



GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

## Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development

# First YEAR IN OFFICE



Members of the Head Table at the Basic Terms and Condition of Work Code Consultation held in June this year



Minister Baptiste-Primus is joined by Employer Representatives, Labour Leaders, Director of the ILO (Caribbean) and chair of the IRAC at the consultation on the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Bill held in February 2016



Dr. Camille Wardrop Alleyne delivers the Feature Address at the National Forum on the Future of Work held in UWI in August 2016



Attendees at the Empowerment and Jobs Expo navigate the National Employment Services Website for job opportunities



The Honourable Prime Minister Dr. Keith Rowley (7th from right) stands with the members of the National Tripartite Advisory Council (NTAC).



Overhead shot of the participants in the Cooperatives Societies Bill and Credit Union Regulations in January 2016



Participants give feedback at the Consultation on the review of the Retrenchment and Severance Benefits Act

**Challenging, busy, and productive.** That's how the last year can be summed up for the Minister and Staff at the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development.

Senator the Honourable Jennifer Baptiste-Primus assumed Office on September 11, 2015 as the country's first female Minister of Labour and Small Enterprise Development. It was the start of a year that would prove to be quite challenging in the sphere of Labour. The price of oil and natural gas continued its decline on the international markets which gave rise to increased cases of retrenchment and lay-offs in the local labour force.

The Minister signalled her intention to engage in the consultative approach with all the stakeholders, to identify solutions. Thus, as a matter of priority, the Minister set out to meet with the stakeholders of Labour and Employer Representatives in both Trinidad and Tobago. She was also paid several courtesy calls by various Ambassadors and Regional and International Heads.

Legislative reform was high on the Minister's agenda. National Stakeholder Consultations were held to discuss a wide range of issues inclusive of but not limited to the Co-operative Societies Bill 2014 and Credit Union Regulations in January 2016; In February, the Industrial Relations Advisory Committee's recommendations to amend the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Bill; Contract Labour – Reducing the Dependency in April 2016; Review of the Retrenchment and Severance Benefits Act in May

2016; Development of the Basic Terms and Conditions of Work Code in June 2016; and the National Stakeholder Forum on the Future of Work in Trinidad and Tobago in August 2016. Since hosting these consultations reports have been compiled to be sent to the relevant stakeholder bodies for their feedback as we move forward to our second phase of consultations.

On March 18, 2016, the Ministry launched its National Retrenchment Register and in April, hosted an Empowerment and Jobs Expo as its immediate response to the rising levels of unemployment and to provide affected citizens with opportunities and assistance to social services.

Some other achievements of the Ministry are:- Our Labour Inspectorate Unit conducted 410 inspections, identified 248 breaches and recovered \$422,485.44 in arrears on behalf of minimum wage employees. A feature entitled "The Face of Child Labour in Trinidad and Tobago" was produced and aired in addition to a radio panel on the topic. As part of a nationwide awareness campaign on rights and responsibilities in the workplace there was the production and airing of the Chronicles of Labourville - six (6), one (1) minute radio advertisements on: The role of the Conciliation Unit, Natural Justice, Progressive Discipline, the Probationary Period, Retrenchment and Employers' and Employees' responsibilities; Launch of the Co-operative Agribusiness Networking (CANE) initiative, aimed at promoting the development of Co-Operatives in

the agricultural sector and hosted three (3) Co-operative Agribusiness Networking Fora on June 16, 21 and 24, 2016; Placement of five hundred and twenty-five (525) nationals who travelled to Canada to work as part of the Commonwealth Caribbean Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Programme (CCSAWP).

The Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development played a pivotal role in the conceptualisation of the policy framework for the establishment of the National Tripartite Advisory Council (NTAC), which was launched on March 15, 2016.

Senator the Honourable Jennifer Baptiste-Primus continues to hold regular meetings with critical Stakeholders in the Trade Union Movement, the Co-operative and Credit Union Society, the Business and Energy Chambers, International Labour Organisations and Bodies and Groups in Academia and Civil Society.

The Minister of Labour and Small Enterprise Development has no intention of slowing down. She continues to work with a professional, loyal and committed team of public officers at the Ministry who she expressly thanks and is immensely proud of what has been achieved through **teamwork**. Minister Baptiste-Primus looks forward to the tasks ahead as she continues to work with her team at the Ministry for the benefit of all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago.