

Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

**Public Statement of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development as at December
31st 2019**

In Compliance with Sections 7, 8 and 9 of

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 1999

In accordance with Sections 7, 8 and 9 of the Freedom of Information Act, 1999 (FOIA) the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (MHUD) is required by law to publish the following statement, which lists the documents and information generally available to the public.

The FOIA gives members of the public:-

- (1) A legal right for each person to access information held by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.
- (2) A legal right for each person to have official information relating to him/her amended where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading.
- (3) A legal right to obtain reasons for adverse decisions made regarding an applicant's request for information under FOIA.
- (4) A legal right to complain to the Ombudsman and to apply to the High Court for Judicial Review to challenge adverse decisions made under the FOIA.

Section 7 (1) (a) (i)

Function and Structure of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development

Vision of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development

The MHUD is a premier state entity facilitating the development of, and access to, healthy sustainable communities in which citizens may thrive and grow.

Mission of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development

The MHUD facilitates the development of sustainable communities through the formulation, communication and administration of Government's policy for the Housing and Urban Development sectors, in collaboration with its partners and stakeholders, for the benefit of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Function

The housing portfolio of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development involves the provision of appropriate housing and land solutions for low and middle income families through the direct construction and distribution of new homes, the development of appropriate home financing mechanisms and development of sustainable communities.

The Ministry has also placed emphasis on the maintenance of housing stock, the issue of land tenure instruments through squatter regularization, the upgrading of infrastructure in Government housing developments and the distribution of grants and subsidies to members of the public through the requisite divisions, for the purpose of improving the social conditions of poor families, enhancing the aesthetic quality of Government developments and reducing the annual national demand for new homes.

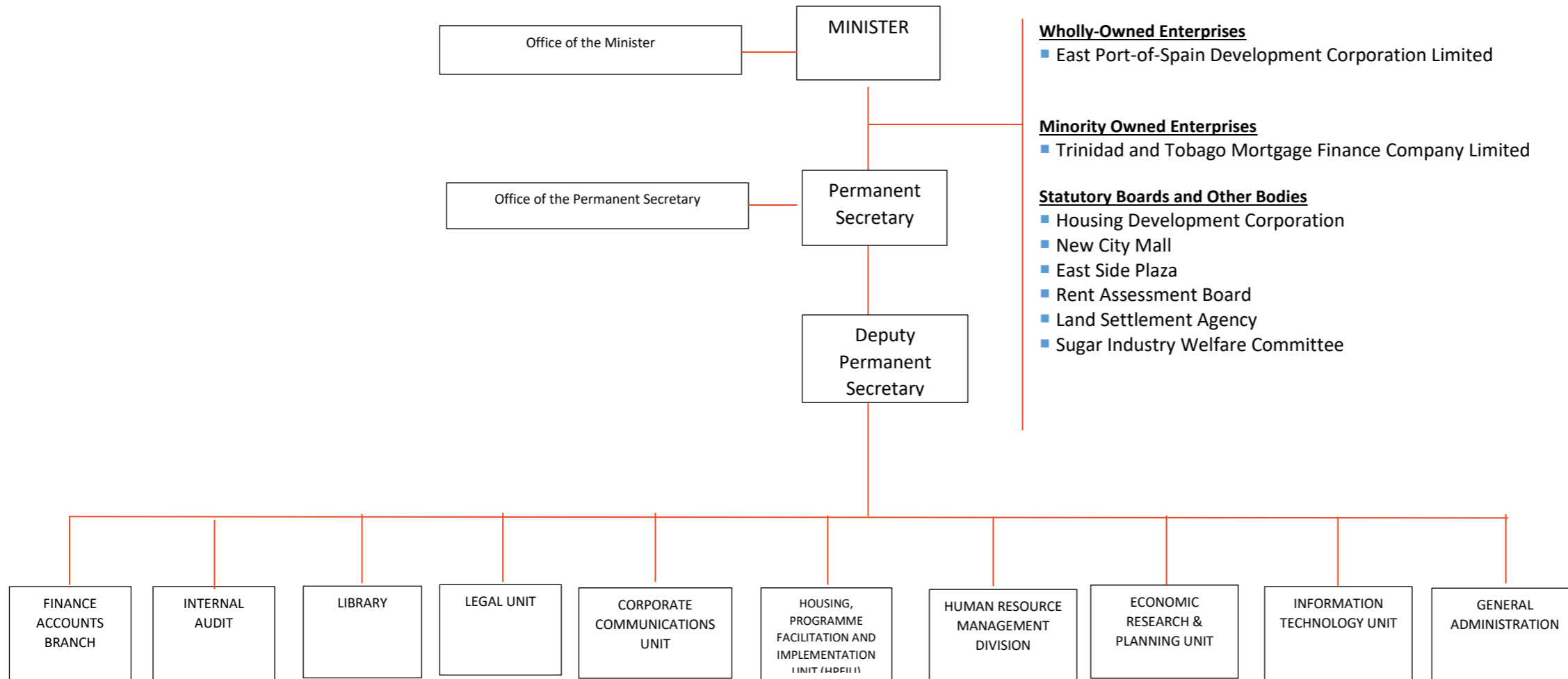
The Ministry strongly believes in education as it relates to the housing sector, and has embarked on an education drive providing relevant information on various aspects of this sector to the public.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development is headed by the Permanent Secretary and has ninety-one (91) established and sixty-five (65) contract positions in sum, comprising of clerical, technical/professional, secretarial, administrative and manipulative staff. The core Ministry is divided into the following Divisions/Sections/Units; as outlined in the organizational chart attached.

Organizational Chart

Organizational Chart of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development



Functions of the Divisions of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.

Human Resource Service Division

This division is responsible for the management of the Ministry's human capital in an effective, fair, and consistent manner, so as to achieve the Ministry's strategic goals and objectives. The functions include recruitment, human resource planning, training and development, performance evaluation management, development of human resource management policies, industrial and employee relations and compensation.

General Administration/Operations

This section is responsible for the provision of support services for the Ministry, through the registry and office management functions. The Registry ensures the orderly recording and safe storage of Ministry files and documents. The office management section is responsible for the procurement of goods and services, e.g. office supplies, furniture, equipment, messenger, maid, janitorial services etc.

Economic Research and Planning Unit

The Economic Research and Planning Unit is responsible for assisting in the preparation of policies, programmes and projects in the housing sector and ensuring that these policies, programmes and projects are executed in accordance with Government's mandate.

This Unit is instrumental in monitoring the budgetary requirements of the divisions and agencies under the purview of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. Some of the areas on which the Economic Research and Planning Unit places emphasis are as follows:

- Oversight of the implementation of the Public Service Investment Programme (PSIP);
- Preparation of annual budgets (mainly capital);
- Monitoring of the Ministry's performance under Government's Policy Framework for Sustainable Development;
- Provide data and advice on ongoing projects to the Minister/ Permanent Secretary;
- Providing comments on reports and documents (in-house or from other Ministries/agencies);

- Develop initiatives to ensure that goals are achieved including liaising with other departments within the Ministry;
- Ensure internationally agreed goals are achieved e.g. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
- Functioning on Committees; and
- Preparation of comprehensive reports on the Ministry (e.g. Action Plan report, Administrative reports).

Finance and Accounts Unit

The functions of the Accounts unit include:

- The processing of the Ministry's payroll;
- Processing payments to all the suppliers of goods and services to the Ministry;
- Processing payments to the Ministry's Agencies for their operational and capital projects; and
- Preparing statutory and other reports for the Ministry of Finance, the Comptroller of Accounts and the Auditor General.

Information Technology (IT) Services Unit

The IT Unit is responsible for the Ministry's IT platform, which allows the Ministry and its support agencies to share information in real-time, and so improves the public's access to housing information through the internet interface. The four (4) broad areas of services provided by the IT Unit are:

- Systems analysis: i.e. analyzing the business needs of the Ministry and its agencies to identify business problems, and recommend possible solutions;
- Systems development: i.e. the development and maintenance of new applications;
- Systems installation: i.e. installation, maintenance and monitoring of the Ministry's computer network, inclusive of the hardware and software; and

- Systems administration: i.e. implementation, training and documentation of new systems and applications.

Housing Programme Facilitation and Implementation Unit (HPFIU)

The Housing Programme Facilitation and Implementation Unit administers the Home Improvement Grant Programme, which targets low income persons with a total maximum household income of \$5,000 per month. The maximum amount of the Grant is \$15,000, which is disbursed in two (2) tranches and the funds are used to carry out repairs and upgrades to the beneficiaries' homes. Beneficiaries are selected through a random selection draw system. The additional functions and services of this Unit are:

- Implementation, facilitation and monitoring of housing programmes;
- To provide a high level of quality customer services to all clients;
- To maintain a database of client information for monthly and quarterly reporting; and
- Administration of the Emergency Shelter Relief Grants.

Corporate Communications Unit

The Corporate Communications Unit of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development is responsible for the creation, implementation and management of all internal and external communication programmes, which are designed to raise awareness of the Ministry's mandate and the activities which are being undertaken to fulfil its mandate. Some of the specific duties of this unit include strategic communication planning, reputation management, image and branding, media relations, digital media management, event planning and management, protocol, stakeholder engagement and internal communications.

Legal Services Unit

The Legal Services Unit provides legal opinions, oversight and guidance to the Ministry and its agencies on various matters that pertain to their operations within a legal framework. The Unit ensures that the Ministry adheres to sound legal principles in executing its functions and ensures that the Ministry fulfills all statutory obligations. The Unit facilitates the advancement of the Ministry and its agencies legislative agenda as well as the examination of policy from a legal standpoint in relation to housing and urban development. Officers of the Unit function

as Instructing Attorneys to the Solicitor General and Chief State Departments for all litigious matters in which the Ministry is involved.

Internal Audit

The Internal Audit Unit is responsible for ensuring that the government's accounting system as prescribed by the Ministry of Finance, is implemented in the Ministry, which involves ensuring that all the Ministry's accounting records are complete, accurate and appropriately secured.

Library Services

The Library provides staff of the Ministry with traditional library services, research facilities, e-document delivery and information consultation services.

BUSINESS AND DEPARTMENTS OF THE MINISTRY

- Home Improvement Grants Programme
- Government Subsidised Housing
- Monitoring and Evaluation of housing trends and markets in the country
- Regularisation of Squatters
- Land Settlement
- Regularisation of Tenure/Infrastructural Development of designated squatting sites
- Urban Development

Statutory Boards and Other Bodies

- Trinidad and Tobago Housing Development Corporation
- New City Mall
- East Side Plaza
- Rent Assessment Board
- Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee
- Land Settlement Agency

Indirectly Owned Enterprises

- Oropune Development Limited

- Port of Spain Waterfront Development Limited
- Rincon Development Limited

These three (3) enterprises were transferred when the UDeCOTT was reassigned to the Office of the Prime Minister.

Wholly Owned Enterprises

- East Port-of-Spain Development Company Limited
- Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Limited (UDeCOTT) was reassigned to the Office of the Prime Minister, effective November 14, 2018.

Minority Owned Enterprises

- Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited

Programmes

- Land for the Landless (Discontinued with effect from July 20, 2017)
- Government Aided Self Help Housing Programme
- The Housing and Village Improvement Programme

FUNCTIONS OF THE STATUTORY BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES/WHOLLY OWNED AND INDIRECTLY OWNED ENTERPRISES OF THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The Trinidad & Tobago Housing Development Corporation (HDC)

The Trinidad and Tobago Housing Development Corporation (HDC or “the Corporation”), is an Agency of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, that was established by Act No. 24 of 2005 of the Laws of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The business of the Corporation is managed by its Board of Directors. The functions of the Corporation include the following:

- Do all things necessary and convenient for or in connection with the provision of affordable shelter and associated community facilities for low and middle income persons;

- Carry on any business activity that is incidental to or which may be performed conveniently by the Corporation or which may assist the Corporation in connection with its delivery of the services referred to above;
- Implement the broad policy of the Government in relation to housing as may be directed by the Minister, with whom responsibility for the HDC is assigned;
- Provision of quality, affordable housing solutions, shelter and associated community facilities for first-time home-owners who fall within the low to middle income brackets;
- Carrying out the broad policy of the Government in relation to home construction;
- Stimulation of private sector activities with respect to home construction;
- Developing sustainable communities; and
- Acquisition of land for housing development.

New City Mall

New City Mall, which was formally established in 1997, is a shopping facility owned by the Government of Trinidad & Tobago. It is located within the Metropolitan District of east Port of Spain, a geographic area earmarked by the Government for “urban regeneration”. Its main objective is to create better spaces for commercial letting in a secure and more inviting environment, in order to facilitate viable micro-entrepreneurial ventures. The mission of New City Mall includes the following:

- Providing modern commercial spaces with adequate services for tenants and facilities for micro/small and traditional businesses;
- Supporting tenants to ensure their financial viability; and
- Ensuring customer satisfaction.

East Side Plaza

East Side Plaza is located within the metropolitan district of East Port of Spain and it is strategically situated within the geographic area earmarked for urban regeneration by the Government of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago.

Its main objective is to create better spaces for commercial letting in a secure and more inviting environment, in order to facilitate viable micro-entrepreneurial ventures. The mission of East Side Plaza includes the following:

- Providing modern commercial spaces with adequate services for tenants and facilities for micro/small and traditional businesses;
- Supporting tenants to ensure their financial viability; and
- Ensuring customer satisfaction.

Rent Assessment Board

The Rent Assessment Board is not operational at this time.

Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee (SILWC)

The Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee (SILWC) was formally established by Act No 64:05 of 1951 to control and administer the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund to Caroni workers. Its main focus was the improvement of housing for persons involved in the sugar industry.

Under the said Act, the (SILWC) exercises the powers to:

- Acquire by purchase, transfer, assignment, donation, exchange, demise, gift, bequest, grant, conveyance or otherwise, any real or personal property in Trinidad and Tobago and any estate or interest therein; and
- Sell, demise, grant, convey, exchange or otherwise dispose of and deal with all property which may from time to time, be vested in or acquired by the committee.

The main focus of the work of the SILWC is the improvement of housing for former workers in the sugar industry.

Land Settlement Agency

The Land Settlement Agency (LSA) was established by an Act of Parliament No. 25 of 1998, and commenced formal operations in 1999. It operates under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. Its mandate is to:

- Protect certain squatters from ejection from State Lands;

- Facilitate the acquisition of leasehold titles by both squatters and tenants in designated areas meaning, approved sites scheduled in the Act for the purpose of squatter and tenant regularization; and
- Provide for the establishment of land settlement areas to facilitate the provision of shelter to landless persons and for the relocation of certain squatters.

East Port of Spain Development Company Limited

East Port of Spain Development Company Limited is a wholly-owned, limited liability State Company which was incorporated to fulfill the following mandate:

- To develop and re-develop the Metropolitan District of East Port of Spain which includes areas such as Charlotte Street, Lady Young Road and Eastern Main Road, Morvant, Never Dirty, Caledonia, Sea Lots, Beetham Gardens and Katanga; and
- To improve the social, economic and physical environment of these areas.

Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited (TTMF)

TTMF is a minority owned enterprise. It is a mortgage lender, committed to assisting citizens realize their dreams of home ownership and is the preferred lender under the Government of Trinidad and Tobago's housing program. TTMF offers mortgages to buy a home, build a home, buy land or for home improvement and home equity loans for major expenses.

Effects of Functions on Members of the Public

The work of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development directly impacts on social and economic sectors in the country. Moreover, the Ministry's functions are geared towards long term sustainable development by:

- Improving the quality of life of citizens by the provision of adequate and affordable homes;
- Creating opportunities for the proper maintenance of homes;
- Regularizing the tenure of squatters; and
- The accumulation of wealth, through property ownership.

Section 7 (1) (a) (ii)

Categories of Documents maintained by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development

1. Files
2. Financial records
3. Documents
 - Copies of legislation
 - Legal notes
 - Reports
4. Digital Data
 - CD's
 - DVD's etc.

Legislation

- Land Tenants (Security of Tenure) Act, Chapter 59:54;
- Land Tenants (Security of Tenure) Amendment Act, No.10 of 2010;
- Trinidad and Tobago Housing Development Corporation Act Chapter 33:03;
- Trinidad and Tobago Housing Development Corporation (Vesting) Act Chapter 33:06;
- Housing Act Chapter 33:01;

- Rent Restriction (Dwelling Houses) Act, Chapter 59:55;
- Slum Clearance and Housing Act, Chapter 33:02;
- Land Acquisition Act, Chapter 58:01;
- Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee (Incorporation) Act, Chapter 64:05;
- Sugar Industry Special Funds Act, Chapter 64:04;
- Succession Act, Chapter 9:02.
- Town and Country Planning Act, Chapter 35:01;
- Conveyancing and Law of Property Act, Chapter 56:01;
- Real Property Act, Chapter 56:02;
- Real Property Limitation Act, Chapter 56:03;
- Registration of Deeds Act, Chapter 19:06;
- Wills and Probate Act, Chapter 9:03;

- Administration of Estates Act, Chapter 9:01;
- State Lands Act, Chapter 57:01; and
- State Land (Regularisation of Tenure) Act, Chapter 57:05.

Reports

- At this time, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development has no reports.

Section 7 (1) (a) (iii)

Material prepared by public authority for public inspection

- At this time, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development has no such materials.

Section 7 (1) (a) (iv)

Literature Available by Subscription

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development offers no literature by way of subscription services.

Section 7 (1) (a) (v)

Procedure to be followed when a request for access to a document is made to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.

Applications to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development must be made in writing. The Request for Access to Official Documents form can be downloaded from the website www.foia.gov.tt. The application should include:

- Name of the Applicant
- Contact information for the Applicant
- The information requested and the format in which the information is to be provided
- Date of the request

- Signature of Applicant
- Details that will allow for ready identification and location of the records that are being requested.

The application should be addressed to the Designated Officer of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (see Section 7(1)(a)(vi)). If insufficient information is provided, clarification will be sought from the applicant. An applicant who is unsure how to write a request or of what details to include, should inquire from the Designated Officer.

A request under the FOIA may not be processed to the extent that it seeks information that is readily available in the public domain, either from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development or another public authority, or if the said information is exempted.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development is required to furnish copies of documents only when they are in its possession.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development is required to furnish only one copy of a document. If it cannot make a legible copy of the document to be released, it will not attempt to reconstruct it, instead the best copy possible will be furnished.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development will determine whether to grant a request for access to information as soon as practicable but not later than 30 days of the date of receipt, as required by the FOIA. Every effort will be made to comply with the time frames set out in the FOIA, but where it appears that processing a request may take longer than statutory limit, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development will acknowledge the request and advise the applicant of its status. If the Ministry fails to meet the deadlines set out in the FOIA, the applicant has the right to proceed as if the request has been denied.

Section 17(1) stipulates that no fee shall be charged by a public authority for the making of a request for access to an official document. However, where access to an official document is to be given in the form of printed copies, or copies in some other form, such as tape, disk, film or other material, the applicant will be required to pay the prescribed fee incurred for duplication of the said material.

Section 7 (1) (a) (vi)

Procedure to be followed when a request for access to a document is made to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.

Officers in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development are responsible for:

1. The initial receipt of, and action upon notices under Section 10;
2. Processing requests for access to documents under Section 13; and
3. Processing applications for correction of Personal Information under Section 36 of the FOIA.

The Designated Officer for the Ministry is:

Name Mr. Justin Dwarika
Job Title Legal Officer I
Address Legal Unit, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
44-46 South Quay
Port-of Spain
Telephone 623-4663 Ext. 2182
Fax 623-5827
e-mail justin.dwarika@housing.gov.tt

The Alternate Officer for the Ministry is:

Name Ms. Lynette Mansingh
Job Title Senior Human Resource Officer
Address Human Resources Management Division, Ministry of Housing and Urban
Development
44-46 South Quay
Port-of Spain
Telephone 623-4663 Ext. 2028
Fax 624-3060
e-mail lynette.mansingh@housing.gov.tt

Section 7 (1) (a) (vii)

Advisory Boards, Councils, Committees and other Bodies (Where Meetings/Minutes are Open to Members of the Public)

- There are no bodies which fall within the meaning of this Section at this time.

Section 7 (1) (a) (viii)

Library / Reading Room Facilities

The Library and Information Services Unit of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development is located on the 2nd Floor of the HDC Building at Nos. 44-46 South Quay, Port of Spain. The library's main clients include Heads of Departments and their staff, members of state agencies of the Ministry, other government Ministries and external researchers. External researchers can access the library via appointment from Monday to Friday between the hours 9:00 a.m. to 3:00p.m. It is also recommended that requests to use the library facility are made in advance. The library can accommodate up to five (5) persons at a time for reading or research purposes; and two computers with internet access are also available for use.

Public Policy for the provision of Copies of Documents held in the public domain

- At this time, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development has no such documents.

STATEMENTS

Section 8 (1) (a) (i)

Documents that are provided for the use of guidance of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.

Certain Documents to be Made Available for Inspection and Purchase:

- Reports of Government Agencies;
- Medium Term Planning Framework;
- Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP);
- Reports of meetings attended on programming, monitoring and evaluating the PSIP;
- Monthly, midterm and annual reports on the performance of the PSIP;

- Quarterly project monitoring reports on programmes/projects financed wholly or partly by International Financing Institutions;
- Documents providing Guidance to the process and procedures in the preparation of the PSIP;
- Building Cost Averages Manual;
- Policies of Sectoral Agencies;
- Estimates of Expenditure, Recurrent and Development Programme;
- Implementation Plan and Action Plans;
- Procurement Policies and Guidelines;
- Financial Regulations and Instructions;
- Guidance on Implementation of FOIA; and
- Manual on Financial and Economic Analysis.

Section 8 (1) (a) (ii)

Documents containing interpretations or particulars of written laws or schemes administered by the public authority

- At this time, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development has no such documents.

Section 8 (1) (b)

Documents on the procedures to be employed or the objectives to be pursued in the enforcement of written laws or schemes.

- At this time, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development has no such documents.

Section 9

Statement of Possession of Certain Documents to Be Published

- At this time, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development has no such reports or statements.

MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT¹

¹ This Compliance Statement will be published in the daily newspaper at a later date.