



THE HONOURABLE COLM IMBERT
MINISTER OF FINANCE
Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

F (I): 1/45/32

July 12, 2022

The Honourable Brigid Mary Annisette-George
Speaker of the House
Speaker's Chambers
Office of the Parliament
Parliamentary Complex, The Red House
St. Vincent Street
PORT-OF-SPAIN

Dear Honourable Annisette-George

The Fifth Report of the Public Accounts (Enterprises) Committee on the Examination of the Audited Financial Statements of the National Schools Dietary Services Limited (NSDSL) for the financial years 2016 to 2019 and follow-up on the implementation of the recommendations in the Report of the Auditor General on a Special Audit of the School Nutrition Programme managed by NSDSL

I refer to your letter dated May 19, 2022, regarding the matter at caption which made the following recommendations for the Ministry of Finance:

- i. The Ministry of Finance should provide a status update on the Oversight Mechanism – Internal Risk Management Controls submitted by NSDSL for feedback no later than August 5, 2022; and
- ii. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance should ensure that the quarterly disbursements to the NSDSL were made on schedule so that the quarterly payment to the School Nutrition Program caterers was done on time.

Kindly note that the Investments Division, by letter dated February 27, 2020, provided feedback to the NSDSL regarding the Oversight Mechanism – Internal Management Controls document submitted by the company. A copy of the letter is attached for ease of reference. We continue to liaise with the company to obtain the documents requested to ensure the company's internal control policies and procedures remain robust.

On the issue of disbursement of funds, please also note that the NSDSL has been liaising directly with the Budgets Division of the Ministry of Finance as well as with the Ministry of Education regarding any amendments to the budgetary allocation and subsequent receipt of funding for fiscal 2022/2023.

Yours sincerely,

Minister of Finance



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
MINISTRY OF FINANCE
INVESTMENTS DIVISION

F (I): 1/45/1

February 27, 2020

Ms. Stacy Barran
Chief Executive Officer
National Schools Dietary Services Limited
Couva/Point Lisas Chamber of Commerce Building
Camden Road
COUVA

Dear Ms. Barran,

Re: NSDSL Oversight Mechanism – Internal Risk Management Controls

Reference is made to your Email dated September 27th, 2019 in which the NSDSL Oversight Mechanisms – Internal Risk Management Controls Report was submitted.

The Ministry of Finance has reviewed the Report and, based on the information stated therein, concluded that the Internal Risk Management Controls at the NSDSL appear robust. However, further evidence of the application of some of these controls may be required. These can be assisted by, *inter alia*:

- Copy of the Audit Report of the Pension Plan
- Copy of the Health and Safety Consultant's Report
- Sample Quality Assurance Officer's Reports from site visits to caterers

While these additional documents may give assurance of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Internal Risk Management Controls at the NSDSL in the absence of an Internal Auditor, the submission of said documents does not negate the NSDSL's need for an Internal Auditor.

In light of the above, steps should be taken to recruit a suitably qualified person for the said position. You may consider collaborating with your Line Ministry, the Ministry of Education, in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

Permanent Secretary in the
Ministry of Finance (Ag.)



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