THE STRUCTURE
OF
GOVERNMENT
Objectives

• describe the structure of government in Trinidad and Tobago: Central government, local government, THA
• identify and explain the functions of the different arms of government
• outline the functions of the Tobago House of Authority
What is government?

- **Government** is the way in which a nation, country, group or organisation is run.

- **The Government** consists of a body of individuals with the power and authority to control and direct the affairs of a society.
Who does the government represent?

• The government rules on behalf of society.
• “Government of the people, by the people, for the people”
• How should this guide their policies?
• Their policies should:
  – Benefit society as a whole
  – Protect individual rights
What did the previous pictures tell you about the structure of the government?
The Structure of Government

**EXECUTIVE**
- Prime Minister
- Cabinet

**LEGISLATURE**
- Makes laws
- Amends laws
- Repeals laws
- President
- Senate
- House of Representatives

**JUDICIARY**
- Courts
- Police

Sets policy
Makes decisions

What do you notice about the structure?
The SEPARATION OF POWERS

Why do you think this is necessary?
Interprets and enforces laws
T&T has three levels of government:

1. Central government – elections every 5 years

2. Local government (municipal government) – elections every 3 years

3. The Tobago House of Assembly (THA) – elections every 4 years
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
Functions of the Central Government:

- Rule the country/set policy (leadership)
- Make, amend and repeal laws
- Protect citizens’ rights and maintain law and order
- Collect taxes to pay for social services such as health, education, transportation, police, fire protection etc and build infrastructure
- Prepare the national budget
- Create employment
- Negotiate trade agreements
Central Government:
3 arms or branches

1. Executive
2. Legislature
3. Judiciary

Separation of Powers:
The division of the functions of government into three separate arms so that no one person or group of persons has absolute power. Each arm acts as a check or balance on the powers of the others.
The Structure of Government: CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

1. Executive
   - Prime Minister & Cabinet
     - Set policy
     - Make decisions
     - Lead/rule the country

2. Legislature

3. Judiciary
The Structure of Government: CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

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3. Judiciary
   - Courts and the Police Service
     - Interpret and enforce the law
The Structure of Government: CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The **Separation of Powers**: the division of the functions of government into three separate arms so that no one person or group of persons has absolute power. Each arm acts as a check or balance on the powers of the others.

1. **Executive**
   - Prime Minister & Cabinet
     - Set policy
     - Make decisions
     - Lead/rule the country

2. **Legislature**
   - President & Parliament
     - Make laws
     - Amend laws
     - Repeal laws

3. **Judiciary**
   - Courts and the Police Service
     - Interpret and enforce the law
A Bicameral Legislature consists of two houses or groups of people that meet to make, amend and repeal laws.
The Legislature or Parliament

The President of the Republic

Senate

Head: President of the Senate

31 senators
Appointed \textit{not} elected
16 government senators
(chosen by the Prime Minister)
9 independent senators
(chosen by the President)
6 opposition senators
(chosen by Leader of the Opposition)

House of Representatives

Head: Speaker of the House of Representatives

41 Members of Parliament (MPs)
Elected into office in general elections held every 5 years
41 constituencies in T&T:
\begin{itemize}
  \item 39 in Trinidad
  \item 2 in Tobago
\end{itemize}
REMEMBER:

- The House of Representatives is made up of **elected members** who represent the citizens of the country in government.

- A **bicameral legislature** has **two** houses. In T&T these are the Senate (Upper House) and the House of Representatives (Lower House).

- A **unicameral legislature** has **one** house e.g. Guyana.

- The **constitution** is a written document which limits the power of the representatives and sets out how the country is to be governed and how laws are to be made.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
➢ 2 Cities (POS, San Fernando)
➢ 3 Boroughs (Arima, Chaguanas, Point Fortin)
➢ 9 Regional Corporations
   1) Couva/Tabaquite/Talparo Regional Corp.
   2) Diego Martin Regional Corporation
   3) Penal-Debe Regional Corporation
   4) Princes Town Regional Corporation
   5) Rio Claro-Mayaro Regional Corporation
   6) Sangre Grande Regional Corporation
   7) Siparia Regional Corporation
   8) San Juan-Laventille Regional Corporation
   9) Tunapuna-Piarco Regional Corporation
➢ The Tobago House of Assembly
Local Government elections are held every 3 years in order to elect councillors to Regional Corporations to manage the affairs of each region.
Functions of local government

1. Development, maintenance and repair of roads, bridges, pedestrian paths (sidewalks/pavements) and road signs
2. Collection and disposal of garbage
3. Development and maintenance of markets, abattoirs, burial grounds, cremation facilities, recreational and other public facilities (public toilets, community centres, playgrounds, carparks etc)
4. Drainage – clearing and maintenance of rivers, drains etc.
5. Providing community services such as bus shelters, and truck-borne water supply.
6. Authorising and approving plans for the erection of buildings and land development activities in accordance with national laws
Financing of local government

Apart from an annual allocation from Central Government, local government bodies raise money from the following sources:

• Rental of market stalls
• Rates for cleaning cesspits
• Operation of carparks
• Property taxes (house and land tax)
• Fees for granting bar licences
• Fees for processing of building plans
THE TOBAGO HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
Structure of the THA

House of Assembly

Executive [Executive Council]
Chief Secretary

Legislative [Assembly Legislature]
Presiding Officer

Divisions
- Office of the Chief Secretary
- Community Development, Enterprise Development and Labour
- Education, Innovation and Energy
- Finance and the Economy
- Food Production and Fisheries
- Health, Wellness and Family Development
- Infrastructure, Quarries and the Environment
- Settlements, Urban Renewal and Public Utilities
- Sports and Youth Affairs
- Tourism, Culture and Transportation

Presiding Officer Clerk
THA composition:

- The Chief Secretary
- The Presiding Officer
- 12 Assemblymen (elected)
- 4 Councillors
- The Executive Council
- The minority leader

Chief Secretary of the THA: Ancil Dennis
Past Chief Secretaries - THA

Hochoy Charles

Orville London

Kelvin Charles
Functions of the THA

- Development and marketing of tourism
- Provision of health services
- Paying salaries of teachers and other public servants
- Development of sporting facilities
- Promotion of culture
- Control of marine resources and state lands
- Agricultural development

The THA receives finances from the Central Government to carry out its functions
THE ELECTORATE

• The electorate consists of those eligible to vote
• The electorate elects the government and expects it to perform efficiently
• If displeased, the electorate has the right and power to remove the government at a general election
• This right is enshrined in the constitution of democratic countries
• In Caribbean countries, general elections take place every 5 years
The CONSTITUTION

• Most independent countries have a WRITTEN constitution.

• A system of basic principles according to which a nation state or group is organised.

• The CONSTITUTION is a body of basic rules by which the people of a country agree to govern themselves.