

VISION: *To be the provider of choice for “out-of-court” dispute resolution services based on the highest standards of integrity, trust and service excellence*

Chairman’s Report:

“Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skilful execution.” William A. Foster

I’ve chosen the above quote as the theme for this year’s Annual Report as it so aptly describes the ongoing transformation of the Dispute Resolution Centre founded some 17 years ago. The Centre continues to strive towards quality and service excellence and has been uncompromising in creating the first private commercial Mediation Agency to be approved by the Mediation Board of Trinidad and Tobago. As a result of this commitment to service excellence, our Executive Director and staff regularly receive positive feedback from our customers and clients.

The Centre boasts a cadre of certified, experienced mediators and arbitrators from a wide range of backgrounds and expertise. In 2013, the Centre transformed its facilities into a space more suitable for mediations and which set the right tone. It is both peaceful and welcoming. This transformation has been well received and we are grateful to Director Stephanie Daly S.C. for so generously beautifying our offices with paintings which she acquired over the years.

Mediations & Arbitrations:

I am pleased to report that these collective and deliberate efforts have not gone unnoticed and have set the overall standard and direction for commercial mediations locally. The Centre was thrilled when it was awarded, for a second time, the Court Annexed Mediation Project. In this project 200 Civil High Court matters will be referred to the Centre for mediation. The project will run for one year and is expected to be completed by March 2014. It is being fully subsidised by the Judiciary and mediations are being facilitated in Port of Spain, San Fernando and Tobago.

The Centre congratulates Chief Justice Ivor Archie for making this bold and progressive move towards the quicker resolution of cases. The Centre also recognises the high powered ADR Project Committee ably led by Chairman Mr. Justice Andre des Vignes and including key judicial officers Mr. Justice Vasheist Kokaram, Madam Justice Charmaine Pemberton and Assistant Registrar Shabiki Cazabon.

The Centre has been working closely with this team to execute the Court Annexed project successfully on behalf of the Judiciary and, by the close of 2013, completed 80 matters with a settlement rate of 75% and a customer satisfaction rating of over 90% with regard to our mediators, our service and our facilities. We are very proud of these results.

It should be noted that the Centre also facilitates walk-in mediations and arbitrations and has a roster of over 30 local, regional and international mediators and arbitrators with specialisations in areas such as corporate,

commercial and contractual disputes, insurance claims, construction, energy, negligence, employer liability, defamation, land and estate disputes.

The Centre acknowledges the mediators and arbitrators affiliated with the Centre and thanks them for the professional and ethical manner in which they have conducted their -proceedings. By so doing, they have raised the bar for the Centre and for ADR generally. We consider both essential to transforming our society.

Training:

The Centre is the premier provider of a range of dispute resolution training and, in 2013, facilitated 19 public and in-house workshops with 641 persons in attendance. We offer over 50 short courses and our trainers include conflict resolution specialists and trainers certified in Civil, Commercial and Family mediation, legal experts, psychologists and clinical therapists, medical doctors, human resource and industrial relations specialists, as well as experts in business, finance, strategy, innovation and organisational development. With such a wide array of skills from which to draw, the Centre continues to offer fresh and relevant programmes.

I am pleased to advise that the Centre’s Mediation programme is accredited by the Mediation Board of Trinidad and Tobago and, upon successful completion of the Centre’s programmes, participants may apply to the Mediation Board for certification, following which they may be considered to serve on the Centre’s multiple rosters.

In 2013, the Centre partnered with the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (UK) to facilitate the first local CI Arb International Commercial Arbitration programme. This intense training offered an accelerated route to Fellowship and included peer interviews. The Centre worked directly with the Institute’s regional branch in Jamaica and we wish to thank Mr. John Bassie, the regional Chairman of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. The Centre also acknowledges the invaluable efforts of the Honourable Madam Justice Charmaine Pemberton in promoting this programme. Participants of this course included Chief Justice Ivor Archie, Court of Appeal and High Court judges, registrars, senior counsels and specialist attorneys from Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean.

Further, the faculty of international trainers for the CI Arb programme reported that having facilitated the programme throughout North America, Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean they had never been so impressed by the efficiency of a hosting body. I wish to thank the staff for their outstanding delivery and support for this initiative.

Our Team

As we close another year, I wish to acknowledge and thank the Board of Directors of the Dispute Resolution Centre for their dedication and loyalty to the Centre. They each bring a level of professional expertise, vision and strategy, enthusiasm and, most of all, integrity, which is second to none. As Chairman, I thank the Board for its unwavering support over the years; I am both proud and humbled to be associated with such an esteemed Board including:

- Mr. Dennis Gurley, S.C. Vice Chairman
- Mr. Kenneth Dalip Director
- Mrs. Stephanie Daly, S.C. Director
- Ms. Catherine Kumar Director
- Ms. Yukmai Marsang Director
- Mr. Baliram Sawh Director

I also wish to thank team Dispute Resolution Centre led by Executive Director Beverly Britain. She has mentored and grown a team of Officers including Candy Le Platte, Cadence Benjamin and Nigel George who have excelled in their areas of responsibility. Newer additions to the Centre's family include Michelle Pierre, Christiane Hope, Aurelia Williams and Melissa Shortt, who was seconded for the one year court project. This team has proven to be strong, competent, resilient and solution-orientated. Their growth and dedication to the Centre has been unquestionable and I speak on behalf of the entire Board when I say it is a delight working with this young and vibrant team.

Congratulations once again to our Board and Staff and to our Mediators and Arbitrators. We have proven that Quality is never an accident, but it is work that is well planned, purposeful and diligently performed.