

**NINETY-FIFTH REPORT**

**OF THE**

**SALARIES REVIEW COMMISSION**

**OF THE**

**REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

**January 24 , 2012**

# **NINETY-FIFTH REPORT OF THE SALARIES REVIEW COMMISSION**

## **Review of the Terms and Conditions of Service of the offices of the Clerk of the House and Clerk of the Senate**

By letter dated December 20, 2010, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago conveyed his approval for the Salaries Review Commission (SRC):

- (i) to review the salary and other conditions of service of the offices of the Clerk of the House and Clerk of the Senate with a view to determining the applicability of a duty allowance to said offices; and
- (ii) in undertaking the review at (i) above, to determine whether such duty allowance should be made retroactive from the date of the last general review of salaries and other terms and conditions of service of officers within its purview as contained in its Eighty-ninth Report.

2. In our deliberations on this matter, we met with the incumbents in the offices of Clerk of the House and Clerk of the Senate who provided clarification with respect to their duties and responsibilities and information on the demands placed on them, given the business conducted by the Parliament Department.

3. We are advised that the Clerk of the House is the Administrative Head and Accounting Officer of the Parliament Department and is responsible for the leadership and strategic management of that Department. The office holder provides procedural advice and guidance on parliamentary practice and procedures to all Members of Parliament and reports to the Speaker of the House.

4. We are advised further that the Clerk of the Senate is the Deputy Head of the Parliament Department. He/she assists in directing the operations of the Department and provides support to the Senate and parliamentary committees. The office holder is responsible also for supervision of the administrative services of the Senate and reports to the Clerk of the House.

5. A Duty Allowance is provided to certain office holders within the purview of the SRC, in recognition of the fact that they must be available to respond to the demands of their offices outside working hours. These offices are at the most senior levels and are, generally, of national importance.

6. Over time, a number of office holders within the purview of the SRC have requested that a Duty Allowance be included in their remuneration packages. In our last general review in 2008, we re-examined the basis for the payment of the allowance, the offices to which it applied, the quantum paid, and whether other offices should be provided with such an allowance. At that time, we were satisfied that the allowance should be retained for offices currently in receipt of it. Thus, the payment of the allowance was not recommended for any other offices. No increases in the rates were recommended.

7. The Duty Allowance payable to office holders within our purview currently ranges between \$2,000 per month and \$7,500 per month, with the highest quantum being paid to the President of the Republic.

8. We are advised that the Parliament Department is central to the successful operations of parliamentary democracy. Its officers are responsible for supporting the constitutional and representational duties of seventy-three Members of Parliament of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The Clerk of the House, with the support of the Clerk of the Senate, is required to manage, supervise and coordinate the work of a multidisciplinary team of approximately one hundred and seventy members of staff to ensure operations at the office of the Parliament are well run. Given the manner in which Parliament functions, the office holders and other key staff regularly are required to work beyond normal hours to provide accurate and prompt information and advice. Extended hours of work are an inherent feature of their work and impact on their personal lives.

9. We are informed that the office holders are required also to make administrative arrangements to acquire constituency offices and sub-offices for the Members of Parliament and for the engagement of staff for those offices. We are advised that in February 2010, the number of constituencies was increased from thirty-six to forty-one, which resulted in an increase of five Members of Parliament in the Lower House and a consequential increase in the demands on the office holders.

10. The office holders are required to co-ordinate the activities of and provide support to a number of committees in Parliament, that is, five statutory parliamentary committees as well as ad hoc committees. Additionally, from time to time, sub-committees of the aforementioned committees are established to deal with specific matters. Over the last five years, Parliamentary committees have numbered seventeen per year, on average.

11. In determining whether a Duty Allowance should be included in the remuneration package of the offices of Clerk of the House and Clerk of the Senate, we considered the office holders' duties and responsibilities and the demands placed on them, particularly with regard to the manner in which Parliament functions. We are mindful that, like other office holders in receipt

of a Duty Allowance, the hours of work of the Clerk of the House and Clerk of the Senate are outside of their control and that non-standard hours of work are not occasional.

12. In assessing the matter, we examined the offices classified in Groups 2B and 4B respectively of the Top Managers in the Public Service, being the groups in which the offices of Clerk of the House and Clerk of the Senate are remunerated. The offices of Chief Medical Officer, Comptroller of Customs and Excise and Chief Immigration Officer are remunerated in Group 2B and are provided with a Duty Allowance of \$2,450 per month in recognition of their duties and responsibilities and the demands of their job. We observed that none of the offices classified in Group 4B of the Top Managers in the Public Service are eligible for a Duty Allowance.

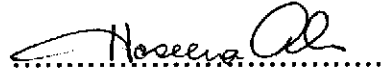
### **Recommendations**

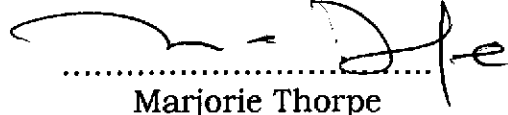
13. Having regard to the responsibilities of these offices, the uncertain and extended hours of work and the demands placed on the office holders, the Commission considers appropriate the payment of a Duty Allowance for the offices of Clerk of the House and Clerk of the Senate. To this end, we recommend a Duty Allowance of \$2,450 and \$1,700 per month for the Clerk of the House and Clerk of the Senate respectively.

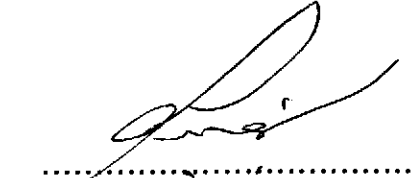
14. We have considered whether the effective implementation date for the payment of the Duty Allowance should be retroactive from the date of the last general review. We are of the view that the allowance should be introduced with effect from a current date. However, as the first session of an expanded Parliament was held under the new administration in June 2010, we recommend that the effective implementation date for the payment of a Duty Allowance to the Clerk of the House and Clerk of the Senate be June 1, 2010.

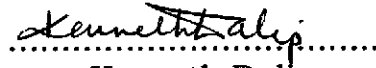
Dated this 24<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2012.

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Edward Collier  
(Chairman)

  
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Haseena Ali

  
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Marjorie Thorpe

  
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Gerard Pinard

  
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Kenneth Dalip