



**Workshop on the Parliamentary Committee System  
Tobago, Trinidad & Tobago, 20 – 21 March 2006**

**PRINCIPLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PARLIAMENT**

**PRINCIPLES**

- **Through the Parliament the accountability of the Executive to the people is assured.**
- **Parliamentarians must be able to carry out their legislative and constitutional functions in accordance with the Constitution, free from unlawful interference.**
- **Parliamentarians should maintain the highest standards of accountability, transparency and responsibility in the conduct of all public and parliamentary matters.**
- **The Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago should be exclusively responsible for the internal management and governance of its administration.**
- **The Parliament should be served by a professional staff independent of the public service and dedicated to supporting Parliamentarians in fulfilling their constitutional role.**
- **Members must give priority to the institution of Parliament at all times.**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **The number of Members serving in the legislature should be increased, inter alia, to provide sufficient membership for the parliamentary committee system and to strengthen the Parliament's oversight role.**
2. **The role of an MP should be recognized as a full-time occupation.**
3. **Parliament should review its corporate structure to meet the challenge of managing more effectively its administration and financing.**
4. **Parliament should consider modernizing the Standing Orders of both Houses.**

## **THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM**

### **PRINCIPLES**

- **Parliamentary committees have an essential monitoring role in holding government and its agencies to account.**
- **Committees must function independently of the Executive.**
- **All Members should endeavour to work together to improve the committee system.**
- **Committee Members are expected to attend Committee meetings.**
- **Committee members, including Chairpersons, should extend normal courtesies to witnesses.**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **Cabinet Members should not be appointed to oversight committees.**
2. **Adequate resources must be allocated to support the administrative, research and legal needs of committees.**
3. **Consideration should be given to amending the Standing Orders to allow Bills to be referred to committees after First Reading.**
4. **Consideration should be given to live broadcast the proceedings of public committee meetings.**
5. **Committees should initiate follow up inquiries to review the government's response to recommendations.**
6. **All Select Committees established by the Standing Orders should be appointed and become operational at the first available opportunity.**
7. **Membership of committees should be reduced and an appropriate quorum be established.**

**THE AUDITOR-GENERAL, PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (PAC)  
AND THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS ENTERPRISES COMMITTEE (PAEC)**

**PRINCIPLES**

- **The Government must be held to account for the management and use of public resources.**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **The Auditor-General must be provided with the appropriate resources in order to carry out her duties and issue reports in a timely fashion.**
2. **The PAC and PAEC must be adequately resourced to ensure that they are able to carry out their functions in a timely fashion.**

**The forgoing Declaration was agreed to by consensus and it was agreed that a report on the workshop will be prepared and tabled for further discussion.**