

Launch of TTS/ISO 26000:2011,

Guidance on Social Responsibility

at

Auditorium, School of Education, UWI

Thursday 20th October 2011

TTBS Executive Director's Opening Remarks

Opening Remarks

Thank you Madame Chairperson

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SALUTATIONS

- Head, Department of Economics of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, *Mr. Martin Franklin*
- Chief Administrator of the Tobago House of Assembly, *Dr. Ellis Burris*
- Chair of the National Mirror Committee on Social Responsibility, *Ms Melanie Richards* and Members of the National Mirror Committee
- Chair of the Asa Wright Nature Centre, *Dr. Judith Gobin*
- Education & Research Officer of the Banking, Insurance and General Workers' Union, *Mr. Alva Allen*
- Technical Secretary of the National Mirror Committee on Social Responsibility, *Mr. Wade Inglesbirth*
- Specially Invited Guests

➤ Members of the Media

➤ Ladies and Gentlemen

A PLEASANT GOOD MORNING TO YOU ALL

This morning, it gives me great pleasure to be on the Campus of this notable University, in the company of some wonderful people as we gather for this special occasion. I wish to join with the UWI in welcoming all our guests to this function to officially launch a truly remarkable standard, ***TTS/ISO 26000: 2011, Guidance on Social Responsibility.***

The Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards, familiarly known as TTBS, is proud to be associated with the formal launch of this National Standard. We firmly believe that this standard has great potential for influencing the way in which social responsibility is practiced in public and private-sector organizations across our twin island state.

The national standard is a full adoption of the International Standard ISO 26000:2010 - *Guidance on Social Responsibility*. This International Standard

was launched on November 1st 2010 in Geneva by ISO, the International Organization for Standardization. ISO is the world's largest developer and publisher of international standards with some 18,000 published standards on its database. The organization, with its Central Secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland, is involved in the business of identifying and developing international standards to serve the needs of its world-wide membership which is comprised of over 160 National Standards Bodies; TTBS is a full member of ISO.

OUR HISTORICAL INVOLVEMENT

The participation of the TTBS in the development of this International Standard on Social Responsibility began in the year 2000, with the involvement of one of our Managers, Mr. Steve Williams, who co-chaired a key Working Group of ISO which conceptualized the idea of this standard.

In 2002, the ISO Committee on Consumer Policy, also known as COPOLCO, funded a workshop hosted by the TTBS in Port of Spain on the theme *Corporate Social Responsibility – Concepts and Solutions*. At this workshop, a decision was taken to submit to the Technical Management Board of ISO (ISO TMB), a proposal for the development of this standard.

The TMB gave its approval to go ahead with the development of a Guidance Standard, and ISO began seeking worldwide participation from developed and developing countries in the formulation of the standard. In support of this effort, TTBS established the National Mirror Committee on Social Responsibility in January 2007 with a view to making its contribution to this process. The purpose of the National Mirror Committee at that time was to provide feedback from our national stakeholders on the international draft standard.

TTBS also participated at various workshops within Latin America and the Caribbean region including ISO 26000 Workshops in St. Lucia, Costa Rica and Peru. In 2010, a TTBS representative attended (in Denmark) the 8th Plenary Meeting of the Working Group which approved the draft ISO 26000 Standard for processing as a Final Draft International Standard. TTBS was one of the 66 Participating Members of ISO that cast an affirmative vote to approve the publication of ISO 26000:2010.

Following the ISO launch in November last year, TTBS moved to reconstitute the National Mirror Committee, this time with the primary role of promoting the standard, which in the meanwhile was adopted as a National Standard. This event today is an initiative of the National Mirror Committee.

TTBS' INITIATIVES

Within TTBS, this national standard, can play a significant role as the organization becomes increasingly involved in various social responsibility endeavours. Currently, our social responsibility initiatives have been primarily focussed at our internal stakeholders, with some outreach to targeted homes and other institutions in the community. Within the organization, socially responsible practices have involved investment in our human capital by striving to instil and improve a culture of excellence, empowerment and personal fulfilment. Recent efforts include a Rewards and Recognition Initiative followed by the roll out of our Core Values throughout the organization; these values include:

- ***Excellence*** (& Quality Consciousness);
- ***Integrity*** (& Trustworthiness);
- ***Teamwork*** (& Collaboration);
- ***Respect*** (& Commitment to People);
- ***Pioneering*** (& Innovation); and
- ***Purpose*** (& Enterprise).

These Core Values demonstrate considerable alignment with some of the very principles and values in ISO 26000; values to be embedded in, and translated into behavioural changes across the organization.

THE ISSUE OF RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR

In today's world, the message is becoming louder and clearer that organizations need to ensure that they are appropriately managing their social and environmental impacts on their stakeholders. Organizations need to be accountable and to take responsibility for both the good **and negative** repercussions of their decisions and actions on society and the environment. On the other hand, there are some very significant benefits both internally and externally that can be derived through an organization's endeavours to be socially responsible; these include:

- Developing and enhancing relationships with stakeholders such as clients, customers, employees, suppliers, government and the community;
- Attracting and retaining staff (Being an Employer of Choice);
- Building your reputation and standing;
- Reducing corruption and enhancing transparency;

- Maintaining proper channels of communication between management and workforce; and
- Improving Work-Life Balance;

Ensuring that your actions have a positive impact on society and the environment is a huge responsibility. And it is acknowledged that implementing appropriate strategies and behavioural practices can take time; obviously, this period will vary from one organization to the other – but to begin the process – we must!

I wish to read a short excerpt from the standard (and I quote):

“... [It] is intended to be useful to all types of organizations in the private, public and non-profit sectors, whether large or small... [It] is intended for use by those beginning to address social responsibility, as well as those more experienced with its implementation. The beginner may find it useful to read and apply ... as a primer on social responsibility, while the experienced ... may wish to use it to improve existing practices and to further integrate social responsibility into the organization.”

In light of the noble objectives embodied in this document, I encourage everyone to use the international guidance provided in this standard to implement socially responsible best practices in your organizations for the sustainable development of our beloved country.

In closing, I would like to thank the University of the West Indies for providing the venue for today's launch and I commend the National Mirror Committee on Social Responsibility for taking the lead in organizing this event. I look forward to future activities organized by the committee as we work together to promote accountability, transparency, ethical behaviour, respect for human rights and rule of law for the welfare of our society.

Thank you.

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