

MEDIA RELEASE

The Integrity Commission calls upon declarants to observe their statutory obligation

September 10, 2021: The Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago (the Commission) continues to encourage persons in public life to comply with the provisions of the Integrity in Public Life Act (the Act), including the obligation to file their annual declarations of income, assets and liabilities and statements of registrable interests. The Commission has a “zero tolerance approach” to the non-filing of annual declarations and registrable statements.

In light of the long history of non-filing of annual declarations and registrable statements by some persons in public life, the Commission is pursuing a new approach to the execution of its statutory mandates. It has adopted a general policy concerning declarations outstanding from persons in public life from 2014 onwards. In the discharge of its mandate, the Commission has been making ex parte applications to the High Court, under section 11(7) of the Act, in respect of persons in public life who have failed to file their annual declarations of income, assets and liabilities and statements of registrable interests.

The Commission has adopted a special project to implement its policy on outstanding declarations and statements and for the period February – August 2021, the Commission has made **ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY (150)** ex parte applications to the High Court for orders directing persons whose names had been published in the newspapers in the previous years for failing to file their declarations, to comply with the Act and file their declarations under pain of criminal prosecution.

The Commission is in the process of preparing additional ex parte applications requesting the High Court to order persons in public life who have failed to file their declarations to do so. These applications will shortly be presented to the High Court.

The relevant sections of the Act include section 11(8), by which a person who fails to comply with the directions of the Court after an ex parte order is made, commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Under section 21(1) of the Act, persons who fail to provide further particulars and who fail to file without reasonable cause are also liable on summary conviction to a fine of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars and to imprisonment for a term of ten years.

The Commission takes the opportunity to remind persons in public life who have declarations outstanding – including declarations in respect of which the declarants had been given extensions but have failed to file within the period of extension – to do so with all convenient speed and observe their statutory obligation. Let us play our part in developing a new culture of transparency and compliance with laws that are intended to assist in ridding Trinidad and Tobago of the scourge of corruption.