

Agenda

Workshop: Strengthening Accountability through Fiscal Transparency Practices
September 6, 2017 | Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago



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09:00 – 09:30

Welcome remarks

Hyatt Regency Hotel

Address: 1 Wrightson Road, Port of Spain, Trinidad

- Member of Parliament Bridgid Annisette-George (Trinidad and Tobago), Speaker of the House of Representatives

09:30 – 10:50

Session 1: Challenges throughout the Parliamentary Financial Cycle

- Facilitator: Kevin Page, President and CEO, Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy and Former Parliamentary Budget Officer of Canada

One of parliament's fundamental roles is its fiscal scrutiny function which includes the review, approval or rejection, of a government's national revenues and expenditure plans (including its expenditure estimates, budget and taxation proposals, and public accounts). The information asymmetry that exists between executive and legislative branches can make a parliament's scrutiny role challenging. This session will provide an overview of the parliamentary financial cycle and guide participants in group discussions to identify common gaps and strategies to manage challenges.

10:50 – 11:00

Coffee break

11:00 – 12:30

Session 2: Improving Transparency and Accountability Through Independent Financial Analysis

- Facilitator: Kevin Page, President and CEO, Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy and Former Parliamentary Budget Officer of Canada
- Cheryl Gibson, Assistant Clerk, Parliament of Jamaica
- Keiba Jacob, Procedural Clerk, Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago
- Jason Jacques, Director of Fiscal Analysis, Parliamentary Budget Office of Canada (video conference)

Parliamentary Budget Offices (PBOs) are non- partisan analytic units that generally provide independent and objective analysis of the budget, fiscal policies and financial implications of proposals made by the executive. They increase fiscal transparency through the publication of their analyses, simplify complex budgetary information to make it understandable to the legislature and the public, increase accountability through the independent scrutiny of the budget and improve informed evidence-based decision-making. This session will explore the role, purpose, results and institutionalization of PBOs, and consider experiences by participating parliaments who have established or are in the process of establishing such bodies.

12:30 – 12:40

Official Photo

12:40 – 14:00 **Lunch**

14:00 – 15:20 **Session 3: Fiscal Openness and Opportunities**

- Facilitator: Juan Pablo Guerrero, Network Director, Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency (GIFT)
- Sandeep Saxena, Senior Economist of the Public Financial Management Division, International Monetary Fund (video conference)

Fiscal transparency is a key element of government accountability. It provides the information required for oversight of public resources by parliament and contributes to a more informed public debate on fiscal policy issues to improve decision-making. This session will explore gaps in availability and accessibility of information throughout the parliamentary financial cycle to identify opportunities for improvements to allow parliament to better achieve its role.

15:20 – 15:30 **Coffee break**

15:30 – 16:50 **Session 4: Public Participation in Fiscal Policy**

- Facilitator: Juan Pablo Guerrero, Network Director, Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency (GIFT)
- Dr. Maurice McNaughton, Director of the Centre of Excellence for IT-enabled Innovation, Mona School of Business of the University of West Indies
- Manuela Garza, Founding Partner, Colectivo Cometa (video conference)

Involving citizens in the legislative process is critical to ensuring inclusive, participative and representative decision-making as per Sustainable Development Goal 16. It not only brings a variety of perspectives to the table but also adds legitimacy to the decisions that are taken. However, this can be particularly challenging when it comes to financial decisions which are often quite complex. This session will explore opportunities to engage citizens in fiscal policy and consider experiences of participative budgeting that have been implemented.

16:50 – 17:20 **Session 5: Taking Action in Our Parliaments**

- Facilitator: Member of Parliament Esmond Forde (Trinidad and Tobago), Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives

Participants will be invited to reflect on the topics discussed during the day, identify follow up actions they intend to take upon returning to their parliament, and share their thoughts on how international organizations present can assist in achieving these objectives.

17:20 – 17:30 **Evaluations and Closing Remarks**

- Member of Parliament Esmond Forde (Trinidad and Tobago), Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives

18:30 – 19:00 **Transfer to Restaurant Chaud**

Address: 6 Nook Avenue, St. Ann's, Port of Spain, Trinidad

19:00 – 21:00 **Dinner**