



MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SMALL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Minister of Labour Refutes PSA Leader's Allegations.

The Minister of Labour and Small Enterprise Development, Senator the Honourable Jennifer Baptiste Primus, firmly believes that President of the Public Service Association (PSA), Watson Duke should be brought to account by his organisation for the wild and nefarious allegations which it has become his practice to hurl at law-abiding citizens and civic-minded organisations anytime he is challenged by unpalatable and embarrassing outcomes of his own dubious and devious creation.

The Minister was referring to the latest edition of false and malicious charges which Mr. Duke goes out of the way to hurl at the Peoples National Movement (PNM) as night follows the day and in particular at herself, on this occasion, in the face of the very incriminating judgment handed down against him by the courts in which he has been given specific deadlines to put the union's financial, democratic and constitutional houses in order.

In his spurious, farfetched and unfounded accusations levelled at Senator the Honourable Jennifer Baptiste Primus and the Ministry, Mr. Duke has, by implication, cast unkind and unfair aspersions at the staff of the Ministry of Labour which he alleges have **"failed to send any single auditor"** to audit the accounts of the union. Mr. Duke was also reported as having said the PSA has been ready and willing to audit its accounts and the lack of auditing since 2014 was not its fault **"The books are there. The reason it's all at once (now), there was a time the Ministry of Labour failed to send any single auditor. They didn't send any," he said.**

The Minister wishes to refute these derogatory allegations categorically. All of Trinidad and Tobago knows that whenever it serves his purpose, Mr. Duke feigns forgetting very readily and is quick to become a stranger to the truth to the extent that he is prepared to perpetuate a concoction of lies and untruth to cover up for his innate weaknesses, shortcomings and lack of decorum.

The Minister wishes to remind Mr. Duke that auditors were appointed to review the financial statements of the PSA on the following occasions:

- 19th March 2016 to audit the statement of 2015
- 10th February 2017 to audit the statement of 2016
- 29th January 2018 to audit the statement of 2017
- 14th January 2019 to audit the statement of 2018

Yes, Mr. Duke, the records are truly there. I refer to the Ministry's records. Contrary to your allegations, they show that the last audited statement submitted to the Ministry by the PSA was for the year 2014 and this was received by the Ministry on August 13, 2019, five (5) years late.



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Lest Mr. Duke continues to feign forgetfulness, let me remind him, that the Ministry held a meeting with him and his team on Friday, April 13th 2018 at the Ministry's Head Office to discuss matters relative to the Audited Financial Statements for the years 2014 to 2017. This is in keeping with the Trade Union Act. At that meeting, he gave the undertaking to work with the Ministry to have the PSA's books audited by the appointed auditors. However, he has never honoured this undertaking.

The Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development continues to stand ready to have the PSA's Statements of Accounts appropriately audited in accordance with the provisions of the Trade Unions Act and welcomes any legitimate initiative which may be taken by its officers and members to call upon Mr. Duke to have this situation addressed. It's all in his hands.

All that is required is for Mr. Duke to be honest and truthful towards himself and his membership and save the PSA from the plethora of negative publicity and downright embarrassment which, through no fault of its members, the PSA is being subjected to.

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