

# INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY

## “Recovery with Integrity”



### A MESSAGE FROM MR. JUSTICE MELVILLE BAIRD (RET.) CHAIRMAN, INTEGRITY COMMISSION

As we in Trinidad and Tobago join the international community in observing International Anti-Corruption Day, we are also cognizant of the significant milestone in the history of the United Nations that we passed on 24th October, 2020 – the 75th Anniversary of the coming into force of the United Nations Charter. And the General Assembly of the United Nations it was, that designated December 9 as International Anti-Corruption Day, with the raising of awareness of the dangers of corruption as one of its objectives.

The Covid-19 Virus – lethality in eminence – is pushing the boundaries of this awareness and is taking the motto of the Integrity Commission: “Do the Right Thing Always” to a completely new level.

Living as we are under the ferule of this pandemic, with cumulative unease we have witnessed normalcy being coerced into making a convincing one hundred and eighty degree turn. In such a situation, it is imperatively necessary that we rise above the fallout and refuse to compromise our integrity. Indeed, this pandemic should be viewed as an opportunity to bring our integrity, honesty and high ideals into greater prominence in every aspect of our lives.

This crisis has swollen the ranks of vulnerable persons in the country to alarming proportions – and this vulnerability is extremely ramified. In whatever form however, that vulnerability must not be exploited. We must not abandon our integrity and our honesty and espouse corruption and dishonesty with our vulnerable fellow citizens as our victims – this would be a surpassing travesty. Empathy and support are the considerations we must foster for our less fortunate citizens as we place virtue in their necessity.

The ferocity of this virus has slipped beyond the nation’s collective comprehension, but when eventually we are liberated from this scourge and have regained ownership of ourselves, although we might be somewhat bruised and battle-fatigued, our integrity must emerge pristine and unsullied. We must be able to hold our heads high and with pride and conviction articulate our International Anti-Corruption theme: “Recovery with Integrity.”

Because of the necessary restrictions that were imposed by the authorities in an endeavor to combat this virus, the Integrity Commission was unable to hold any of its usual functions and events in which integrity is paid due homage. I was unable to enlist the assistance of my loyal and dedicated allies in the fight against corruption, that is to say, the children and young people of the nation.

It is my hope however, that the values and ideals they proclaimed and practised in the preceding year, would have served them in good stead as they came to grips with this unprecedented state of affairs in 2020, and would continue to so serve them in 2021 and beyond.

I wish the people of Trinidad and Tobago a contemplative International Anti-Corruption Day and I urge you all most strenuously to stay safe.