



# 2016

## ANNUAL REPORT



**REVISITING TRIPARTISM**  
*BUILDING BRIDGES IN TURBULENT TIMES*





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**“The Voice of the Employer”**



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Notice of  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Notice is hereby given that the Fifty Seventh (57th) Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Employers Consultative Association of Trinidad and Tobago (ECA) will be held on **Thursday June 29th, 2017** at the **ECA's Training and Conference Facility**, #17 Samaroo Road, Aranguez Roundabout North, Aranguez. Registration begins at **7:30 a.m.** and proceedings begin at **8:30 a.m.**

### AGENDA

1. Reading of the Notice convening the 57th AGM
2. Chairman's Remarks
3. Minutes of the 56th AGM
4. Chief Executive Officer's Report
5. Auditor's Report
6. Financial Statements
7. Appointment of Auditor for 2017
8. Election of Directors
9. Other Business
10. Vote of Thanks

**By Order of the Board of Directors, ECA**

*Joycelyn Francois, Chief Executive Officer/Secretary*

### THEME

**REVISITING TRIPARTISM:**  
 Building Bridges in Turbulent  
 Times



Keynote Speaker:

**Dr. Andre Vincent Henry**, PhD  
 Principal Consultant,  
 Ideas to Business Limited

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# Fundamental Pillars

## VISION

To be the Premier Employer's Representative for Human Resource, Industrial Relations and a prominent Advocate for Best Practice in business in Trinidad and Tobago

## MISSION

The ECA shall promote the employers's agenda for the creation of optimum sustainable value for all stakeholders through effective business leadership, advocacy, lobbying and the provision of quality Industrial Relations and Training Services

## MANDATE

To provide employers with informed, innovative and transformational representation at the organisational, national and international levels, in order to ensure the strength and success of the employer community for the socio-economic well-being of the nation

## VALUES

Our values underpin our mandate and strategic direction:

- Integrity
- Respect
- Open-Mindedness
- Member-focused
- Trustworthy
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Equality and Equity
- Innovation
- Competency and Excellence

# Chairman's Remarks

## Revisiting Tripartism: Building Bridges in Turbulent Times

**I**t is indeed an honour to bring greetings to you, our valued members, on the occasion of our 57th Annual General Meeting. For over 57 years, the ECA has pursued with excellence and professionalism, the execution of its mandate to deliver informed, innovative and transformational representation at the firm, national and international levels.

In so doing, we continue to strive for a stronger and more resilient employer community and ultimately, the socio-economic well-being of Trinidad and Tobago.

We firmly believe that the presence of an employers' organisation like the ECA should not be underestimated given our role, through social dialogue and tripartite mechanisms, in shaping a supportive environment for competitive, sustainable enterprises, which are essential contributors to economic and social development.

The history and evolution of the ECA is consistent with the evolution of labour and industrial relations in Trinidad and Tobago. Its genesis in 1960 came following a highly contentious and confrontational five-year period that saw approximately 230 strikes, a combined 805,000 man-days lost, and \$4.5 million in wages of workers and Government tax revenue. Employers were in an unhealthy environment and a disadvantageous position and urgently an association that would collectively speak on their behalf and advocate for their rights just as vigorously as trade unions did for workers at that time.

### Weathering the Storm

Fifty seven years passed, our nation is again facing turbulent circumstances both from an industrial relations and socio-economic perspective. The year 2016 was undoubtedly a challenging one for Employers, including the ECA, as organisations began to implement their own austerity measures to mitigate the rising cost of doing business. For some, that meant cost reduction measures, restructuring exercises, alternative revenue generation, while for others, it meant the dissolution of operations. Regrettably for the ECA, that meant having to lose a number of members who were forced to discontinue their membership due to the rationalisation of expenditure. However, through a dedicated leadership team and the resilience of its staff members, the ECA has continued to endure despite these challenges.

Unfortunately, this unfavourable state of affairs did affect



**Suzetta Ali,**  
**Chairman of the Board**

the top and bottom lines and resulted in a reduction in our asset base by 16%, going from \$3,411,577.00 to \$2,852,957.00 and a considerable drop in revenues by just over \$1,400,000.00 over the previous year.

This meant that planned activities like our rebranding exercise, which was scheduled for 2016, needed to be temporarily shelved as we re-strategised and refocused our efforts on streamlining our operations to better meet the needs of our members and clients in an efficient and cost effective manner.

### Social Dialogue

The precipitous declines in Government revenue and foreign exchange over the last year has not only had major adverse effects on the economy and people of Trinidad and Tobago but has cultivated an increasingly antagonistic and fragmented industrial relations climate. While the platform continues to burn, it is unfortunate that established mechanisms for social dialogue, like the National Tripartite Advisory Council, is struggling.

The ECA refuses to accept the notion that meaningful solutions are not possible through honest and constructive dialogue and therefore, we believe that this state of affairs presents an ideal opportunity to come together in the interest of our nation's survival and development.

During the past year, the ECA would have repeatedly and publicly made several calls for stakeholders to (1) Accept that we are in dire straits; (2) Appreciate the fragility of the situation; and (3) Objectively sit around the table, let go of political, cultural and historical differences and agendas, and engage in meaningful discussions for the greater good. We remain resolute in this effort and will continue to do our part as a catalyst for change, knowing that we can only get through this turbulence with a renewed collective action for a better

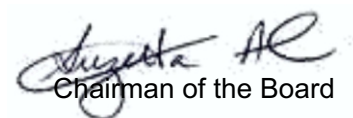
quality of life.

There are many success stories in this regard, we have seen it in many other territories throughout history to this present day. Apart from the resolution of important economic and social issues, social dialogue can encourage good labour market governance, advance social and industrial peace and boost economic progress. Moreover, as we progress to a state of stability and competitiveness foreign investment will flow, creating a healthy environment for further economic prosperity and social advancement. **Everyone wins!**

I therefore encourage you our members to continue to stand with the ECA as we intensify our efforts towards a socially and economically strong Trinidad and Tobago with a buoyant and enabling business environment. The ECA is your voice, but this voice can only be heard when

you speak. In this regard, I urge you to share your perspectives on matters affecting employers and business.

These are certainly trying times, however, the ECA is optimistic that with a concerted effort by all citizens and a shared responsibility to ensure the well-being of this great nation, that we will persevere and triumph.

  
Chairman of the Board





# Labour Reflections on Revisiting Tripartism

Mr. Michael Annisette, General Secretary,  
National Trade Union Centre



**T**he history of the attempts at social dialogue would show that tripartism is a necessary starting point if we are to propel our beloved country into the 21st century.

Your theme therefore “**Re-visiting Tripartism – Building Bridges in Turbulent Times**” is timely and appropriate given the economic, political and social changes that we will have to undergo in Trinidad and Tobago if we are to survive the global financial crisis.

We in the NATUC think that it is necessary to adhere to the conception of tripartism as established by the ILO. We make reference to the inventory made by the ILO on country responses to the 2008–09 global crisis, which showed that countries with well-established traditions and tripartite institutions of social dialogue have demonstrated a remarkable resilience in difficult circumstances. By contrast, countries lacking effective frameworks for tripartite social dialogue faced difficulties in mobilizing the social partners and other stakeholders to respond to the crisis in a quick and effective way.

We ourselves have also been studying the successful implementation of tripartism/social dialogue in several other countries; we refer specifically to the Singapore model. This model of tripartism, using a collaborative approach between the government, employers, and unions, has seen Singapore underpinned three decades of success and its peaceful industrial relations — a centerpiece of this economic competitiveness — has often been attributed to its model of tripartism.

The role of a centralised tripartite social partnership in promoting social and economic progress is not unique to Singapore, as it is also being practiced in Germany and Austria. It is well recognised among labour economists that countries with some form of tripartite partnership and engagement have better economic and social outcomes — economic efficiency, top line growth and social equity — compared to those with enterprise-based bargaining. In this regard, Singapore's economic growth stands as a testimony to the success of its tripartism model. In 2011, the World Economic Forum ranked Singapore as the most competitive Asian country that possessed the most cooperative labour-employer relations.

In addition, we have also seen the success of the

Barbados, Mauritius and Ireland model. Ireland, in fact, going a step further and including a fourth pillar - the community and voluntary pillar. This includes the unemployed, and those experiencing poverty and inequality.

May I venture to say that the significance of the ECA's theme, as it pertains to “building bridges in turbulent times” can only be envisioned through the eyes of the parties concerned as to whether or not there is the political, cultural and social will to genuinely engage the social partners in the process of tripartism.

From Natuc's standpoint, we believe that the constitution of Trinidad and Tobago has to change to make the question of tripartism and social dialogue part of our constitution. Our political history has demonstrated that each government interpret the question of social dialogue and tripartism in different forms and shapes and the records would demonstrate that we have had no continuity on the question from the various governments, past and present, as it relates to this fundamental issue of tripartism and social dialogue. Lessons learned from past experiences demonstrate that the government does not have a solution nor can they ensure social stability and economic recovery through autonomous action. To find sustainable solutions to economic crisis and to accelerate recovery, tripartite consensus is needed. Natuc is painfully aware that in these economic times the whole industrial relations landscape has to change to reflect and incorporate the views of the social partners. We can no longer practice the failed concept of the first “past the poll system” which inevitably gives the party and the elected prime minister, excessive powers over the rights of the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.

Social dialogue and tripartism, in our view, is a true test of a democratic society and the exercising of our constitutional right to vote every four years cannot and must not be construed to be “democracy”. The question therefore is how we inculcate in the minds of politicians, the social actors, the business community and the trade union movement, the urgent need to propel the country to a new concept of democracy that incorporates the tripartite and social dialogue concepts and mandates.

As stated above, Natuc is of the view that for this principle to have roots and bear the democratic fruit, we

must of necessity lobby and insist that the process forms part of our constitutional mandate so that no political party in power can use the concept of social dialogue and tripartism as a political football and to their own whims and fancy. Natuc believes that the key to the success of tripartism in Trinidad and Tobago is that all parties must have a common vision which is shared, understood, and accepted by all three parties, and which is also recognized at different levels.

In looking at the success of the Singapore model we can conclude that the question of tripartism involving government, labour and management would have been responsible for propelling the country to another level and ensuring that the social partners, business, labour and government benefitted from whatever success the country would have had and they would have also put their collective wisdom together whenever the country was facing any financial issues.

For tripartism to have any meaning in Trinidad and Tobago, we are painfully aware that we will have to go beyond the legislative process. Natuc has always understood that legislation alone will not address and/or resolve the historical antagonism between the social partners.

We should therefore strive for ethical governance and a process and procedure in the tripartite approach that

speaks to culture and values, that ensures the highest standard of principles and behaviour that underlines the responsibilities and obligations of the parties involved in the tripartite process.

History would be unkind to us if we do not embrace this golden opportunity to forge the principals and concepts of tripartism so as to enable us to leave a better society for our children.

Therefore we must strive towards developing the ethical climate, the moral atmosphere and the kind of work environment that will bring about fairness, justice and a distributive mechanism that embraces each and every citizen, regardless of political party, race, gender and cultural or social background.

Tripartism must be a continuous dialogic and reflective process which must take into consideration our cultural and historical antecedents.

In closing, please allow me, on behalf of the Executive of the National Trade Union Centre, to wish your Chairman, Mrs. Suzetta Ali and your Chief Executive Officer, Mrs. Joycelyn Francois Opadeyi, every success in your deliberations at your Annual General Meeting, 2017, and we in Natuc look forward to the continued cordial relations that we have enjoyed over the years.

## Reflections by the International Labour Organisation on Revisiting Tripartism

Vanessa Phala, Senior Specialist, Employers' Activities,  
ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean



**S**ound industrial relations and effective social dialogue are a means to promote better wages, working conditions and increased productivity as well as peace and social justice. As instruments of good governance they foster cooperation and economic performance, helping to create an enabling environment for the realization of the objective of Decent Work at the national level.

The ILO aims to assist member States in establishing or strengthening legal frameworks, institutions, machinery or processes for sound industrial relations and effective social dialogue in member States. It also aims to promote social dialogue among member States and

regional or subregional groupings as a means of consensus building, economic and social development, and good governance. It supports the development of knowledge on global industrial relations, in particular the actors and institutions involved in cross-border social dialogue and agreements.

In this regard, the ILO has worked with constituencies in Trinidad and Tobago on a number of initiatives including the recent review of the labour legislation and the National Tripartite Advisory Council (NTAC) launched on 15 March 2016, whose mission is to give effect to commitments, as articulated in the Official Policy Framework, with regard to facilitating tripartite

engagement, dialogue and consultation and to promote consensus building and democratic involvement among key stakeholders on national development issues. The role of the NTAC is critical in building and sustaining social dialogue and tripartism in Trinidad and Tobago especially as the country is wrestling falling oil prices that continue to threaten economic growth and employment.

The ILO defines social dialogue to include all types of negotiation, consultation or information sharing among representatives of government, employers and workers (tripartite dialogue), or between employers and workers (bipartite dialogue), on issues of common economic and social interest. The main aim of social dialogue and tripartism is to promote consensus building and democratic involvement of the main stakeholders in the world of work.

During tough economic times, social dialogue and tripartism are very critical and help to stabilise relationships. At the national level, overcoming economic challenges requires trust and commitment from all social partners to put constituency differences aside and make decisions that are in the interest of the country. We have to ask ourselves if we are all doing that is required to work together as one nation because no individual interests will move the nation forward, but only if we work together. Of course, this will not be achieved overnight, especially since social dialogue is an ongoing process. We cannot expect miracles in the short term. Instead, we must sustain our genuine efforts and be truthful to ourselves. One cannot win on the back of the other. Injustice, unemployment, inequality and crime are interrelated and no one wins if no one is safe.

The establishment of the NTAC reflects a firm commitment by the government to strengthen social dialogue and tripartism by working together with employers and the workers in co-designing solutions that would transform and take the country forward. Successful social dialogue structures and processes have the potential to resolve important economic and social issues, deal with economic crises in an effective way, encourage good governance and boost economic and social progress. The preconditions required for a successful social dialogue include (i) strong, independent and representative workers' and employers' organizations with the technical capacity and access to relevant information to participate in social dialogue; (ii) political will and commitment to engage in social dialogue by all the parties; (iii) respect for the

fundamental rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining; and (iv) an enabling legal and institutional framework. The effectiveness of the NTAC depends on a strong administrative support coupled with the commitment and contribution of each constituency. At first sight it seems all this exists in Trinidad and Tobago. But is it really so? What is undermining effective social dialogue in our country? Social dialogue is threatened when expectations are too low or unrealistically high; when reaching an agreement is not central to the parties; when differing values and attitudes cannot be reconciled; when lack of trust and confidence prevail; when parties are unable to use modern industrial relations techniques; and when they come unprepared. We need to guard against these threats. Barbados has done it by creating a success story in the Caribbean when they established the Social Partnership in 1993, NTAC has a strong potential to become a success story for Trinidad and Tobago.

The role of the employer is very critical for the success of tripartism and social dialogue. The contribution and effective representation of the business sector requires collaboration and cooperation within the business community. The business constituency should constantly engage on key socio-economic issues that affect businesses and employers. This will enable the business community to debate, conduct research, share information, and make meaningful contributions to social dialogue by contributing to the development of legislation and policies that reflect the views of the business sector. By strengthening the role and effectiveness of the business constituency in social dialogue, the business community is contributing to a unified business voice and a long-term vision for solutions. Unity amongst the business community is critical, even more so, when companies continue to face tough economic times and look unto the business community for bold leadership and unified action. The business community has to see the larger picture, should demonstrate genuine commitment, be adequately prepared, agree on its own priorities but leave room for flexibility and compromise, and embrace modern forms of management.

Equally important is to support and encourage bipartite dialogue at the enterprise level. This will facilitate better understanding of decisions, higher motivation of workers, higher productivity, smoother collective bargaining, building trust and a higher probability of achieving win-win solutions.

# Government Reflections on Revisiting Tripartism

**Senator the Honourable Jennifer Baptiste-Primus**  
**Minister of Labour and Small Enterprise Development**



I am pleased to congratulate the Employers' Consultative Association of Trinidad and Tobago (ECA) on its significant contribution over the past fifty-seven (57) years in promoting good industrial relations practices, tripartism and social dialogue, and economic and social advancement in Trinidad and Tobago.

The theme of the ECA's 57th Annual General Meeting is quite apt in the current economic and social climate facing Trinidad and Tobago. The theme is reminiscent of the words of renowned scientist Sir Isaac Newton who said that, "we build too many walls and not enough bridges."

In times of crises, building walls seem to be a natural response with stakeholders safeguarding their turfs and advancing their specific interests. However, as research by the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the response of countries to the global economic and financial crisis of 2008/2009 has shown, tripartism played an important role, alongside sound public policy measures, in mitigating the negative effects of the crisis and accelerating recovery. Countries with experiences of social dialogue and well established social dialogue institutions also reacted more rapidly and efficiently to the shock of the financial and economic crisis.

We have noticed that some countries have resorted to unilateral approaches in the face of the current economic pressures which have worsened conditions. This is not the case with Trinidad and Tobago where the Government, from the onset, recognized that it cannot address the numerous challenges facing the economy on its own and clearly articulated its commitment to fostering tripartite engagement among Government,

Labour and Business in its Official Policy Framework.

This has resulted in the establishment of a number of fora for Labour and Business to participate on an equal footing with Government in the decision-making process. Establishment of the National Tripartite Advisory Council (NTAC) in March 2016, where the tripartite partners discuss issues of national significance, inclusion of representatives of workers' and employers' organizations on a number of State Boards and dialogue with Labour and Business leaders on a regular basis are just a few examples.

We recognize that for tripartism to effectively work there must be some pre-conditions which the Government of Trinidad and Tobago continues to assess on an ongoing basis. These include strong and independent social partners, political will, an enabling legal framework, appropriate institutional support and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms such as freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. The existence of trust among the tripartite partners, the spirit of consensus-building and genuine commitment to the national good are also critical pre-conditions.

As is the case with relationships in life, things do not always work well all the time. However, it is more beneficial when partners can "agree to disagree without being disagreeable" and resort to a "talk-out" as opposed to a "walk-out." We must not allow pride and prejudice to infiltrate the tripartite relationship. As one writer stated, "pride builds walls between people while humility builds bridges."

I dare say that for us to truly reap the benefits of tripartism in Trinidad and Tobago, we must not only seek to build our end of the bridge, although this is critically important. Government, Labour and Business must work to assist each other in building their parts of the bridge so that as a nation we can successfully traverse the turbulent waters. We must also keep the bridge functioning well even when the turbulence has subsided so that we are always poised to face the challenges that may confront us.

May God continue to bless the ECA, our tripartite partners and our blessed Nation.





# "Expressions of Love"

## 2016 Charity Brunch

The 7th Annual Charity Brunch was held on Sunday 11th December, 2016 at the Hyatt Regency Trinidad. Through this event, the ECA has been able to contribute to several charitable organisations over the past six (6) years such as Families in Action, The Coalition Against Domestic Violence, The Trinidad and Tobago Cancer Society, The Save Our Children Foundation, the Cotton Tree

Foundation and the Hope of a Miracle Foundation.

Our selected charity for 2016 was the **St. Mary's Children's Home**, located in Tacarigua, and we are thankful to those who supported us in contributing to improving the standard of living of these precious children by making the event a success.



# Company Profile

## Employers Consultative Association

**T**he Employers Consultative Association (ECA) was established in 1960 to assist and support Employers in industrial relations matters and to give employers an association that would speak on their behalf on matters of similar interest.

The ECA has built a strong reputation for handling all issues concerning Employers in Trinidad and Tobago. Over the years, the ECA has developed a pivotal role in tripartism, facilitating smooth labour relations by representing employers at the national, regional and international levels and assisting in national development, formulating policies and shaping legislation.

The ECA is the only officially recognised Employers' Organisation in Trinidad and Tobago that deals with Industrial Relations and Labour Issues. The Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development and Trade Unions in particular are two bodies with which the ECA works closely since these groups recognise the association's expertise and experience in industrial relations and social dialogue. It is our vision to be the Premier Employers Representative.

As the premier Employers organisation in Trinidad and Tobago, the ECA offers the following benefits to its membership:

### Our Services



#### Publications

FREE: Industrial Relations Quarterly, Week in Review, Bulletins. Preferred rates on all library publications regarding wages and salaries, collective agreements, workplace policies and labour laws, etc.



#### Advocacy and Representation

As the Voice of the Employer, we provide opportunities for representation on several state boards and statutory bodies (e.g. NIBTT, Registration Recognition and Certification Board etc.)



#### Specialised Consultations

Through the Employers' Solution Centre, access Human Resource and Talent Management, Industrial Relations, Payroll Processing and Legal solutions at preferred rates



#### Exclusive E-Content

Access to our membership portal and exclusive e-content including topical industrial court judgments, business templates, sample policies and past lecture presentations



#### Facility Rental

Need a facility to host your next training session, meeting, disciplinary hearing or interview? We have a space for you!



#### Research Services

Make informed decisions and get the information you need. Compensation surveys, collective agreements analysis, labour market information etc.





### FREE Telephone Advisory

Need to make a quick decision?  
Call or write us to access our free  
advisory services



### Professional Training Solutions

Concessionary Rates on Training  
Sessions hosted by our Training and  
Development Solutions Centre



### Industrial Court Judgments

FREE summaries of Industrial Court  
Judgments with access to full  
judgments



### FREE Sensitisation Sessions

Access to selected FREE sensitisation  
sessions on topical issues hosted by  
the ECA

# Report of the Chief Executive Officer

## Re-Tooling and reorganising for greater efficiency and profitability

**L**ike the legendary phoenix, in 2016 the ECA started its climb back to the pinnacle of its existence. Challenged by the winds of economic recession and a tough marketplace, the ECA quickly marshalled its force towards a reorganisation that resulted in a more optimum structure to enable its survival.

The Company undertook a review of its business processes as well as the organisation structure and re-tooled for greater efficiency. This contributed to a 59% improvement over its 2015 results.

The main reason for the lower than budgeted income earned by the ECA was the reduced demand for membership stemming from the declining economic reality of local companies. During the first half of the year, the battle worsened and by mid-year, the ECA was forced to take decisive action to aid business recovery.

Recognising the sharp fall in demand for membership of the ECA, as well as the declining use of the business services of the subsidiary, it became necessary to re-engineer the organisation to achieve sustainability. Greater focus was placed on Membership services with the organisation adopting a more proactive approach to its business streams. More proactive action in the form of planned visits to existing and potential members led to the eventual improvement in the membership revenues.

In order to accomplish success with this approach, it was also necessary to influence changes in the mind-set of the ECA staff. To achieve this objective, transformational sessions were planned and these were led by Ms Denise Caesar, Organisational Change Consultant who challenged the organisation to embark on the journey to better understand elements of the lifeline and the mind-set needed to boost the organisation towards its optimum performance. I am proud to report that our staff took heed and by year-end the financial performance showed signs of improvement.

This was by no means an easy task, but the final consolidated results for 2016 showed an improvement over 2015 and I am happy to report that this trend has continued into 2017 with the current YTD consolidated results to June 2017 showing a profit.



**Joycelyn Francois,  
Chief Executive Officer**

### Governance

Twelve (12) Board meetings were conducted in 2016 while the Executive and Finance Committees met ten (10) times. Most Directors regularly attended and actively engaged in the meetings. Additionally, the Board of Directors provided support to management on various matters including contribution and valuable guidance to the creation of press releases and accompanied the Chief Executive Officer on various radio and television interviews to actively promote the mission of the ECA.

### Advocacy and Representation

Mr Neil Derrick, Director and Vice President represented the ECA at the International Labour Conference (ILC) in Geneva in June 2016.

The ECA was also represented at the ILO's workshop on the establishment of a Regional Tripartite Social Dialogue Mechanism and Regional Social Protection Floor. This session was held in Guyana and was attended by Director Ruben Mc Sween.

Locally, the ECA held representation on the following National Boards through Directors and designated persons as follows:

- National Insurance Board - Ruben Mc Sween, Keston Nancoo, W. A. Hilton Clarke;
- Registration, Recognition and Certification Board - Neil Derrick, Keston Nancoo, Gwendoline Mc Laren; Joint Nominees representing ECA and the National Trade Union Council (NATUC) on the Registration, Recognition and Certification Board - Edward Duggins / Kewal Singh;
- National HIV/AIDS Advocacy - Gwendoline Mc Laren;
- Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago -



Lennon Ballah-Lashley;

- National Training Agency - Suzetta Ali;
- Minimum Wages Board - Bryan Rooplal;
- Tripartite Working Group on the issue of Freedom of Association/Individual access to the Industrial Court - Charles Campbell;
- National Tripartite Advisory Council - Suzetta Ali;
- National Insurance Appeals Tribunal - Cheryl Ann Jordan (North); Wayne Moze (South); Kenneth Jones (Tobago);
- National Insurance Investments Committee - Peter Clarke;
- Occupational Safety & Health Agency - Farzan Ali;
- Pesticides & Toxic Chemicals Control Board - Dr. David Jackson.

The ECA actively participated in four (4) national Consultations during the 2016 period. These related to the review and revision of the following pertinent Labour-related Legislation:

1. Industrial Relations Act (IRA);
2. Retrenchment and Severance Benefits Act (RSBA);
3. Basic Terms and Conditions of Work;
4. Contract Employment.

The ECA also participated in the following workshops during the review period:

1. Stakeholder Consultation on the Preparation of the Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics - UWI
2. CARICOM Workshop on the Regional Qualifications Framework - CARICOM

The ECA presented a total of twenty (20) Radio programmes in 2016 on the 195.5FM frequency. These radio programmes continue to be a source of valuable advisory to membership and the public at large and addressed topical and relevant issues such as Dealing with Industrial Action; HIV/AIDS in the Workplace; The Role of the HR Leader; Dismissal Advice; Misconduct Outside the Workplace; Presenteeism; Workplace Stress; Employment Contracts; and Youth Employment.

Over the 12-month period to December 2016, the ECA issued ten (10) press releases on various issues of national interest. These included:

- "Government's performance rated "acceptable" by ECA (Express – September 14, 2016 – Pg. 21)";
- "ECA's Budget Wish List (Business Guardian – September 29, 2016 – Pgs. 10 and 11);
- "Interview with Chairman Suzetta Ali on the Prime Minister's Address to the Nation (Express – September 14, 2016 – Pg. 19);
- "ECA responds to 2017/2018 Budget Presentation (Express, Newsday, CNC3 Business Watch);
- ECA condemns OWTU Strike Action (CNC3, Loop News, Newsday, and Guardian).

The ECA's posts on Social media were actively followed averaging 500 reach per post per month, with the company's overall following on its social media pages growing by just over 33%, further extending our reach.

The 2016 Voice Magazine entitled "*Business Survival, Sustainability and Growth in Trinidad and Tobago*" was published in November 2016. The release of the magazine coincided with the organisation's IR



Membership Consultation | January 2016  
Retrenchment and Severance Benefits Act



Trade and Investment Conference 2016

Symposium on November 11, 2016. Articles were received from nine (9) member companies and stakeholders: International Labour Organisation Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean, Motor One Insurance Company Limited, Dr. Hazel Carter-Strachan, Government Human Resource Services Company Limited (GHR), CEEJAY Engineering Limited, Excellent Stores, Trinidad & Tobago Electricity Commission (T&TEC), JobsTT, and the Eco-Industrial Development Company of Tobago Limited (E-IDCOT), with advertisements from three (3) companies: Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, First Citizens, and CEEJAY Engineering Limited.

### **ECA Membership**

We are pleased to advise that fifty-five (55) companies were added to the ECA's membership in 2016. On average, the total membership has remained relatively steady with the number of new members almost equal to the resignations. The radio programmes continue to be a source of valuable advisory to membership and the public at large. The main reasons given by members for resignation is the economic hardship facing businesses as well as business closures.

The two (2) main membership events in 2016 were the Annual General Meeting held in June and the Annual Charity brunch entitled "Expressions of Love" in December 2016. Part of the proceeds of the Charity brunch was donated to the St Mary's Home for Children.

Both events were relatively successful with the Charity Brunch attracting about 150 attendees.

There were also eight (8) sensitisation sessions on topical HR/IR issues planned and executed for the benefit of the membership.

### **Facility Rentals**

Facility rentals by members continued and was relatively profitable. Our venue is ideally located and was actively marketed in 2016 and proved to be a growing source of revenue. Efforts have been made to heighten the marketing of space in 2017 due to the convenient, central location it provides for our members.

### **Research and Publications**

Income from Research and Publications fell in 2016 due to the challenge of finding a strong research resource. This resulted in reduced demand for such services and therefore income was significantly lower than in the previous year.

### **Tobago Membership Day**

Tobago membership day was held on Tuesday 20th September, 2016 at the Victor E. Bruce Financial Complex in Tobago. A total of 28 persons attended the one (1) day session representing 15 member companies. The session dealt with "Understanding and Managing your IR Environment" followed by a free live



consultation session. We continue to explore strategies to expand our reach in Tobago while providing a more effective service to our Tobago members.

### Rebranding of the ECA

Rebranding remains a critical requirement for the ECA, however the financial reality of the organisation hindered the achievement of this objective in 2016.

### External Staff Training

In April 2016, the Chief Executive Officer participated in the ITC ILO Master programme in Effective Business Member Organisations. This consisted of a 12-week distance learning online sessions and a 1-week face-to-face contact in Turin, Italy culminating in a final examination. The CEO successfully completed the programme, with special mention.

The PR and Marketing Officer, Mr Ronald Ramlogan and the IR Officer, Ms Leontiena Jones, attended the Caribbean Employers Confederation's (CEC) 3-day training in Research Methodology in St Lucia in September 2016. This was part of the ILO/EU Funded regional programme aimed at enhancing the capacity of the regional Employers organisations in the area of Research.

### Customer Relationship Management

One of the important outcomes of the CEO's visit to Turin in April 2016 was the implementation of the ITC/ILO's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System in November 2016.

Having interacted with users of the system in Turin, the CEO initiated the request for the system to help manage the membership database. The ITC ILO approved the request and in October 2016 Mr Ronald Ramlogan, then PR and Marketing Officer and Mr Avalon Vegas, IT Consultant, attended the technical training in Jamaica for the administration of the system. The CRM Training for the ECA and ESC staff was conducted by representatives of the ITC/ILO's team and the system was installed and customised. The system went live in January 2017.

The CRM has led to a significant improvement of the management of the ECA's membership database by synchronizing the information with our Access Database. Additionally, the functionality of the Member reporting and statement details is extremely useful and will assist with the ECA's membership retention strategies.



CRM Software Training with Jorge Illingworth, Manager  
International Training Center of the ILO | October 2016

# Board of Directors

## Employers Consultative Association



**SUZETTA ALI**, Chairman  
General Manager,  
Coates Brothers Caribbean Limited



**NEIL DERRICK**, Vice Chairman  
Vice President, Human Resources  
and Corporate Services, Petrotrin



**JOYCELYN FRANCOIS**  
Chief Executive Officer/Secretary



**RUBEN MC SWEEN**, Director  
Founder/President,  
Eve Financial Services Limited



**KESTON NANCOO**, Director  
Vice President, Human Resources  
Guardian Holdings Limited



**DEXTER CHARLES**, Director  
Manager, Group Corporate  
Communications, First Citizens



**GISELLE ESTRADA**, Director  
Industrial Relations Manager,  
Republic Bank Limited



**FARZAN ALI**, Director  
Director, Human Capital  
and Government Relations  
Grand Bay Paper Products Limited



**LENNON BALLAH-LASHLEY**, Director  
General Manager, Human Resources  
National Petroleum Marketing  
Company Limited (NP)





**GWENDOLINE MC LAREN**, Director  
Human Resource Director,  
Massy Stores



**NARENDRA KIRPALANI**, Director  
Director, Interior/Exterior  
Decorators Limited



**RUSSEL GEORGE**, Director  
General Manager,  
Hyatt Regency Trinidad



**GRACE MAHARAJ**, Director  
Corporate Secretary, Trinidad and  
Tobago Electricity Commission



**MISTY DORMAN-HOSEIN**, Director  
Senior Manager, Learning and Development  
Scotiabank Trinidad Limited



**UMESH RAMPERSAD**, Director  
Chief Executive Officer, West Shore  
Medical Private Hospital



**HAYDEN NEWTON**, Director  
General Manager, Airports Authority  
of Trinidad and Tobago

The ECA's Board of Directors is constituted by professionals from its member organisations and are responsible for both the governance and strategic direction of the organisation.

Board members also serve on several sub-committees, each of which focus on specific areas integral to the ECA's overall mandate and operation. These include:

1. Membership
2. Industrial Relations
3. Human Resources
4. Occupational Safety and Health
5. Finance & Administration

# Company Profile

## Employers' Solution Centre (ESC)

*The subsidiary of the ECA*



The Employers Solution Centre (ESC) was established in January 2008 and is the business arm of the ECA. The highly competent staff of the ESC is ready and willing to find solutions for its clients, especially in the areas of Industrial Relations, Training and Development and Human Resource Management.

### Industrial Relations Solution Centre

*Equal Justice for Employers*

Geared towards resolving workplace conflict between employers and workers, this centre is committed to mitigating risk by identifying problems, clarifying perspectives and concerns, while reaching mutually satisfactory agreements. It also encourages the right to justice by providing high quality dispute resolution and the promotion of the principles and practices of good industrial relations.

The Industrial Relations Solutions Centre offers the following services:

- Mediation
- Industrial Relations Audit
- Ombudsman Services
- Representation at the Industrial Court and Ministry of Labour
- Retainer
- Collective Bargaining
- Representations at meetings with Trade Unions

### Human Resource Services

*Practical Solutions...Exceptional Results*

This unit offers complete consultancy in all areas relating to human resource management and practice with an objective to optimise organisational performance through Human Resource Management strategies. The ESC's people management solutions and services

include:

- Producing, editing and/or reviewing of employee handbooks and company policies
- Review or development of job descriptions and performance management systems
- Recruitment services
- Human resource audits
- Complete outsourcing of the human resource management function

### Training and Development Solutions

*Building Stronger Institutions*

Staff development through training activities is a vital component towards the enhancement of organisational development, competencies, competitiveness and profitability. This is because training contributes to performance improvement by up-skilling or re-skilling employees to better meet the needs of changing organisational and marketplace demands.

The Training and Development Solution Centre conducts three (3) forms of training activities: National training, In-house training and the Academy of Industrial Relations. **National training** is conducted on a daily basis and is geared towards addressing pertinent topics for employers and businesses. These sessions are available to both members and non-members.

Our **in-house training** services are geared towards delivering relevant workshops and sensitisation sessions customised to your organisation's needs and delivered at your organisation. We are proud of our "learning by doing" principle which ensures that each session delivers a practical component to supplement other learning techniques.

The **Academy of Industrial Relations** is a registered

programme with the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago, and has three (3) cycles annually. This unique programme offers certificate courses in Industrial Relations Management, Labour Law as well as a diploma in Advanced Labour Law.

Throughout the year, the ESC's suite of training services include, but are not limited to the following programmes:

- Business Etiquette and Protocol
- Labour Laws
- Planning and Organizing
- Business Writing
- Performance Management
- Customer Service
- Administrative Professionals Retreat
- Conducting Disciplinary Hearings
- Accident/Incident Investigation and Reporting
- Leadership and Supervisory Training
- Analysis of Industrial Court Judgments
- Effective Selling Techniques
- Time Management
- Interpersonal and Conflict Management
- Recruitment Strategies
- Dealing with Difficult Employees

## Board of Directors



**Glenn Maharaj**, Chairman  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Superpharm Limited



**NEIL DERRICK**, Vice Chairman  
Vice President, Human Resources  
and Corporate Services, Petrotrin



**JOYCELYN FRANCOIS**  
Chief Executive Officer/Secretary



**RUBEN MC SWEEN**, Director  
Founder/President,  
Eve Financial Services Limited



**MARTIN DE GANNES**, Director



**GWENDOLINE MC LAREN**, Director  
Human Resource Director,  
Massy Stores

# Employers Solution Centre Year in Review

**T**he operations of the Employers Solution Centre (ESC) was adversely affected by the economic downturn during 2016. Demand for Training fell by 32% while the request for the Industrial Relations services fell by 8%. The revenue from the HR Solution Services fell by 34% and based on the continuing decline, the organisation was forced to reorganise the business resulting in the closure of the HR Services Unit which comprised three (3) staff members.

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The economic challenges faced by employers in 2016 significantly affected the department's revenue resulting in a considerable reduction in training activities compared with the 2015 period. The strong relationships forged with some of the ESC's faithful clients and solid reputation developed over the years helped in securing training jobs during a very difficult 2016 period.

A total of 72 programmes were conducted, comprising of 38 national programmes, 31 in-house and 3 cycles of the academy of industrial relations. Persons trained for the year numbered 1274.

In 2016, employers focused a lot on the more traditional training programmes, inclusive of Industrial Relations, Supervisory Management and Customer Service Training. This we suspect was a business survival strategy as they sought to protect their businesses, while endeavouring to retain and win new customers.

The Industrial Relations Symposium held in November 2016 and January 2017, was a major success factor for the training and development department. Some of the highlights were:

- A strategic alliance formed with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the ECA/ESC to conduct primary and secondary research on the

changing Industrial Relations landscape in Trinidad and Tobago, the first of its kind;

- Heightened media coverage for the ECA/ESC leading up to, during and even after the symposium;
- Positioning of the ECA to formulate a policy position on the changing Industrial Relations climate and its impact on the organisation.

In addition to the symposium, another major victory for the team was the awarding of two major projects that brought in revenue in excess of \$100,000.00.

## INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The Industrial Relations Solutions Centre stood resilient despite numerous challenges in terms of staffing and a turbulent marketplace. Its reputation as a leader in the provision of quality representation and industrial relations solutions to employers in Trinidad and Tobago enabled the team to weather the external storms. By the end of the year, the Industrial Relations team was able to hold it's own, producing income of 8% less than the previous year. The range of services provided were intended to minimise risk and incidents of employees seeking recourse to the Industrial Court. Our shield of protection for employers includes:

- Daily Advice and Consultancy on employer-employee issues
- Industrial Relations Retainers
- Industrial Relations Audits
- Drafting Industrial Relations Correspondence
- Drafting Employment Contracts
- Review of Workplace Policies
- Conducting Disciplinary Hearings
- Representation at Ministry of Labour
- Representation at Bi Lateral Meetings
- Representation at Collective Bargaining
- Representation at the Registration Recognition and Certification Board
- Representation at Industrial Court

### Winning for Employers in Tobago too!

The Industrial Court of Trinidad and Tobago has recently



begun convening Court in Tobago to facilitate the hearing of Trade Disputes for parties based in the sister isle. The Employers Solution Centre was one of the few representatives who defended employers' interests in Tobago in 2016. We represented Trico Industries Limited against the Oilfield's Workers Trade Union in Trade Dispute 200 of 2016. The dispute was presided over by Her Honour Deborah Thomas Felix, President of the Court. The Union claimed that the employer terminated the services of a worker with almost eight years' unblemished service in circumstances which were harsh and oppressive and contrary to good industrial relations practice. The IRSC argued that the Company conducted enquiries and found that the employee was implicated in misappropriation of funds. Her Honour agreed with the ESC's submissions and dismissed the Union's claim.

The experienced specialist team of the ESC will ensure that your company is assiduously represented at Court. We continue to urge our members to contact us for representation service remembering that the Unions have years of experience in industrial relations. Employers should be mindful not to go to Court unprepared or underrepresented. The ESC stands ready to assist!

### New Product Launch – SME Toolkit

The ESC Industrial Relations team values its role and as the premier employer's representative, continues to find proactive solutions for employers in Trinidad and Tobago. It has been noted that new and growing organisations are not equipped to address employee matters in a structured way which minimises risk. Many employers learn about these processes when it is much too late. The ESC has therefore developed and launched in 2016 a Toolkit to assist employers in this regard. The Toolkit includes customizable templates for recruitment, performance management, workplace policies and treating with disciplinary issues. Thus far, over fifty (50) organisations have benefited from the use of our SME Toolkit.

### OUTSOURCING

The company's Human Resource Solution Centre (HRSC) unit was closed in August 2016 as a result of restructuring. The focus was on the servicing of the major client, a technology related company. Companies have also requested the outsourcing of their Policy Review and Recruitment functions to the ESC. This appears to be a potential growth area of business and internal resources supplemented with Consultants' services are utilised where necessary.



Tobago Membership Day 2016

# Re-Tooling Organisations for the Future

## Strategic HR/IR and Leadership Symposium 2016

**T**he subsidiary of the ECA, the Employers Solution Centre (ESC), hosted a strategic leadership and IR symposium with the theme **From Adversity to Prosperity: Re-Tooling Organisations for the Future**. This symposium was conducted in two sessions, the first of which was held in November 2016 with the sub-theme “Preparing for the Road Ahead: Re-tooling Strategy” and the second session was held in January 2017, the sub-theme of which was “Preparing HR for the IR Onslaught: Re-Tooling Capacity”.

The ESC saw that even as the country continued to struggle with the economic shortfalls and industrial relations turbulence, there was a need to provide HR practitioners with valuable support and solutions to successfully cope with this changing landscape while affording leaders the opportunity to discuss issues and share ideas for the development of concrete policies and business strategy resolutions. As part of this symposium the ESC, in partnership with the International Labour Organisation Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean, commissioned a research project, the first of

its kind, to study the industrial relations climate over a ten (10) year period in an effort to:

1. Gain an understanding of pertinent trends, systems and issues relating to industrial relations in T&T, and;
2. To provide a foundation for evidence-based policy interventions with a view to improving the functioning of T&T's IR system and ultimately the national economy

Speakers for Day 1 of the symposium included Dr. Andre Vincent Henry, Mariano Browne, Shingo Miyake (ILO Senior Specialist), Lennox Marcelle and Indera Sagewan-Alli. Whilst Day 2 featured Newton George, Vanessa Thomas-Williams, Stephanie Fingal, David Abdullah and Senior Council Elton Prescott. More than 110 participants attended, representing 33 small, medium and large companies.

At the end of this programme participants were better positioned to:

- Plan and execute better policies and decision-making initiatives, based on the survey information
- Understand clearly the economic environment and its impact on local businesses
- Look into the future and plan for the road ahead
- Conduct an IR audit
- Properly vet IR advice
- Calculate the cost of an IR decision
- Incorporate IR considerations with strategic planning





# Consolidated Financial Statements of the Employers Consultative Association and Subsidiary 2016



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# NOTES

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