

SEVENTY-SECOND REPORT

OF THE

SALARIES REVIEW COMMISSION

OF THE

REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

October 29th, 2004

SEVENTY-SECOND REPORT OF THE SALARIES REVIEW COMMISSION

Foreign Service Allowance for the High Commissioner in Pretoria, South Africa

By letter dated May 17, 2004, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago conveyed his approval for the determination by the Salaries Review Commission (SRC) of the rate of Foreign Service Allowance (FSA) for the High Commissioner in Pretoria, South Africa.

2. We are informed that in October 2003, Cabinet agreed to the establishment of a High Commission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in Pretoria, South Africa with multiple accreditation to Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi. Consequently, the need has arisen to quantify the FSA to be payable to the office of High Commissioner, South Africa.

3. We are advised that the High Commissioner in Pretoria, who is Head of Mission, is responsible for, *inter alia*, promoting and protecting the socio-economic interests of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in the host country. The High Commissioner will also be responsible for developing future bilateral relations in a number of emerging democracies in southern Africa, such as Namibia and Botswana and seeking technical co-operation in several areas. Principal among the responsibilities of the High Commissioner is the promotion of Trinidad and Tobago as an attractive destination for trade, tourism and investment.

4. The FSA is intended to compensate for the difference between the living costs in Trinidad and Tobago and those in the host county in which a Mission is located. In this regard, we note that the FSA is formulated to ensure that High Commissioners/Ambassadors maintain a standard of living commensurate with their status as chief diplomatic representatives of their country at that Mission and also to facilitate the effective discharge of their overall duties and responsibilities.

5. We are advised that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in anticipation of the assumption of duty of the Head of the Mission in South Africa, had sought and obtained the approval of Cabinet for the payment of an interim FSA to the High Commissioner, South Africa. In March 2004, Cabinet agreed that the interim allowance be payable at rates equivalent to those applicable to the office of High Commissioner in Abuja, Nigeria pending the determination of the FSA by the SRC. As a consequence, a FSA at the rate of US\$4,597 per month was approved for the office of High Commissioner, South Africa: the allowance to take effect from the date of assumption of duty of the High Commissioner in South Africa. However, we are informed that to date, the High Commissioner, South Africa has not assumed duty at the Mission.

6. In our deliberations, we noted that in the past a set formula has been utilized in the determination of the FSA for the office of High Commissioner/Ambassador. In this regard, a relationship exists between the FSA payable to the office of High Commissioner/Ambassador and that payable to Foreign Service Officers; that is, the allowance payable to the former is set at 20% above the rate payable to a married Foreign Service Officer V. While the establishment of the FSA payable to Foreign Service Officers does not fall within our purview, we are aware that the United Nations (UN) Index relating to Living Expenditure of United Nations Officials for the particular country in which a Mission is located, is utilised in determining the relevant FSAs. The allowances recommended in the general review undertaken in 2002 and accepted by Cabinet were based on the December 2000 UN Index (rebased using Washington, DC as the benchmark). Those allowances are still in effect.

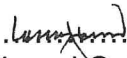
7. Notwithstanding the fact that the existing levels of FSA payable to High Commissioners/Ambassadors are based on the December 2000 UN Index, we are of the view that an allowance derived from that Index would not be relevant in 2004 given the intention of the FSA, namely, to compensate for the difference in living costs in Trinidad and Tobago and the host country. Our preference for the use of a more recent index is all the more pertinent in view of the fact that if the rate of FSA were derived from the December 2000 UN Index (US\$3,211) it would be 26% less than that calculated utilising the December 2003 UN Index. Consequently, we are of the opinion that it would be appropriate to utilise the latter Index for Pretoria in determining the FSA. The resultant allowance is US\$4,365.

8. While this allowance is less than that approved by Cabinet as an interim allowance, a determination of the quantum based on the December 2003 UN Index would not place the High Commissioner, South Africa at a disadvantage, since the office holder has not yet assumed duty at the Mission.

Recommendations

9. We therefore recommend that a FSA of US\$4,365 per month be payable to the office of High Commissioner, South Africa with effect from the date on which the High Commissioner assumes duty in South Africa.

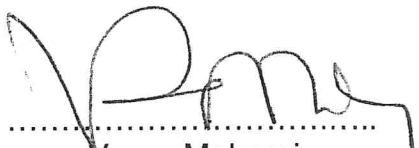
Dated this 29th day of October, 2004.


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Edward Collier
(Chairman)


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Keith Ortiz


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Joyce Marshall


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Ashton Breton


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Varun Maharaj