



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
MINISTRY OF FINANCE

April 26, 2016

MEDIA RELEASE

Payment of outstanding backpay to members of the protective services

The Hon. Minister of Finance has taken note of reports in the media on the outcome of a meeting held with members of the Associations representing officers of the protective services.

On Tuesday April 26, 2016, the Minister of Finance held a cordial meeting with representatives of the Police, Fire and Prison Services Associations to discuss outstanding backpay to officers.

The Minister confirmed the Government's proposals for the payment of these arrears, namely:

- 50% be paid in cash by June 30, 2016
- the remaining 50% be paid in either two tranches in Fiscal 2017 or through Government Bonds to be issued by September 30, 2016

In response, the Associations indicated that the issuance of bonds was not contemplated previously, and as such, they needed more information to take back to their members, such as the rate of interest; the maturity of the Bonds, the denomination of such Bonds; whether the Bonds would be tax free and whether the Bonds will cover the entire second tranche. The Minister assured that the Bonds would be competitive.

The Association then put forward the following to the Minister for consideration:

- Arrears in the sum of \$50,000.00 or less should be paid in cash;
- Allowances such as travel and upkeep should be paid in cash and not form part of a Bond Scheme;
- Pensioners should be paid all their outstanding monies in cash;
- Benefits in kind, such as housing and/or land;
- Shares in Public companies.

Based on the proposals from the Associations, they were asked to furnish the Minister with the following:

- A list of the number of persons falling below the \$50,000.00 threshold; and
- The potential number of officers requesting housing or land.

They agreed to provide this information to the Minister in one week.

The Minister committed to reviewing their proposals, but stressed that the final decision rests with the Cabinet. He told the Associations that by May 31, 2016 he would communicate with them on the final decisions with respect to all of the matters raised.

The Minister also committed to providing full details on the proposed bonds by that time.

The Government is mindful of the challenging work environment the offices of the protective services are required to work within. It is therefore the aim of the Government to work with this group and all other public sector employees to arrive at the best solution given the current economic environment, yet ensuring officers are paid their arrears in the shortest possible time frame.

The Minister is therefore committed to maintaining a collaborative approach to the finalisation of the payment of arrears to the officers.

- END -