

# **RIAL Cooperation Fund of the IACML of the Organisation of American States**

*Report on Study Tour for Technical Co-operation Training Exercise for Senior Labour Relations Officers from the Ministry of Labour and Immigration (MLI) of Barbados to the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development of Trinidad and Tobago - on June 28 - July 2, 2010.*

## **Background**

The Labour Department will soon be faced with the introduction of the Employment Rights Bill. In Barbados the voluntaristic system of industrial relations is practiced and underpinned by the conciliatory approach to dispute resolution. Through the RIAL Cooperation Fund, assistance for a study tour to Trinidad and Tobago from June 28 to July 2, 2010 was sought as a means of generally observing its Industrial Relations process.

The aim of the programme was to expose officers to contemporary approaches to dispute resolution with a view to improving the technical capabilities of the Labour Department in the context of a rapidly changing industrial relations environment. Additionally, to obtain training on alternative dispute resolution techniques that can be applied to employment tribunal practices and procedures, and to gain practical experience in preparing matters for presentation before the industrial court.

On June 28, 2010, Mrs. Linda Bowen, Senior Labour Officer (ag), Mrs. Yvette Walcott Dennis, Labour Officer I and Miss. Khama Salankey, Labour Officer I departed Barbados for Trinidad and Tobago courtesy of RIAL which provided full sponsorship.

## **Overview**

The training programme was opened with brief remarks made by the Honourable Errol McLeod, the Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development of Trinidad and Tobago, the Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Roslyn Khan Cummings and Mr. Lincoln Lee Chee, Head, Conciliation and Labour Relations in the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprises Development of Trinidad and Tobago. Brief remarks were also made by officials from the Ministry of Labour and Immigration (MLI) of Barbados by Mrs. Linda Bowen, Senior Labour Officer (ag), Mrs. Yvette Walcott-Dennis, Labour Officer I and Miss. Khama Salankey, Labour Officer I.

## **Day 1**

### **Monday June 28, 2010**

Senior Conciliator and Labour Relations Officer II, Miss Sabrina Gomez made a presentation on “*The Role and Function of the Conciliation Unit in Conflict Management in Trinidad and Tobago* “. She highlighted that the Industrial Relations process in Trinidad and Tobago focused on the principles of collective bargaining, conciliation and adjudication. She added that the conciliation unit which is made up of thirty-two contract posts provides advisory services to members of the public, employers and trade unions. These entail walk-in cases and telephone requests. This topic also covered the different types of conciliation.

Mr. Gerard Ramtahal Conciliator and Labour Relations Officer I also presented on “*The Role of the Minister of Labour in Conciliation.*” He made brief remarks about the work of the Conciliation and Labour Relations officers, their role in dispute procedure, the conciliation process, referrals, collective agreements and the role of the Minister under the Retrenchment and Severance Benefits Act, (RSBA) 1985.

“*Dispute Procedure*” was the topic presented by Mr. Rudolph Boneo, a Senior Conciliator and Labour Relations Officer. He discussed several pieces of legislation and these included the Trade Union Act 1932; Trade Disputes and Protection Act; Industrial Stabilization Act 1965; Industrial Relations Act 1972; Retrenchment and Severance payment Act 1985, the Maternity Protection Act and the Minimum Wages Act.

The participants met with the Chairman - Essential Services Director His Honour Mr. Gregory Baker and acting President of the Industrial Court. Also present was Mr. Noel Inniss the Registrar of the Industrial Court and Judge Heather Seale.

During the meeting the Barbados delegation was given insights about the role and function of the Industrial Court. We were informed that the Court is divided into general services, essential services and occupational safety and health sections.

The Barbados delegation was then given a tour of the Registry Department, the Research Unit and the Library.

For the final activity of that day, the participants were given insights about the Registration, Recognition and Certification Board. In attendance were Mr. Clifford Buffong, Secretary, Registration, Recognition and Certification Board, Ms. Angela Birju, Examiner II and six additional examiners. Mr. Clifford Buffong and staff members shared valuable information about the role and function of the Board. It was emphasized that the main aim of the Board was to determine bargaining units and as part of its power and authority, to function under the Industrial Relations Act (IRA).

## **Day 2**

### **Tuesday June 29, 2010**

Ms. June Goodridge, Senior Conciliations and Labour Relations Officer made a presentation on ‘*International Procedure and Documentation*’. She outlined that the procedures are governed by the Industrial Relations Act 1972. (IRA). She referred to Sections 51 and 52 of the (IRA)

Mr. Gerard Ramtahal's presentation on '*Arranging Conciliation Meetings*' highlighted the responsibilities of the Labour Relations Officers and outlined the methods used by those officers in setting up meetings.

The final two presentations were conducted by two officers employed with the Occupational Safety and Health Agency (OSHA); namely Mr. Randolph Alvarez, Chief Inspector and Ms. Joanne Sinanansingh, Legal Research Officer and Attorney-at-Law.

Mr. Alvarez made an address on '*A Brief History of OSHA Occupational Safety and Health Act #1 of 2004 (as amended.)*'. He noted the pressure on the unit due to increased industrialization and spoke about the dramatic increase in serious accidents and fatalities. He examined some of the fatalities in Trinidad and Tobago for the year 2005.

*"Occupational Safety and Health Act 2004 (as Amended)" - The Procedure to the Industrial Court* was presented by Ms. Joanne Sinanansingh. She pointed out that this Act represented the safety health and welfare of persons at work. Additionally, she shared how the Act applied to industrial establishments.

The presentation outlined the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) duties of employers, self-employed persons, employer's manufacturers, suppliers, installers, designers and importers. She cited that the Act made provisions for the notification of accidents and investigations of occupational disease. This Act also allows for the establishment of an OSH Authority. She finally examined the internal procedure leading to the decision to prosecute.

### **Day 3**

**Wednesday June 30, 2010**

Ms. Jacqueline M. Bowen, Attorney-at-Law and Industrial Relations and Labour Law Specialist presented on *"Opportunities and Challenges of the*

*Adjudicative System of Industrial Relations in Trinidad and Tobago – An Employer’s Perspective*”. She defined the “*Adjudicative System*” and explained the laws and rules governing Industrial Relations and the process of resolving and adjudicating disputes. She also spoke of the benefits of the resolution of matters in the presence and with the assistance of a neutral third party who possesses the expertise in aiding the settlement of dispute and that the terms of settlement are agreed to by the employer. One of the challenges mentioned was the confirmation of the employee being “. . . a member in good standing . . .” by the Registration, Recognition and Certification Board.

*‘An Overview - Criminal Law to Industrial Relations’* was presented by Mr. Morton Mitchell, the Chief Labour Inspector. He discussed the role and function of the Labour Inspectorate Unit and it was observed that workers are protected through social inspections which promote the application of decent work. He discussed the following five pieces of legislation:

- Industrial Relations Act chap. 88:01
- Minimum Wages Act chap. 88:04 1976 - the Minimum Wage Act 2000.
- Minimum Wages Order, 2005
- The Maternity Protection Act, 1998
- Miscellaneous Provisions (Minimum Age for Admission to Employment) Act, 2007.

Mr. Mitchell noted when he examined the role of the Industrial Court in relation to Labour Inspectorate functions, that granting of warrants were issued if for example admission to premises had been refused.

Due to the unavailability of a Union representative, the participants were unable to have discussions from a Union’s perspective.

#### **Day 4**

**Thursday July 1, 2010**

The delegation made a visit to the Industrial Court, Corner of Queen and St. Vincent Streets in Port-of-Spain. The officers were split up and observed different aspects of the Industrial Court and its proceedings.

Ms. Khama Salankey observed "Open Court". The following three persons sat in Court. His Honour Ramchand Lutchmedial, Attorney-at-Law was the Judge and the Chairman, His Honour Mr. A. Aberdeen, a former Trade Unionist and Her Honour Ms. Bindie Mahabir, a former Labour Relations Officer. Ms. Rhona Dukeran was the Court Clerk.

The matter in the Open Court was a trade dispute between Banking, Insurance and General Workers' Union, Party No. 1 (Union) and RBTT Bank Limited, Party No. 2 (Employer). This dispute was filed by the Union on September 7, 2007 and the dispute arose as a result of the termination of the services of a Mr. Rajesh Seusaran on March 7, 2007. The Union's representative made opening remarks. Mr. Seusaran was able to submit his evidence and was later cross-examined by the Employer's Attorney-at-Law. The Judge concluded at 12 noon and the matter was adjourned until the following day.

Mrs. Yvette Walcott-Dennis sat with the Assistant Registrar, Ms. Kathyann Alexander-Frazer and observed "*Directions*" which she conducted on that day.

A representative from the Oil Workers' Trade Union highlighted his series of cases with the respective employers. Both parties were directed based on the information given when questioned as to how and when to file, and what steps to take.

In one particular case that was ongoing since 2007, a consultant had not adequately prepared the case and asked for further time. The request was denied. A date for hearing was given within a few weeks. Mrs. Alexander-Frazer explained the process, explaining that it was necessary to cut out trivial and vexatious matters and also to save time at the actual hearing.

Mrs. Linda Bowen observed the hearing of the case of the Banking, Insurance and General Workers' Union versus the Co-operative Credit Union League of Trinidad. The worker's claim was for compensation arising out of wrongful dismissal. Presided over by His Honour Mr Gregory Baker - Barrister and Attorney at Law, the matter was briefly heard before being adjourned for the following week.

The delegation was however privileged to later meet with the Registrar of the Court who explained the steps to reporting a trade dispute. It was observed that the Registration Department was important and critical. We learnt that the **Industrial Report Book** was a short journal and a diary of all matters.

## **Day 5**

### **Friday July 2, 2010**

The participants visited the Employers' Consultative Association (ECA) of Trinidad and Tobago.

The following members of the Employers' Consultative Association were present. The Executive Director, Ms. Linda Besson; Research Officer, Ms. Crystal Deokiesing; Industrial Relations Advisor, Mr. Gabriel Yeates and Attorney-at-Law and Consultant Ms. Vanessa Thomas-Williams. Representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development were Senior Conciliations and Labour Relations Officer, Ms. June Goodridge and Conciliator and Labour Relations Officer, Mr. Gerard Ramtahal.

Ms. Linda Besson welcomed the participants and made brief remarks. She noted that the Employers' Consultative Association was established in 1959 with the mandate to provide employers with quality representation at the organizational, national and international level, in order, to ensure the strength and success of the employer community for the socio-economic well being of the nation. Ms. Vanessa Thomas-Williams highlighted that they offer training and development to employers.

It should be noted that only one site visit was managed on the last day. However, Industrial Relations Advisor, Mr. Gabriel Yeates gave an in-depth insight into the background of the Employers' Consultative Association Services as it relates to representation at the Industrial Court, mediation and industrial relations.

There was a closing session at the Ministry Of Labour where Mr. Lincoln Lee Chee - Senior Conciliation and Labour Relations officer, expressed his appreciation for the participants of Barbados and sharing in their experiences on the study tour. In turn Barbados' delegation thanked all the facilitators and staff, and all others who contributed to the success of the programme, and for hosting the study tour.

### **Clear and Systematic Procedures**

- One such measure is the process of “Directions” whereby cases would be reviewed by an Assistant Registrar of the Court before whom the parties would appear to give information on action taken and to be given guidance on what further action needed to be taken. They would be given a date of hearing for “Mention and Report” where the parties would report on the status of a case, be given a date for the actual hearing or given the opportunity of further conciliation before the court. This sometimes long and drawn out process is used to remove “frivolous and vexatious matters” from before the court.
- There is the operation of an efficient and well organized registry system. The registry of the Court is the section which can be termed as the control centre of the Court as it controls all of the documentation of the Court. All incoming and outgoing documents must pass through the registry. The staff at the registry checks the suitability of the information to proceed; determines the dates of all hearings, Mention and Report hearings and Directions sessions; and ensures that all parties are notified of the dates and times of their various appearances at the court. All case documents are prepared and filed at this section – from lodgement up to judgement.
- Any court or tribunal system thus needs a well organized registry to be effective.

### **MAIN RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

In outlining the main lessons learned from the Trinidad experience, we must first note that the system of industrial relations in Trinidad and Tobago, while evolving from a similar historical environment also had different socio-cultural underpinnings and therefore, an economic reality at variance with what existed in Barbados.

While both systems in Trinidad and Barbados employed a consensual approach to dispute resolution, the Trinidad system did not stop at negotiation and conciliation, but went on to adjudication as an important part of the process. The Barbados system on the other hand placed more emphasis on social dialogue and went towards a Social Contract which favoured the final settlement of matters being taken to the level of the Social Partnership, with the Prime Minister in the capacity as the head of the Social Partnership.

These variances have lead to an industrial relations system and more precisely a system of dispute resolution in Trinidad which is adjudicative in nature and with an emphasis on a legal framework that has a collective focus, while in Barbados the collective focus has maintained its ad hoc voluntaristic character, leaving the state then to review and amend its legal framework to become more individual in nature.

Hence these differences in outlook present a problem with taking directly from the Trinidad experience to place unchanged into the Barbadian frame of reference.

However, there are certainly some aspects of the Trinidad experience that stand out as being useful lessons that we could learn from and in some ways adapt or assimilate into our system.

### **Importance of the Industrial Relations System and Labour Law**

One of the observations made of the Trinidad system is the premium it places on being able to respond to the economic environment and its focus on using industrial relations and labour law as a developmental tool. The Ministry of Labour Small and Micro Enterprise Development is seen as an important tool to monitor and control the labour market and its impact on the economy; and hence measures are taken to help these players to fulfill their various roles with some prominence. This of course may vary in terms of the perception of importance as the political directorate changes from time to time, however, some level of importance is always assumed.

A few of the examples of the response to the economic needs of the country are; the passing of the Industrial Stabilisation Act of 1965, and when it failed; the change to the industrial Relations Act of 1972, maintaining the Industrial Relations Court and; the various amendments to this Act all to deal with perceived threats or weaknesses in the act and in an effort to maintain social and economic stability through harmonious Industrial Relations.

Another important tool in the effort to monitor and control the economy has been the Office of Economic and Industrial Research within the Industrial Court of Trinidad and Tobago.

In its role as custodian of the economy, the Industrial Court has utilized the services of its Economic and Industrial Research Unit to conduct research which then informs its decisions and judgements, especially in the area of pay determination for both the public and private sector.

This unit has played a very important role in helping the Court to follow the trends, through the analysis of pay data and using the principles of “comparability” and “ability to pay” to arrive at a fair and just means of pay determination. The Unit also systematically prepares a Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) index which is also used by the Court in arriving at its judgements.

Through the use of empirical data, the attempt is being made “to maintain and expand levels of employment, ensure workers a fair share of the outcome of productivity increases in enterprise, maintenance of reasonable differentials in rewards between different categories of skills and jobs, maintain or improve standard of living or workers; promote competitive position of the country’s products in domestic and overseas markets and to ensure ability to finance developmental programmes” (IR Act).

The work of the research unit was also helpful in the decision to establish both national and sectoral minimum wage statutes. It is also useful in determining the awards to be given arising out of judgements of the Court.

## **Maintenance of Industrial Relations Norms in a Legalized Environment**

Despite or because of the highly legalized nature of Industrial Relation in Trinidad and Tobago, there is a marked attempt to maintain good Industrial Relations by retaining many of the concepts, practices and norms that inform the IR system.

Indeed the court is structured in such a way that it possesses a mix of expertise allowing it to have an all round approach to matters using its knowledge of industrial practices and policies and not being confined to legal form or being bound to the rules of evidence. It may also take into account, opinion evidence. (IRA 33: 07, Sec 4 and 9).

This kind of approach has been done through the use of sitting members of the court being taken from among experienced union representatives as well as IR practitioners who would have worked with the Ministry of Labour's Conciliation Unit and other sections of the Ministry. Economists, accountants and other relevant professionals of not less than five years standing are also appointed as members and assigned to cases as deemed fit. The President and Vice President of the Court, however, must be a judge of the Supreme Court of Judicature and an attorney of not less than ten (10) years, respectively.

In addition there has been a great focus on advocacy, and the officers of the Ministry of Labour pursue, as far as possible without tarnishing their neutrality, a policy whereby they assist persons who may not be knowledgeable of the requirements of the IR Act or even the processes of the court. This policy of assisting persons not familiar with the Act or possibly the law is continued by the Officers of the Court all in an effort to engender fairness and justice for all parties.

Allowance is even made for further conciliation at the industrial Court if parties indicate that they are willing to pursue this.

The major plank in maintaining the essences of industrial relations policy and practice within a legalized atmosphere has been the move away from the use of the magistrates' courts and its focus on criminal law to a court or tribunal, specifically for labour matters.

This could inform the discussions deriving from Barbados' policy review as we rely totally on the Magistrates' Court for the determination of our cases. The decisions emanating from the judgements given by a Tribunal set specifically for Labour matters could and should more easily reflect industrial relations

practice which may not be taken into account as easily as in magistrates' courts.

The state, in order to achieve its goal of a stable industrial relations climate has, through the Cipriani Labour College taken on the role of providing training in Industrial Relations for **all** stakeholders in industrial relations issues in general but in particular, case preparation in and presentation.

Some other Observations include:

- The building of the partnerships with other related agencies in conducting outreach related programmes. Outreach is shared between the Ministry of Labour and the National Insurance Board and Community Development among others. This reciprocal approach lends to cost sharing and to reaching a wider audience and while already employed by Barbados on a small scale, our partnerships can be extended to more agencies and deepened at the level of organization and planning.
- Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise pays special attention to the separation of the duties of the 'enforcers' of the law and the 'facilitators' of harmonious relations. This separation is seen as necessary for success as a neutral third party in the conciliation process.  
Having already given consideration to the prospect of an integrated labour inspection system, Barbados can consider taking the step of separating the services offered by the Conciliators and Labour Inspectors.
- The visit to the Registration, Recognition and Certification Board was fairly instructive, as we were exposed to the structure and function of the Board, as set out in the Industrial Relations Act of Trinidad - Part 11 and 111.  
Wide powers have been given to the board in determining bargaining units before registering a Trade Union. The Board can also vary a bargaining unit after it has been certified and it can conduct preferential ballots by a democratic process. Further examination of the powers and functions of the Board can be constructive to Barbados for further

determination of the Trade Unions and Employers' Registration Status and Recognition Bill.

### **LESSONS WHICH CAN BE REPLICATED**

- A greater focus should be placed on the impact that the industrial relations system has on the social and economic development of the country and consequently to the prominence given to the agencies that administer its policies.
- A system of regular reviews of legislation should be put in place and fast - tracked for effectiveness. A special committee could be selected to oversee this activity.
- The capacity of our Manpower, Research and Statistical Unit should be enhanced with a view to being more in a position to collect and analyse the information that could be useful in empowering the decision making of both the policymakers and technical stakeholders.
- A similar study tour should be considered whereby the officers of the Manpower Unit can be exposed to the work and expertise of the Economic Research Unit of the Industrial Court.
- The Manpower and Research Unit if functioning at optimum capacity can also be of great assistance to the proposed Tribunal in its decision making.
- The type of research done on an ongoing basis can be of assistance to those giving consideration to the determination of minimum wage levels and also to conciliators giving consideration to interest disputes.
- Clear procedures and guidelines along similar lines of those practiced when preparing matters for Trinidad's Industrial Court can be observed and put in place for Barbados' Employment Rights Tribunal when enacted.

### **NEXT STEPS**

It has now however been determined that some further measure needs to be taken to protect the more vulnerable in society and to facilitate "*decent work*" in the face of changing socio-economic conditions. Agreement was reached

after a lengthy period of consultation with Barbados' signatories to its Social Partnership and the draft **Barbados Employment Rights Bill** has been the result.

This Bill, when enacted, will seek to expand the rights of employees and confer on primarily employed persons, new employment rights among which, is the right to a statutory minimum amount of notice of termination for both employers and employees. Other rights proposed for employees include the right not to be unfairly dismissed; the right to be informed of details of their employers; the right to be given a written statement of particulars relating to their employment; the right to register a complaint of unfair dismissal or the infringement of other employment rights; the right, if dismissed for redundancy or laid off to priority on a rehiring in certain circumstances; the right, where employment has ended, to a certificate giving particulars of the employment including where the employment ended by dismissal (should the employee so wish), a statement of the reasons why he was dismissed and the right not to be unfairly dismissed

This Bill has also made provision for an Employment Rights Tribunal to determine issues relating to employment rights, but provides that complaints must first be referred to the Chief Labour Officer for an opportunity for a settlement to be reached by conciliation. If a settlement is not reached, provision is made for the complaint to be referred by the Chief Labour Officer to the Tribunal. The Tribunal is given wide powers, subject to an appeal to the Court, on questions of law, to determine complaints. These powers include, in appropriate cases, power to award compensation and power to order reinstatement or re-engagement of an unfairly dismissed employee.

The **Employment Rights Bill** thus represents a new turn on the march towards development - one which seeks to widen the net of protection for the vulnerable.

Having already given consideration to the prospect of an integrated Labour system, the delegation thus recommends separating the services offered by the conciliators and Labour Inspectors in an attempt to improve the effectiveness of the Industrial Relations Section. An enhancement of the Labour Department's library system and the implementation of an efficient registry system for the Tribunal need also to be considered. Additionally, training of officers in case presentation as well as advocacy needs to be undertaken.

The Ministry of Labour can thus use this information to inform its decision-making with regard to the Employment Rights Bill and its Tribunal, as well as other policy decisions. The delegation commits to playing its part in sharing the knowledge gained with the other officers in the department.

## **EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The agenda as outlined for the Study Tour were given as:

- An opportunity to have an audience with one or more judges of the Industrial Court
- An examination of the process applied in the registration of a Trade Union, with some emphasis on the proceedings of the Industrial Court.
- Attendance at a sitting of the Industrial Court

The tour provided the understanding that legal frameworks in any industrial relations systems must be kept under constant review in order to cater for its organic growth.

Insomuch therefore as the above represented the Barbados Labour Department's focus, in all regards those objectives were realized. Having been exposed to the in depth and varied elements that comprise the Industrial Relations Systems in Trinidad, it has been shown that there is usefulness in the participation of government, employers' and workers' organizations in the formulation and implementation of national development programmes and methods adopted to strengthen the principle of tripartism.

The delegation further recommends that consideration be given to implementing a programme whereby officers of the Labour Department can be exposed to the Industrial Relations Systems and practices in other jurisdictions on an annual basis; and a follow up visit be undertaken to Trinidad with special emphasis on that it's Labour Relations at the level of the undertaking. This can only lead to increased learning and sharing of the knowledge across the region and even beyond. This would in a great way enhance the policies and decision making capabilities of our Ministry and Labour Officers.

## CONCLUSIONS

With the advance of the Employment Rights Bill and the systems and policies that would be attendant in its operations, it is believed that the following observations should be noted to inform the Barbados Labour Department's way forward and avoid any related pitfalls:

- There is the general perception that in Trinidad that the Industrial Relations Act has brought some measure of order in the industrial relations system. However, there seems to be need for periodic review in order to strengthen some of its areas.
- The Industrial Court came into existence through the enactment of The Industrial Stabilization Act and at the moment appears to be accepted as an integral and indispensable part of the industrial relations system of the country. The Court has seemingly developed a reputation of being generally fair and impartial in its deliberations and its procedures appear relatively simple and have been followed successfully by persons appearing before it, even those not trained in law.
- There seems to be major concerns that the Court has been affected by external factors, one of which is the unemployment rate, which, when spiraled produce more dismissal cases being filed to coincide with the expiring of multiple collective agreements. Again, despite its smooth operations, one drawback appears to be the slow pace of a technological upgrade of the court. There is still an extremely heavy reliance on too much paper work.
- There has been the implementation of the "fixed bench" system, which ensures that cases are heard in a timely manner. The "fixed bench" system was introduced about four years ago, and groups of three judges sit together consistently to adjudicate cases, and co-ordinate adjournment dates so that they would manage a case from the beginning until it ended.
- The Ministry of Labour is the major conciliation machinery in the country, but in recent times most of the senior and experienced conciliators have been enticed away from that department into employment by the offer of superior terms. This seems to have affected the level of conciliation particularly where the larger trade unions and employers are involved.
- Significant attention would have to be paid to the establishment and functions of any Registration, Recognition and Certification Board. At

- Of note however is that once the Board issues a Certificate of Recognition to a Trade Union, the employer recognises that trade union as the recognized majority union and both, in good faith, treat and enter into negotiations with each other for the purpose of collective bargaining.
- Trade Unions need no longer apply to employers for recognition and they now have no need to call workers out on strike in order to force the employer to grant recognition. This feature thus eliminates the standard Survey system as used in Barbados, where a check of the union's records is used to determine the representative standing of the union in the particular workplace.

The Barbados Study tour to Trinidad has been particularly timely coming at this juncture and on the eve of its Labour Department determination to embark on a path to extend a safety net to the otherwise vulnerable in the society. This exposure of participants to the operations of the total framework and workings of Trinidad and Tobago's system of industrial relations has been quite useful. While reinforcing the value our own system with its focus on Partnership, it has also brought us into clearer view of a different way of doing things. We expect that we will be strengthened as we look to assimilate the best and most relevant aspects of the practices and procedures to which we were exposed.

We would therefore like to express our gratitude to **all** those who would have worked hard to make this exchange a reality. Our appreciation extends not only to the members within the RIAL/OAS and the Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development as well as the Industrial Court in Trinidad, but to all those who in any way accommodated us through giving of their time and efforts to make the visit a fruitful and enjoyable one notwithstanding the time constraints.

<b><i>Linda Y. Bowen (Mrs)</i></b>	-	<b><i>Senior Labour Officer (Ag)</i></b>
<b><i>Yvette Walcott-Dennis (Mrs)</i></b>	-	<b><i>Labour Officer I</i></b>
<b><i>Khama Salanke (Miss)</i></b>	-	<b><i>Labour Officer I</i></b>