

The Trinidad and Tobago Transparency Institute
REPORT ON ACTIVITIES
DURING THE PERIOD JANUARY TO DECEMBER, 2002
(Prepared by B. Reid, Chairman, 14 January, 2003)

The *main activities completed* during the twelve months from January to December, 2002 were

- A presentation to an International Symposium on Integrity in Public Procurement
- A conference on Political Party Funding and Regulation
- A submission to the Commission of Enquiry into the Piarco Development Project
- Strategic Planning

The *main 'works in progress'* were

- Public Procurement Reform
- A Membership Drive
- Political Party Funding Reform
- Constitution Reform

1. Presentation to an International Symposium on Integrity in Public Procurement

On the 16th of January TTTI Director Reginald Dumas made a presentation on "Integrity in Public Procurement" to an International Symposium on Procurement Systems and Technology Transfer held by the International Council for Research and Innovation in Building and Construction at the Centre of Excellence in Macoya. Mr. Dumas noted weaknesses in Trinidad & Tobago Government procurement systems and the need for more emphasis on preventive structures and mechanisms. He gave information on TI's Integrity Pact, which was received with interest.

2. Second Annual General Meeting

We held our second AGM on the 23rd of January at the Royal Palm Suite hotel, Maraval. Members and guests heard former President Sir Ellis Clarke, in the feature address, speak on the current constitutional issues arising out of the tied result of the recent General Election.

The feature address was followed by a review of the activities of 2001. These included a survey of the laws and institutions designed to foster integrity and curb corruption, a conference for members of the financial community and the media, public statements on integrity issues and the development of a Strategic Plan.

In his report to the meeting, the outgoing chairman, Mr. George Collymore, emphasised the need for TTTI to adhere to the principles of our parent body, Transparency International (TI), increase our membership, develop our anti-corruption skills and collaborate with both Government and Civil Society.

After discussion and amendment of a draft, which had been circulated in advance, the members approved the Institute's By-Law.

The meeting then elected Mrs Mary King as Chairman of the Institute, Mr. Gerald Montes de Oca as Vice-Chairman, Mr. Boyd Reid as Secretary. Mrs. Sonah Nagassar as Treasurer with Mr. George Collymore, Father Henry Charles and Mr. Derek Ramsamooj as directors.

3. Contribution to TI's Strategy Retreat

The Chairman, Mrs King, sent a paper on 'Corruption as a Result of Democracy' along with an overview of the situation in Trinidad & Tobago to the TI leadership's Strategy Retreat held in April to take stock of developments impacting the movement and discuss options for future progress.

4. Conference on Political Party Funding and Regulation

On the 13th and 14th of April we held an international conference on Political Party Funding and Regulation at the Crowne Plaza hotel. Participants came from the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Jamaica and Barbados. The Attorney General made a presentation. Other local participants included representatives of some political parties and trade unions as well as interested members of the public.

Participants agreed that unlimited and non-transparent methods of political party funding were not in the public interest. They opened the doors to corruption and the 'capture' of the State by 'political investors'. They fostered unfair competition for political office.

There was therefore a call for legislation requiring the registration of political parties, prescribing limits on political party funding and full disclosure of the amounts and the names of the donors. There should be realistic and enforceable limits, too, on campaign expenditure. And it was essential to establish an independent agency to ensure compliance with this legislation. A legally established Code of Conduct for politicians was also required.

The Conference also saw the need for a system of monitoring pre and post election campaigns, which could disclose acts of corruption, and the misuse of State funds as well as exercise the oversight of campaign advertising practices.

The Conference urged TTTI to join with other Civil Society organizations in organizing a campaign to engage public support for a transparent, accountable and honest system of political party funding. There was also a resolution that the papers and findings of the Conference be circulated to all CARICOM states.

Towards the end of the Conference, the winners of an essay competition for secondary schools, which we had held towards the end of 2001, were presented with their awards.

The Committee that organised the Conference began the necessary follow-up work. It prepared a press release that was issued on the 19 August calling on the political parties that would be contesting the General Election to declare their commitment to funding reform.

In the weeks prior to the elections the Board tried without success to hold talks with the PNM and UNC on their positions on this and other public integrity issues.

5. Contribution to a Seminar on Corporate Social Responsibility

At the invitation of the Consumer Affairs Division of the Ministry of Community Empowerment, Sport and Consumer Affairs, Mrs King attended a seminar in April on Corporate Social Responsibility and facilitated a workshop on “Corporate Behaviour/Action: Paradigm from Civil Society”.

6. Contribution to the Global Corruption Report

At the request of the editorial committee of TI’s 2002 Global Corruption Report (GCR), the Institute submitted a short piece written by Mrs King on the impact of corruption or allegations thereof on the fortunes of the UNC Government. The Chairman also reviewed for the committee a draft of the section of the GCR dealing with the Caribbean area.

7. Strengthening the Accounting Profession

In September Mrs. Johanna Koorn represented the Institute at a seminar on this topic held by the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

8. TI’s International Conference and AGM, 2002

With the help of funds provided by the US Government we were able to send two delegates to TI’s annual conference and AGM held in Casablanca, Morocco on the 12th and 13th of October. Our delegates were able to make several very useful contacts and were brought up-to-date on the work that TI is doing globally and at the level of its more than eighty national chapters and contact groups.

According to TI Chairman, Dr. Peter Eigen, the challenge to TI was now to keep corruption ‘in centre stage’ and to make sure that there was also change ‘on the ground’.

The consensus was that the priorities for TI’s global agenda should be access to information, anti–corruption conventions, ethics/anti–corruption education programmes, anti–corruption laws and agencies, political party finance, electoral corruption and public procurement.

Delegates stressed the importance of continuing advocacy and awareness campaigns, enhancing knowledge management, providing regional support for civil society, carrying out continuous monitoring and assessment and building global coalitions.

The Conference paid considerable attention to ways of making the organisation more responsive both to global issues and the needs of its national chapters and considered procedures for regular evaluation of the performance of National Chapters.

9. Submission to the Commission of Enquiry into the Piarco Development Project

In its submission to the long sought after inquiry into the airport terminal construction project, TTTI outlined suggested reforms to the Central Tenders Board Act and recommended TI’s Integrity Pact as a means of preventing corruption in projects involving major expenditure of public money.

Towards the end of October we appeared before the Commission to answer questions on our submission. Our recommendations seem to have been very well received by the Chairman. He showed particular interest in the Integrity Pact. He asked the Director of Contracts, whom he had invited to be present, to take note of our views and discuss our recommendations with the Central Tenders Board.

10. Strategic Planning

Work on the Strategic Plan for 2002 to 2005 continued slowly for most of the period under review, ending with approval at a General Meeting of members in November. Copies of the approved text were distributed to all members.

The Plan identifies the following projects to be implemented over the next three years:

- A membership drive for self-sufficiency
- Public procurement reform
- A campaign of public education on the National Integrity System
- Evaluation of the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act
- Promotion of political party funding reform
- Promotion of constitutional reform (in collaboration with the Constitutional Reform Forum and other organisations)
- Monitoring the implementation of the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption.

11. Membership

The following table shows that during 2002 individual membership increased slightly—from 52 to 54. The number of corporate members remained at 6.

Members	at 1 Jan 2002		at 31 Dec 2002	
INDIVIDUAL		% of Total		% of Total
Financial	27	52	37	68
1 year in arrears	26	50	9	17
over 1 year in arrears	9	18	8	15
Total:	52	100	54	100
CORPORATE				
Financial	3	50	4	67
1 year in arrears	3	50	2	33
over 1 year in arrears				
Total	6	100	6	100

Mr. Emile Elias volunteered to head a membership drive aimed at bringing us to a position where we could finance our normal operations without outside assistance and would have an adequate pool of voluntary support for our activities. This project has been included in the Strategic Plan. The goal is full self-sufficiency by January 2004. The membership drive committee under Mr. Elias' chairmanship is presently reviewing its estimate of the funds that will be required to meet the administrative costs of the project. Subject to Board approval, it proposes to raise these funds itself.

12. Public Procurement Reform

Thanks to a \$90,000 grant from the British Government we were able to begin in December the first phase of a Public Procurement Reform Project which aims to work with the Government and other stakeholders to:

- create a framework for and facilitate national discussion of public procurement reform
- develop specific proposals for the reform of legislation governing public procurement including its extension to all State owned enterprises
- advocate the adoption, in major public investment projects, of TI's Integrity Pact.

During December the project team worked closely with the Ministry of Finance committee charged with procurement reform to develop the project plan. During the first three months of 2003 the project will survey procurement practice and concerns and promote the adoption of the Integrity Pact through presentations to key agencies and a symposium for stakeholders. With the generous help of Mrs Diana Mahabir-Wyatt of Personnel Management Services the process of recruiting a research officer was well advanced by the end of the year.

13. Communication with the Public via the Media

We continued our efforts at communicating with the public on integrity issues via the news media, making public statements on:

- the Integrity Pact as a means of preventing corruption in the award of public contracts; and
- the constitutional crisis following the appointment of a Prime Minister in December, 2001.

In May we held a press conference to release TI's 2001 Bribe Payers Index (BPI).

In August we issued a call to all political parties for commitment to party financing reform and released TI's 2002 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). The latter provided us with an opportunity to discuss integrity issues and the work of the Institute on television and radio.

Just before the 2002 General Elections we issued a statement on what would be required of any new government in the promotion of greater public integrity.

14. Communication between Board and Members

We managed to produce only two issues of our Newsletter, TTTI Update. But the chairman did make up for this with occasional letters to all members keeping them informed of the Institute's activities.

15. Constitution Reform

During 2002 we collaborated with the Constitution Reform Forum (CRF). Sonah Nagassar and Nikola Mitchell represented us at their meetings. Mr. Mitchell presented a paper on Political Party Finance Regulation at a CRF Conference of Citizens. The Institute was represented at the 'Walk the Talk' march for constitution reform on Republic Day.

16. Board of Directors

The Board held 12 meetings during the period with an average attendance of around 75%.

At end of May Mrs. King tendered her resignation as Chairman to the members of the Institute who met in Special General Meeting on the 27th of June and elected the Secretary, Mr. Boyd Reid to replace her as Chairman. Mr. Fitzroy Jackman was elected to the vacant directorship.

On the same day of the meeting the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Gerald Montes de Oca, resigned on the grounds of ill-health.

17. Operations

In March Mr. Steve Mulrain joined us as a part-time Administrative Assistant.

At the beginning of July we moved our offices from the premises of Mary King & Associates in Valsayn to Bretton Hall on Victoria Avenue in Port-of-Spain.

The cost of operations in 2002 was met mainly by members' subscriptions and by a grant of US\$10,000—the second and final tranche of seed money provided by the TI Secretariat. The year ended with sufficient funds in hand to continue operations until the end of June, 2003.

It should be noted that the TI grant was made on the condition that we would make every effort to become 'self-funding' by June, 2003. The Membership Drive was the main initiative designed to meet this condition. In addition, in August, at the invitation of Mr. Shane Cave of TI New Zealand, we submitted through him to the British Development Fund for International Development (DFID) a request for funds to cover about 38% of the estimated cost of operations in 2003.