

MEDIA RELEASE

**Trinidad and Tobago Securities and
Exchange Commission
57-59 Dundonald Street
Port of Spain**



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TTSEC and FIU sign MoU concerning cooperation and information sharing

On Wednesday May 21, the three regulators in the financial sector, the Trinidad and Tobago Securities and Exchange Commission (TTSEC), Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) and the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago (CBTT), formalised an agreement concerning cooperation and information sharing because they recognise that greater co-ordination and co-operation will facilitate the investigation and prosecution of persons suspected of money laundering and terrorist financing as well as the criminal activity related thereto.

Some of the main issues which gave rise to the formal execution of this agreement were the absence of a formalised process for the sharing of information; the appearance of arbitrary and unauthorised requests for information; and the concern surrounding confidential information and resulting liability. This Memorandum therefore sets forth a statement of intent by these authorities to establish a framework to facilitate the exchange of information relating to their respective functions and duties. It is anticipated that co-operation will be achieved primarily through written requests, ongoing consultations, periodic meetings, training events and other practical arrangements as may be developed by the Authorities.

At the formal signing of the agreement, TTSEC Chairman, Professor Patrick Watson indicated that “the responsibility of the Commission to consult, cooperate with, provide information to the Financial Intelligence Unit arises from the co-operative functions pursuant to Section 19 of the SA 2012.” He further indicated that he believes that “the circle is now complete since the three main regulators in the financial services sector now have formal agreements with each other and can therefore maximise all efforts to protect the financial consumers.”

Pursuant to Regulation 22 of the FIU Regulations, the FIU may share or request financial information from agencies, authorities, and persons when co-operating and liaising pursuant to Section 16 of the FIUTTA. In her remarks, Director of the FIU, Susan Francois, indicated that “cooperation and information exchange on the basis of reciprocity are critical building blocks in the foundation of effective supervision. The signing of these MoUs, therefore, is an acknowledgement of the significance of maintaining and improving regulator to regulator communication and will ultimately improve across the board, exchange of information, thereby enhancing regulatory oversight of all supervised entities in Trinidad and Tobago.”

In his remarks, the Governor of the Central Bank, Jwala Rambarran underscored that this “collaboration will develop a regulatory framework that offers protection, consistency and stability.” He further indicated that “this alliance will certainly contribute to the detection and suppression of money laundering and terrorism financing activities in our economy and help to facilitate the provision of information to relevant authorities which are charged with the power to initiate legal action against those involved in criminal activities. This is an area in which we need to urgently strengthen our capabilities.”

This is the fifth agreement that the TTSEC has signed and formalised between 2013 and 2014. In June 2013, the TTSEC became a Full Signatory to the IOSCO Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MMoU) *Concerning Consultation and Cooperation and the Exchange of Information* and in January 06, 2014, a MoU with the CBTT was formalised. Both agreements represent a common understanding by the two authorities about how they will consult, cooperate, and exchange information for regulatory enforcement purposes. On January 08, 2014, a Protocol between the Commission and the Securities Dealers Association of Trinidad and Tobago (SDATT) was signed and on April 09, 2014, a MMoU for the Exchange of Information and Cooperation and Consultation with the Caribbean Group of Securities Regulators (CGSR) came into force. The latter agreement aims to facilitate mutual cooperation in the conduct of the regulatory and supervisory functions under the relevant securities laws, regulations and rules in the respective jurisdictions, including specific initiatives, between jurisdictions that will require such co-operation and collaboration.

As the nation's securities regulator, the TTSEC remains committed to ensuring that the securities market remains fair and transparent in an environment where investors can comfortably invest and have peace of mind.



Professor Patrick Watson (right) signs the official Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Cooperation and Exchange of Information with the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU). Looking on are Susan Francois, Director, FIU and Jwala Rambarran, Governor of the Central Bank.

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About the TTSEC:

The TTSEC is an autonomous agency established by The Securities Industry Act, 1995 to regulate the securities market. That legislation was repealed and replaced by the Securities Act 2012 which is intended to provide further protection to the investor, promote integrity and transparency and foster the development of the securities market. Our vision is to be an effective regulator fostering confidence in the securities industry.