during this period was fifty-four per cent (54%) in 2017 and fifty-three per cent (53%) in both 2018 and 2019.
- In all three (03) years, virtually the same number of complaints was received in the fourth quarter: twenty-nine (29) in 2017, twenty-eight (28) in 2018 and thirty (30) in 2019.

Number of Complaints Received by Quarter – 2017 to 2019

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

Table 03



Report from the Legal Unit (continued)

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

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

- One hundred and seventy-five (175) were lodged by males, or about forty-eight per cent (48%); and
- One hundred and eighty-six (186) were lodged by females, or about fifty-two per cent (52%).

In both 2017 and 2018, more complaints were lodged by males than by females unlike in 2019 where significantly twenty-eight (28) or twenty-six per cent (26%) more complaints were lodged by females. In 2017, only one (01) more complaint was lodged by a male than female; however, the margin was widened in 2018 when thirteen per cent (13%) more complaints were lodged by males than by females.

Sex of the Complainants - 2017 to 2019

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

Table 04

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

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

- In all three (03) years, the percentage of complaints lodged by persons under eighteen (18) years old has been relatively small, amounting to less than three per cent (03%); in actuality, complaints from this group are normally complaints by students and are lodged by their parents.
- The other small group is the persons aged over sixty-five (65+) years who accounted for one per cent (01%) or less in each year. As noted in the 2017 Annual Report:

“It may be that these persons are no longer in the labour market as employees, as they would be beyond mandatory retirement age, and as such, have passed the point of complaining about things



Report from the Legal Unit (continued)

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 sixty-five (65) years is denied employment, or some benefit or facility associated with employment, he/she has no recourse for relief with the Commission.”

One of the Commission’s core functions is to propose amendments to the Equal Opportunity Act, and one proposal that has been made is to add age as a status ground for protection. If and when this amendment is passed, it may be that there would be an increase in complaints from persons over sixty-five (65) years.

- The number and percentage of complaints received from persons aged eighteen to twenty-five (18 to 25) years was highest in 2017 and steadily declined in the two (02) years thereafter; in 2017, eleven (11) persons, amounting to eight and a half per cent (08.5%), were within this age group; in 2018, it was six (06) persons, amounting to four and eight-tenths per cent (04.8%), and in 2019, it was three (03) persons, amounting to three per cent (03%).
- Over the three (03) years, the super-cluster of persons aged twenty-six to forty-five (26 to 45) years accounted for the most number of complaints and rose consistently over the period: this group accounted for forty and a half per cent (40.5%) of all complaints in 2017, increased to forty-three per cent (43%) in 2018, from which it rose significantly to fifty-three per cent (53%) in 2019.
- In 2017 and 2019, there was a drop in the number and percentage of complaints received from persons aged forty-six to fifty-five (46 to 55) as against the group in the preceding age bracket, thirty-six to forty-five (36 to 45), but in 2018, both groups accounted for the same number and percentage of complaints.

Age of the Complainants - 2017 to 2019

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

Table 05



Report from the Legal Unit (*continued*)

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

- Forty-five (45) persons self-identified as being of African origin, which was about forty-two per cent (42%) of complainants received for that year. In both 2018 and 2017, this group also accounted for thirty-three per cent (33%) of the complainants, so it can be said that there has been a noteworthy increase in complaints from this group between 2018 and 2019.
- Seventeen (17) persons self-identified as being of East Indian origin, which was about sixteen per cent (16%) of complainants received for 2019. This is lower than both 2017 and 2018 and is a significant decline from the 2018 peak of thirty-two per cent (32%) which is twice the 2019 percentage.
- Twenty-four (24) persons self-identified as being of mixed origin, which is about twenty-two per cent (22%) of complaints received. This is notably higher than the two previous years: eighteen (18%) per cent in 2017 and fourteen per cent (14%) in 2018.
- There were zero (0) persons who self-identified as being of White/ French Créole, Chinese, Portuguese or Syrian/ Lebanese origin, there being a decrease from 2018 where there were two (02) persons, amounting to one and a half per cent (01.5%). In 2017, no person so identified. Over the three (03)-year period, complaints from this group have been relatively low.
- Twenty-two (22) persons did not provide any data about their origin; this amounted to twenty per cent (20%). This percentage is more or less consistent with the previous two (02) years: nineteen per cent (19%) in 2018 and twenty-two and a half per cent (22.5%) in 2017.

Percentage of Complaints Received by Racial Groups – 2017 to 2019

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

Table 06



Report from the Legal Unit (continued)

Racial Background of Complainants - 2019

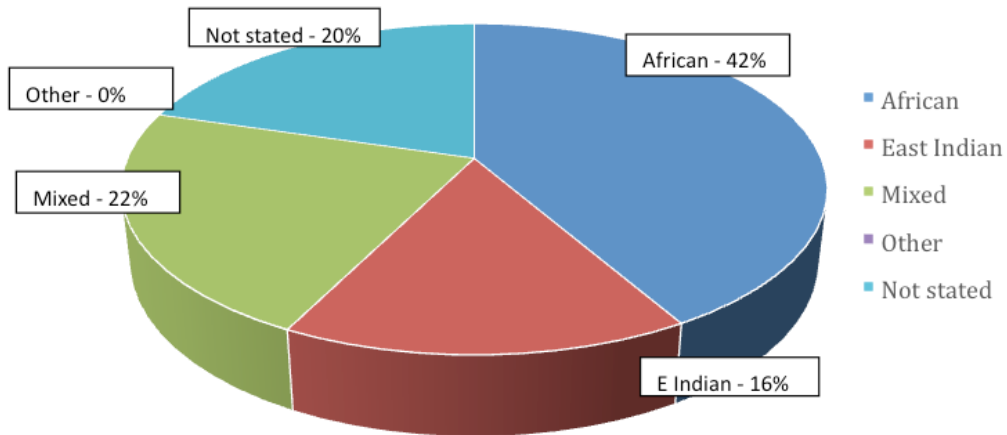


Figure 02

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%

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

- Persons of African origin surpassed its composition in accessing the Commission’s

complaint services as this group accounted for thirty-four per cent (34%) of the national population and forty-two per cent (42%) of complainants.

- Persons of East Indian origin underutilised the Commission’s complaint services as this group accounted for thirty-five per cent (35%) of the national population but only sixteen per cent (16%) of complainants.
- Persons of Mixed origin about equivalently accessed the Commission’s complaint services in 2019 as this group accounted for twenty-three per cent (23%) of the national population and twenty-two per cent (22%) of complainants.
- As noted previously, persons of White/French Créole, Portuguese, Chinese and Syrian/Lebanese ancestry did not utilise the Commission’s complaints services.



Report from the Legal Unit (*continued*)

3. Geographical Origin of the Complainants

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

- **The North-West Region** [this comprises of Port-of-Spain and Diego Martin]: About thirteen per cent [13%] of all complaints received in 2019 were lodged by persons who lived in this region. This is an increase from nine and a half per cent (09.5%) in 2018 and is relatively consistent with the 2017 amount of twelve per cent (12%). The percentage of complaints coming from this region has been fairly consistent – between nine and thirteen per cent (09% to 13%) – and is somewhat consistent with the national baseline, as derived from the 2011 National Population and Housing Census published by the Central Statistical Office. According to the 2011 National Census, this area accounts for 10.6% of the total population of Trinidad and Tobago; consequently, it can be said that in 2017 and 2019, there was a somewhat higher tendency for persons from this region to lodge complaints, though not by a significant amount, and in 2018, there was a slightly lower tendency for persons from this region to lodge complaints, though not by a significant amount.
- **The North-East Region** [this comprises of San Juan/Laventille, Tunapuna/Piarco, Arima and Sangre Grande]: The percentage of complaints coming from this cluster has been relatively higher than other regions in all three (03) years: forty-six per cent (46%) in 2019, thirty-three per cent (33%) in 2018, and thirty-three and a half per cent (33.5%) in 2017. However in 2018 and 2017, it was lower than the national baseline; per the 2011 National Census, this area accounts for 36.3% of the total population of Trinidad and Tobago. So it can be said that in 2019, there has been a significant increase in persons from this region to lodge complaints, with a differential of approximately thirteen per cent (13%).
- **The Central Region** [this comprises of Chaguanas and Couva/ Talparo/ Tabaquite]: In 2019, twenty-one per cent (21%) of all complaints came from this region; this is somewhat consistent with the 2018 amount of twenty per cent (20%) but is a decrease from the 2017 amount of twenty-five and a half per cent (25.5%). Over the period, there has been a slight fluctuation of complaints of about four to five per cent points (04% to 05%) each year coming from this region. Despite this, these regions are still above the national baseline; according to the 2011 National Census Data, this area accounts for nineteen and seven-tenths per cent (19.7%) of the total population of Trinidad and Tobago. Consequently, it can be said that in 2019 and 2018, there was an almost equivalent tendency for persons from this region to lodge complaints, but in 2017, there was a greater tendency.
- **The Southern Region** [this comprises of San Fernando, Point Fortin, Penal/ Debe, Princes Town, Siparia and Mayaro/ Rio Claro]: In 2019, about seventeen per cent (17%) of all complaints came from this area; this is a significant decrease of about twelve per cent (12%) points from 2018 [about twenty-nine per cent (29%)] and a slight decrease of about two per cent (02%) points from 2017 [about nineteen and half per cent (19.5%)]. Per the 2011 National Census, this area accounts for



Report from the Legal Unit (continued)

twenty-eight and eight-tenths per cent (28.8%) of the total population of Trinidad and Tobago. Using this as a baseline, it can be said that in both 2017 and 2019, this region was significantly below the national baseline, but in 2018, it was consistent with it.

- **Tobago:** In 2019, three per cent (03%) of all complaints came from Tobago; this is significantly lower than both 2018 and 2017 where the amount was in the region of seven per cent (07%) in both years. According to the 2011 National Census, the island of Tobago accounts for four and six-tenths per cent (04.6%) of the total population, so it can be said that in 2017 and 2018, there was a greater tendency for persons from Tobago to lodge complaints, and in 2019, there was a lesser tendency, but in all three (03) years, the margin is not significant (less than three per cent (03%) points).

Geographical Origin of Complainants – 2017 to 2019
(By Regional and Municipal Corporations)

Area	2019		2018		2017	
	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total
Port-of-Spain	08	07	09	07	08	06
Diego Martin	07	06	03	02.5	08	06
San Juan/ Laventille	11	10	10	08	10	07.5
Tunapuna/Piarco	20	19	21	17	20	15.5
Arima	12	11	06	05	09	07
Toco/Sangre Grande	06	06	04	03	04	03
Chaguanas	12	11	15	12	22	17
Couva/Talparo/ Tabaquite	11	10	10	08	11	08.5
San Fernando	06	06	20	16	11	08.5
Penal / Debe	0	0	06	05	05	04
Siparia	03	03	03	02.5	0	0
Point Fortin	01	01	02	01.5	01	<01
Princes Town	04	04	04	03	05	04
Mayaro/Rio Claro	03	03	01	<01	03	02.5
Tobago	03	03	09	07	10	07.5
Not Stated/ Other	01	01	01	<01	02	01.5
Total	108		124		129	

Table 07



Report from the Legal Unit (*continued*)

In all three (03) years, persons living in the Tunapuna/ Piarco region accounted for the single highest number of complaints lodged, with persons from the Chaguanas Borough placing second in 2017 and 2019, but in 2019, it tied for second place with Arima. Over the three (03) years, the numbers received from Chaguanas decreased, and the numbers received from Tunapuna/Piarco were about equivalent. The amount of complaints received from persons in San Fernando, which were the third highest in 2017 [eight and a half per cent (08.5%)] and the second highest in 2018 [sixteen per cent (16%)], has significantly declined in 2019 [six per cent (06%)]. On the other hand, the amount of complaints received from persons living in Arima increased between 2018 and 2019, and as noted, it has tied for second place.

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

- Complaints from Toco/ Sangre Grande accounted for three per cent (03%) in both 2018 and 2017 but has increased in 2019 to six per cent (06%);
- Complaints from Mayaro/ Rio Claro were consistently three per cent (03%) or below in all three (03) years and were less than one per cent (<01%) in 2018; and
- Complaints from the regions of Siparia and Point Fortin were consistently below three per cent (03%) in all three (03) years.

Added to this, in 2019 no complaints were received from persons living in Debe/Penal, so it could be said that it was not just the south-east and south-west tips of Trinidad that presented with low complaints, but the entire southern region below San Fernando, in the stretch from Icacos to Mayaro.

4. Category and Status of Discrimination Alleged

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



Report from the Legal Unit (continued)

But it only applies if that discrimination is:

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

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

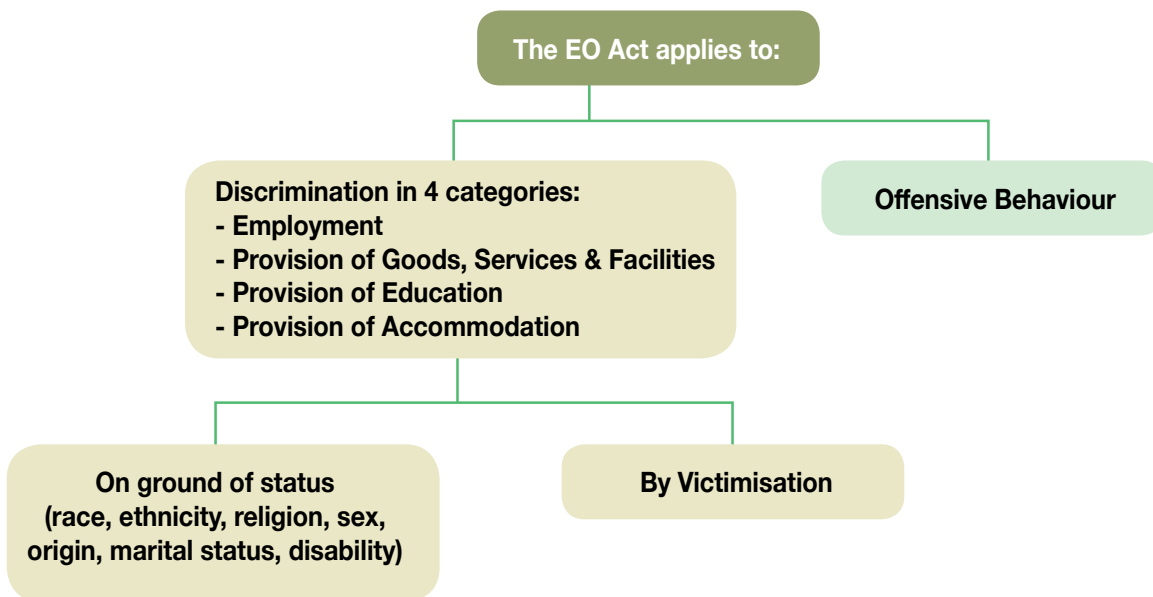


Figure 03

A ‘status’ is a personal characteristic that the Act gives protection to. Currently there are seven (07) status grounds that are protected: Sex, Race, Ethnicity, Religion, Marital Status, Origin (including geographic origin) and Disability.

Category of Discrimination:

In all three years, complaints of discrimination in employment significantly outweighed the complaints in the other categories, accounting for over eighty per cent (80%), and peaking at ninety - one per cent (91%) in 2019.

In all three years, the second highest number of complaints were lodged in the category of goods & services, but the percentage share has about halved from eleven per cent (11%) in 2017 to six and a half per cent (06.5%) in 2019.

Over the period, the number of complaints of discrimination in education has remained small, though there has been a great drop, from eight (08) in 2018 to two (02) in 2019.

In each of the three years, only one (01) complaint was received of discrimination in accommodation, so the number has been consistent.



Report from the Legal Unit (continued)

Category of Discrimination Alleged – 2017 to 2019

Category	2019		2018		2017	
	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total	No. of Complaints	% of Annual Total
Employment	98	91	100	80.5	107	83
Goods, Services & Facilities	07	06.5	08	06.5	14	11
Education	02	1.9	08	06.5	06	04.5
Accommodation	01	0.9	01	<01	01	<01
Offensive Behaviour	00	00	06	05	0	0
Other/Not Stated	00	00	01	<01	01	<01
Total	108		124		129	

Table 08

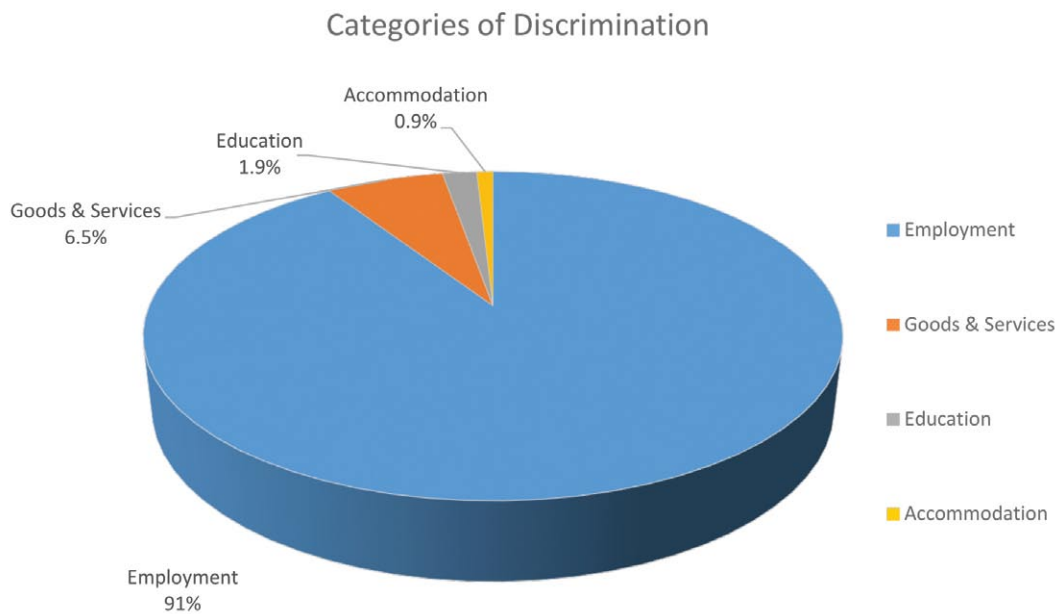


Figure 04



Report from the Legal Unit *(continued)*

Status/ Victimization Alleged

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

- Twenty-five (25) complainants identified no grounds under the Equal Opportunity Act that is they did not claim as the basis for their complaint:
 - (i) one or more of the seven (07) grounds under status
 - (ii) victimisation or
 - (iii) offensive behaviour.

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

- Eighty- three (83) complainants identified one or more grounds (status, victimisation or offensive behaviour). This amounts to about seventy-seven per cent (77%) of all complaints lodged. This is more than 2017 [seventy-four and a half per cent (74.5%)] but less than 2018 [eighty-three per cent (83%)].
- Of the eighty- three (83) complaints that alleged a recognised ground:
 - Forty-seven (47) complaints, or about fifty-seven per cent (57%), were taken to have been based on one ground alone. (As explained below, race and ethnicity are treated as one ground.)
 - The remaining thirty-six (36) persons alleged two or more grounds.

Total Number of Complaints that Alleged a Recognised Ground – 2017 to 2019

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

Table 09



REPORT FROM the LEGAL Unit (continued)

The eighty-three (83) complaints where persons alleged one or more recognised grounds can be dissected as follows:

Race and/or Ethnicity

Although the study of anthropology recognises a difference between race and ethnicity, the ordinary Trinidadian or Tobagonian sees these two (02) words as interchangeable, and oftentimes complainants tick both categories when their complaint may really be with respect to one, and in instances, may tick one (01) of the categories, when their complaint is really about the other. For this reason, race and ethnicity are treated as one (01) ground for the purposes of analysis. In 2019, twenty-six (26) complaints, or about thirty-one per cent (31%) of all complaints received, involved an allegation of racial and/or ethnic discrimination. This was relatively consistent with 2018 [thirty-two per cent (32%)] and was an increase from 2017 [twenty-eight and a half per cent (28.5%)]. In 2017 and 2018, as in all previous years of the Commission's operations, this combined ground was the single largest status alleged, but in 2019, for the first time it was second to another ground (victimisation). Of the twenty-six (26) complaints received in 2019:

- ☆ Six (06) persons alleged race alone; no one alleged ethnicity alone.
- ☆ One (01) person alleged race and ethnicity together.
- ☆ The remaining nineteen (19) persons alleged race and/or ethnicity along with other status grounds. For example:
 - One (01) person alleged race and/or ethnicity along with sex.
 - Three (03) persons alleged race and/or ethnicity along with sex and religion.
 - Two (02) persons alleged race and/or ethnicity along with origin and offensive behaviour.
 - One (01) person alleged race and/or ethnicity along with disability and victimisation.
 - One (01) person alleged race and/or ethnicity and victimisation together with offensive behaviour and religion.
 - Two (02) persons alleged race and/or ethnicity with victimisation and offensive behaviour.
 - One (01) person alleged race and offensive behaviour.
 - One (01) person alleged race and origin.
 - One (01) person alleged race, sex and victimisation.
 - One (01) person alleged race, sex, victimisation and offensive behaviour.



REPORT FROM the LEGAL Unit (*continued*)

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



Report from the Legal Unit (*continued*)

Disability	<p>Eleven (11) complaints, or about thirteen per cent (13%) of all complaints received in 2019, involved an allegation of discrimination on the grounds of disability (either by itself, or in conjunction with other grounds). This is an equivalent to the number of complaints received in 2018 and almost equivalent to 2017 [ten (10) complaints or about eight per cent (08%)]. Of the eleven (11) complaints received in 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Six (06) complainants alleged disability on its own. ☆ One (01) person alleged disability along with offensive behaviour. ☆ Four (04) persons alleged disability and victimisation.
Marital Status	<p>Only three (03) persons, or about four per cent (04%) of all complaints received in 2019, alleged discrimination on the grounds of marital status (either by itself or in conjunction with other grounds). A similar but slightly lower number of persons alleged this status in both 2018 and 2017 that being two (02) complaints which was about one and a half per cent (01.5%) in 2018 and two (02) complaints which was about two per cent (02%) in 2017 of all complaints received.</p>
Victimisation	<p>Thirty-nine (39) complaints, which is about forty-seven per cent (47%) of all complaints received in 2019, involved an allegation of discrimination by way of victimisation (either by itself or in conjunction with other grounds). This was a significant increase from 2018 [twenty-six (26) complaints or about twenty-one per cent (21%)] which itself was a much larger increase from 2017 [twenty-two (22) complaints or about seventeen per cent (17%)]. Of the thirty-nine (39) complaints received in 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Nineteen (19) complaints alleged victimisation on its own. ☆ The other twenty (20) complaints alleged victimisation along with another status ground: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four (04) persons alleged victimisation along with disability. • Three (03) persons alleged victimisation along with offensive behaviour. • Two (02) persons alleged victimisation along with sex and offensive behaviour. • Two (02) persons alleged victimisation along with sex. • Two (02) persons alleged victimisation along with race and/or ethnicity and offensive behaviour. • Two (02) persons alleged victimisation along with race and/or ethnicity. • One (01) person alleged victimisation along with race and/or ethnicity, religion and offensive behaviour. • One (01) person alleged victimisation along with race and/or ethnicity and offensive behaviour. • One (01) person alleged victimisation along with race and sex. • One (01) person alleged victimisation along with religion and marital status • One (01) person alleged victimisation along with sex, race and offensive behaviour



Report from the Legal Unit *(continued)*

<p>Offensive Behaviour</p>	<p>Sixteen (16) complaints, or about nineteen per cent (19%) of all complaints received in 2019, involved an allegation of discrimination on the grounds of offensive behaviour (either by itself or in conjunction with other grounds). This is an increase from 2018 [eleven (11) complaints or about nine per cent (09%)] which in turn was a significant increase from 2017 when there were no such complaints for that year, so it can be said that there has been a steady increase of complaints of this nature over the three (03)-year period. Of the sixteen (16) complaints received in 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ One (01) complaint related to offensive behaviour on its own and could be considered as true complaints for reasons explained below. ☆ The remaining fifteen (15) complaints were mixed with other status grounds such as sex, disability and victimisation, and these complaints fell within one of the broad categories of discrimination. <p>Offensive behaviour, as created by section 7 of the Equal Opportunity Act, is intended to provide a remedy for what, in the colloquial sense, can be termed 'hate speech', that is words, action or conduct said or done in the public domain, with the intention of inciting hatred based on race, gender or religion. The action giving rise to offensive behaviour does not have to bear any connection to the four (04) broad areas of discrimination (employment, goods & services etc) that the Act is concerned about. However, some of the persons who complained about offensive behaviour did so in the context of employment (or in one (01) case the provision of goods and services), and mistook it to mean behaviour that was offensive to them because they felt insulted (for example, they felt that their supervisor talked down to them, or in one (01) case, a public officer spoke harshly to them) as opposed to behaviour that was done with the intention of inciting public hatred, ridicule and scorn based on race, gender or religion.</p>
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Table 10

5. Types of Respondents

(The person or entity against whom the complaint was lodged)

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

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

- Sixty-nine (69), which is about sixty-four per cent (64%), were against State/ public sector entities. This is a relatively consistent percentage (though less in number) to that in 2018 [eighty-two (82) complaints or about sixty-six per cent (66%)] and a decrease from that in 2017 [one hundred and two (102) complaints or about seventy-nine per cent (79%)]



Report from the Legal Unit (continued)

- Thirty-nine (39), which is about thirty-six per cent (36%), were against private sector entities. This is a relatively consistent percentage (though less in number) to that in 2018 [forty-two (42) or about thirty-four per cent (34%)] and an increase from 2017 [twenty-seven (27) complaints or about twenty-one per cent (21%)].

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

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

- Ministries or departments of the Central Government, for example, the Ministry of Education, the Board of Inland Revenue, the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service;
- Service commissions, such as the public service, police service, teaching service and Statutory Authority Service Commissions;

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

Types of Respondents - 2017 to 2019

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

Table 11



Report from the Legal Unit *(continued)*

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

- Twenty-one (21) complaints were lodged against a Government Ministry or a department, office or division of a Ministry. This is a decrease from thirteen (13) in 2018;
- Two (02) complaints named the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service as a respondent. This was a decrease from seven (07) in 2018;
- A further four (04) complaints were lodged against a protective service, that is, the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, Fire Service or Prison Service;
- Eight (08) complaints were lodged against statutory bodies. Of these, there were four (04) complaints against a service Commission. This is equivalent to the number received in 2018;
- One (01) complaint was lodged against a public body that regulates the telecommunications sector;
- Four (04) complaints were lodged against public bodies that operate in the aviation sector. This is double the number received in 2018;
- Four (04) complaints were lodged against Regional Health Authorities based in Trinidad. This is a slight increase from the two (02) that were lodged in 2018;
- Two (02) complaints were lodged against municipal corporations based in Trinidad (that is regional corporations, city corporations and borough corporations); this is a decrease from the five (05) received in 2018;
- Two (02) complaints were lodged against regional and administrative bodies that operate in Tobago;
- Seven (07) complaints were lodged against public sector educational institutions. This is a decrease from seventeen (17) in 2018. Of the seven (07) public-sector institutions:
 - One (01) complaint was lodged against a secondary school that falls under the purview of the Ministry of Education;
 - Two (02) complaints were lodged against tertiary level institutions, including a regional university that has a campus in Trinidad and a university wholly based in Trinidad and Tobago;
 - Four (04) complaints were lodged against institutions that provide specialised and/or vocational training.
- Fourteen (14) complaints were filed against corporations and enterprises owned by the State, apart from those that would fall into one of the categories above. This is a decline from seventeen (17) in 2018. Of the fourteen (14) complaints:
 - Five (05) were against one specific public utility, and one (01) was against another utility;
 - Three (03) were against State companies that operate in the oil and gas sector;
 - Five (05) were against a company that provided security and janitorial services.



Report from the Legal Unit (*continued*)

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

- Two (02) complaints were lodged against named individuals which related to issues of offensive behaviour;
- Two (02) complaints were lodged against entities in the Transport – Aviation sector;
- Three (03) complaints were lodged against entities in the Financial Sector: one (01) against an insurance company and two (02) against a credit union.
- With respect to the Chemicals, and Oil and Gas Sector, two (02) of the two (02) complaints were lodged against producers/ manufacturers with revenues in excess of one billion dollars (TT\$1,000,000,000);
- With respect to the Manufacturing Sector, three (03) complaints were lodged against mid-sized manufacturers, and one (01) was lodged against a paint manufacturer;
- With respect to the Retail - Goods and Merchandise Sector, one (01) complaint was lodged against a mid-sized distributor, one (01) against a small-sized distributor and two (02) against a seller/ distributor of new automobiles;
- One (01) complaint was lodged against a church board;
- The rest of the complaints were lodged against entities involved in the Services Sector, for example:
 - With respect to the Restaurant, Nightclub and Entertainment Sub-Sector, one (01) complaint was lodged against an events organisation;
 - With respect to Professional Services, one (01) complaint was lodged against a dental practice;
 - Two (02) complaints were lodged against medical institutions of which one (01) was a private hospital and the other a medical research entity;
 - Five (05) complaints were lodged against private security companies;
 - One (01) complaint was lodged against a private school;
 - Two (02) complaints were lodged against an entity providing computing services;
 - One (01) complaint was lodged against a tile company;
 - One (01) complaint was lodged against a mall;
 - One (01) complaint was lodged against a funeral home;
 - One (01) complaint was lodged against a Lotto booth;
 - One (01) complaint was lodged against a hardware;
 - One (01) complaint was lodged against a courier service.

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



Report from the Legal Unit *(continued)*

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 is a brief explanation of the cluster zones, and the table thereafter presents the number of individual respondents that are based in said zones.

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



Report from the Legal Unit (continued)

Geographical Origin of Respondents – 2017 to 2019
(By Economic/ Commercial Cluster Zones)

Cluster Zone	2019		2018		2017	
	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Annual Total	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Annual Total	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Annual Total
Port-of-Spain	46	43	51	38	69	53.5
North-West	04	04	03	2.25	02	01.5
San Juan	07	6.5	09	07	05	04
St Joseph/ St Augustine	14	13	13	10	11	08.5
Macoya/ Trincity	14	13	12	09	05	04
Arima	03	03	09	06.75%	03	02.5
North-East	02	02	01	0.75%	02	01.5
Caroni/ Chaguanas	03	03	05	03.75%	07	05.5
Couva/Point Lisas	06	06	03	02.25%	03	02.5
Claxton Bay/ Pointe-à-Pierre	0	0	06	04.5%	03	02.5
San Fernando	02	02	04	03%	07	05.5
La Brea/ Point Fortin	0	0	0	0%	01	0.77%
South-West`	01	0.9	04	03	01	0.77
Penal/ Debe/ Princes Town	03	03	01	0.75%	01	0.77
Manzanilla/ Mayaro	01	0.9	01	0.75%	01	0.77
Tobago	02	02	08	06 %	08	06
Not Stated	0	0	02	02.25%		
TOTAL	108		132			

Table 12



Report from the Legal Unit *(continued)*

In 2017 and 2018, more than fifty per cent (50%) of the respondents were based in Port-of-Spain. In 2019, this area still accounted for the largest share of respondents, but it has dropped to forty-six per cent (46%) of respondents; in fact there has been a steady decline from the high of sixty-nine per cent (69%) in 2017, and it will be interesting to see if this trend continues in coming years.

Twenty-eight per cent (28%) of the respondents were from the St Joseph to Trincity area, which is a steady increase from twelve and a half per cent (12.5%) in 2017 and nineteen per cent (19%) in 2018. In both 2018 and 2019, this cluster was the second highest source area for respondents after Port-of-Spain. If one were to add in the outlying regions of San Juan and Arima, this stretch accounted for thirty-eight per cent (38%) of the respondents in 2019, and slightly under thirty-three per cent (33%) in 2018.

The Central stretch from Caroni to Pointe-à-Pierre accounted for nine per cent (09%) of the respondents in 2019 which is consistent with 2018 and 2017 when it was ten and a half per cent (10.5%) in both years.

There has been a steady decline in complaints against respondents based in San Fernando, from the high of five and a half per cent (05.5%) in 2017 to two per cent (02%) in 2019.

In all three years, the percentage of respondents from the entire southern region below San Fernando, in the stretch from Icacos to Mayaro, has been relatively small and consistently five per cent (05%) or under.

In 2019, about eight per cent (08%) were based in the energy belt from Pt Lisas to Pt Fortin; this is less than

2018 [ten per cent (10%)] which in turn was less than 2017 [fourteen per cent (14%)].

If one were to compare the 2019 data on the geographical location of the respondents with the geographical location of the complainants, that was presented earlier, one may observe the following:

- Nineteen per cent (19%) of the complainants resided in the Tunapuna/Piarco region and fourteen per cent (14%) of the respondents were located in the same region.
- Only seven per cent (07%) of the complainants live in Port-of-Spain, but forty-six per cent (46%) of the respondents are based there.
- On the other hand, eleven per cent (11%) of the complainants live in Arima, but only three per cent (03%) of the respondents are based there.
- Also twenty-one per cent (21%) of the complainants live the regions of Chaguanas and Couva/Tabaquite/ Talparo, but only nine per cent (09%) of the respondents are based in the Caroni to Pointe-à-Pierre cluster.
- Eleven per cent (11%) of the complainants live in the entire southern region below San Fernando, in the stretch from Icacos to Mayaro, but five per cent (05%) of the respondents are based there.

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



Report from the Legal Unit (*continued*)

B. Complaints Referred to Conciliation in 2019

The Equal Opportunity Act, Chap. 22:03 empowers the Commission to refer a matter to conciliation when 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.

Nine (09) matters were referred for conciliation in calendar year 2019. A summary of the complaints is as follows:

No. and Code	Brief Description of Matter	Status as at 31st December 2019
1. (JB)	The complainant claimed discrimination in employment based on her race in the way she was bypassed for acting promotions on three (03) occasions: Manager, Financial Services; Manager, Exchequer Services; and Manager, Management Services Department.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit
2. (FH)	The complainant claimed discrimination in employment by victimisation in the way she had been reassigned to a different work unit after she made complaints of sexual harassment against her supervisor.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit
3. (CR & Ors)	A group of five (05) complainants claimed discrimination in employment because of their race in the way they were terminated during the term of their employment contracts for no given reason.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit
4. (CT)	The complainant claimed discrimination in employment firstly on the grounds of her sex in the way they failed to treat with an allegation of sexual harassment she made against a senior officer and secondly by victimisation in the way she was demoted/ reverted after making said complaint.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit
5. (KH)	The complainant claimed offensive behaviour because of a Facebook post in which the respondent labelled him a 'half pint house negro'.	Matter was not resolved and is to be referred to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal. The Commission has to publish its report.
6. (AS)	The complainant claimed discrimination in employment because of her race and ethnicity after she was transferred from her department on the basis that she was 'not a good culture fit' and later suspended pending investigation into an alleged incident.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit



Report from the Legal Unit (continued)

No. and Code	Brief Description of Matter	Status as at 31st December 2019
7. (KM)	The complainant claimed discrimination in employment because of his race against his previous employers in the way they have not resolved an outstanding promotion issue.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit
8. (AG)	The complainant claimed discrimination in employment because of his race and religion and by way of victimisation in the way he was made to do physical activity which he complained resulted in injury, which complaint the employer deemed to be false.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit
9. (KR)	The complainant claimed discrimination in employment based on his race based on the manner in which he was denied a promotion despite being qualified for same.	Matter is with the Conciliation Unit

Table 13

Eight (08) out of the nine (09) matters were based on the category of employment. Of these, three (03) were related to instances of non-promotion. Two (02) concerned victimisation arising out of a sexual harassment complaint made to the employer. One (01) matter dealt with the issue of termination by an organisation.

The matter that was not an employment one concerned the issue of offensive behaviour against a private individual based on a Facebook post.

Seven (07) of the above matters were against State/ public sector respondents. Three (03) were against organisations that fell within the remit of the Ministry of National Security; one (01) was against an organisation in the transport and maintenance of government buildings and facilities sector; one (01) was against a public utility; one (01) complaint was against an organisation in the petroleum sector and one (01) complaint was against a company functioning as a special purpose State enterprise focusing on providing project management services to the Government.

C. Summary Prosecutions for Non-Compliance

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

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

- (a) *in the case of an individual, to a fine of one thousand dollars;*
- (b) *in the case of a body corporate, to a fine of five thousand dollars,*
for every day that the individual or body corporate refuses or fails to comply with any requirement.



Report from the Legal Unit (*continued*)

The cause of action in these cases was the alleged non-compliance with a Notice issued by the Commission under section 33 to provide information with respect to an on-going investigation.

In 2019, no matters were laid before any Magistrate’s Court. In 2018, the Commission laid a summary complaint in the Couva Magistrates’ Court against Trinidad Cement Ltd. As at 31st December 2019, the matter is ongoing.

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:

- (a) *prepare a report relating to the investigation with its recommendations;*
- (b) *send a copy of the report to the parties to the complainant;*
- (c) *publish the report; and*
- (d) *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 **ten (10) reports in calendar year 2019**, in the following matters:

	File No.	Complainant	Respondent	Category/ Status	Date of Report	Further Status of Matter as at 31st December 2019
1	EOC 090/2016	Dr Anil Ramnanan	Customs and Excise Division of Ministry of Finance ('Customs')	Provision of Goods and Services/Sex	20th March 2019	Complainant has to provide consent for matter to be referred to the EOT.
2	EOC 075/2014	Keath Munroe	Trinidad and Tobago National Petroleum Marketing Company Ltd ('NP')	Employment/ Disability	10th July 2019	Matter was referred to EOT. No date has been set for hearing
3	EOC 069/2017n and 093/2017	Simon Wiltshire	North-West Regional Health Authority ('NWRHA')	Employment/ Victimization	05th March 2018	Complainant has to provide consent for matter to be referred to the EOT.

Table 14

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.



Report from the Legal Unit (*continued*)

The following are summaries of the allegations in these matters:

1. **Dr Anil Ramnanan complaint against Customs:** The complainant's posting as Consul General in Miami, USA was terminated on 16th October 2015. At that time, he was in the process of purchasing a motor vehicle which he shipped back to Trinidad. According to a Cabinet Minute from 1977, persons in the foreign service who are returning to Trinidad and who are bringing a motor vehicle with them are in certain circumstances entitled to exemptions on duties and taxes. However, the complainant was made to pay over three hundred and sixty thousand dollars (\$TT360,000.00) in duty and taxes on his vehicle. Customs said that he did not meet the criteria for exemption in the Cabinet Minute, as the vehicle he brought in was not a vehicle he used or possessed when in Miami.

2. **Keath Munroe complaint against NP:** The complainant alleged discrimination because of his disability when NP brought his employment as a Draughtsman to an end in May 2014 on the advice of a medical board. The complainant suffered from a psychological condition which NP said led to erratic behaviour and loud and obscene outbursts on the job, which in turn led to among other things, his suspension from work. They referred him to a medical board comprised of a Consultant in Occupational and Environmental Health, who recommended that he be medically boarded (with appropriate benefits) and if his behaviour continued, his employment was likely to be adversely affected (termination and loss of benefits).

3. **Simon Wiltshire complaint against NWRHA:** The complainant lodged two (02) complaints against the NWRHA alleging that they victimised him in refusing to short-list or hire him with respect to two (02) applications for employment. In his first complaint, he said that in August 2016 he applied for the advertised position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO), which was a position that he had previously held with them. He was terminated in June 2010 and brought proceedings against them in the Industrial Court, which he won, and he said that because of this, they victimised him by refusing to consider him when he applied again. In his second complaint, he said that in May 2017, he applied for the advertised position of Chief Operating Officer (COO) but again the NWRHA refused to consider him, because of the Industrial Court matter, and also because of the first complaint he had lodged with the Commission, which was in the process of being investigated at that time.

It must be emphasised that the foregoing are merely summaries of the matters; the allegations made by the complainants and/or the responses provided by the respondents are more detailed than what is presented. 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.



Report from the Legal Unit (*continued*)

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 (02) 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 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 total, eight (08) matters were instituted before the Tribunal in 2019.

1. Complaint lodged by Mr Ricardo Taylor against Probation Services Division of the Ministry of National Security
2. Complaint lodged by Dr Raymond Ramcharitar against the University of the West Indies ('UWI')
3. Complaint lodged by Mr Andy Short against the Strategic Services Agency, a division of the Ministry of National Security
4. Complaint lodged by Ms Melissa Messiah against Guardian Media Ltd
5. Complaint lodged by Mr Makesi Soanes against the South-West Regional Health Authority ('SWRHA')
6. Complaint lodged by Ms Sangita Rampersad against D Rampersad & Co Ltd
7. Complaint lodged by Mr Samnarine Singh against the Petroleum Company of Trinidad and Tobago Ltd ('Petrotrin')
8. Complaint lodged by Mr Keath Muroe against the Trinidad and Tobago National Petroleum Marketing Company Ltd ('NP')

Nos 01 to 07 above relate to reports that were prepared and published in calendar year 2018, and these matters are summarised in the annual report for that year. No 8 is a 2019 matter.



Report from the Conciliation Unit

January – December 2019

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 is staffed with one (01) certified Conciliator/Mediator and one (01) Business Operations Assistant II to provide administrative support.

In 2019, nine (09) matters were referred for conciliation, and nine (09) matters were brought forward from the previous year. The conciliation sessions for these matters were held at the EOC's office at 55-57 Manic Street, Chaguanas.

Of the eighteen (18) matters handled at the Conciliation Unit for 2019:

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

Conciliation Unit Report • January - December 2019

	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	
Details	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	2019
No. of Cases Received for the Period	05	01	03	0	09
Case Brought Forward from Previous Year	09	-	-	-	09
Total					18
Cases Completed with Signed Agreements	01	01	01	0	03
Cases Completed – Unresolved. Referred to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal	02	01	04	01	08
Cases Completed with No Further Action – Withdrawn by the Complainant	0	0	0	0	0
Cases in Progress	-	-	-	-	06
Cases Not Yet Started as at 31-12-2019	-	-	-	-	01
Total					18



Report from the Communications Unit

This report provides details of the Commission's activities in 2019 with respect to *'Work towards the Elimination of Discrimination, Promotion of Equality of Opportunity Generally and Public Education and Research Programmes.'*



EOC Visibility

The EOC has become more visible to the public and key stakeholders and is seen as a leader in human rights. This is evident by the increased requests from other human rights defenders to collaborate on projects and public events to raise awareness and educate the public on their human rights as well as policies and laws in place to protect against the violations of such rights. The Commission also received requests for public education sessions from key stakeholders from State agencies, businesses, educational institutions and NGOs which was a sharp increase from 2018.

Public Awareness and Advocacy Programmes

In the continuation of broadening and intensifying the Commission's advocacy and awareness programmes in 2019, the EOC hosted approximately thirty (30) 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; Unit Trust Corporation (UTC); Arima Borough Corporation; the Trinidad and Tobago Regiment; the Public Service Association and the Living Water Community.

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

- The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine – One-day Symposium on Domestic Violence Policy and the Way Forward - Let Voices Be Heard;
- A Sexual Culture of Justice – Add All 3 to the EOA: Champions Orientation;
- The Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA CAA) – 12th Conference of Women Parliamentarians (CWP) of the Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region (CAA);
- CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago (CCoTT) on 16 – 365 Collaborate for Impact Part II... From recommendations to Action;
- Office of the Prime Minister (Gender and Child Affairs) - 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Nov 25th – Dec 10th, 2019.



Report from the Communications Unit (*continued*)

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.

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 is conducted, a questionnaire is distributed for feedback to determine the effectiveness of the session.

It has been noted that a growing number of employers and service 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

In 2019, the EOC continued to work with the Faculty of Law and the Department of Careers, Co-curricular and Community Engagement (UWI) and the American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) to facilitate informational sessions and participate in exhibitions related to human rights and non-discrimination. These included:

- The UWI Executive Transition Programme (ETP), Career Workshop Series

- The UWI Faculty of Law, Gender and the Law class
- The American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM), National Youth Productivity Forum (NYPF).

Major Stakeholder Engagement Projects for 2019

The Commission identified major strategic priorities for the year 2019 as part of its planning process. These also targeted areas of public interest that were on the agenda for dialogue and policy reform.

Under the chairmanship of suffragette, Mrs. Lynette Seebaran Suite, a litigator with over thirty-five (35) years of 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.

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 (03) major projects per year, subject to the availability of resources.

The three (03) major stakeholder sessions held during the year 2019 included panel discussions on:

1. National Survey on Public Perception of Equality and Discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago – An Academic Critique
2. Living Good: A Conversation About the Right to Dignified Lives and Just Communities
3. Introducing the Equal Opportunity Act Remedy to the Legal Profession.



Report from the Communications Unit (continued)

National Survey on Public Perception of Equality and Discrimination in Trinidad And Tobago – An Academic Critique



The public forum was a collaboration between the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social & Economic Studies (SALISES) and the Equal Opportunity Commission. In August 2017, the EOC completed its National Survey on Public Perception of Equality and Discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago and now forms part of our programmatic agenda moving forward. The aim of the panel discussion was to gauge a deeper analysis of the survey results and engage in dialogue with key stakeholders.

Living Good: A Conversation About The Right to Dignified Lives and Just Communities

Overview

This forum discusses the right to dignified lives as the heart of respect for and protection of human rights and just communities, from different perspectives.

Panellists

- **Sophia Chote**, SC - Independent Senator
- **Roberta Clarke** - Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- **Élysse Marcelin** - Mindwise: A Mental Health Project
- **Cyrus Sylvester** - The Patient Advocate Mission
- **Steve Theodore** - Amalgamated Workers Union

Join us on facebook.com/unaidscaribbean

Event Details

Location
Choquanas Borough Corporation Auditorium
Cumberbatch Street
Choquanas

Time
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Chair and Moderator
Lynette Seebaran Suite: Chairman, Equal Opportunity Commission

GET IN TOUCH
868-322-7373 | facebook.com/CAISO

The forum centred its discussion on the right to dignified lives as the heart of respect for and protection of human rights and just communities from different perspectives. The right to dignified lives implies and must include the following:

1. The right to a dignified life includes being able to articulate and work towards achieving one’s own life plan;
2. The right to a dignified life implies minimum conditions that are compatible with human dignity;
3. A right to a dignified life includes a right to the highest attainable level of health.

Introducing the Equal Opportunity Act Remedy to the Legal Profession

The panel discussion was a collaboration between the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago (LATT) and the Equal Opportunity Commission to commemorate World Human Rights Day observed annually on 10th December. The purpose of the event was to bring



Report from the Communications Unit (*continued*)

awareness to the legal fraternity about the EOC and its avenues for recourse. The main topics presented were:

1. The Scope and Limits of the Constitutional Right to Equality;
2. Effective Remedies for Human Rights Contraventions;
3. The EOA Remedy and Developing jurisprudence.

Press Releases, Interviews and Public Engagements

Media Monitoring – in the period under review, the EOC and Commissioners were featured and/ or mentioned in over thirteen (13) 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

Facilitating the General Public

Tobago Outreach

The EOC continues 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 in Tobago.

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.

In April, the EOC organised and participated in a media drive in Tobago to heighten awareness of the Commission and its work in Tobago. The EOC was featured on the following television and radio stations:

1. Channel 5
2. Tobago House of Assembly (THA)
3. Radio Tambrin
4. Trini Bashment
5. Pulse

The EOC also collaborated with the Tobago House of Assembly (THA) to produce a video on the EOC’s Complaints and Investigation Procedure and was featured in the Let’s Talk Tobago TV programme.

Research and Assessment

Evaluations from Public Education Sessions

The Unit continues to rely on the data collected from public education sessions. This data is compiled into a report completed by the Research Officer II.

Social Media

The EOC continues to promote respect for diversity, human rights, and non-discrimination through its social media platforms. In 2019, the Unit bolstered its human rights campaign on Facebook for the following international observances, recognised and endorsed by the United Nations.

- World Autism Day
- World Down Syndrome Day
- International Women’s Week
- World Refugee Day
- World Day for Cultural Diversity
- World Suicide Prevention Day
- World Humanitarian Day



Report from the Communications Unit (continued)

- 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence – International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Women’s Human Rights Defenders Day
- World Aids Day
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- World Human Rights Day

The Digital Marketing and Social Media Specialist (OJT) filmed and produced videos to highlight the following:

1. World Down Syndrome Day – Lots of Socks
2. International Women’s Day – A message titled # Balance for better, # Demand more

Digital Engagement

Website

The Communications Unit is hopeful that the rebranding of its website, which commenced in 2018, will attract more visitors to the page and allow for information on the website to be pushed through Facebook and other social media platforms, enabling and increasing direct digital engagement. The use of social media continues to be 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 twelve thousand (12,000) users, each averaging approximately two (02) minutes of time spent on the website, with a total page view count reaching forty- three thousand, eight hundred and fifty-seven (43,857). October 2019 showed the highest page view at a total count of one thousand and eighty-nine (1,089).

Facebook

The EOC’s Facebook page has received a total of one thousand, five hundred and seven (1,507) page likes, with the highest peak observed on 7th September 2019 and one thousand, five hundred and sixty-eight (1,568) page followers up until the end of December 2019.



Figure 05



Report from the Communications Unit (continued)



Figure 06

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 Commission 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 fulfill the strategic goals set by the Commissioners. It is hoped that, in 2020, 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.

Recommendations

Staffing

A Manager, Corporate Communications, a Corporate Communications Officer and an On-the Job-Trainee, Digital Marketing and Social Media Specialist comprised the Unit almost to the end of the period under review until their resignation from the Commission. A Business Operations Assistant I and an On-the Job-Trainee Graphic Artist continued to staff the Communications Unit for the period under review.

In November, the recruitment process commenced for recruiting a Manager, Corporate Communications, a Corporate Communications Officer and a Business Operations Assistant I. It is hoped that the Unit can 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 will access training and other capacity-building tools to strengthen their skills in the following areas:

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



The EOC External Events - Public Education/Awareness Sessions

	Date	EOC Public Education	Location
January 2019			
	Thursday 10th January	EOC Workshop for RAMPS Logistics	51A Railway Road, Cunupia
	Tuesday 22nd January	Scotiabank	Corner Park and Richmond Streets, Port-of-Spain
	Thursday 24th January Friday 25th January	AMCHAM T&T National Youth Productivity Forum 2019	Chaguanas Borough Corporation Auditorium
February 2019			
	Tuesday 12th February Wednesday 13th February Friday 15th February	AMCHAM T&T National Youth Productivity Forum 2019	UTT Valsayn Campus Scarborough Library Auditorium (Tobago Round)
	Friday 22nd February	The EOC and SALISES National Survey Panel Discussion - An Academic Critique	The Institute of International Relations, UWI, Lecture Room 1



The EOC External Events - Public Education/Awareness Sessions

	Date	EOC Public Education	Location
March 2019			
	Friday 29th March	UTC Public Education Labour Law Training Initiative	UTC 26-28 Endeavour Road, Chaguanas
April 2019			
	Wednesday 10th April	Arima Borough Corporation	Arima
	Thursday 11th April	One-day Symposium on Domestic Violence Policy and the Way Forward - Let Voices Be Heard	Learning Resource Centre, The University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus
	Wednesday 17th April	Arima Borough Corporation	Arima
	Wednesday 24th April	Living Good: A Conversation About the Right to Dignified Lives and Just Communities	UTC 26-28 Endeavour Road, Chaguanas



The EOC External Events - Public Education/Awareness Sessions



	Date	EOC Public Education	Location
May 2019			
	Thursday 9th May Friday 10th May	AGLA Open Day 'Empower Me'	AGLA Tower, Level 12, Government Plaza, Port-of-Spain
	Friday 17th May	ADD ALL 3 TO THE EOA: Champions Orientation	Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social & Economic Studies (SALISES) Conference Room, UWI
June 2019			
	Tuesday 18th June	T & T Regiment Lecture Request	Support and Service Battalion Teteron Barracks, Western Main Rd, Chaguaramas
July 2019			
	Monday 1st July	TTR Lecture First Infantry Battalion Camp	Ogden, Long Circular Road, St James
 	Thursday 4th - Sunday 7th July	TIC 2019	Centre of Excellence, Macoya





The EOC External Events - Public Education/Awareness Sessions

	Date	EOC Public Education	Location
	Wednesday 12th July	44th Caribbean, America and Atlantic Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association	
	Monday 22nd July	COSTAATT	Pierre Connector Road, Chaguanas

August 2019

	July 25th- August 02nd	CEDAW South to South Institute Capacity-Building Programme for WHR Defenders	UWI St Augustine Campus
	Thursday 29th August	Living Water Community Know Your Rights 2nd session	Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, No. 22 Harris Promenade, San Fernando

September 2019

 	Friday 6th September	Presentation College, Chaguanas	Presentation College, Corner Yves and Rene Streets, Chaguanas
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The EOC External Events - Public Education/Awareness Sessions

	Date	EOC Public Education	Location
	Tuesday 17th September	First Citizens Bank	Market Street, Chaguanas
October 2019			
	Wednesday 16th October	Living Water Community - "Know Your Rights" Session	St. Philip and St. James R.C Church, Chaguanas.
November 2019			
	Wednesday 6th November	Public Service Association	Abercromby Street, Port-of-Spain
	Wednesday 13th November	Public Service Association	Abercromby Street, Port-of-Spain
		Living Water Community	La Casita Cultural Centre, 36 Pro Queen Street, Arima
	Monday 25th November	OPM IDEVAW Sensitisation session	International Waterfront Centre, 1A Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain, OPM (GCA) Office, Conference Room I, Level 21 Tower D.



The EOC External Events - Public Education/Awareness Sessions

	Date	EOC Public Education	Location
	Wednesday 27th November	Public Service Association	Abercromby Street, Port-of-Spain
December 2019			
	Wednesday 4th December	Public Service Association	Abercromby Street, Port-of-Spain
	Thursday 5th December	Collaboration for Impact part II with CCoTT “16...365 From Recommendations to Action.”	US Embassy, Public Affairs Section, 2nd Floor, Briar Place, Sweet Briar Road and Gray Street, St. Clair
	Tuesday 10th December	Human Rights Day	Law Association Trinidad and Tobago, Port-of-Spain



Report from the Research Unit

The Equal Opportunity Commission 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 (04) 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.



Report from the Research Unit (*continued*)

For the year 2019, the Research Unit's work consisted of:

1. Reports

- Report on Statistical Data of Complaints 2019;
- Annual Report of the Research Unit 2019;
- Report on NFA Analysis for the Period 2017-2018;
- Reviewed and prepared responses for the preparation of the National Report on the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action;
- Assisted the Senior Legal Officer with Report of Trinidad and Tobago on Unratified Conventions and Recommendations of the ILO for 2021 General Survey Concerning Decent Work for Care Economy Workers in a Changing Economy;
- Summary of Complaint Matters for each quarter of 2019;
- Status Report on the Central Statistical Office (CSO), the Population Council of Trinidad and Tobago; the Survey on Living Conditions in Trinidad and Tobago; Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) and GRB Toolkit;
- Report on Generic Poverty in Trinidad and Tobago for the Joint Select Committee on Human Rights and Equality – Inquiry into Persons Living in Poverty and Extreme Poverty in Trinidad and Tobago with Specific Focus on Vulnerable Groups;
- Report on the Venezuelan Refugee Crisis;
- Status Report of the Research Unit for the EOC's Strategic Plan 2018-2020.

2. Research Papers

- Prepared research notes and four (04) papers for dissemination for the Director, Legal Services at the 11th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality: Achieving the Balance in the World of Work held in Mexico City;
- Research on the Joint Select Committee of Parliament on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity – Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in the Workplace;
- Research the Work from Home Policy looking at the Flexible Work Arrangement Policy from the United Nations (UN), International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Kingdom and Canada;
- Commented on the National Policy on Persons with Disabilities for the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services.

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

- Transcribed Dr. Gabrielle Hosein and Dr. Christine Laptiste presentation at the launch of the National Survey on Equality and Public Perception of Discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago: An Academic Critique;
- Prepared Power Point Presentation (PPT) for the Panel Discussion on the National Survey on Equality and Public Perception of Discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago: An Academic Critique.



Report from the Research Unit *(continued)*

4. Reports for Publication

- Reviewed one (01) report for publication

5. Evaluation and Analysis of Public Education Stakeholder Consultations

- Inputted, evaluated and analysed data on thirty (30) public education stakeholder consultations for 2019.

6. Prepared Remarks/Speeches

- Chairman’s Remarks for Annual Report 2018;
- CEO’s Remarks for Annual Report 2018;
- CEO’s Remarks for the Launch of AMCHAM’S National Youth Productivity Forum;
- Provided data on complaints for two (02) public inquiries, from lecturers of the UWI and the UTT;
- Prepared Power Point Presentation (PPT) and presented at First Citizens Pink Fund on Domestic Violence;
- Prepared Power Point Presentation (PPT) for the 12th Conference of Women Parliamentarians (CWP) of the Caribbean, Americas and Atlantic Region.

7. Training on

- Global Equality and Diversity Online Conference
- Conflict Resolution

8. Other Activities

- Worked on the logistical arrangements for the webinar hosted by EOC/LATT on Introducing the Equal Opportunity Act Remedy to the Legal Profession;
- Attended and provided rapporteur services to the CEDAW Committee’s 16-365 Collaboration for Impact from Recommendation to Action;
- Reviewed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the EOC and UWI on Research and Collaboration;
- Supervision of the Corporate Communications Unit in the absence of Manager;
- Deliberated on the Tenders Committee for Security and Janitorial services;
- Worked on the amendments to the Commission’s Position Paper on Domestic Violence;
- Served as second marker for the Investigating Officer Competency Test;
- Prepared guiding documents for the pre-conference workshop for the Report of the ILO’s Global Commission on the Future of Work;
- Prepared speech delivered at the Telecommunications Association of Trinidad and Tobago’s (TATT) Soft Launch of Persons with Disabilities Subsidized Accessible Devices Project;
- Developed the proposal for the British High Commission’s Caribbean Regional Call for Bids International Programme Fund.



Report from the Research Unit (*continued*)

9. Proposed Activities for the period January to December 2020

- Compilation of the EOC's Statistical Data Report on Complaints;
- Compilation of the Research Unit's Annual Report;
- Compilation of the Statistical Data Report on Stakeholder Consultations;
- 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;
- Scanning and digitalising newspaper articles commencing January 2020;
- Provision of assistance to the Commissioners and the various Units of the EOC.



Report from the General Administration Unit

This report provides details of the work of the General Administration Unit of the Equal Opportunity Commission in 2019.



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

- Administrative Officer IV (acting)
- Clerk IV (acting)
- Accounting Assistant (acting)
- Driver/Messenger
- Office Support Assistant
- Telephone Operator/Receptionist

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, the Chief Executive Officer, Internal Managers and support of the Legal, Corporate Communications, Information Technology, Human Resources, Research and Conciliation/Mediation Units.

Accounts Unit

Financial Expenditure

During the period January, 2019 – December, 2019, the Equal Opportunity Commission obtained Releases of Funds in the sum of seven million, five hundred and sixty-four thousand, six hundred and twenty-eight dollars (\$TT7,564,628.00) from the Budget Division, Ministry of Finance. This sum was in relation to Goods and Services (02/003) and Minor Equipment (03/003).

Expenditure in the sum of six million, eight hundred and thirty-three thousand, seven hundred and seventy-three dollars (\$TT6,833,773.00) was spent under 02/003 – Goods and Services (this consisted of Fixed Cost two million, one hundred and twelve thousand, seven hundred and fifty dollars (\$TT2,112,750.00) and Variable Cost four million, seven hundred and twenty-one thousand and twenty-three dollars (\$TT4,721,023.00) and expenses under 03/003 Minor Equipment in the sum of sixty-one thousand, four hundred and eighty-six dollars (\$TT61,486.00).

It is to be noted, that Release of Funds for the year January, 2019 to December, 2019 was seven million, five hundred and sixty-four thousand, six hundred and twenty-eight dollars (\$TT7,564,628.00) and actual Expenditure was six million, eight hundred and ninety-five thousand, two hundred and fifty-nine dollars (\$TT6,895,259.00) which resulted in a surplus of Release of Funds. This surplus is the result of unutilised Release of Funds from October, 2019 to December, 2019. Also, the Financial Year is from October, 2018 to September, 2019 being different from the calendar year January, 2019 to December, 2019 which the Annual Report covers.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION STATEMENT OF EXPENSES FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED - DECEMBER, 2019	
Goods and Services (02/003)	
Fixed Cost	
Rent/Lease Office Accommodation	2,025,000.00
Janitorial Services	87,750.00
Total Fixed Cost	\$TT2,112,750.00
Variable Cost	
Travelling & Subsistence	43,328.27
Electricity	129,276.69
Telephone	144,439.98
Rent /Lease Vehicles & Equipment	54,990.00
Stationery & Supplies	45,579.96
Books & Periodicals	9,385.93
Maintenance of Vehicle	8,685.69
Maintenance of Equipment	73,726.50
Contract Employment	3,496,047.69
Training	67,941.54
Official Entertainment	0.00
Repair and Maintenance of Building	14,400.00
Other Contracted Services	40,406.32
Security Services	396,683.45
Postage	1,000.00
Medical Expenses	0.00
Travelling -Direct Charges	111,600.00
Promotion/Publicity/Printing	47,562.39
Hosting of Conference	30,276.87
Fuel & Lubricants	5,691.09
Total Variable Cost	\$TT4,721,022.37
Minor Equipment	
Office Equipment	55,823.12
Furniture & Furnishings	0.00
Other Minor Equipment	5,663.13
Total Minor Equipment	61,486.25
Total Expenditure	\$TT6,895,258.62



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 during the year 2019.

During the year 2019, 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 Development and Implementation of Policies and Procedures**

Staffing at the Commission in 2019

There were no changes to the organisational structure of the Commission during 2019. The thirty (30) existing contract positions approved in November 2014 continued to be filled until the expiration of the six (06) - year Contract Plan, which will expire on November 5th, 2020.

The second part of the six (06) - 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.

There was no short-term contract employment at the Commission at the end of December 2019. Among the ten (10) staff establishment positions, six (06) positions were filled with permanent and acting staff, two (02) positions remained suppressed, two (02) positions remained vacant, and there were no retirements. An Assistant Graphic Artist, On the Job Trainee, assigned to the Corporate Communications Unit assumed duty on the 21st January, 2019. A total of nine (09) employee contracts were renewed in 2019; three (03) employees resigned, and one (01) new officer was recruited. In total, at the end of 2019, there were twenty-two (22) members of staff, inclusive of fifteen (15) contract staff, six (06) staff establishments and one (01) On the Job Trainee (OJT).





Report from the Human Resource Unit (continued)

Recruitment and Selection

The recruitment and selection process which commenced in 2018 to fill one (01) vacant contract in the position of Business Operations Assistant I (BOA I) was completed in January 2019. A request for an Assistant Graphic Artist, OJT Trainee was placed in December 2018 and a placement was made in January 2019.

The Ministry partnered with the Hugh Wooding Law School during the period June – August to fulfil the requirements of the In-Service Training Programme for law students for the year 2019. A total of four (04) law students were assigned to the Commission for the period.

Figure 01 under the heading ‘Administrative Framework’ (page 15) 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. The sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$TT150,000.00) was allocated to the Commission in 2019 for training and development. Of the sum, one hundred thousand and seventeen dollars and twenty-seven cents (\$TT100,017.27) was released for training and development in 2019.

This sum was utilised to participate in six (06) events;

1. The Global Equality and Diversity (GED) Conference 2019;
2. Foreign training in the area of Empowering Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs which was a collaborative effort by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore in collaboration with the Singapore Cooperation Programmed Training Awards (SCPTA) and the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) and

the Ministry of Public Administration, Trinidad and Tobago;

3. Foreign training entitled Facilitating for Equality - Using Facilitation to Change Mind Sets conducted by The International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITCILO);
4. Foreign training entitled Equal Opportunities in Germany hosted by The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Port-of-Spain;
5. Human Resource and Gender Equity in the Workplace facilitated by the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) of the University of the West Indies;
6. The CEDAW South to South Institute Capacity-Building Program for Women’s Human Rights Defenders facilitated by the Convention to the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) South to South Institute.

The Commission was invited by Neil Stewart Associates to join the live stream of the 6th Annual Global Equality and Diversity Conference and Awards which took place on October 17, 2019 at the Crown Plaza London, Docklands, UK where approximately one hundred and fifty (150) equality and diversity professionals from the UK and beyond participated. This initiative cost a sum of six thousand, six hundred and eighty-one dollars and thirty-nine cents (\$TT6, 681.39).

The Commission nominated one (01) suitable candidate to participate in a course entitled Empowering Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs. Since the 1960’s, Singapore has provided technical assistance to other developing countries in empowering their human resource. The Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) was established to bring the various technical assistance programmes



Report from the Human Resource Unit (*continued*)

offered by Singapore together under one framework. The main course objectives included focusing on strengths rather than vulnerabilities; this course examined the holistic approach of protecting, empowering and integrating persons with disabilities (PWD) and special needs. Attendance brought tremendous value to the Commission as it seeks to promote equality and work towards the elimination of discrimination in Trinidad and Tobago.

The course is entitled **Facilitating for Equality - Using Facilitation to Change Mindsets**. It is intended to stimulate competence, confidence and commitment in participants, facilitating them to bring their own expertise to their learning about equality and inclusion. Attendees participated in a sample workshop aimed at changing mindsets concerning a particular group which experiences discrimination i.e. people with disabilities. Topics covered included dynamics; participation in experimental exercises/games/dramas and discussions; work related- relevant to participants' actual work and interests; reflection; encouragement and support; creative and constructive engagement.

The Board of Commissioners endorsed the attendance of one (01) staff member to participate in the programme themed **Equal Opportunities in Germany** which was held in Berlin, Germany. The programme was part of the Visitors Programme of the Federal Republic of Germany which focused on the development of equal opportunities for women and men in Germany and equality and anti-discrimination policy in this field as well as rights and tolerance of LGBTI+ and new family models ('marriage for all').

The Commission was invited by The Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine to nominate persons to participate in the short course entitled **Human Resources Management and Gender Equality in the Workplace**. This course focused on strategies and structures for 21st century leaders to effectively engage with gender equality as a business imperative, reputation risk and gender concern, the development of practical tools to address the impact of gender-based violence on the workplace and gender sensitivity and organisational decision making.

The Commission participated in the **Introduction to Human Rights and CEDAW training** in April 2017 which was scheduled to be completed via supplemental Training in Canada with the Women's Human Rights Institute (WHRI); however, due to limited funds, this was not feasible. The CEDAW Committee of Trinidad and Tobago (CCoTT) has organised for the supplemental training to be brought to Trinidad and Tobago, and the Commission took advantage of this opportunity in order to bring the training package to its entirety.

Training was also sourced from the Public Service Academy, the Ministry of Public Administration and Communications in the form of conferences/seminars. The Commission also relied on in-house training provided by the Communications and Conciliation Units to further improve employee performance.



Report from the Human Resource Unit *(continued)*

Training and development provided to members of staff during 2019 were as follows:

Internal Training

Area /Name of Training	Institution/Facilitator	Participants (Positions)	No. of Persons Trained
Training in Customer Service and Telephone Etiquette	Communications Unit	Human Resource Officer I (Ag.); Telephone Operator/ Receptionist; In-service Trainees; Assistant Graphic Artist (OJT); Digital Marketing and Social Media Specialist (OJT); Business Operations Assistant I and the ICT Support Officer	09
Conflict Resolution	Conciliator/Mediator	All Staff of the Commission	28

External Training

Area /Name of Training	Institution/Facilitator	Participants (Positions)	No. of Persons Trained
Communication for Effective Customer Service	Public Service Academy, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications	Office Support Officer	01
Presentation Skills for Senior Managers	Public Service Academy, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications	Senior Legal Officer, Manager, Corporate Communications	02
Conflict Resolution	Public Service Academy, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications	Human Resource Officer I (Ag.)	01
Improving Workplace Productivity	Public Service Academy, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications	Senior Legal Officer	01
Ethics in Procurement	Public Service Academy, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications	Administrative Officer IV (Ag.)	01



Report from the Human Resource Unit (*continued*)

Area /Name of Training	Institution/Facilitator	Participants (Positions)	No. of Persons Trained
Ethical Issues in the Public Service	Public Service Academy, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications	Corporate Communications Officer	01
Emotional Intelligence	Public Service Academy, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications	Director, Legal Services	01
Empowering Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs	Collaborative effort by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore in collaboration with the Singapore Cooperation Programme Training Awards (SCPTA) and the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) and the Ministry of Public Administration, Trinidad and Tobago	Chief Executive Officer	01
Communication for Effective Customer Service	Public Service Academy, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications	Investigating Officers	02
Cabinet Note Writing	Public Service Academy, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications	Human Resource Officer I (Ag.)	01
HR for Non-HR Professionals	Public Service Academy, Ministry of Public Administration and Communications	IT Infrastructure Specialist	01
SQL Server Features and Administration	iGovTT in conjunction with Microsoft	ICT Support Officer	01
Human Resource Management and Gender Equity in the Workplace	The Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS)	Manager, Corporate Communications, Legal Officer I, Human Resource Officer I (Ag.)	03
Firewall Security Training	Fortinet	ICT, Manager, IT Infrastructure Specialist	02



Report from the Human Resource Unit *(continued)*

Area /Name of Training	Institution/Facilitator	Participants (Positions)	No. of Persons Trained
The CEDAW South to South Institute Capacity Building Programme for Women's Human Rights Defenders	CCoTT	Corporate Communications Officer, Investigating Officer I, Business Operations Assistant I	03
Active Directory Troubleshooting	iGovTT in conjunction with Microsoft	IT Infrastructure Specialist	01
Equal Opportunities in Germany	Federal Republic of Germany	Manager, Corporate Communications	01
The Global Equality and Diversity (GED) Conference 2019	Neil Stewart Associates	Director Legal Services; Senior Legal Officer; Research Officer II; Clerk IV (Ag.); Accounting Assistant (Ag.); Conciliator/Mediator; Administrative Officer IV (Ag.); Legal Officers I; Business Operations Assistants I; Investigating Officers; Business Operations Assistant II; Driver/Courier; Officer Support Assistant; Human Resource Officer I (Ag.); IT Infrastructure Specialist; ICT Support Officer; Assistant Graphic Artist (OJT)	20
Facilitating for Equality - Using Facilitation to Change Mindsets	The International Training Centre of the International Labour Organisation (ITCILO)	Legal Officer I	01



Report from the Human Resource Unit (*continued*)

Conferences/Seminars

Area/Name of Training	Institution/Facilitator	Participants (Positions)	No. of Persons Trained
Shared Incident Database, Legal Literacy and Advocacy Validation	National AIDS Coordinating Committee Secretariat	Legal Officer I, Corporate Communications Officer	02

The Commission was also fortunate to be invited to the Equity and Justice Alliance High Level Caribbean Dialogue: Reforming Laws that Discriminate hosted by The Royal Commonwealth Society. The dialogue brought together high-level stakeholders from across the Commonwealth Caribbean to engage in peer learning and knowledge sharing the reform of discriminatory laws. Utilising case studies of legislative reforms that have been undertaken in the Commonwealth, including in the Caribbean, participants discussed legislative reform processes and how these may be applicable in their own countries. Participants had the opportunity to network with fellow legislators and stakeholders from across the region and broadened their understanding of how discriminatory laws impact and can be overcome in the Caribbean. This event was attended by the Vice-Chairman and the Senior Legal Officer.

Additionally, the Commission was recommended by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to the ParlAmericas to nominate one (01) suitable facilitator to facilitate a training session at the 11th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender: Frameworks to Prevent and Address Workplace Sexual Harassment to be held in Mexico City, Mexico. Mr. Haran Ramkaransingh, Director, Legal Services was recommended to attend. This session examined the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace as an obstacle to human rights and gender equality. Drawing examples from the region, it provided an overview of the legal principles underlying national legislation on this issue and explored how these frameworks could be adapted for protocols or codes of conduct to

prevent harassment within parliamentary institutions. The session also presented voluntary practices that parliamentarians can champion to promote cultures of respect and well-being for all employees, and by extension, achieve greater productivity, morale and justice in their places of work.

Developing and Implementing Policies and Procedures at the Equal Opportunity Commission

The Policy Review Committee completed the review of the Presence of Staff at the Office after Working Hours approved in March 2019, the Automatic Renewal of a Contract of Employment approved in November 2019 and the Training and Development Policy approved in December 2019.

One (01) new policy was created in 2019: Guidelines for the Application of Compensatory Time which was approved in November 2019.

Furthermore, work has commenced on the Grievance and Sexual Harassment Policy.

Performance Management

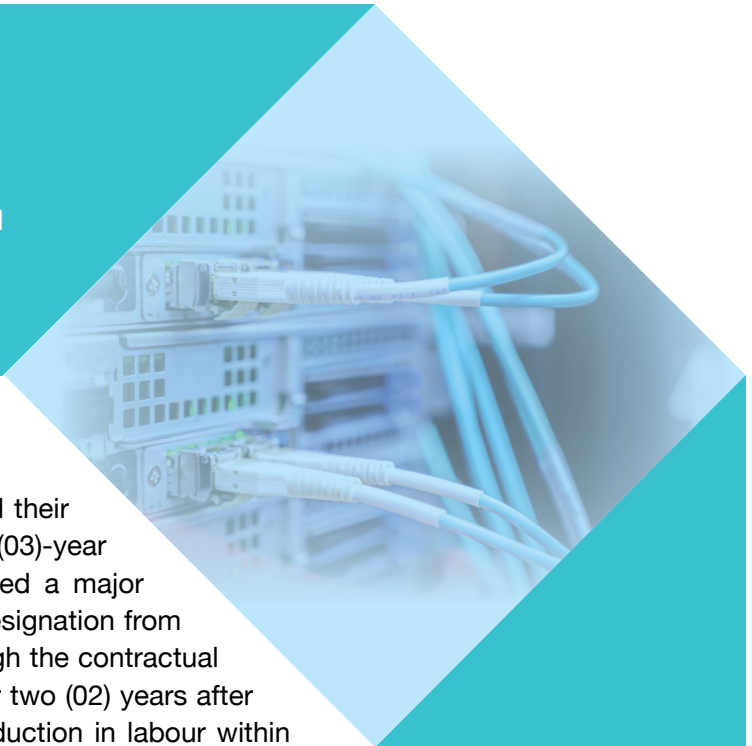
All performance appraisal reports were completed up until December 2019. The next set of appraisals will be due in 2020.

The year 2019 was a productive year for the Human Resource Unit despite several staff changes within the Commission. The Unit will continue to serve the staff of the EOC as effectively and efficiently as possible, as we strive for excellence going forward in 2020.



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 2019.



Overview

During the year of 2019, the IT Unit (ITU) continued their work plans according to the Commission's three (03)-year strategic plan (2018 to 2020). The Unit encountered a major setback as a result of the ICT Manager tendering resignation from the position toward the end of August 2019, although the contractual term for the ICT Manager was renewed for a further two (02) years after it initially ended on February, 2018. Despite the reduction in labour within the department, the ITU continued to maintain its existing technical staff of Information and Communication Technology Support Officer (ICTSO) and an Information Technology Infrastructure Specialist (ITIS) to carry out the operations of the Unit in line with the mandate of the Commission.

ICT Project Achievements for 2019

The following lists some of the achievements of the ITU during the said period:

Renewal of Microsoft Office 365 Annual Subscription Licences

The organisation continued its option, renewing its Office 365 licences from a local Microsoft partner at a cost of fifty-seven thousand, two hundred and ninety dollars and sixty-three cents (\$TT57,290.63) a year. The Commission had frequent dialogue with the National Information and Communication Technology Co. Ltd. (iGovTT) to seek clarification on their ability to provide Office 365 licences. In March 2019, the ITU was informed by the agency (iGovTT) that their negotiations for the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement, which expires in June 2019, is still ongoing and new pricing is not available at

this time to State entities. Therefore, it was feasible to engage external vendors to provide proposals for the renewal of the Office 365 licences.

Renewal of Veritas Backup Exec Software Licences

The organisation was given the option of renewing its Veritas Backup Exec software licences for a further three (03) years for the period April 2019 – April 2022, in the sum of thirteen thousand, three hundred and fifty dollars and thirty-eight cents (\$TT13,350.38) from Digi-Data Systems Ltd. The Commission has utilised this software for the automation of our tape backups since September 2015, and this solution has proven to be a reliable tool for our business continuity / disaster recovery implementation of our on premise data.



Report From the Information Technology Unit *(continued)*

In-House Training of Microsoft Office

The Information and Communication Technology Support Officer (ICTSO), Mr. Zameer Hosein, has had continued success in harnessing his knowledge towards the hands-on training sessions using Microsoft Office and Office 365 to the Commission’s staff. The use of these tools continues to be a critical factor for the organisation’s operational success, hence the IT Unit committed to lowering training costs and boosting productivity by offering repeated training for both existing and new staff at all levels to help bridge the use of these tools with their day-to-day duties.

Purchase of Live Streaming Equipment

Towards the end of 2019, the organisation was able to acquire basic multimedia equipment to facilitate the video production, recording and Facebook live streaming of the Commission’s public events. Previously the Commission utilised a small desktop webcam as a pilot to live stream some of our public events which includes collaborative partnerships with other stakeholders, such as The Institute of Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) at the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the American Chamber of Commerce of Trinidad and Tobago (AMCHAM T&T). While the live streaming has proven to be successful in terms of reaching a wider target audience, the equipment was limited in features for what was required; the organisation was therefore granted the approval for the purchase of modern equipment that has proven to be effective at a cost of thirteen thousand, one hundred and thirty-four dollars and ninety-nine cents (\$TT13,134.99) from Direct Point Company Ltd.

Outstanding Projects, Challenges and Direction for 2020

The financial challenges of receiving releases to support the ITU’s day-to-day operational activities is in itself a challenge to manage effectively. Despite the ITU requests each year for reasonable budgetary allocations to meet the Unit’s annual expenditure, the reduction of allocations and releases has been noted year after year.

These reductions limit the Commission’s ICT operations and limit the ability of implementing projects. The following remains outstanding projects for the Commission:

Implementation of a Cloud Disaster Recovery Solution

The ITU was mandated by the Board of Commissioners to improve its existing on premise backup capabilities by leveraging cloud solutions such as Microsoft Azure Backup Services to provide a more sustainable environment for data storage and recovery. This service was approved from MAGLA with the aim of having the services purchased from ICONS Co. Ltd at an annual cost of twenty-two thousand, six hundred and fifty-one dollars and twenty-six cents (\$TT22,651.26) (VAT Inclusive) for delivering a solution that integrates with our existing ICT infrastructure and improves the sustainability of the Commission’s backup capabilities. As of April 2019, the request was submitted to Budgets for financial releases, and towards the end of the fiscal year 2018-2019, no releases were approved, and therefore the ITU has resubmitted a draft estimate for the solution for the fiscal year 2019-2020 on the basis of revising proposals from all qualifying vendors.



Report From the Information Technology Unit *(continued)*

Implementation of an In-house Managed Firewall Security Solution

Closer to the end of 2019, the Commission developed a strategy that seeks to address the procurement and implementation of a resilient, secure, scalable and cost-effective firewall security solution that is owned and controlled by the Commission and the ITU as an alternative to its continued security agreement with the external vendor contracted to protect the Equal Opportunity Commission's ('EOC') Data and ICT assets from cybersecurity threats. This initiative is set to continue in 2020 as the process is within its early stages of accepting vendor proposals based on the requirements set out by the Commission and the consistent analysis of each qualifying submission.

Implementation of a Legal, Workflow Case Management System for Tracking Complaints

In 2019, the ITU continued its research into effective legal workflow and case management systems that help support the Legal Unit. The ITU was invited to a Demystifying Document & Case Management (public sector) seminar, which was held in May 2019. This seminar was a joint venture between the National ICT Company Ltd (iGovTT) and the overseas vendor Hyland OnBase and was intended to provide insights into how the Hyland – OnBase solution can be implemented as an enterprise content management solution for case management, records and information management within government agencies. Both iGovTT and the vendor agreed on a pilot project for the Commission as a proof of concept trial over a three (03)-month period. However, this project is currently on hold since the resignation of the ICT Manager and the need for critical information from the Legal Unit that requires Board approval.

Migration of the Commissions Website Making it More Interactive with the General Public

The Commission is in the process of migrating its website to a more stable and compatible platform that integrates with Microsoft Office365 that matches the security requirements and features for receiving online complaints. The Commission will also continue its 'hybrid' approach of integrating the Commission's new website in 2020 with our social media platforms i.e. Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter to effectively disseminate information to the wider public as part of our mandate to bring more awareness of the functions of the Commission.

Despite financial limitations and reduction in manpower resources, the ITU will continue to chart the way forward to cost reduction and improving service levels to the public and keep to its strategic direction of leveraging technology to help improve the operations of all units within the Commission.



Strategic Objectives

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 the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) for Trinidad and Tobago.

- 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 organizational 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 can work toward the transition.



Strategic Objectives (continued)

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 value 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 videoconferencing 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 continue to work together to create and publish additional appropriate guidelines for dissemination to all stakeholders in 2020.

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].



EOC Internal Events 2019



Carnival 2019





EOC Internal Events 2019



EID 2019

World AIDS Day 2019







Equal Opportunity Commission

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

CHANGE & CONTINUITY

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