

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2007 TO JUNE 2008

(Prepared for the 9th AGM held on the 26th of June, 2008)

1 Introduction

This report outlines the activities of the Trinidad and Tobago Transparency Institute (TTTI), the national chapter of *Transparency International (TI)*, undertaken in the fifteen-month period between the 8th and 9th Annual General Meetings of the Institute.

These activities were carried out, for the most part, under programmes specified in the *Strategic Framework 2007-2009* in fulfilment of TTTI's *vision* of a world in which government, politics, business, civil society and the daily lives of people are free of corruption and *mission* to work towards a country and region that are free of corruption.

In Sections 2 to 12 below, for each of the programmes in which there was activity during the period, there is a brief description of what we planned followed by a summary account of what we actually did.

Other activities carried out during the period are described in Section 13.

2 Political Party Funding and Regulation Programme

- *Before the 2007 general elections, seek to have the contesting parties declare their positions on party funding and regulation.*
- *Both before and after the elections, advocate reform and seek to hold parties to the any declarations made.*
- *Join with other organisations in proposing the inclusion of provisions for party funding and regulation in any revised Constitution.*

2.1 Election Campaign Initiative

Toward the end of August, 2007, TTTI wrote to the COP, PNM and UNC asking for meetings within four weeks to learn their positions on specific questions concerning the regulation of political party funding. A release on this action was sent to the media. The COP responded to the letter and held a meeting with TTTI representatives in the third week of September. The party's representatives were not able at that time to state any official position on the questions but said that they would provide the information within a fortnight.

By mid October we informed the media that we had received no statement of position from any of the parties.

TTTI is currently working in collaboration with an Independent Senator who has filed a Parliamentary Motion on the subject for debate in the Upper House. The collaboration is aimed at launching public awareness activities to get the views of the public before the motion is debated.

3 Public Contracting Programme

- *Continue efforts at getting the government to implement fully its Reform of the Public Sector Procurement Regime, especially by the introduction of new legislation.*
- *Monitor the implementation process and the performance of the regulatory body that is eventually established under the new regime.*
- *Assist the regulatory body in its work.*
- *Advocate and monitor the adoption of TI's Integrity Pact and the wider use of public consultation for major public projects.*

3.1 Public Procurement Reform Project

In the face of the slow-down to a virtual halt of Government's implementation of its announced Reform of the Public Sector Procurement Regime (White Paper of August 2005), our Public Procurement Reform Committee began work on a project to analyse the current status of public procurement reform in Trinidad and Tobago and provide, in a report, an informed basis for advocacy of its revitalization and sustainability.

By July 2007 the Committee had drafted a questionnaire to be posted on the Institute's website and begun the identification of the stakeholders who would be invited to respond to it. The aim of the questionnaire was to provide information on stakeholders' views on the need for reform and on the reforms proposed in the White Paper. Analysis of this information would then be used to identify the issues to be discussed at a workshop which would develop recommendations on the way forward.

In the meantime private and public statements by members of Cabinet had suggested that there was a move by Government to revive the reform process. Advised that it might delay things further if we were to publicly promote discussion of the White Paper, the Board decided to put the project on hold until after the General Elections.

Events subsequent to the Elections have not suggested that the project should be resumed.

3.2 Training of Public Officers in Procurement Ethics

In April and May of 2007 we provided ethics training for about fifty public officers as part of a course in the Fundamentals of Public Procurement hosted by the Public Service Academy.

3.3 Actions in Coalition

In February 2008 TTTI joined with the Joint Consultative Council for the Construction Industry (JCC) and other stakeholder organisations in a *delegation to the Prime Minister* to discuss matters of concern to the Construction Sector, including the delay in implementing Public Procurement Reform.

In May 2008 TTTI again joined with the JCC and other stakeholder organisations, this time to call for a Commission of Enquiry to investigate the operations of the *Urban Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago Ltd. (UdeCoTT)*.

4 Private Sector Corruption Prevention Programme

- *Work with business and professional associations and firms to facilitate the adoption by local companies of TI's Business Principles for Countering Bribery.*
- *Develop approaches for tackling corruption in sport.*

4.1 Anti-Corruption Forum Project

In October 2007 TTTI began a project to facilitate the establishment in Trinidad and Tobago of an Anti-Corruption Forum (ACF) along the lines of the UK Infrastructure ACF that had been founded in 2004 as an alliance of business associations, professional institutions and companies with interests in the infrastructure, construction and engineering sectors. The purpose is co-operatively to develop and implement effective industry-led actions to help eliminate corruption.

Arrangements have been made with the Co-ordinator of the UK ACF, Mr. Neill Stansbury, to conduct in Trinidad and Tobago in September:

- a meeting with interested heads of companies in the local infrastructure sector to help them found a local ACF; and
- a training workshop for all stakeholders on the prevention of corruption in construction projects to be hosted jointly with the Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce.

We are also exploring the possibility of a special training session on the prevention of corruption in construction projects for senior public officials.

5 Public Education Programme

- *Continue to seize the opportunities that arise to educate the public on the forms corruption takes and on how individuals and groups can combat it.*
- *Continue efforts to undertake public education campaigns.*
- *Advocate the inclusion in school and teacher training syllabuses treatment of ethical questions of integrity and openness.*
- *Promote the observance of International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD).*
- *Disseminate information via e-mail to a continually increasing number of recipients and, by mid 2007, through a web site.*

5.1 Ethics Training

In June 2007 we made presentations to public officers on Ethics in the Workplace.

5.2 Public Statements

During the report period we wrote some 15 *letters to the daily newspapers*. Topics included: public procurement reform, investigative journalism, CEPEP, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), the Rapid Rail project, the executive jet purchase, the use of anti-corruption clauses in procurement contracts, UDeCoTT and people's right to information.

We issued 5 *media releases* during the period. Topics included our participation in the monitoring of Trinidad and Tobago's compliance with the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption as well as the role of Civil Society in the preparation for the Fifth Summit of the Americas to be hosted in Trinidad and Tobago in April 2009.

5.3 Press, TV and Radio Interviews

We were interviewed by the *print media* several times during the period of this report. We made 18 *TV appearances* and were interviewed at least as many times for *radio*. In most cases we were called upon to comment on topical issues from the perspective of an organisation dedicated to fighting corruption through systemic reform.

5.4 Lectures

During the period of the report, represented for the most part by our Chairman, we undertook some ten local speaking engagements with business groups, professional associations, service clubs and groups of public officers in training.

Topics included Integrity in Private Enterprise, Professional Ethics, Public Sector Procurement Reform, Strategies for Corruption Prevention and Investigative Journalism.

5.5 Newspaper and Magazine Articles

We had 3 articles published dealing with the Rapid Rail project, the EITI and construction procurement.

5.6 International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD)

For December 9th, 2007, we distributed to all TV stations for airing as a public service a three-minute video clip produced by TI to mark the occasion.

We are planning to mark the 2008 IACD with the conferring of an award for investigative journalism. (See 6.1 below).

6 Access to Information

- *Undertake a critical evaluation of the Freedom of Information Act, 2001, looking at the legislation's effectiveness in satisfying the public's right to know.*
- *Establish an Annual Transparency Award for Investigative Journalism in Trinidad and Tobago.*

6.1 Investigative Journalism Award Project

The project committee is in the process of selecting judges and seeking sponsors for the first annual award and should soon be inviting submissions for evaluation. The aim is to confer the award on the 9th of December, International Anti-Corruption Day.

7 International Conventions Programme

- *Monitor the implementation by Trinidad and Tobago of the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (IACAC) and of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).*
- *Advocate TI's recommendations regarding the implementation of these treaties and the signing of other international treaties and conventions.*

7.1 Inter-American Convention Against Corruption (IACAC)

In June 2007 our Chairman made a presentation in Washington DC to the *OAS Committee of Experts* that monitors the implementation by States Parties of the Convention. He presented a report that we had submitted in October 2006 and that assessed the extent to which Trinidad and Tobago was in compliance with the Convention's requirements concerning public procurement.

He also took part in a panel presentation on the same topic at the *Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars*.

7.2 United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC)

In April 2008 our Secretary represented TI as a resource person at a *regional consultation of Caribbean States on promotion of the ratification of the Convention* hosted by the UNDOC and UNDP in Barbados. He made a presentation entitled '*Fighting Corruption in the Caribbean: the Role of Civil Society*' in which he explained the work of TI and suggested how it might, through the establishment of chapters, assist in promoting the implementation of the Convention in the region.

8 Public Integrity Programme

- *Seek to promote the increased effectiveness of the Integrity Commission as an anti-corruption agency.*
- *Advocate the introduction of whistleblower protection in the public service and address issues of public sector management reform.*
- *Explore ways of supporting corruption prevention in the Protective Services.*
- *Continue ethics training in Government departments and seek to extend this to State Enterprises.*

8.1 Integrity Commission

In July 2007 a delegation of the Board met with the members of the Integrity Commission. Discussion centred around the Commission's credibility, its investigative procedures, whether the requirement of confidentiality discouraged necessary transparency and whether there was need to improve the Integrity in Public Life Act.

8.2 Whistleblower protection

At the *OAS meeting in Washington* (see 7.1 above) we took the opportunity to urge that the IACAC monitoring committee to recommend to Trinidad and Tobago the introduction of whistleblower protection legislation.

At the *Civil Society Hemispheric Forum in Miami* on May 1-2 (see 13.6 below) we took the opportunity to recommend the introduction of whistleblower protection legislation in the states of the Americas where none now exists.

8.3 Ethics training

See the activities described under 3.2 and 5.1 above

9 Constitutional Reform Programme

Continue to work with the Constitution Reform Forum (CRF) and other bodies engaged in constitutional reform.

9.1 Constitution Reform Forum (CRF)

In October 2007 the Secretary participated in a CRF hosted *forum on the content of the political party election manifestos* at which he spoke on TTTI's approaches to political party funding, investigative journalism and the work of the Integrity Commission.

In April 2008 the Chairman participated in a *Civil Society Mobilisation Forum* organised by the CRF. Since then he has continued to maintain contact with CRF on this and related matters and will be participation in further CRF activities related to civil society mobilisation.

10 Research Programme

Establish a Research Committee that will support the development of effective anti-corruption strategies and, where possible, collaborate with universities and research institutes.

10.1 Home Mortgage Bank

The Research Committee looked into issues arising from the case in the public domain of the private purchase by the Chairman of the Home Mortgage Bank (HMB) of 25% of the shares of the Bank at a cost of TT\$110 million. The information gathered was used to draft for the Board a public statement on the matter as well as to prepare a contribution to TI's 2009 Global Corruption Report (see 13.1 below).

11 Regional Activities

- *Hold discussions with stakeholders on having CARICOM declared a corruption-free region.*
- *Assist, wherever possible, in the establishment of TI chapters in other countries of the English-speaking Caribbean.*

11.1 Declaring CARICOM a corruption-free region

The Chairman has written to the Secretary-General of CARICOM and discussions are expected to begin shortly.

11.2 TI in the Caribbean

We have held preliminary discussions with representatives of the *Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)* on the possible funding of a project to promote the establishment of TI chapters in the English-speaking Caribbean. We have also discussed with them other ways in which TTTI could participate in the Canadian Government's planned governance support projects.

We have been in contact for some time with a group in *Barbados* that is seeking to establish itself as a national chapter of TI. On the occasion of our Secretary's visit to Barbados to represent TI at a UNCAC conference (see 7.2 above) the group provided his accommodation and he took the opportunity to discuss the work of TI with them and with several other persons representing Civil Society.

We are also in contact with a group in *Guyana* that has similar plans and have received enquiries about starting a chapter from *other Caribbean territories*.

11.3 Integrity Legislation in Montserrat

With funding from the UK Government's Department for International Development, DFID, we provided in August 2007 professional advice to the Government of Montserrat in a report entitled '*Integrity in Public Life in Montserrat: a Review of the Draft Integrity in Public Office Bill 2007*'. The report was prepared under sub-contract by Ms Carla Herbert, Legal Consultant. It reviewed the British Overseas Territory's draft integrity legislation, suggested legislative amendments in accordance with current best practice and made recommendations on other measures to promote integrity in public life in Montserrat.

12 Organisational Strengthening

- *Return, by September 2007 at the latest, to rental of office space and the employment of a part-time Administrative Assistant.*
- *Seek, by September 2008 at the latest, to have sufficient recurrent income to employ a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and, eventually, one or more Programme Officers/Project Officers.*
- *Review and, if necessary, amend our By-Law and Code of Ethics.*

12.1 Office space, staff and equipment

With help of one of our members, *Mr. Emile Elias*, we were able to locate office space to rent in St. Augustine and, beginning in November 2007, to outsource the post of part-time administrative assistant to *Educare Ltd.*, one of the companies of his group that occupies premises next door to ours. Educare supplies us with the services of *Ms. Cindy Paul* from noon to 4PM five days a week.

Mr. Elias joined with *Mr. Winston Riley*, CEO of corporate member ENDECO (Trinidad) Ltd., in generously donating a new computer and printer for the office.

12.2 Capacity Building Project

Under a funding agreement with the *Canadian High Commission* signed in December 2007 we undertook a two-phase project to build our capacity to maintain professional and technical staff on a permanent basis and put in place financial management and communications systems necessary for the achievement of our mission.

In the first phase of the project we engaged a consultant to carry out a diagnostic assessment of our organisation and design the second phase of the project. We expect to receive the consultant's report before the end of June.

The second phase of the project will involve the completion, over an nine-month period, of the tasks specified in the first phase that are designed to realise the objectives of the project.

12.3 Membership

During the period 1 May 2007 to 30 April 2008 individual membership increased by 10% to 75. Corporate membership increased by 5% to 21.

12.4 Financial Resources¹

The main sources of income during the period were members' subscriptions and consulting engagements

Over the period from 1 May 2007 to 30 April 2008 total annual subscriptions receivable increased by 21% to \$144,000. Consultancy earned \$25,000. Our net current assets increased by 60% to \$230,000.

13 Other Activities

13.1 TI's Global Corruption Report (GCR)

In May 2007 we marked the launch of *GCR 2007* with a media release. We sent copies of the report, which had as its theme *Corruption in the Judiciary*, to, among others, the Acting Chief Justice, the Caribbean Court of Justice, the Law Association, NALIS and the UWI.

In March 2008 we entered into an agreement with the TI Secretariat to produce a *Country Report on Trinidad and Tobago for GCR 2009* which has as its theme *Corruption and the Private Sector*. Our first draft is due to be submitted shortly.

13.2 Courtesy call on President Richards

On the 8th of June 2007 His Excellency, President George Maxwell Richards received the Chairman and three other directors on a courtesy call. This provided us with an opportunity to inform the President of our work and receive his advice and encouragement.

13.3 Launch of the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2007

On the 26th of September 2007 TTTI joined with the TI Secretariat and many other TI chapters around the world in launching the 2007 CPI with a media conference.

13.4 Re-Accreditation

In October 2007 the TI Board confirmed our re-accreditation as a national chapter for a period of three years.

¹ All amounts in Trinidad and Tobago dollars (TT\$1.00 = US\$0.16 approximately).

13.5 TI's Annual Meeting of Members (AMM)

In October 2007 our Chairman represented us at TI's AMM in Bali, Indonesia.

13.6 The Fifth Summit of the Americas

TTTI, represented by the chairman, was one of seven local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that attended the Civil Society Hemispheric Forum which took place on May 1-2, 2008, in Miami, Florida, in preparation for the Fifth Summit of the Americas to be held in Port-of-Spain in April 2009.

The Forum provided CSOs with the opportunity to formalize their comments on and recommendations arising from the Trinidad and Tobago government's Summit Concept Paper for consideration by the government and the National Summit Coordinators of the OAS Member States for possible inclusion in the Summit's *Draft Declaration of Port of Spain*.

TTTI was honoured to be charged with the preparation for the forum of the official TI Position Paper. Many of the recommendations made by TI were adopted by the Forum.

13.7 The Board of Directors

The Board elected at the 8h AGM on the 28th of March 2006 comprised Mr. Victor Hart (Chairman), Mr. Brian Lewis (Vice-Chairman), Mr. Boyd Reid (Secretary), Ms. Wendy Kerry (Treasurer), Ms. Diana Clyne, Dr. Bishnu Ragoonath and Ms. Margaret Rose.

During the period under review the Board held 15 meetings with an average attendance of 70%.

14 Conclusion

In conclusion we must ask what *impact*, if any, have these activities had?

In the best of circumstances, the measurement of impact is difficult. In the case of the mitigation of corruption and the systemic improvement of state institutions, there are no known reliable measuring tools. However, we can make some estimate by looking at *public reaction* to our efforts. This has been encouraging.

TTTI is now referred to in newspaper editorials. There is strong demand for our views from the print and electronic media. We are frequently asked to deliver addresses at various forums. Our political leaders make reference to our work in and out of Parliament and people often engage our directors in conversations about our activities.

Beyond a doubt, TTTI's voice is being heard and support is growing.

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