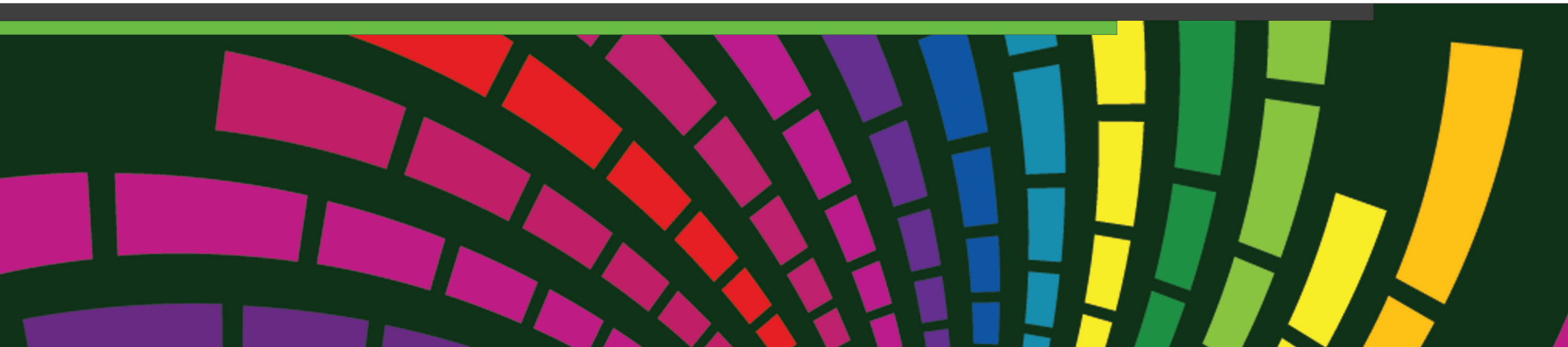




**Government of the
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**

RATIONALE FOR POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR MULTICULTURALISM



RATIONALE FOR POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR MULTICULTURALISM

BACKGROUND

Creation of the Ministry of the Arts and Multiculturalism

In her Indian Arrival Day Message in 2010, the Prime Minister the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar announced the change in the name of the Ministry of Arts and Culture to the Ministry of the Arts and Multiculturalism (see Appendix I). Cabinet has since mandated that the Ministry develop a Policy Framework for Multiculturalism. To this end the Ministry has conducted two stakeholder consultations:

1. **Towards a Multiculturalism Policy, Wednesday, October 13th, 2010, Centre of Excellence, Macoya**
2. **2nd Symposium Towards a Multiculturalism Policy Framework: A Focus on the Creative Arts, Friday 4th February, 2011, Crowne Plaza, Port-of-Spain**
3. **3rd Symposium Towards a Multiculturalism Policy Framework, 23rd March, 2011, Rovanel's Resort, Crown Point, Tobago**

These symposia featured contributions from policy makers and academics from the national, regional and international arenas and from members of the local artistic community. More than six hundred people participated in these events.

Pre-Existing Calls for Multiculturalism

Local Calls for a platform for Multiculturalism have traditionally revolved around perceived inequity in distribution of state resources amongst disparate ethnic groups in Trinidad and Tobago. This call has been most popular amongst the Hindu artistic and cultural fraternity as evidenced by the Maha Sabha's request that the Ministry of Culture be labelled the Ministry of Multiculturalism (see Appendix II). These calls seem to be premised on two assumptions:

1. **The term 'Culture' signifies manifestations that are defined as afrocentric i.e. Calypso, Steelpan, and Limbo.**
2. **The Ministry with responsibility for Culture traditionally concentrates resources (financial, training, productions etc) on these African expressions of culture.**

The 'multi' in Multiculturalism is seen as acknowledging that there are other 'cultures' that need to be treated with some level of equity. These calls usually accompany additional demands that the same exact treatment be meted out to stakeholders e.g. the same amount of money be granted to public holidays like Emancipation and Indian Arrival Day. Consequently, our movement towards understanding multiculturalism has been driven by perceived inequities in the distribution of state resources in the Cultural Sector.

International Experience in Implementation of Multicultural Policy

Foreign models in Multiculturalism revolve around the accommodation of minorities who are usually indigenous peoples or incoming migrants. The genesis of multicultural policymaking is usually located in the 1960s when the Anglophone world of the Global North began to treat with integration and the cultural presence of large populations of migrants originally brought into their countries as labourers. The concern here was the degree of integration to be afforded to immigrants and their offspring, and human rights and discrimination issues. Multiculturalism was often resorted to as a means to resolve civil unrest like riots that were seen as a reaction of minorities to discriminatory practices that they endured.

Previous statements on the efficacy of Multiculturalism as a policy initiative by those charged with its implementation must be taken into account:

1. **Honourable Angela Merkel, Chancellor, Germany** has stated that the concept that different cultures can live happily side by side does not work. 'This (multicultural) approach has failed, utterly failed'. While she continues to embrace the influx of immigrants, she is sounding the failure of a policy of the maintenance of separate cultural identities within the German state at the expense of a national German identity.
2. **Honourable David Cameron, Prime Minister, United Kingdom** has said "Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We've failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We've even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values". While Cameron links multiculturalism to the rise of Islamic extremism in the UK, and this may prove untenable for Trinidad and Tobago, the trade-off he implies between patriotism, nationalism and disparate cultural identities cannot go unnoticed.

Other countries with a long history of policy implementation in this area include:

1. **Australia whose National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia has three main dimensions:**
 - a. Cultural Identity;
 - b. Social Justice;
 - c. Economic Efficiency.

They strongly reinforce that all Australians need an overriding commitment to Australia and confer obligations related to tolerance of free speech rights of others of different views.

2. **Canada whose Canadian Multiculturalism Act has four pillars:**

- a. The need to respect diversity;
- b. The need to also promote integration by having newcomers learn French or English;
- c. The need to participate in cross-cultural exchanges;
- d. The need to engage in mainstream institutions.

Multiculturalism is positioned as a demographic reality and developmental resource for these countries. However, the perception that these policies have conferred differential rights, entitlements and obligations to those within a national space is now being linked to decreased national cohesion by some in these states. While Multiculturalism as a policy differs from country to country, it is important to take stock of the potential impact the promotion of a concept of different cultures and peoples can have on the development of a unified national people and populace working towards interculturality.

All these countries engage in the balance between support for separate cultural identities and national cohesiveness. There is so much debate in the policy, artistic and academic circles on this issue that its importance must be taken into consideration in the creation of a Multiculturalism policy framework for Trinidad and Tobago.

Proceeds from the Symposia

General findings have been as follows:

Symposium I

Multiculturalism as articulated by the nations that pioneered multicultural policy is not directly applicable to Trinidad and Tobago. Consequently, we must seek to develop our own approach to Multiculturalism and not mimic what these nations have

done. We must also be sure to include relevant legislation and supporting policies with the Multiculturalism Policy Framework. Support for the artist and cultural worker and the creation of a fertile environment in which various artforms can flourish is also an important consideration that must not be overlooked in this process.

Symposium II

The success of Trinidad and Tobago in terms of racial diversity and social harmony was underscored by several contributors. Complaints and questions were raised however in relation to resource allocation across disparate artforms and cultural practices, especially in light of what was seen as abundant emphasis on the performing arts (especially music) as opposed to other components of the Cultural Sector. The state needs to be mindful of the policy environment that relates to effective design and implementation of policy in the Cultural Sector. Cultural policy must pursue appropriate blending of initiatives across Ministries with responsibility for Culture, Education, Trade, Business Development, Communications and Tourism amongst others.

The majority of participants in the Symposia advocated for proper, equitable treatment of the arts in all its diversity inclusive of ethnicity and genre. Some in lesser numbers advocated for the spreading of the ambit of Multiculturalism beyond the Cultural Sector to treat with human rights and equity issues in the wider national community. This view remained in the minority with most of the presenters and members of the public advocating greater recognition of and support for a more diverse collection of artforms. Key recommendations coming out of the two symposia are at **Appendix III**.

MANDATE

The Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

The Honourable Prime Minister has clearly demarcated the focus of Multiculturalism on greater equity in the distribution of state resources in the Cultural Sector. In renaming the Ministry with

responsibility for Culture, she said:

“...the Ministry of Arts and Culture will be redesigned to become the Ministry of the Arts and Multiculturalism in order to give greater voice to the diverse cultural expressions of our common desires for individual and national identity. There will be a realignment of policies including resource allocation, to allow for a more equitable recognition and fulfilment of the needs of the diverse proponents of our culture’.

The Honourable Winston Peters, Minister of the Arts and Multiculturalism

The Honourable Minister of the Arts and Multiculturalism has clearly indicated the basic structure within which Multiculturalism is to function. The policy framework will include Arts and Heritage. Multiculturalism will be the overarching policy whose objectives include the fostering of inclusion, equitable resource distribution, and the celebration of cultural diversity. The Cultural Policy and the Policy on Grants and Subventions will emanate from the Multiculturalism Policy.

Public Consultation Process

The most universal recommendations emerging from the two symposia were to:

1. Devise our own Multiculturalism Policy.
2. Keep arts and Multiculturalism distinct but related as they operate within a creative ecosystem.
3. Multiculturalism implies broad appreciation of all types of artforms and heritage.
4. Avoid the prescriptive approach used by the major countries and choose a ‘bottom up’ approach.
5. Recognise that the country does have a long history of racial harmony that must be respected and preserved.
6. Understand the core values of the policies (equity and diversity) as espoused in a multicultural framework must run through every aspect of arts and cultural industry policy framework.

PRIMARY ISSUES FOR POLICY DESIGN

A. Nationalism and Diversity

1. Multiculturalism must not be so positioned as to undermine national identity and cohesion. This issue continues to rear its head in countries that are implementing such policies.
2. Cultural forms are essentially dynamic but can be pigeonholed into narrow ethnic paradigms. These manifestations do not however, exist only on one plane. As afrocentric as Carnival may be to some, none can deny that large portions of our people of all walks of life participate in the annual parade and are artists in the festival. Many people of multiple ethnicities also participate in the festival as non-dedicated service providers of items such as tents, chairs, light and sound systems and transportation. The Carnival is also inherently multicultural because it is a conglomeration of European beliefs (e.g. Catholicism), African retentions (i.e. traditional Masquerade) and contemporary innovations emanating from a multiplicity of ethnicities (Calypso and Steelpan from the African community, and Chutney from the Indian society) amongst other things. Defining cultural forms that have transcended any particular ethnic enclave as the primary manifestation of one ethnic group may undermine the conceptualisation of a national culture to which all can feel a sense of belonging and participation and undermine any common ground the wide spread practise of these forms has created. It can be said that if Carnival is not national, then neither is Roti, Hoosay and Parang.

Ramifications: The use of ethnicity as the primary identifier of culture at the expense of any signifying national cultural form that appeals to all our citizens can lead to escalation of ethnic intolerance in the nation because of the elimination of important common ground established by cultural forms in which all participate. Public policy must take into account a holistic appreciation of the value of our various cultural forms. All citizens of Trinidad and Tobago are to be encouraged to identify with the cultural manifestation of all Trinidadians and Tobagonians in the name of a national culture. Celebration of diversity is also about the promotion of the right to choose. Fortunately, the populace

is far advanced in this regard. This level of advancement must not be retarded in any way by any state policy.

B. Type of Resources Allocated

1. The future position on resource allocation cannot afford to be constricted entirely to grant funding as the Ministry with responsibility for Culture has much more than grants and subventions under its purview.

Ramifications: Trinidad and Tobago State activity in the Cultural Sector usually involves the following activities:

1. Technical support
2. Financial support
3. Developmental programmes and projects e.g. Training programmes
4. Collaborative arrangements with stakeholders
5. Development of policy and procedures to support growth
6. Representation in products created by the Ministry e.g. production of shows
7. Conferring of recognition e.g. giving of national awards and the declaration of public holidays
8. Creation of venues and institutions e.g. Queen's Hall and the National Steel Symphony Orchestra

It is therefore necessary that the general public is fully aware of all state contribution to the sector and where the state deems it necessary to allocate more funding to an area of the art or culture managed by the state rather than by an NGO the state must not only reserve the right but inform the public.

C. Finite Resources

1. In an environment where so many insist that the Ministry underwrite their projects either in full or in large measure, the Ministry simply does not have the resources to meet every one's demand and must by necessity choose.
2. It is accurate to say that specific agencies and individuals do receive more than others.

Ramifications: The Ministry will still be unable to please everyone requesting financial assistance after a more equitable disbursement of funds is made because demand far outstrips supply. In the interest of continued equitable sharing of the limited resources at our disposal it is important to secure increases for other underserved artforms as opposed to giving more to those who presently receive more than others. Consequently, criteria must include history of grant disbursement to subsectors and successful applicants.

D. Methodology for Grants and Subventions

1. Fairness and Confidence: This remains a major issue in resource allocation for many in the sector despite recent changes in government.

Ramifications: It is best dealt with via

- a. Criteria: This must be universally applied and seen to be applied.
- b. Participation: Involvement of artists and culture sector stakeholders in the decision making process via consultation on criteria for grants for grants and subventions.

2. Transparency: Many in the sector perceive that people receive grants on the basis of nepotism.

Ramifications: Greater transparency can best militate against this impression and is most properly facilitated by

- a. Publication of criteria for disbursement of funds
- b. Periodic publication of records of disbursement

E. Equity

Trinidad & Tobago's Heritage is considerably rich and encompasses more than an African and an Indian preserve. Factors impacting on the attainment of equity include:

1. Ethnicity (e.g. religion {Christianity [including Baptist, Catholic, Anglican, Born-Again], Orisha, Hindu, Muslim, Rastafarianism etc.}, race {African, Indian, Chinese, Trini-White, Other}): Trinidad and Tobago is at an advanced stage in development in terms of the accommodation

of multiple ethnic groups, their level of harmony and camaraderie and state support for same. Issues of inequity are due largely to problems with grants (e.g. transparency, criteria), that enhance perception of unfairness. It is notable that stakeholders from the two largest ethnic groups and across numerous artforms complain of a lack of state resources going their way. For example, one Calypso tent used the Freedom of Information Act to seek information on why another tent received more financial support than they did.

Ramifications: The issue of fairness is more than about race or colour as inefficiencies in the disbursement of state funds impact on everyone.

2. Artforms (e.g. literary, visual, media, design and performing {dance, drama, music}): There is inequity in project and programme focus across artforms and genres: music gets the majority of state attention, followed by the other performing arts. Visual arts and design and the literary arts get the least. Focus on folk and local artforms has also left artists in other genres underserved.

Ramifications: This particular focus is quite understandable as a response to hegemonic prevalence of foreign artforms in our media but must now be modified so as to still provide substantial support to artists of all kinds, hence the importance of a meritocratic system of support for artists. The issue is the promotion and development of all local artforms and artists.

3. Geography (e.g. Tobago, Central, South Trinidad, North Trinidad, and Western Peninsula etc.): Geography is also a consideration: the coastal areas and the south eastern quadrants are underserved. Project implementation is usually at Western East-West Corridor, Central i.e. Chaguanas, San Fernando. While these represent major centres of population and artistic and cultural activity, areas like the north coast go underserved.

Ramifications: In the interest of attaining a greater equity of resource distribution, training, programmes, performances and funds need to be directed to areas of the country that have not received as much attention as our major population centres.

4. Gender: Gender mainstreaming is best applied throughout the entire state sector and, consequently, is also applicable to the Cultural Sector and its line Ministry.

Ramifications: Gender needs to be factored into the distribution of state resources.

5. Age (Children, youth [dancehall & hip hop], Teenager, Adult [Calyпсо], Senior Citizen): there are strong intra generational identities and cultural practices that are shared by these groupings.

Ramifications: Policy implementation must take into account the nurturing of newer manifestations championed by the younger generation and the support and preservation of older forms championed by the senior members of society.

F. Asymmetrical Structure of the Cultural Sector

1. The legacy of our cultural and artistic diversity means that Indians and Africans do not have the same mirror image of cultural manifestations any more than do Chinese and Syrians. There are also other angles in terms of differences in tastes within these ethnic groups and cultural manifestations that have crossed over from one ethnic group into another. Even where components are similar, they are never the same.
2. Because many of these manifestations have different objectives, they also have different needs. Some festivals, for instance, are thoroughly commercialised, whilst others are of a spiritual nature. Some artforms are more capital intensive than others, as is the case with film when compared to literature.

Ramifications: Giving to each what the other receives may undermine optimum development. We may need to pursue giving to each what is necessary to facilitate their individual optimal development.

APPENDICES

- I. Indian Arrival Day Message 2010 by Prime Minister the Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar
- II. "Look to Canada for help" by Sat Maharaj, June 3rd, 2010, Guardian Newspapers

- III. Key Recommendations from Symposia conducted by the Ministry of the Arts and Multiculturalism towards a Policy Framework on Multiculturalism

APPENDIX I

Indian Arrival Day Message 2010 by Prime Minister the Hon. Kamla Persad-Bissessar

Fellow citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, it gives me great pleasure to extend greetings to the entire Nation on the 165th Anniversary of the Arrival of our East Indian forefathers to these shores. More than just a day of remembrance, it is a day when we must give thanks to God, and celebrate the human spirit's triumph over seemingly insurmountable odds, to build a legacy of strength, discipline and tolerance that has helped make us what we all are today as a nation.

Indeed my brothers and sisters, the journey of our East Indian forebears was long and arduous, and didn't come cheaply. It took patience, vision, belief and a spirit of sacrifice to begin a new life in a strange land, with the hope that one day, their offspring would reap the rewards of that sojourn.

And while the East Indian experience was unique in its own way, as would have been for those who made their life's journey to these shores from Africa, China, Europe and the farthest reaches of the globe, there were many things that were common to all... but most important among these was a desire to enjoy life's greatest freedoms without fear, and in an atmosphere of peace, prosperity and harmony.

And this more than anything else has been the legacy that has found its greatest expression in our people, from all walks of life - in our music, our food, our dance, the way we interact with each other...It's a journey that has taken us all centuries to arrive at, and still the journey continues as we steadily improve the means by which we travel to the destination of our Nationhood.

For this reason the Ministry of Arts and Culture will be redesigned to become the Ministry of the Arts and Multiculturalism in order to give greater voice to the diverse cultural expressions of our common desires for individual and national identity.

There will be a realignment of policies including resource allocation, to allow for a more equitable recognition and fulfilment of the needs of the diverse proponents of our culture.

Our celebration of days such as this must be more than just a formality, but an active reaffirmation of this Government's commitment to ensure that every creed and race finds an equal place in this land of ours.

To you all I wish a very happy, peaceful and enjoyable Indian Arrival Day.

May God bless us all.

APPENDIX II

Look to Canada for help
By Sat Maharaj
Jun 03, 2010 – guardian.co.tt

For a number of years the Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha has been advocating that the Ministry of Culture be renamed the Ministry of Multiculturalism with all the attendant policy changes. On May 28, at the SDMS Indian Arrival Day dinner at the Centre of Excellence, Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar announced that she heard the Maha Sabha's call and that the Ministry of Arts and Culture would be renamed the Ministry of Arts and Multiculturalism. We have always advocated the culture of a country in the spontaneous expressions of the people and that the State has no business in culture except as a facilitator. The State must not decide which of the various cultures of our land should receive enhanced funding and which shouldn't. Political affiliation and support must not be the measure of state support.

The Maha Sabha's call to restructure the ministry is a result of the bias and unequal treatment which the PNM administration abused the Ministry of Culture. In fact this abuse was highlighted months before the 2010 general election when it was revealed that almost \$50 million was distributed by the Ministry of Culture to its family and friends under the guise of secret scholarships. For too long culture and in particular the funding of culture by the State has been used as a political weapon against all those who did not vote for the PNM. This new ministry offers the promise of great equity in the allocation of its resources.

<http://www.trinidadandtobagonews.com/blog/?p=3621#more-3621>

APPENDIX III

Key Recommendations from Symposia conducted by the Ministry of the Arts and Multiculturalism towards a Policy Framework on Multiculturalism

- Devise our own Multiculturalism Policy.
- Multiculturalism implies broad appreciation of all types of artforms and heritage.
- Focus on the support of excellence in all types of artforms and genres of art irrespective of whether or not they originate in the country or not.
- Avoid the prescriptive approach used by the major countries and choose a 'bottom up' approach.
- Place a premium on supporting artistic expression.
- The country does have a long history of racial harmony that must be respected and preserved.
- Pay heed to international standard setting instruments like the United Nations International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the Declaration of the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic Religious and Linguistic Minorities and the UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity.
- Ensure that proper legislative and administrative arrangements are put in place to enforce any policies that are created.
- Commissions of Human Rights or Equal Opportunity are the best way to treat with inequities posed by political systems that are based on the distribution of resources to those who can best influence the political process.
- Support must be generated for integration and crossover projects and the deliberate promotion of a "douglarization" of culture so as not to trap ourselves in structures that colonialism defined.
- The State must not deliberately manipulate cultural forms but provide platforms for works that are already proceeding apace.
- Support for all views of knowledge and values with the appreciation that contestation is inevitable and is not naturally destructive.
- Honour and recognise the work of those artists and

communities who have contributed to our national development through artistic and cultural endeavours.

- Keep the arts and Multiculturalism distinct but related as they operate within a creative ecosystem.
- The role of the state means moving among and between the various sectors and policy areas to ensure that:
 - The connections between the audiences and artists are strong,
 - The balance points between production and consumption is even,
 - That the preservation of the core creative arts is not done at the expense of the development of the wider creative industries, or
 - That the instrumental impetus for the cultural policy regime does not overtake the recognition of the intrinsic value of the arts.
- Effective policy design needs convergence of all related areas of the cultural sector (Community Development, Education and Training, Trade and Industry, Economics and Finance, Media and Broadcast, Tourism and Urban Development).
- Core values of policies - equity and diversity as espoused in a multicultural framework must run through every aspect of the arts and cultural industry policy framework.
- Build in evaluative mechanisms that constantly keep agents and institutions accountable to core values of policies.
- There is an architecture that must accompany the development of the arts and cultural industry sector. Supporting architecture must treat with:
 - Institutions of Support
 - Fiscal Incentives
 - Regulatory and Legal Framework
 - Human Resource Development and Training
 - Trade and Promotion
 - Venue and Audience Development
 - Research and Innovation
 - Media and Broadcast

- An annual report to set benchmarks and measure progress in the sector should be developed.
- Multiculturalism cannot be confined to the Cultural Sector.
- In creating a Multiculturalism Policy Framework, focus needs to be placed on an equitable system of distribution of resources inclusive of education, advertising and funding of competitions by the state and corporate sector.

