



ADDRESS BY JUSTICE ZAINOOL HOSEIN  
(RET.) CHAIRMAN, INTEGRITY COMMISSION OF TRINIDAD  
AND TOBAGO

AT THE

2017 COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN ASSOCIATION OF  
INTEGRITY COMMISSIONS AND ANTI-CORRUPTION BODIES  
CONFERENCE- JAMAICA

APRIL 23 – 28, 2017

**1**

The year 2017 is of special significance for the Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago as we celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Pearls are associated with 30<sup>th</sup> anniversaries and the pearl, unique to other gems in that they are created inside of certain species, is reputed to symbolize integrity.

2

In my contribution I welcome the opportunity to share with you information on some of the achievements, public awareness and outreach programmes geared towards ‘best practices’ by the Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago.

3

In Trinidad and Tobago the first integrity commissioners were appointed in 1988 following the enactment of the Integrity in Public Life Act of 1987. The Act provided mainly for the receipt and examination of Declarations of Income, Assets and Liabilities of Persons in Public Life. Successive Commissions called for higher levels of integrity in the conduct of public affairs and a stronger Commission, which would be geared to making more positive results in the safeguarding of integrity in public life.

4

The initial legislation was amended and replaced by an Act of Parliament - Act No 83 of 2002. This was viewed at the time as a harbinger of change heralding, as it did, a new era in the fight against corruption in Trinidad & Tobago. It increased significantly the functions of the Integrity Commission, upgraded its powers of investigation, included provisions for a Code of Conduct to regulate the behaviour of

an expanded list of Persons in Public Life and widened the range of persons who fell under its purview.

## 5

The new Commission, consistent with the Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, had as its mandate to:

- Make new provisions for the prevention of corruption of persons in public life by providing for public disclosure;
- Regulate the conduct of persons exercising public functions;
- Preserve and promote the integrity of public officials and institutions, and for incidental matters.

Its creation was inspired by a desire to deepen the fight against corruption, a scourge which threatens the Rule of Law, undermines good governance and fairness and poses a serious threat to the very foundations of our society. The link between these roles is in-extricable and the imperative of reinforcing their strengths cannot be over-emphasized. Integrity cannot exist where there is corruption, and, as we are all aware, corrupt societies self-destruct.

The Commission consists of a Chairman, Deputy Chairman and three other members who shall be persons of integrity and high standing. At least one member of the Commission shall be an attorney-at-law of at

least ten years' experience and one member a chartered or certified accountant of similar experience.

6

On November 2014 I accepted the invitation of the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to become the Chairman of the Integrity Commission. My immediate goal on appointment sought to open doors and windows of change that seem desirable, to remain accessible and committed to communicating with the public when issues arise in order to attain a satisfactory level of transparency, accessibility, fairness and trustworthiness.

7

Today the Commission finds itself at a critical juncture where the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago are calling for higher levels of accountability and transparency by public office holders. To this end and bearing in mind the opportunities and challenges in the operating environment, the Commission places greater focus on three strategic themes:

- Reducing corruption,
- Building a culture of Integrity, and
- Developing and rebranding the Commission.

In this context the Commission has decided to fully utilise the available judicial procedures to ensure compliance by defaulters, and where necessary, to invoke the intervention of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

## **PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES**

### **8**

#### **Investigation**

The prime objective of the Commission, as stated in the Integrity in Public Life Act, Chapter 22:01 Sections 5 (e) and (f) imposes the following responsibilities on the Commission:-

- To receive and investigate complaints regarding any breaches of the Act or the commission of any offence under the Prevention of Corruption Act (Section 5 E of the Integrity in Pubic Life Act.
- To investigate the conduct of any person falling under the purview of the Commission which, in the opinion of the Commission, may be considered dishonest or conducive to corruption... (Section 5 (f) of the Act.

While the Commission's authority is limited to investigating complaints against persons in public life or persons exercising public functions, our experience has shown that a fair number of complaints are rejected because the nature of the allegation neither discloses a breach of the

Integrity in Public Life Act or the Prevention of Corruption Act. Nevertheless, where a complaint is received, it is thoroughly investigated.

## 9

### **Compliance**

The Commission's principal activities include also the processing and certification of Declarations of income, assets and liabilities of persons in Public life and the promotion of standards of ethics and integrity in the national community.

In the past twelve months the Commission certified 1,707 declarations which represented a 30-percent increase over the previous year. This substantial increase is as a result of the publication in the print media of the names of those who have defaulted as well as the outreach initiatives undertaken by the Commission during the year.

## 10

During the past two years the Compliance and Public Education Units facilitated stakeholder engagements with over a dozen agencies and institutions including Municipal Corporations, bodies involved in agricultural development, sport administration and funding.

11

## **Public Education**

The Commission continues to expand its public education focus by conveying integrity messages to the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Through strategic communication initiatives the Commission underscores that each citizen has a moral duty to ‘do the right thing always.’”

12

### *Do Right Champions*

For the past five years the Commission has collaborated with the Ministry of Education and the Tobago House of Assembly on a robust ‘Do Right Championship’ activity that includes the main disciplines of Language and Performing Arts in both primary and secondary schools. The Do Right Championship has become a fixed part of the Commission’s annual calendar.

### *Tertiary Debates*

In 2015 the Commission launched a debate competition - INTEGRITY MATTERS - on issues of integrity among the academic institutions. The Tertiary Debate competition has succeeded in: -

- Providing an opportunity to spread the philosophy of Integrity so that students think critically about behaviour and how they respond to issues of Integrity.
- Engaging students at the tertiary level in harmonious debate of the social and moral issues related to Integrity and the message of “Do The Right Thing Always”
- Encouraging teamwork and providing a challenge for students to test their debating skills in a friendly, but competitive environment.
- Providing a forum for students and the national community to share information on issues related to Integrity. The Debates are recorded and re-broadcast on radio and television. It’s all about “Doing The Right Thing, Always.”

### *Public Outreach*

The Commission continues to embrace opportunities to promote the fundamentals of integrity to the wider public and enlist public support by encouraging persons to do the right thing always.

The Commission, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Secretariat, Integrity Commissions and Anti-Corruption agencies from across the Caribbean sponsored a meeting in Trinidad in 2016 where we discussed the role in transforming ourselves and establishing a platform for sharing



current and emerging practices and experiences in the fight against corruption and the promotion of good governance.

Additionally, in 2016 the Commission's Registrar attended an anti-corruption training programme in Singapore where information was shared on issues related to reform, governance, leadership and public administration. In 2016 the Investigators of the Commission participated in the National Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Risk Assessment Project facilitated by the World Bank and the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force.

It is encouraging to note that included in the current Parliamentary agenda are Bills relating to Money Laundering, Procurement and Whistleblowing.

The Commission continues to facilitate visits by persons in public life, and by students enrolled in graduate, and undergraduate programmes in Anti-Corruption Strategies in Developing Countries for discussions and exchanges on issues of ethics and integrity.

### *Strategic Planning*

The Commission has recently completed a forensic analysis of its operations with the adoption of an Organisation (Business) Model for the purpose of enhancing its efficiency.

A Strategic Plan for the period 2017-2020 has thus been developed to take the Commission forward and to respond to the urgency of the socio-political environment where there is a perception of and dissatisfaction with levels of corruption by persons in public life. The Strategic Plan reflects the aspirations, perspectives and expertise of the Commission, its employees and key stakeholders.

The work of the Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago is vital to national development. As we move to 2020, and the next decade, the Commission proposes to harness and build on the progress made over the past 30 years to further improve on the delivery of its mandate to prevent corruption and promote a culture of integrity and openness.

The Commission looks forward to ways in which we may partner with the Commonwealth Caribbean Association of Integrity Commissions and Anti-Corruption Bodies, (CCAICACB) in building mutually beneficial relationships. We wish to partner more effectively in areas of mutual interest, to facilitate effective information sharing all with a view to improving investigations, exposing corruption, prosecuting offenders and promoting higher standards of ethics and integrity.

We share the hope expressed by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on the occasion of the second

CCAICAB Conference that “if every nation upheld and implemented every law written and accepted by every government, bodies like the Integrity Commission and Similar Regulatory institutions, would become unnecessary.”

I thank you.

April 13<sup>th</sup> 2017

INTEGRITY COMMISSION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO mc