

1. MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As the first of its kind in the region, the Environmental Commission has a responsibility to continue to lead the way and resting on our laurels is never an option. Therefore, we continually review our operations and development, seeking always to find fresh and better ways to protect the rights of citizens, whether individuals or corporations, while balancing economic growth with sound environmental practices.

As foreshadowed in our last Annual Report, the Environmental Commission has developed a new three-year plan which focuses on the customer. The overriding objective is to make it easier for the public to access justice. The court rules are being reviewed to ensure simplicity and relevance. Even persons who have no attorney-at-law and choose to represent themselves will find the court user-friendly as they prepare for their matters.

This emphasis on the customer is in keeping with our core values of fairness, independence, integrity, accountability and quality service. We have promised to deliver an effective, prompt and impartial system of resolving matters. Further, as stated in our Vision Statement, a guiding principle is to "Provide quality service that continuously improves, that meets and exceeds public expectations, and ensures that all persons appearing before the Commission are treated with courtesy, respect and dignity."

In order to meet the needs of all our publics, the Strategic Plan also calls for an expansion of the bench to ensure sufficient technical expertise. To better underscore our purpose of justice for all, we also propose a change in name from the Environmental Commission of Trinidad and Tobago to the Environmental Court of Trinidad and Tobago.

The spirit of the Environmental Commission is a pioneering one and so the development of the Strategic Plan was a golden opportunity to create a road map for the future. Building on six years of experience, we focused on three main questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we go?
- How do we get there?

In this way, we created a set of priorities and a clear plan for achieving them. As we keep aiming for excellence, we look forward to ongoing dialogue and support from all stakeholders. Over 100 parties, representing government, industry, environmental interest groups and the legal profession, contributed to the Strategic Plan.

My sincere thanks go to all the stakeholders as well as to the Members and staff of the Environmental Commission for their unflinching support which they give on a day-to-day basis.



Sandra Paul
Chairman

