

FACT SHEET:

The **Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago** was established by an Act of Parliament in 1987 (Integrity in Public Life Act 8 of 1987) with responsibility to preserve and promote the Integrity of Persons in Public Life and as well as those exercising public functions.

1. PREVENTION

All Persons in Public Life – as mandated by the Integrity In Public Life Act and its Amendments - are required to declare (on a prescribed form), on an annual basis, their income, assets and liabilities – along with that of their spouse and dependent children. This requirement is designed to discover unexplained accretion in wealth and to capture whether public officials have interests or material benefits that may influence or may be perceived to influence actions taken.

2. A ‘*Statement of Registrable Interests*’ –a separate document - is available for public scrutiny.
3. The filing of declarations and the examination of the **Register of Interests** are seen as anti-corruption initiatives.

Declarations received

as at Dec 6, 2011

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total to date
622	891	844	1289	625	1289	1600	7,160

4. Where a Person in Public Life fails to submit a completed Declaration of Income, Assets and Liabilities and a Statement of Registrable interests within the prescribed period, the Commission is required to publish this fact in the Gazette and in at least one daily newspaper. The Commission may make an *ex-parte* application to the High Court to secure compliance. Failure to comply with the directive of the Court is an offence and a Person in Public Life is liable on conviction to a fine of \$150,000 and to imprisonment for five years.

5. EXAMINATION OF DECLARATIONS

Sections 5 (1) (b) & (c) of the Integrity in Public Life Act (IPLA) require the Integrity Commission to:

- (i) Receive, examine and retain all declarations filed with it under the Act;
- (ii) Make such enquiries as it considers necessary in order to verify or determine the accuracy of a declaration filed under this Act;

6. The Integrity Commission has been examining declaration forms in order to discover corruption since 2005. However, a number of factors have led us to question the effectiveness of this tool:

- the country’s rating on the T&T Transparency Institute’s corruption perception index has fallen consistently from a rating of 59 in 2005 to 81 in 2011
- 4479 declarations have been certified without any matters of corruption being discovered
- The number of complaints received and investigations being conducted has been increasing

7. In the upcoming year, the Commission shall focus on reviewing the legislation and regulations to determine the most appropriate structure of the prescribed forms for declarations of income, assets and liabilities. During the next year the Commission will also be reviewing the technological options available to accelerate the accurate processing of declaration forms and to improve public access to the Register of Interests.

8. RISK-BASED PLAN FOR THE EXAMINATION OF PUBLIC BODIES

Sections 5 (1) (g) and (h) of the Integrity in Public Life Act (IPLA) require the Integrity Commission to:

- (g) Examine the practices and procedures of public bodies, in order to facilitate the discovery of corrupt practices;
- (h) Instruct, advise and assist the heads of public bodies of changes in practices or procedures which may be necessary to reduce the occurrence of corrupt practices.

9. In January 2012, the Commission will commence a programme to systematically examine Statutory Agencies and State Enterprises in order to determine whether there exist satisfactory policies and procedures to ensure that corrupt practices will be prevented and detected and that public funds will be utilized efficiently. Focus will be placed on State Enterprises, Statutory Bodies, Municipal Corporations and Ministries/Government Departments which handle considerable sums of money and/or are engaged in large procurement contracts

10. INVESTIGATIONS

The Integrity Commission is empowered to initiate investigations and receive complaints into alleged breaches of the Integrity In Public Life Act, the Prevention of Corruption Act and acts of dishonesty committed by persons who fall within the purview of the Act.

12. ENFORCEMENT

The effectiveness of the Integrity Commission would be severely retarded had it not been endowed with a degree of cohesive powers to ensure compliance with the Integrity in Public Life Act. Some of these powers include the authority to approach the Courts for the imposition of sanctions against persons who fail to file declarations as detailed above; approaching the Courts for the imposition of sanctions against persons who fail to provide information requested in the course of an investigation; the Commission can also exercise the powers of a Commission of Enquiry and summon witnesses to attend.

11. PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Integrity Commission has as one of its mandates to engage in programmes of public education intended to foster an understanding of Standards of Integrity. Realistic cultural change must start with the school-age population and in this regard the Commission launched in September 2011 a *“Do Right Champions”* Competition that sought to engage students of the Primary and Secondary School in a series of activities on the theme of Integrity. The theme for the competition is **“A BETTER TOMORROW: Do The Right Thing Always.”** Over 1,300 students have participated in the competition and judging of entries in the following categories – Poems, Short Stories, Drawing, Cartoons and Scenarios (Skits) began on December 9.

At the Integrity Commission we seek to ensure that those who serve the nation do so with Integrity, dignity and respect so that public resources are used fairly and for the benefit of all people of the nation. Integrity means making the correct choice when faced between right and wrong. It encompasses adherence to ethics and morals, and is linked with honesty. At the Integrity Commission the key message of principle is *“do the right thing always.”*

Communications & Public Relations

The Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago

THE INTEGRITY COMMISSION

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