

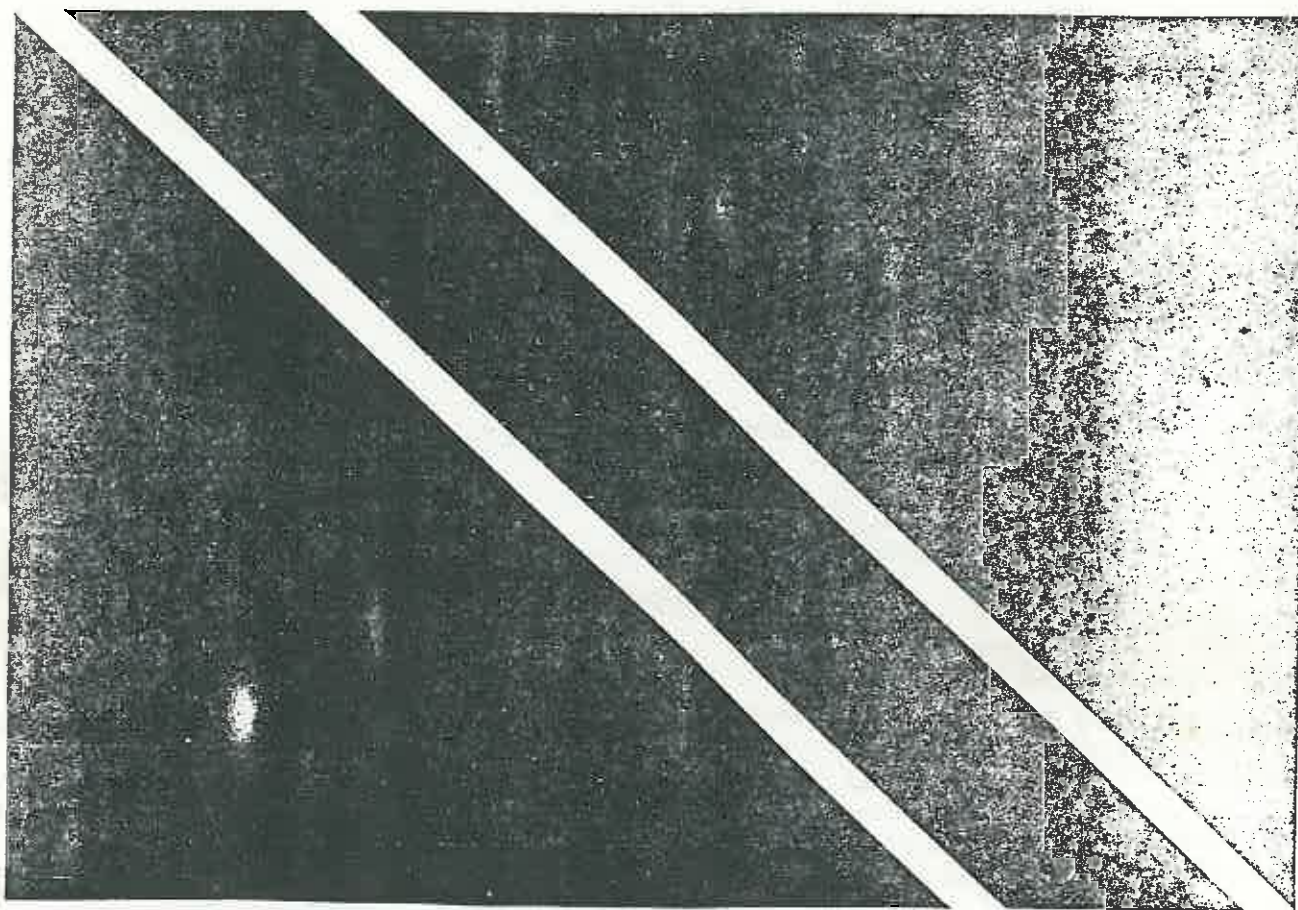
Country Report

HOUSING AND SETTLEMENTS in TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

SECOND UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON SETTLEMENTS

HABITAT II

Istanbul, TURKEY
June 3 - 14, 1996



HOUSING AND SETTLEMENTS in TRINIDAD and TOBAGO

for HABITAT II

ISTANBUL, TURKEY

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS USED

| | |
|-------|--|
| PEU | - Project Execution Unit of the Ministry of Housing and Settlements, Trinidad and To |
| NHA | - National Housing Authority |
| SILWC | - Sugar industry Labour Welfare Committee |
| IDB | - Inter-American Development Bank |
| PADCO | - Planning and Development Collaborative International Incorporated |
| GDP | - Gross Domestic Product |
| IMF | - International Monetary Fund |
| NGO | - Non-Governmental Organization |
| CBO | - Community Based Organization |
| EMA | - Environmental Management Act |
| URP | - Unemployment Relief Programme |
| URPA | - Urban and Regional Planning Act |
| CNIRD | - The Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development |
| FEEL | - The Foundation for the Enhancement and Enrichment of Life |



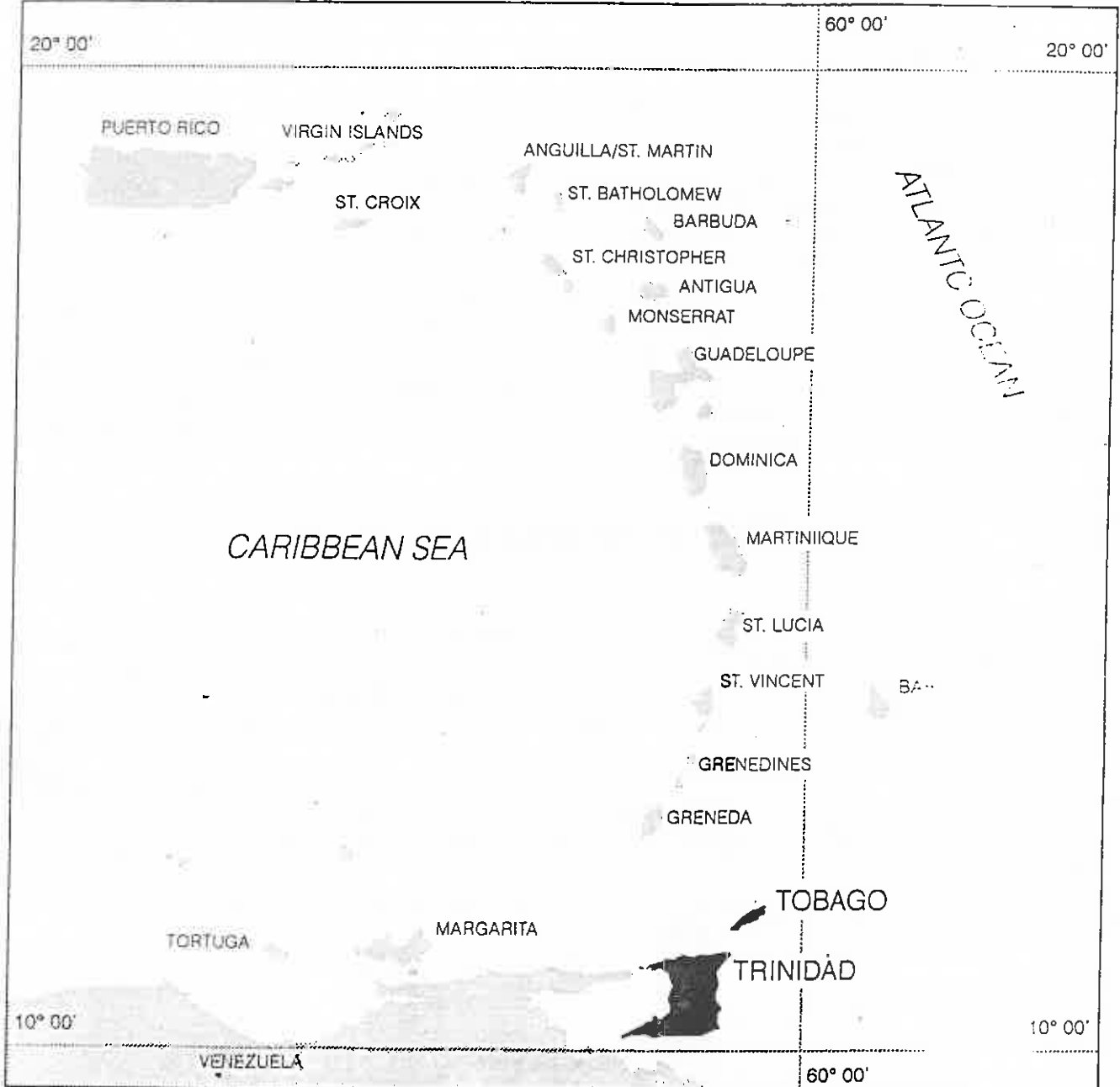
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MAP 1 - The Eastern Caribbean



1- INTRODUCTION

The Country Report was prepared through a collaborative effort of a wide cross section of the major actors in the shelter and settlements sector. The Report has been endorsed by the National Co-ordinating Committee whose membership was sanctioned by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. The Committee comprises representatives from both the Public and Private Sectors, Non-Governmental and Community Based Organizations and Professional and Service Organizations as follows:

The State/Public sector

- The Town and Country Planning Division/Ministry of Planning and Development.
- The Lands and Surveys Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Marine Resources.
- The Ministry of Works and Transport.
- The Ministry of Housing and Settlements.

The Private Sector

- The Joint Consultative Council on the Construction Industry.

The Financial Sector

Non-Governmental and Community Based Organizations

- The Caribbean Network of Integrated Rural Development (CNIRD.)
- The Foundation for the Enhancement and Enrichment of Life (FEEL.)
- Sou Sou Lands Limited.
- The Network of Non-Governmental Organization dealing with gender and related issues.

The National Co-ordinating Committee is expected to continue to function well beyond the conclusion of the HABITAT II Summit. In this regard, the work of the Committee would involve the monitoring and where required, active participation in implementing the National Plan of Action to the year 2000 by which time it is hoped that significant progress would have been achieved in the development of viable and cohesive human settlements.

2 - HISTORY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The twin-island state of Trinidad and Tobago is the most southerly of the Caribbean Island chain and is located between 10° 2' and 11° 21' latitude North, and 60° 29' and 61° 51' longitude West. Trinidad is only seven miles from Venezuela on the South American mainland (MAP 1). The country gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1962 and became a Republic within the Commonwealth in 1976.

Trinidad has an area of 4,828 km² (1864 sq. miles) and a population of approximately 1.2 million people. Tobago has an area of approximately 300 km² (116 sq. miles) and a population of about 48,600 people. The overall rate of population increase was approximately 1.0% per year between the census years 1980 to 1990.

The islands have a tropical climate with distinct dry and wet seasons. The average annual rainfall varies from 2,880mm to 1,200mm. The average daily temperature is approximately 29° C with a variance of some 5° throughout the year. The vegetation is categorized as tropical rain forest with a variety of indigenous species.

The twin island republic, unlike other Caribbean countries, is populated by a diverse cross-section of peoples derived from many backgrounds.

It is a country whose colonial past has known Spanish rule, during which the Land was settled by



French immigrants and worked by African slave labour and thereafter British rule, during which the Chinese and Portuguese and later East Indian indentured labour was introduced after Emancipation. At the time of Emancipation in 1834 the population was just over 50,000 persons.

In relative terms, Trinidad and Tobago is a new country. Over the past hundred years a significant percentage of the existing population immigrated into the country from neighbouring Caribbean Islands and beyond, because of the promise of economic opportunities first in sugar and cocoa and then in the petroleum industry.

Petroleum is now the most significant export and is therefore of immense importance to the economy. The country experienced large increases in levels of income during the oil boom years 1973-1983 and suffered traumatic decline in income with the subsequent collapse in oil prices.

The economy is to a large extent dominated by the energy sector which accounts for over 60% of the value of exports and averaged 25.6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the last 10 years. The economy was under a Structural Adjustment Programme by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after oil prices and crude oil production fell in the mid 1980's. This resulted in serious Balance of Payment problems for the Government.

However, following this structural adjustment programme and the rescheduling of the foreign debt, in 1992 the economy demonstrated positive signs of growth. At the end of 1995, GDP grew at 4.5% and net foreign reserves stood at US \$302.5 millions. Inflation was 5.3% and the unemployment rate dropped from 20% to 17.5%.

Foreign debt stood at US\$1905.0 millions with an estimated debt service ratio of 8.4% of GDP. (Source: *Review of the Economy 1995. Government of Trinidad and Tobago Publication*)

3 - PHYSICAL PLANNING

3.1 Current Legislation - The Town and Country Planning Act

The enactment of the Town and Country Planning Ordinance in 1969 pointed the way for a comprehensive physical planning policy for Trinidad and Tobago. Prior to 1969 control over land and building development was segmented. The Act of 1969 extended physical planning to the entire country and provided for preparation of development plans at the national, regional and local levels. The Act is now being revised.

3.2 National Physical Development Plan

A Background to Plan.

Pursuant to the Town and Country Planning Act a comprehensive approach to physical planning was initiated to bring about development in a co-ordinated and integrated manner.

This resulted in the preparation of the National Physical Development Plan which was approved by Parliament in 1984.

The plan was a broad strategic policy document which set out a physical planning framework to the year 2000.

B Development Strategy

The development strategy articulated in the National Physical Development Plan advocated a regional approach to development as an attempt to reduce the inequalities of the spatial imbalances in the distribution of resources and to encourage government's intervention in which desired social objectives were not being achieved.

The growth center strategy addressed these allocation problems by developing and expanding key towns in lagging and upward transitional regions in order to promote and accommodate growth.



Major features of the development proposals of the National Physical Development Plan included:

- i The pursuit of an overall national growth centre strategy in order to effect some degree of decentralization of activity outside of the Capital Region and redress the problems of regional imbalances.
- ii The development of a national system of settlements in which there was a defined hierarchy of centers, strong communication and activity linkages, and levels of services and facilities commensurate with populations and services required.
- iii The protection of air, water courses and coastal areas from pollution.
- iv The implementation of strong land use controls particularly with reference to agriculture and conservation areas:
 - a The most suitable agricultural lands were to be designated green belts for agricultural use;
 - b Areas critical and important for water catchment and recharge, forestry, soil conservation, drainage and for their landscape value were to be preserved under natural cover;
 - c The designation of National Parks.
- v. The institution of a comprehensive rural development programme in six selected depressed areas
- vi. The implementation of physical, social and economic measures for fuller employment creation and structural change in the economy.
- vii. The undertaking of a massive housing and construction programme functionally related to the distribution of growth centers, and employment areas.
- viii The phasing of major development undertakings where all the critical factors such as infrastructure, housing, etc. are brought together in concert at the right time.
- ix. The re-evaluation and rationalization of the administrative and organizational framework for planning and development to allow for integrated corporate management and programming and greater public participation in the development process.

This was the theory of the plan - the practical reality of the development has not entirely conformed with the plan.

With the change of government in November 1995, this plan is being reviewed on the basis of a new settlements policy

C Existing Land Management Initiatives

The Management of our land resources is achieved through a wide range of initiatives. The Town and Country Planning Division of the Ministry of Planning and Development is responsible through its Development Control function for ensuring that development is consistent with and in accordance with plans and existing policies. This function involves a range of administrative measures and legal devices which aim to minimize conflicts, maximize the efficient use of our land resources yet protect the public interest with respect to enjoyment of property. Several mechanisms are utilized in achieving this goal:-

- i Land Use Zoning - Through a system of zoning as articulated in local area plans, lands are identified for particular purposes most appropriate to their characteristics and in relation to each other.
- ii Environmental Impact Assessment - This planning mechanism is used to assess the extent to which elements of the environment will be altered by proposed development and to evaluate the adequacy of mitigating measures to minimise and/or reduce negative impacts of development.
- iii Development Standards - Thorough development control standards for site planning, building and engineering are applied to development proposals to achieve conformity with established policy, building codes and other regulations.



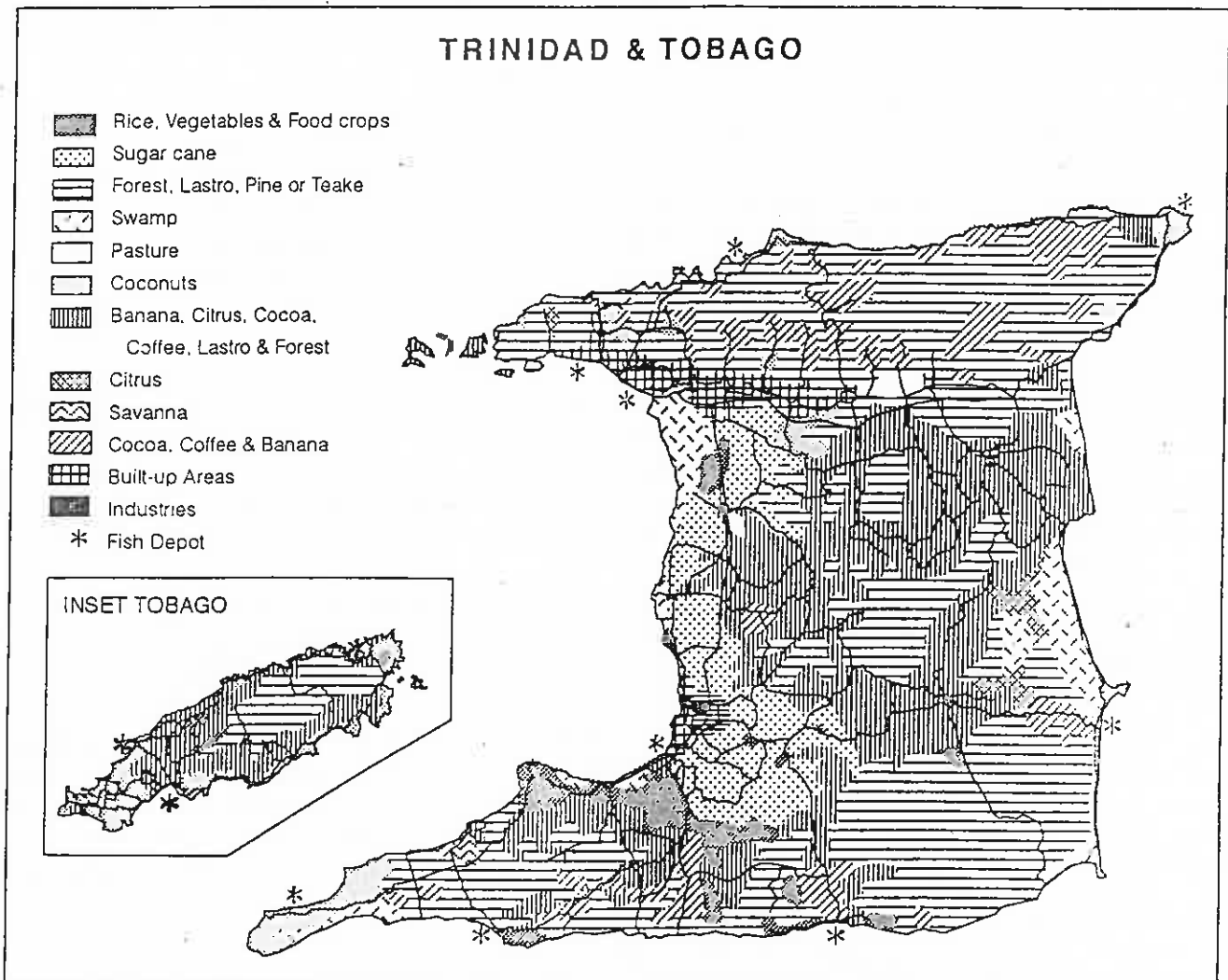
3.3 Land Use

The present pattern of land use indicates that over 59% of the total land area in Trinidad and Tobago is occupied by natural and secondary forests and swamps. Thirty-four (34%) of the land area is devoted to agriculture. About 9% of the land area contains built development, the heaviest concentration of population being found in two belts, one along the west coast of Trinidad and the other along the foothills of the Northern Range. (MAP 2 refers)

In 1990, 66.8% of the national population was concentrated in the Capital, Caroni and San Fernando Regions located within the highly populated northern and western belt of the county. Inter-regional, rural-urban, urban-peri-urban migration has resulted in approximately 55% of the total population of Trinidad and Tobago living in urban areas (1970-1989).

In the island of Tobago, urban development is concentrated in the south-western portion. Elsewhere urban settlements takes the form of ribbon development along the Windward Coast and pockets of dispersed settlement along the Leeward Coast.

MAP 2 - Existing land use



4 - HISTORICAL REVIEW OF HOUSING & SETTLEMENTS IN TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

4.1 Major Actors in the Sector

It can be said that in Trinidad and Tobago there are three (3) main contributors in the housing equation. These are as follows:

i Home Owners

These are the individuals who currently own property or have prospects of becoming home owners in the short-run.

In Trinidad and Tobago the people are home ownership oriented. This has led to an increase in house ownership from 65% in 1980 to 74% in 1990. Measured by world standards, Trinidad and Tobago ranks high among developing countries in home ownership.

A negative consequence to this high aspiration is the increased incidence of squatting. This was due to increased construction cost, high prices for land and the lengthy approval process.

Home ownership has also been affected by the reduction in real income and onerous policies of the financial sector.

ii Private Sector

Slow economic growth has impacted unfavourably on the private sector home-builders. As a result, there are very few developers involved in the home construction process.

While the overall need is 10,000 housing units per year, over the past decade large developers have contributed approximately 350 homes per year. Besides these developers, there are some small developers who are engaged in single unit construction on a demand basis.

Approximately, a quarter of the housing stock produced in the formal sector is attributed to the private sector production. The remaining three quarters of the formal sector is attributed to individual home owners, which use mainly small contractors.

iii The State

The Government has been the main enabler of housing development over the last two decades. It has also embarked on a housing delivery system through a National Settlements Programme, funded by both the Government of Trinidad and Tobago capital expenditure and within the last five years partly by international funding through the IDB. The Settlements Programme focuses on the facilitation of shelter production, delivery, finance, technical support, self-help and the regularization of squatters on State lands.

The housing programme is being implemented by two statutory bodies namely, the National Housing Authority (NHA), the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee (SILWC) and a specially established Project Execution Unit (PEU) of the Ministry of Housing and Settlements.

In 1962, the National Housing Authority (NHA) was established to assist the Government of the newly independent State of Trinidad and Tobago with its mandate to provide and encourage the construction of dwelling houses for the lower income segment of the population.

The Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee (SILWC) was established in 1951, with a Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund established on the basis of a levy placed on sugar exports. The fund was utilized initially for the general improvement of the living conditions and social well being of sugar workers and cane farmers.

The above does not preclude the influence and involvement of non governmental and community based organizations (NGO's and CBO's) which have been involved, albeit on a limited scale, in facilitating provision of housing.

4.2 Government's Policy & Direction in Housing & Settlements in Perspective - Major Shifts

There are three recognized shifts in Government's policy and directions since 1962.



During the period 1962 to 1975, the Housing Programme placed emphasis on the direct provision of flats and cottages mainly in urban and suburban areas. The major objective of the programme was slum clearance. This programme was supplemented by a direct loans programme which facilitated owner-managed shelter construction by low to low middle income citizens throughout Trinidad and Tobago. These efforts were further augmented by loans provided by the Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited which were guaranteed by the State via the NHA.

A First Shift

The period 1976 to 1986, experienced a major policy shift which emphasized the construction of single-family units in large-scale housing production methods for delivery to the low and middle income households. The mass production methods yielded over 32,000 units in the period 1979 to 1986.

This approach, taken by Government, was facilitated by high surplus revenues available during the period of the economic (oil) boom. This period witnessed an unprecedented level of construction activity and astronomical rises in construction and real estate costs. Another feature which characterized this period was a significant increase in the incidence of squatting on State and private lands. In many instances however, large housing estates were created in areas where there were no significant employment generating activities. (Planning had lost its mystique in the oil boom years.) Some of these areas lacked social infrastructure, particularly educational, recreational and cultural facilities. This created serious problems for the socioeconomic development of the communities and placed strain on the transportation system.

B Second shift:

During 1986 to 1991, the Government's emphasis was on Settlements. There were four (4) sub-programmes, namely:

- i Sites and Services (comprehensive development/village expansion)
- ii Squatter Regularization
- iii Urban Renewal
- iv Community Development/Community Revitalization.

This programme, though comprehensive in concept, concentrated mainly on the provision of serviced housing lots in widely dispersed suburban and rural localities to qualified individuals on subsidized terms. This programme yielded 2,500 serviced lots. The squatter population expanded considerably in this period.

In 1989, the programme was supplemented by the widening of the scheme for providing mortgage loans at preferential interest rates (8% - 9%) through agreements with Approved Mortgage Companies. These firms were granted tax concessions commensurate with the loans granted.

In 1991, a soft loan facility enabling beneficiaries to access a maximum of TT \$70,000 was introduced, through the then Trinidad and Tobago Co-operative Bank Trust Limited to promote shelter construction on the land previously distributed under sub-programme B (i) above. This was discontinued in 1992. A parallel facility was introduced in 1990 under the IDB-assisted segment of the Settlements Programme.

C Third shift:

During the period 1992 - 1995 the Government continued the above programme but modified it by introducing high density apartment complexes. The programme embodied the following:

- i Sites and Services - the provision and delivery of fully serviced lots to prospective home owners for house construction. This programme incorporated a shelter construction financing facility with funds provided by the IDB.
- ii Squatter Regularization - infrastructure upgrading and the provision of title to beneficiaries.
- iii Community Facilities - The provision of community facilities on existing and new housing estates.
- iv Urban Renewal - the provision of high density apartment blocks for rental accommodation in depressed urban areas.



- v Starter Houses - The provision and delivery of completed shelter units (starter houses).
 - vi Finance - The provision of loans for the construction, acquisition or repair of shelter units.
- A special housing programme was established for sugar workers, administered by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee (SILWC) which involved:
- i The disbursement of housing loans to sugar workers and cane farmers for the renovation and repairs to homes; and the construction and purchase of homes.
 - ii The development and distribution of building lots to sugar workers and cane farmers;
 - iii The maintenance of the Committee's Housing Settlements under its jurisdiction as Landlord and;
 - iv Assistance in the process of regularizing squatters.

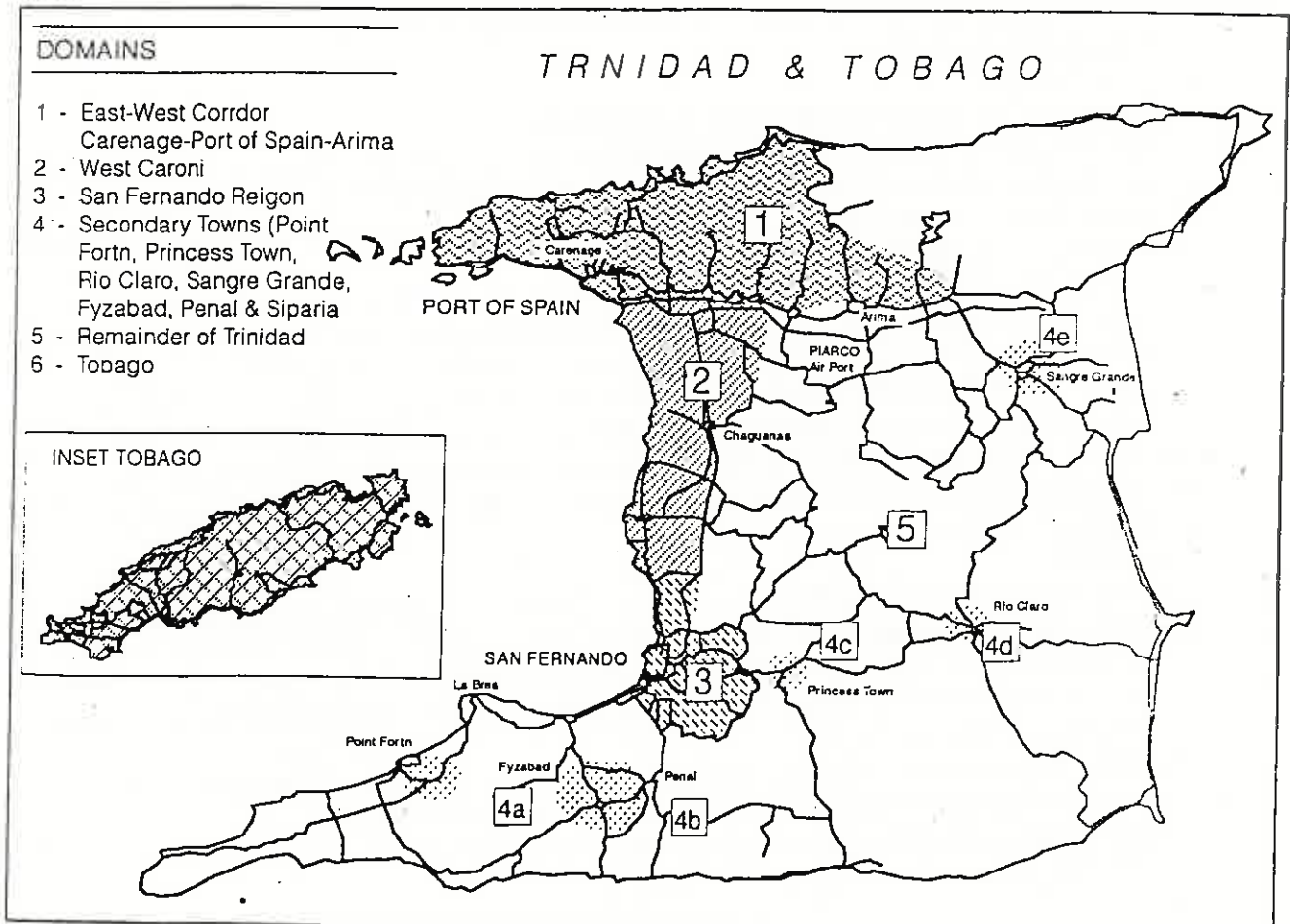
From 1982 to 1995, the SILWC has disbursed approximately TT\$38 million in soft loans for the erection of 906 houses amounting to an average construction cost of approximately TTS\$42,000 per unit. During the same period, the Committee also disbursed approximately TT\$9 million in loans for repairs and renovation to 644 homes or approximately TT\$14,000 for the repairs and renovation per home.

4.3 Settlements Pattern

The settlements pattern in the country at present falls within specific regions which can be subdivided as follows: (See MAP 3)

- i East-West Corridor
- ii Western Caroni

MAP - 3



- iii San Fernando
- iv Secondary Towns
- v The rest of Trinidad and
- vi Tobago

These regions represent different ethnic and socioeconomic characteristics of the population as well as diverse economic bases and historical backgrounds all of which resulted, over the period 1980-1990, in distinct settlement patterns.

The East-west Corridor is highly urbanised and densely populated. This is due to the existence of the capital as well as several secondary towns in the corridor and the concentration of population in these towns. The majority of the country's squatter settlements are also located in this region.

The growth of spontaneous settlements is in large measure a serious indictment on inadequacy of the formal development process.

The Western Caroni area embraces the Sugar belt towns of Couva and Chaguanas. Its large population is due to the sugar cane workers settling near to the sugar industry and to the development of the Pt. Lisas Industrial area. Most of the land in this area comprising approximately 75,000 acres is owned by the state sugar company Caroni (1975) Limited.

The San Fernando region includes the industries engaged in petroleum or its by-products and supports a large percentage of the country's population.

The rest of the Trinidad region consists of the secondary towns serving the immediate petroleum and agricultural hinterlands and thus embraces similar settlement patterns to the towns they serve.

The majority of the Tobago region is rural (approximately 82%). Most of the population are concentrated around the city area of Scarborough. The settlement pattern in this area is extremely dense compared to the rest of Tobago.

The major growth areas in terms of population and household formation in relation to the six regions are Rest of Trinidad, Western Caroni and Tobago (MAP 3). However, even though the East-west Corridor has a greater population density, over the last ten (10) years, the region of Western Caroni has exhibited a greater increase in household formation. If this trend continues, this area density may exceed that of the East-west Corridor in the next two (2) decades. This reality provides very positive development options in a process of structural transformation where land, settlements and shelter development can be integrated with agriculture, commerce and eco-tourism development initiatives. It also highlights the significant opportunities for urban renewal in the major urban regions of the East-West Corridor and San Fernando.

4.5 Existing Housing Stock

The existing housing stock in Trinidad and Tobago is approximately 295,000 units. This grew from 231,436 in 1980 to 271,840 units in 1990, the last year of available actual census data, and is projected to reach 318,600 units by the year 2000. This is based on an annual average compound growth rate of 1.6% over the period 1980 to 1990. This growth pattern is indicated in the most recent comprehensive study of the Trinidad and Tobago land and housing market, in 1994, conducted by the consultancy consortium Planning and Development Collaborative International Incorporated and Laughlin and Associates Limited.

The change in the housing stock in 1990 over 1980 is illustrated in TABLE I.

During the period 1991 - 1995 the state sector delivered 631 single units and 99 apartments units at a cost of TT \$55.6 million and TT \$24.3 million respectively. *i.e.* TT\$88,000 and TT\$245,000 per unit respectively.

The range of housing units available is illustrated in the photographs on pages 12 - 20, with the exception of the image representing the homeless.



TABLE 1 - Change in the Number of Dwelling Units in Total Housing Stock by Administrative Area, 1980 - 1990

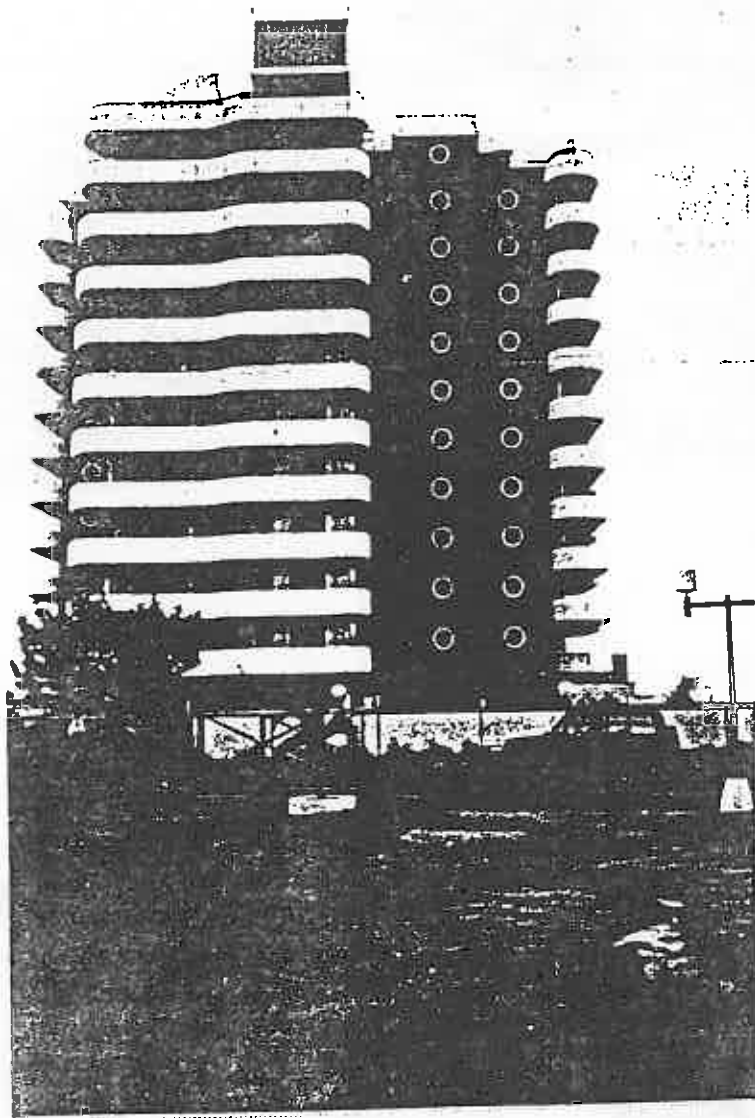
| Division | Total Housing Stock | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| | 1980 | 1990 | Change | % Change |
| Port of Spain | 14,857 | 12,480 | (2,377) | 16 |
| San Fernando | 7,852 | 6,792 | (1,060) | 13 |
| Arima (Borough) | 5,061 | 6,101 | 1,040 | 21 |
| Point Fortin (Borough) | 4,058 | 4,949 | 891 | 22 |
| St. George | 84,823 | 99,600 | 14,777 | 17 |
| Caroni | 27,597 | 37,861 | 10,264 | 37 |
| Nariva/Mayaro | 6,718 | 7,718 | 1,000 | 15 |
| St. Andrews/St. David | 10,963 | 13,755 | 2,792 | 25 |
| Victoria | 38,397 | 45,153 | 6,756 | 18 |
| St. Patrick | 22,358 | 26,164 | 3,806 | 17 |
| Tobago | 8,752 | 11,267 | 2,515 | 29 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 231,436 | 271,840 | 40,404 | 17 |

Source: 1980 - 1990 Census, CSO.

TABLE 2 - Unit Shelter Delivery Cost and Output by Programme and Agency

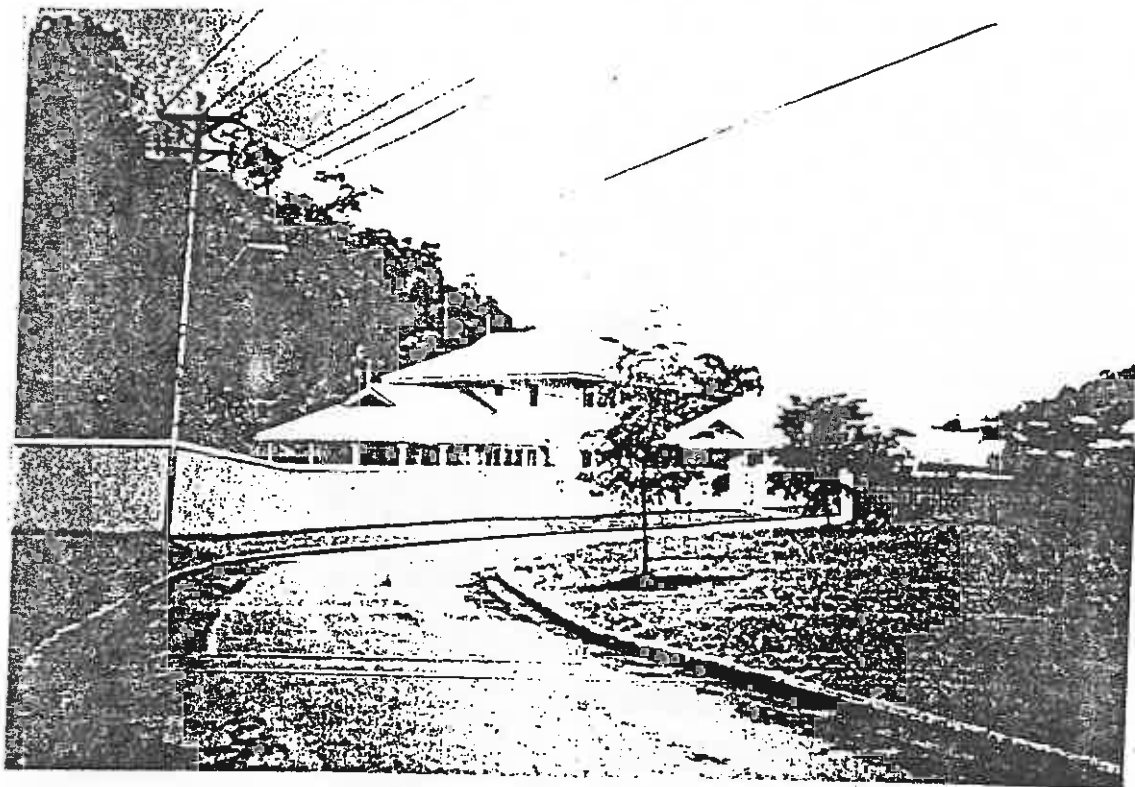
| Year | Agency | Number of Houses Erected | Total Cost of Houses | Number of Apts. Erected | Total Cost of Apts. | Total Number of Housing Units | Total Cost of Housing Units |
|-------|--------|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1991 | N.H.A. | - | - | 28 | 4,407,200 | 28 | 4,407,200 |
| | P.E.U. | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | SILWC | 32 | 1,873,600 | - | - | 32 | 1,873,600 |
| 1992 | N.H.A. | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | P.E.U. | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | SILWC | 62 | 3,634,793 | - | - | 62 | 3,634,793 |
| 1993 | N.H.A. | - | - | 48 | 13,116,000 | 48 | 13,116,000 |
| | P.E.U. | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | SILWC | 72 | 3,018,862 | - | - | 72 | 3,018,862 |
| 1994 | N.H.A. | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | P.E.U. | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| | SILWC | 65 | 2,816,872 | - | - | 65 | 2,816,872 |
| 1995 | N.H.A. | 234 | 32,124,300 | 23 | 6,821,800 | 257 | 39,946,100 |
| | P.E.U. | 106 | 7,950,000 | - | - | 106 | 7,950,000 |
| | SILWC | 60 | 4,152,465 | - | - | 60 | 4,152,465 |
| Total | | 631 | 55,570,892 | 99 | 24,345,000 | 730 | 80,915,892 |



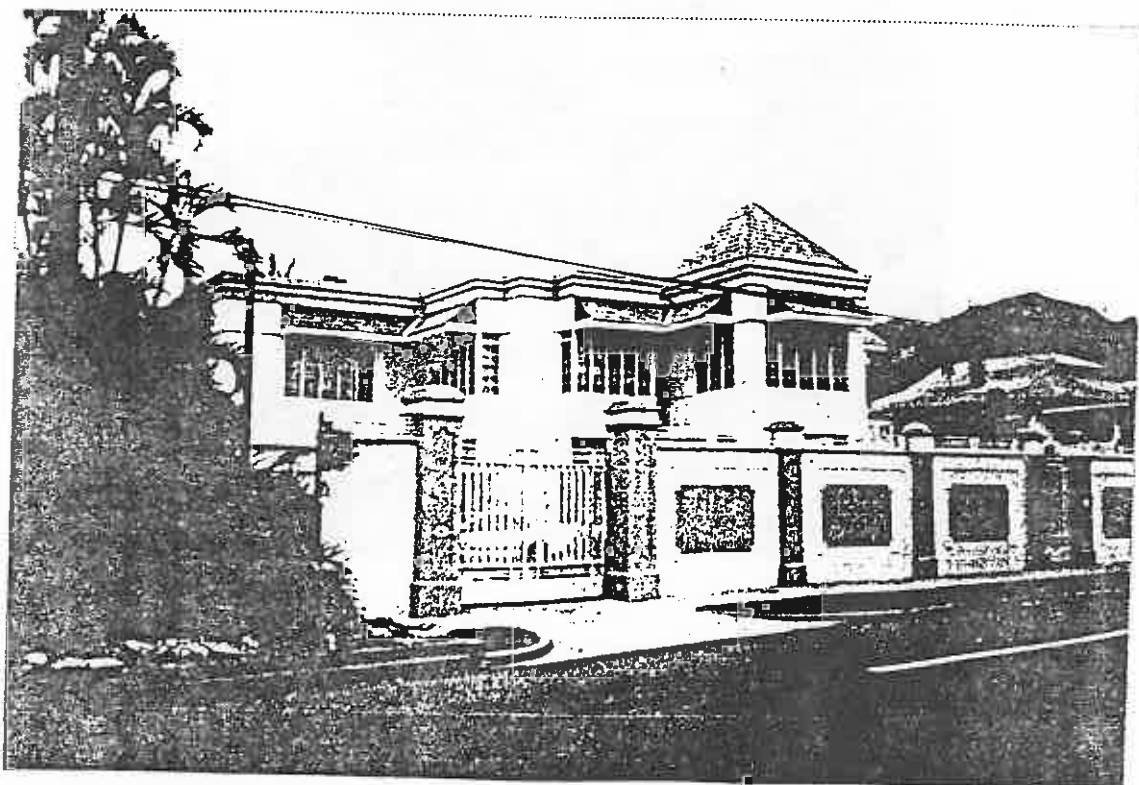


Super Luxurious Apartments



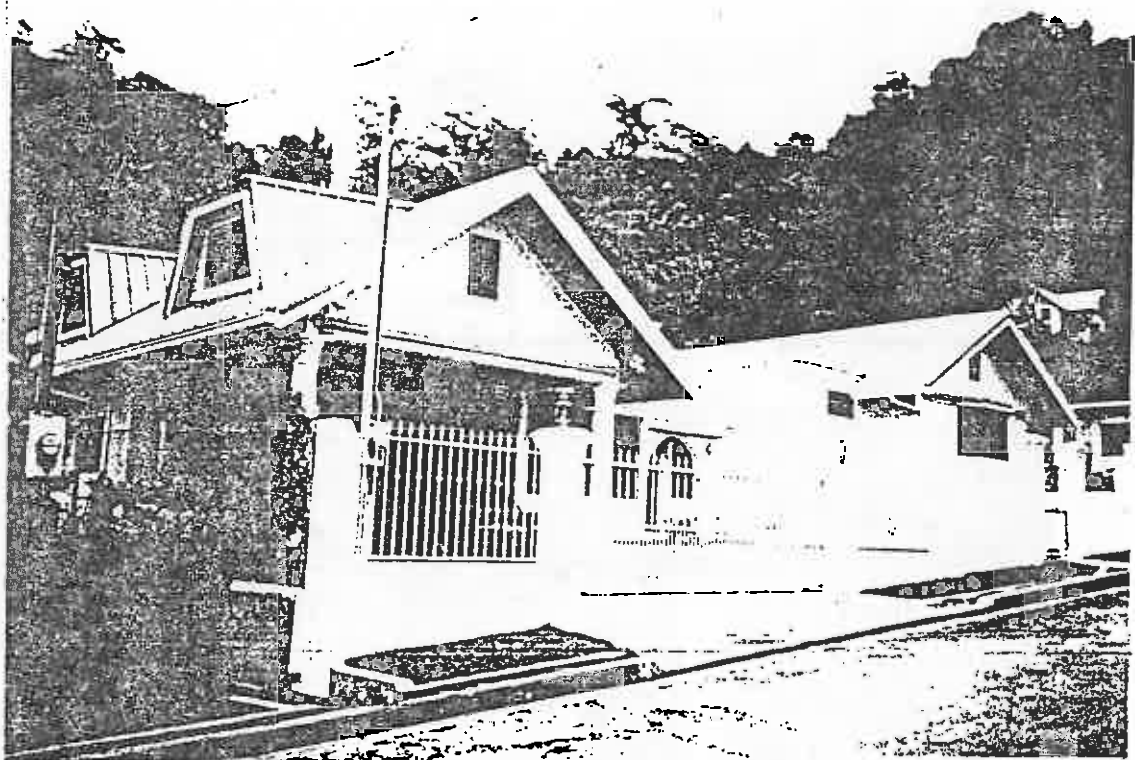


Super Luxurious

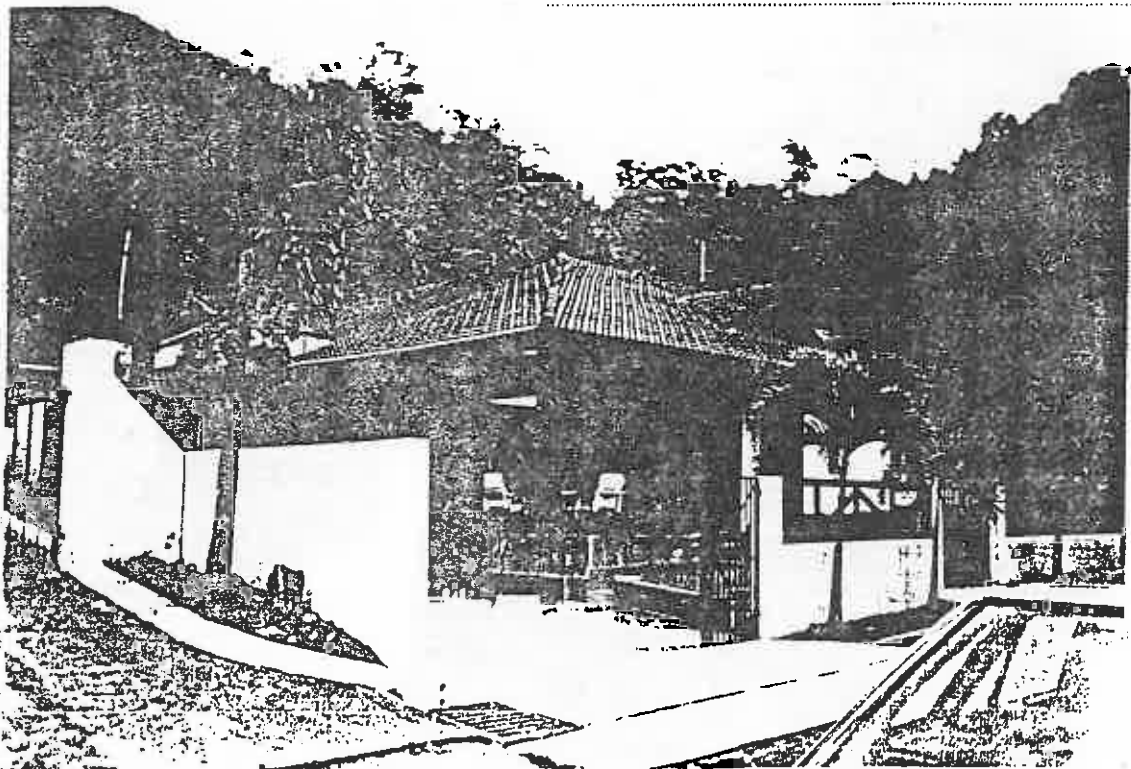


Super Luxurious



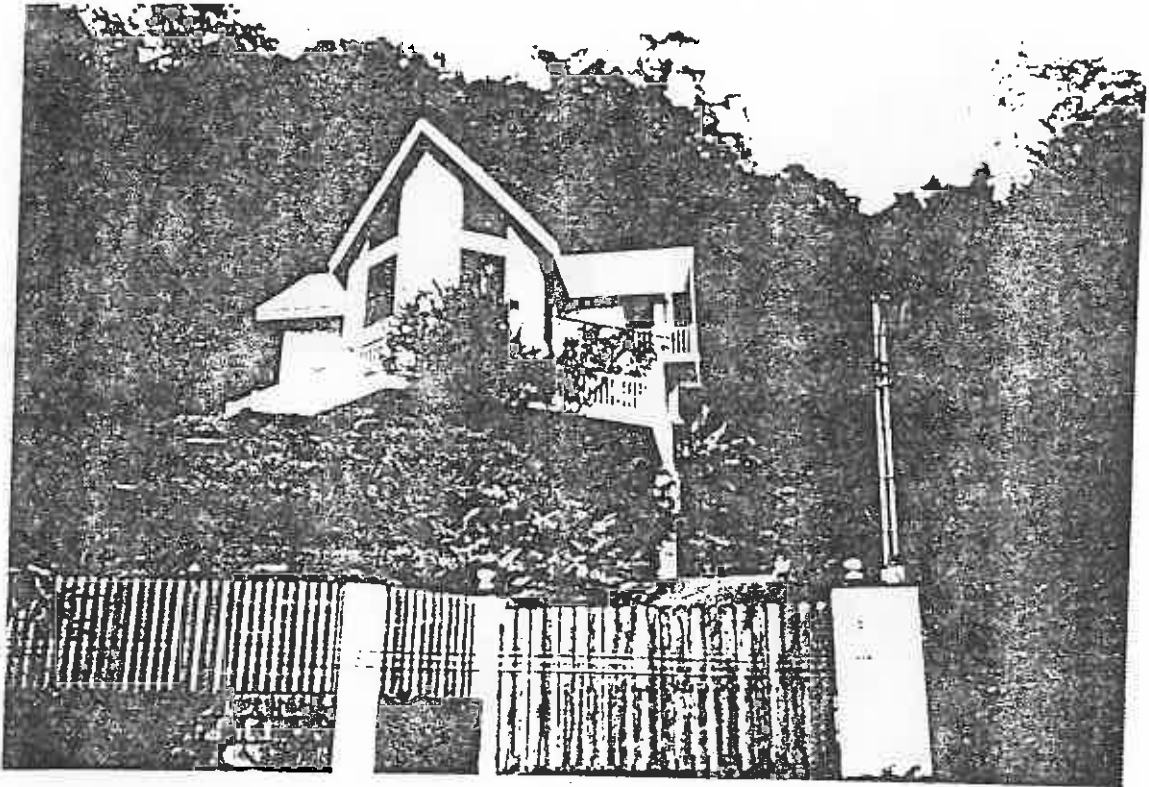


Luxurious

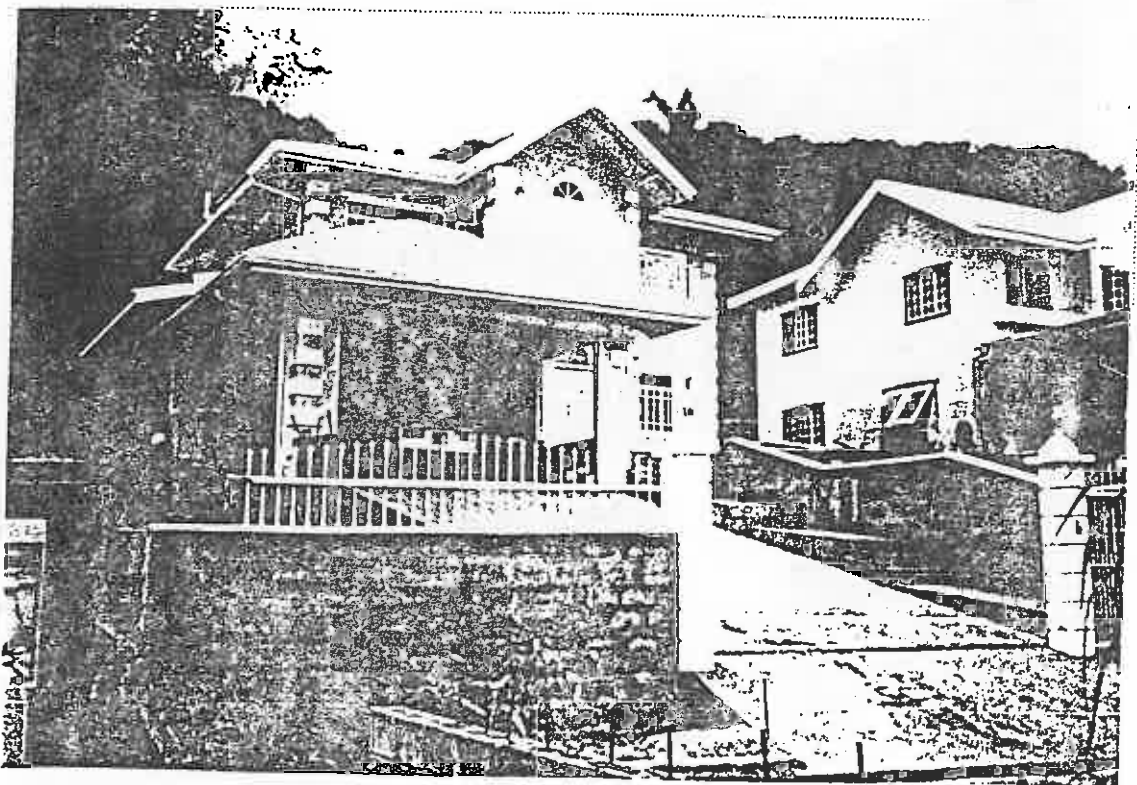


Luxurious



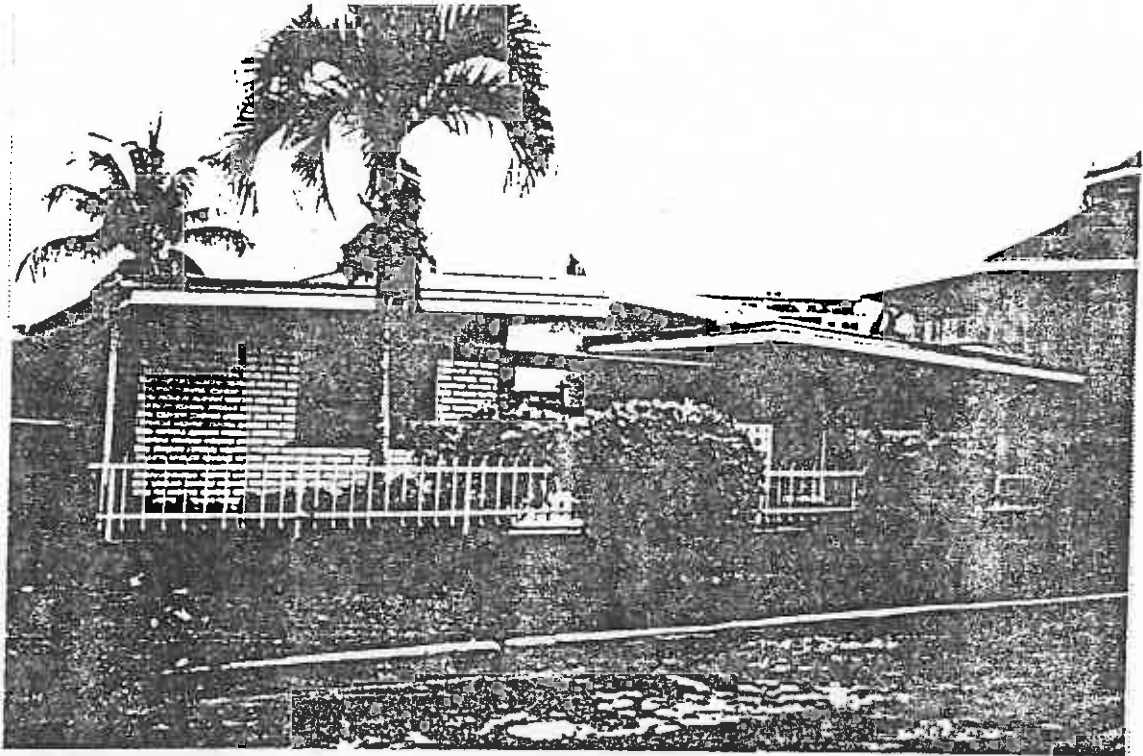


Middle Income

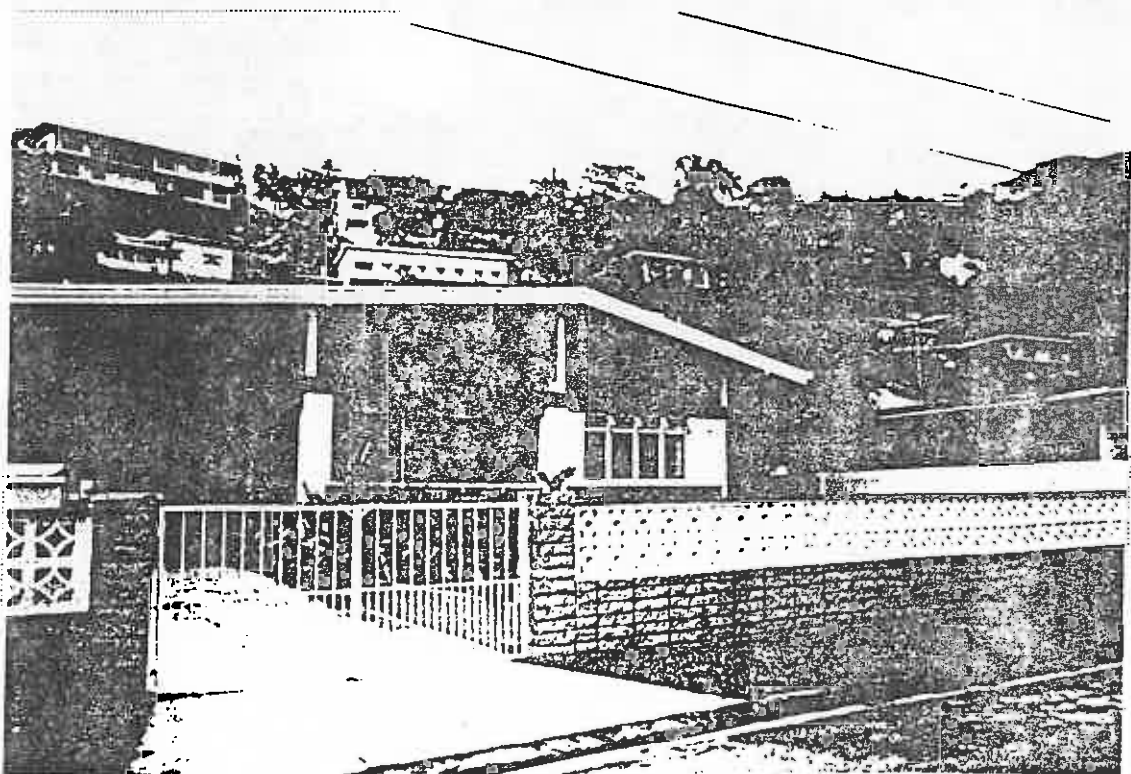


Middle Income



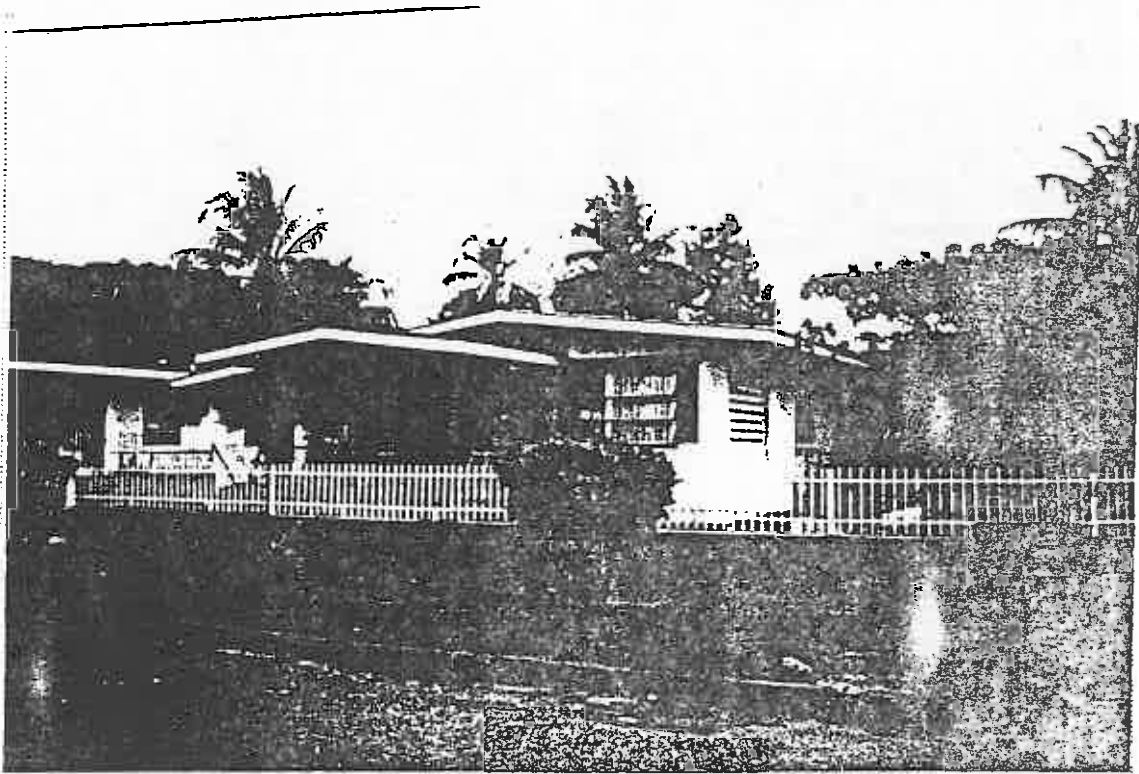


Middle Income



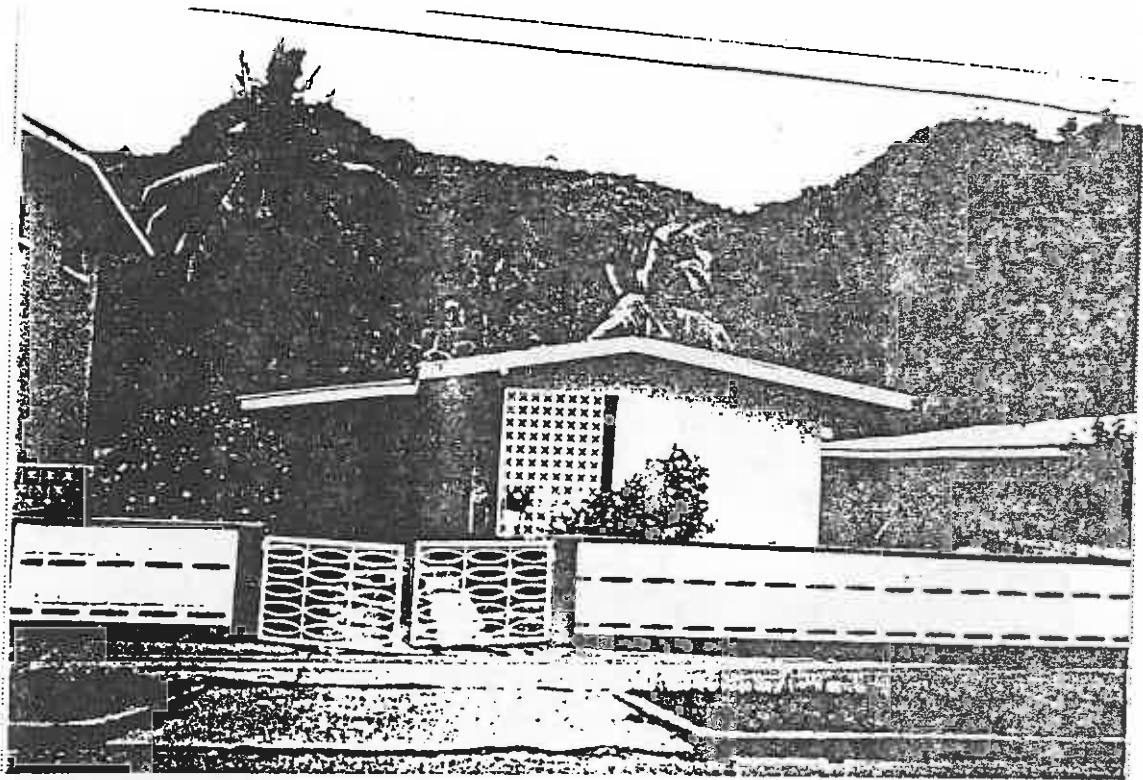
Middle Income



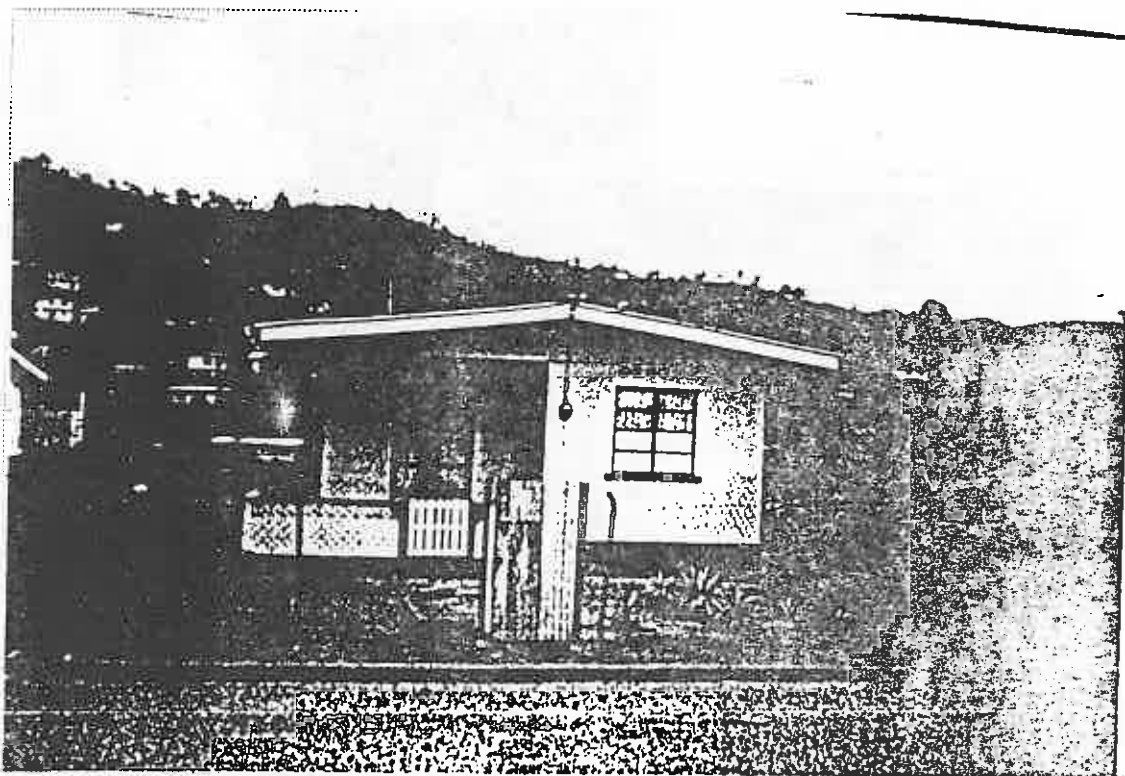


Middle Income



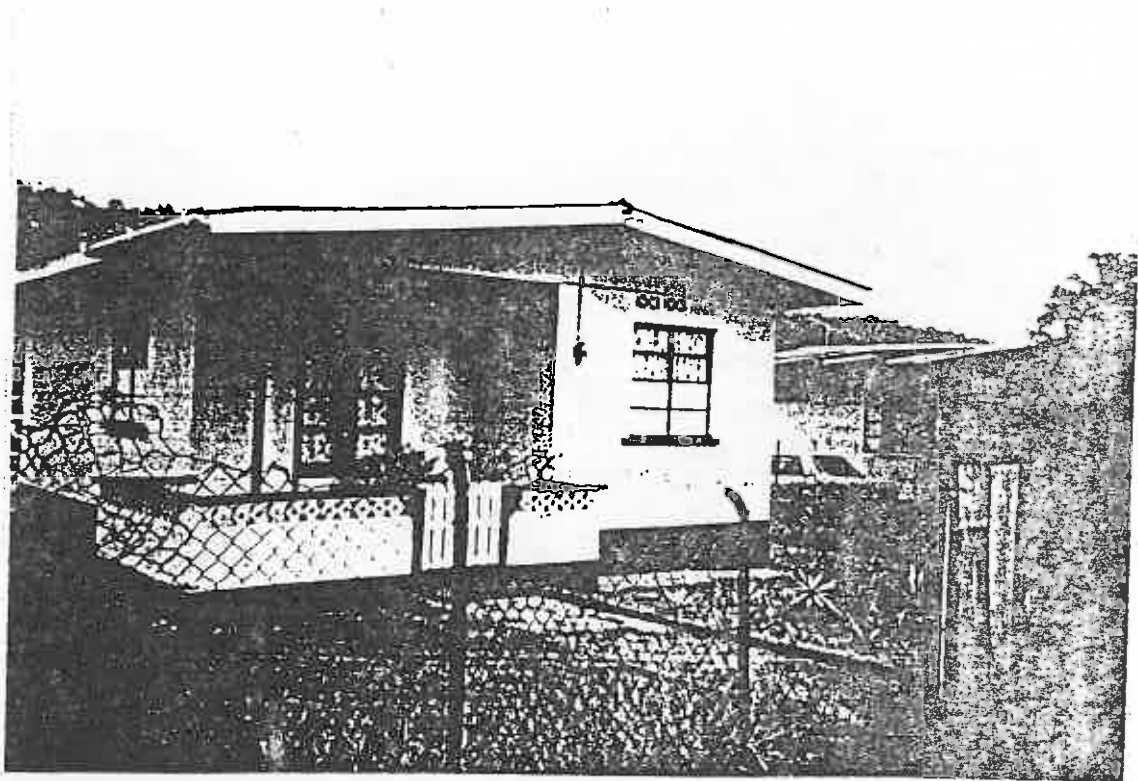


Low Income

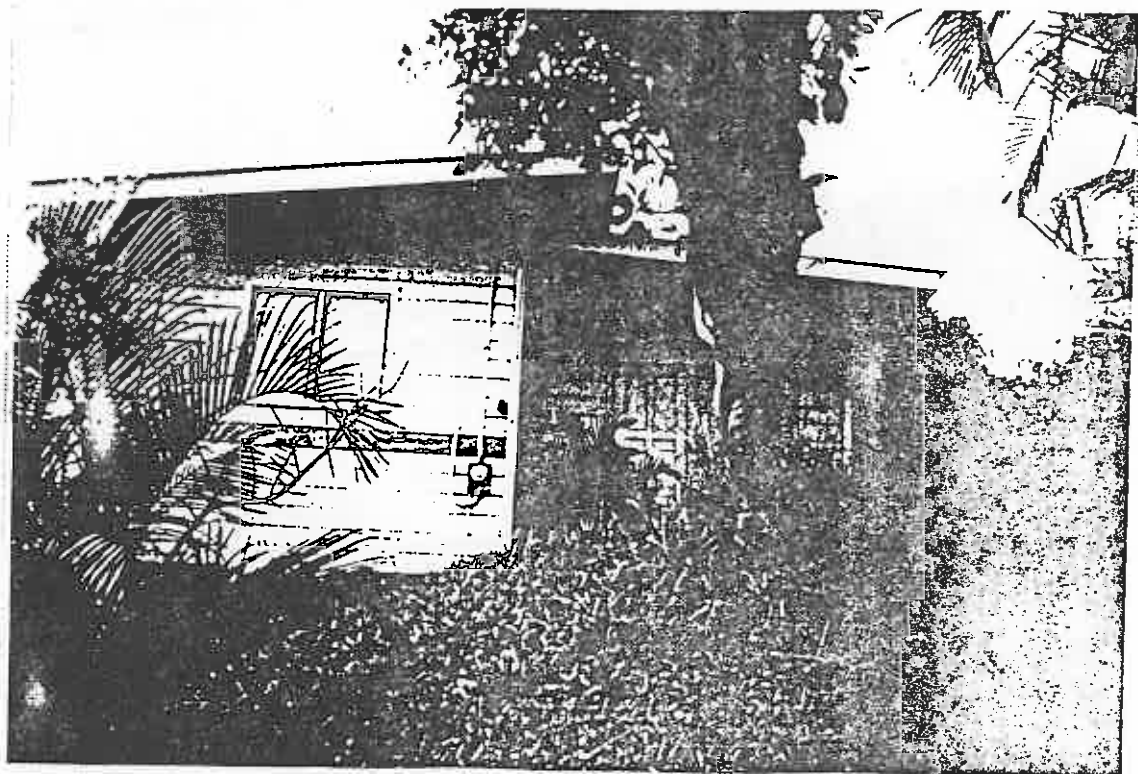


Low Income





Low Income



Low Income





Poor



Homeless



5 - BEST PRACTICES

Since 1962 the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has implemented a host of policy measures and strategies for improving the Housing and Settlements Sector and thus achieving viable settlements. Some of these measures have resulted in laudable projects and significant positive practices. Some on the other hand have not borne the positive fruits that were envisaged in the implementation of the policy and strategy initiatives. Hereunder are highlighted some of the best practices and the existing constraints.

The best practices which are operating in the Sector with significant measures of success, are as follows:-

5.1 Provision of a Range of Approved Building Designs for the Lower Income Households.

The Government has engaged its architects to design houses for the lower income segment of the population. These designs were then approved by the several approving agencies as having met the required standards and building codes, compatible with soil condition, infrastructure requirements and in conformity with the minimum standards for natural disasters of hurricanes and earthquakes. Important features of the designs are that:-

- i The construction cost of fully completed houses range from as low as TT\$30,000.00 to TT\$100,000.00 maximum.
- ii The designs are varied and innovative and include single storey to double storey structures.
- iii They also facilitate the construction of the homes in phases beginning from the core house (one bedroom, kitchen and toilet and bathroom) from as low as TT\$30,000.00. As the home owner acquires more savings/loans in keeping with his/her financial capability, additions can be made to the existing structure until final completion is effected.
- iv This method also utilize maximum local raw materials as is required, i.e. concrete and steel foundation and concrete and clay bricks for walls and partitions.
- v Another laudable feature of this practice is that:
 - It brings architectural design within reach of the poor man's pocket.
 - It provides an additional source of revenue, albeit limited, to a group of professionals whose services were previously not directed to this section of the society.
 - It has been changing the aesthetics of the landscape where the lower income segments of the population reside.

Recently the Trinidad and Tobago Society of Architects was invited and requested to submit additional designs, together with models of their designs, to augment the existing range of designs available to the prospective home owners in the market. A beneficiary would be able to select from a wider range of designs, purchase a copy of the already approved designs for a minimum fixed fee together with a photograph of the scaled house model to guide him in the construction. In the interim the family will have a photograph of their future dream home. The respective architect would benefit by receiving a minimum royalty fee on his design.

These houses are being designed to grow incrementally as the owner can

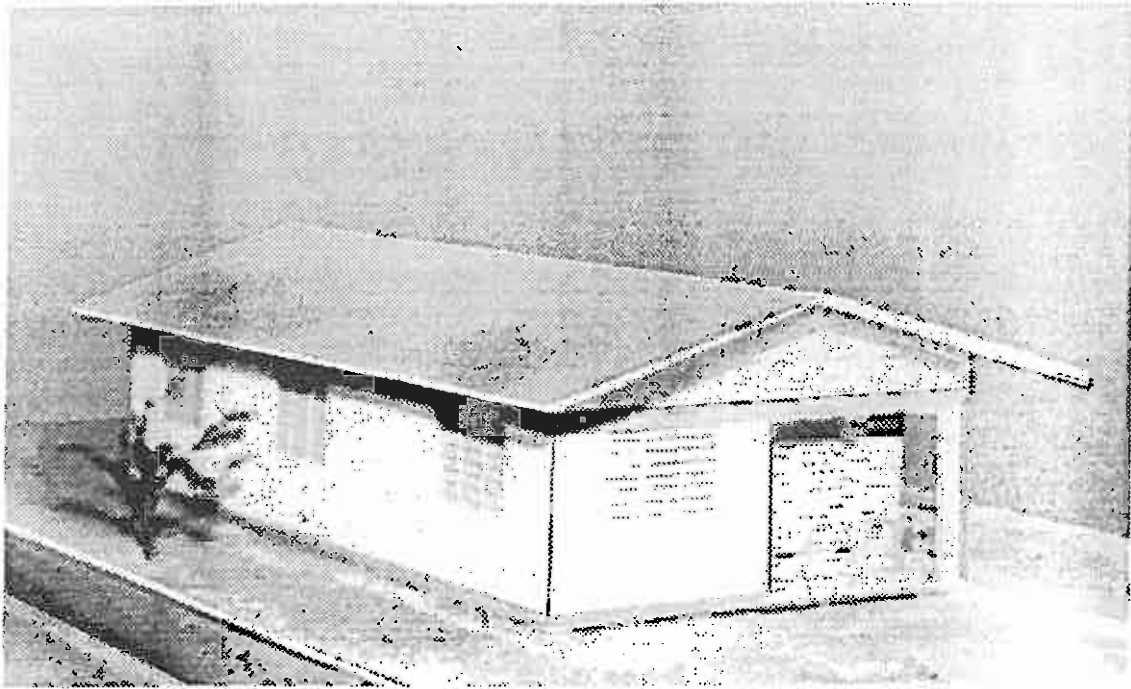
A scaled model of an actual home being currently constructed plus the incremental stages of construction, beginning with the core house, is illustrated on page 22.

5.2 Tailoring an Established Cultural Practice to Fit New Housing Programmes

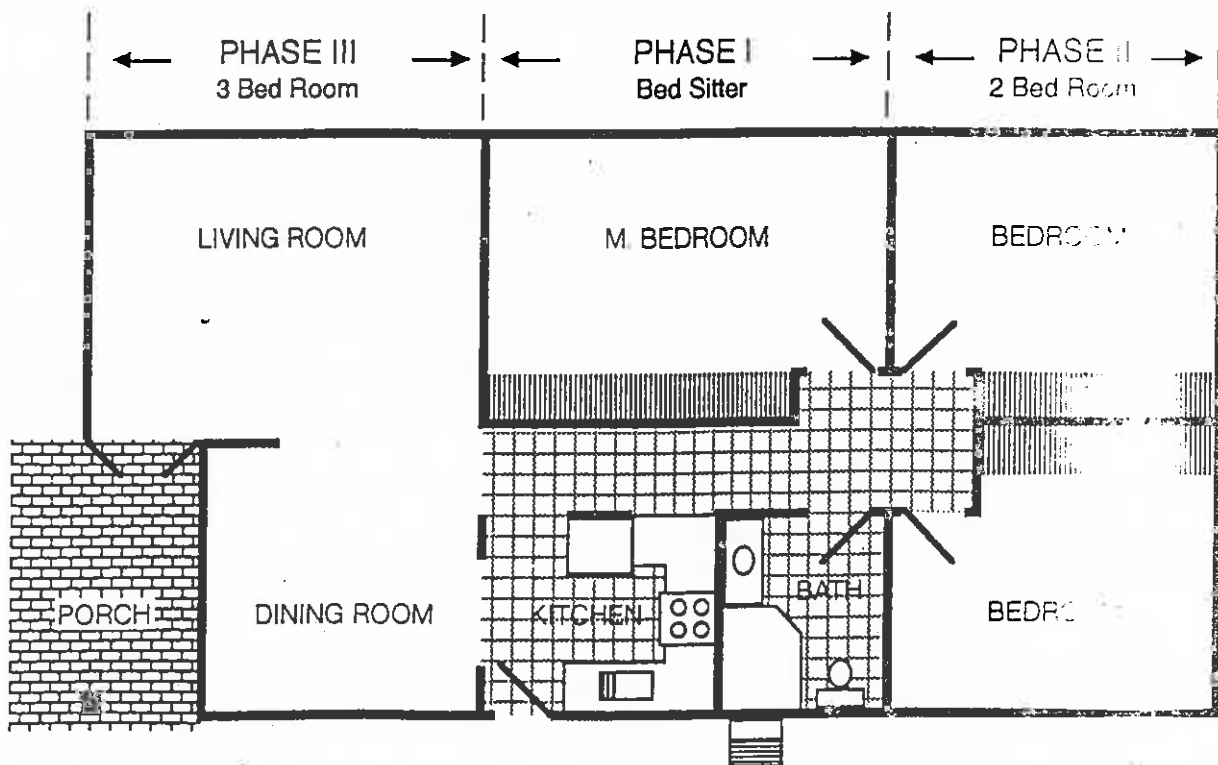
Another laudable practice which has been in existence over the last few years is the establishment and maintenance of a register of small contractors in the housing sector. These



EXPANDABLE HOUSE



Model of the three Bed Room Unit



are constructors who have developed the expertise for constructing high quality houses on a small scale basis usually one unit at a time. Some of them have the capability and resources of constructing usually one to five houses, simultaneously. They have remained small for a number of reasons viz:

- i They do not have adequate collateral to expand their operations.
- ii They prefer to work and employ the few skilled workers from within the area/region in which they reside. In this way the operations are small, manageable and closely knit.

Beneficiaries of fully prepared and serviced housing lots and mortgage finance under the government's low income housing programme are provided with this register of recommended small contractors from which to select.

A chosen contractor then undertakes the physical construction work of the already approved building design provided by the housing Ministry. While project supervision is undertaken by qualified personnel from the Ministry, financial disbursements are made by the client home owner.

The contractor - client relationship remains personalised and harmonious in the construction of the house. This operation also facilitates the owner in providing supplementary labour on the project through sweat equity, which can significantly reduce the final financial outlay on the project.

This method allows the home owner to continue an established and existing cultural pattern (gayap or lend hand) of actually participating in the physical construction of his home.

This process has also been successful in facilitating a regional distribution of employment, income and wealth. At present there are approximately forty contractors on this register of contractors which is maintained by the Ministry of Housing and Settlements.

5.3 Establishing Viable Public and Private Sector Partnerships in the Continued Provision of Low Cost Housing

Traditionally, the private sector in developing economies has not been a supplier of low cost housing. However, in Trinidad and Tobago partnership has been forged, commencing 1994, between the private sector and the State in accelerating the process of providing housing for the lower and middle income home owners. This is yet another element of Government's multi-pronged strategy for shelter construction.

The strategy is as follows:

The Ministry of Housing and Settlements through one of its agencies, the National Housing Authority, identifies the land for housing construction. The land is then provided with all the necessary infrastructure facilities by the NHA. Following the receipt of the necessary approval from the relevant approving agencies, the land is then passed on to pre-qualified private sector home developers on specific terms and conditions. These developers construct the houses, and advertise and sell them to approved beneficiaries.

The cost of land including infrastructure, is then reimbursed to the NHA. A pilot project under a joint - venture arrangement, (both Government and the Private Sector) already yielded 100 single housing units. Under the same arrangement, preliminary works have commenced with respect to the construction of housing units at 9 sites at various locations in Trinidad and Tobago.

When completed the sites will yield a total of five hundred and fifty-five houses at various existing growth poles throughout the country.

Another feature of the Public/Private sector partnership is the establishment of a Joint Consultative Council of the Construction Industry comprising representatives from the Professional Associations and the Associations of Building Contractors, large and small. This umbrella organisation is working closely with the State agencies that deal with construction to optimize the use of resources in the construction sector. Efforts are being made to identify projects of the Government to mobilize all the human and capital resources of the construction sector in the process of development.



6 - CONSTRAINTS IN THE SECTOR

Despite of a host of policy measures and strategic initiatives in the past, the Housing and Settlements Sector continues to face several challenges. The incidence of homelessness and dispossession continue to be unacceptably high and constitute a major crisis. Some of the key issues to be addressed include the following:-

6.1 Demand/Supply Imbalance

The growing demand for affordable homes far outweigh the supply. Recent studies undertaken in the Sector (PADCO, Laughlin and Associates) in 1994, reveal that, at present, approximately 115,000 homes would be required between the period 1996 to 2005. Of this amount approximately 50,000 units would be required by the low income earners.

In essence it is projected that the Programme would require between the years 1995 to 2005 a total of approximately 115081 new housing units to meet the demands of the existing and new households which would be formed within this period as follows:-

TABLE 3 - Housing Demand 1995 - 2005

| Income Status | Income Level Per Month (TT\$) | Number of Units Required | % |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| Low-Income Group | 0-3632 | 48169 | 42 |
| Mid-Income Group | 3633-8843 | 45841 | 40 |
| High-Income Group | 8840 and Above | 21071 | 18 |

6.2 Affordability

The major problem facing low-income households in Trinidad and Tobago is their inability to afford housing produced in compliance with existing infrastructure and housing standards set by the regulatory agencies. Unrealistically high standards have led to diminished levels of affordability among the target group. An average three-bedroom housing unit had a median value of approximately TT\$150,000 in 1993, not including mortgage transaction fees which range between 1-3% of the value or cost of the unit. This basic unit is only affordable by the upper 20% income percentile of the population with the ability to pay TT\$1,600 per month and above. Over the past decade, land and housing prices have remained fairly constant, yet low-income households were unable to access financing for homes due to the escalation in financial and legal costs, their lack of land tenure and their paucity of income.

The ratio of housing prices to income is used as a measure of affordability. In the urban areas in Trinidad and Tobago the ratio is approximately 9:4. The high ratio indicates that the households would have to save over several years to accumulate the downpayment of 10% to 20% on a unit in order to qualify for financing. For low income groups, savings would have to be over a 20 year period to allow them to access mortgage financing. Consequently, the majority of the formal sector housing units on the market are unaffordable to the majority of the population. This segment of the population thus relies on subsidized Government housing programmes or on squatting to fulfil their needs.



6.3 Inadequate Finance and the Issue of Subsidization

The continuing annual reduction of financial resources by the State to the Housing and Settlements Sector has consistently reduced allocation for land development, housing construction, mortgage financing and even for the maintenance of existing State owned rental housing stock. This has led to significant dilapidation of the housing stock.

Subsidies in Trinidad and Tobago have been an essential component of public sector housing policies and programmes in the attempt to make shelter more affordable to the population. Subsidies relate to rents, mortgage interest rates, tax relief, land and capital costs, recurrent expenditure and cost recovery. Together housing subsidies cost the country approximately TT\$287 million per annum. (approximately US\$48 million).

Among the several factors which contributed to the perceived need to continue the high level of subsidies are the following:-

- i Public Perception - Public Sector housing policies especially during the oil boom years have created the perception that the State is responsible for providing housing to the middle and low income segments of the population.
 - ii Public Sector Rental Policy - The current policy on rental housing permits tenants who occupy public housing to pay as little as 5% of the economic rent of an apartment.
 - iii Subsidized Loan Programmes - Interest rate subsidies cost the State TT\$151.19 million (US\$ 25 million) per annum in revenue foregone.
 - iv High Development Standards - High development standards imposed by the statutory approving agencies translate into high development costs. They reduce the affordability of programmes to low income households and require the State to further subsidize its housing programmes by an additional 30% in order to serve the target group.
 - v Serviced Plots - These are being provided to beneficiaries at a subsidy of up to 40% of the cost of land and installed services.
 - vi Squatter Regularization - Under this programme raw land is provided at 25¢ per sq. ft.
 - vii Approved Mortgage Companies Programmes - Under this programme first-time home owners obtain mortgages at preferential interest rates.
 - viii IDB Assisted Programme - Under this programme beneficiaries of serviced lots can obtain mortgage loans ranging from TT\$20,000 to TT\$100,000 (US\$3,300 - 16,666) at an interest rate of 8%. The interest rate subsidy is in addition to the 40% subsidy on the cost of the serviced lot.
 - ix Tax Relief - A subsidy is provided on mortgage interest up to TT\$24,000 per annum. (US\$4,000) The principal beneficiaries have been mainly middle and upper income households. Tax relief on mortgage interest, housing allowances and claims for house repairs amount to an estimated TT\$65.76 million in tax revenue foregone by the Government.
- Future Housing Needs - Estimates of future housing needs indicate that 42% of households in need of new housing (more than 46,000 families) would require assistance over the next 10 years. Additionally, subsidies will be required to facilitate the upgrading of some 23,000 existing units. It is estimated that a subsidy of TT\$552 million would be required for this programme.

6.4 Squatting

Squatting refers to the unauthorized construction of dwelling units, both on private and State lands without the consent of the land owner, as well as, on private lands with the consent of the owner but without approval from the regulatory agencies.

Squatting is a problem that goes back to 1838 after the emancipation of slavery. This historical period was marked by the unwillingness of the now free slaves to work on the plantations and their inability to pay for land. Former slaves who settled on Crown land and worked the land to



support their families were allowed to do so. All squatters on State land are now being regularized.

It is now a well established fact, that provision of adequate shelter for all the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago cannot be achieved by attempting to provide housing to the standards stipulated by the regulatory agencies since the level of investment required is not sustainable on a permanent basis. The result has been an increase in the incidence of homelessness. However, failure to adequately address the needs of the low income sector has resulted in continued squatting, unauthorized subdivisions and unplanned settlements. The following series of linked factors have impeded the institutionalizing of affordable low income solutions:

- i A land market which does not supply affordable land for low income residential development.
- ii High development standards which reduce the availability of affordable, functional and useable serviced land and/or shelter to low income groups.
- iii Unavailability of housing finance for land and shelter which cannot meet the existing standards of the regulatory framework and.
- iv An inappropriate land tenure system

Legislation

Act 20 of 1986 embodies the legislation relating to regularization procedures in respect of the illegal residential occupation of State Lands. However, there are several major deficiencies in the Act which impose serious constraints to the implementation of the Squatter Regularization Programme.

6.5 Unrealistic High Development Standards and the Cumbersome Regulatory Approval Processes

The enforcement of strict and inordinately high Building and Development Codes while being necessary for natural disasters has resulted in increased construction costs. In order to avoid these high costs, many houses have been constructed without all the required statutory approvals.

Moreover at the present time the Approval Process requires that land development and construction of housing and settlements be controlled by a regulatory framework which, not only falls under the purview of several public agencies, but is governed by disparate pieces of legislation which are administered by different Government Agencies. This has resulted in a complicated and cumbersome set of procedures which sometimes involve overlapping and conflicting authority at different levels of Government. This chaotic situation results in lengthy waiting periods to obtain regulatory agency approvals thus frustrating the development process.

6.6 Land Use Planning and Administration

Even though the rate of conversion of land to residential purposes has increased over the years, there are a number of problems associated with the provision of land.

Very little of this new residential land was provided with infrastructure to accommodate owner-managed construction of units. These are now being provided on a limited basis by the Ministry of Housing and Settlements through the Project Execution Unit, the National Housing Authority and the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee.

Low and lower middle income individual households generally experience difficulty to find serviced land on which to build. Where these opportunities exist in the rural areas, they are largely unattractive to these home owners. Another problem is that, over the years, households have depended on large private developers to subdivide land for home ownership. With the downturn in the economy after the oil boom years many large private sector land developers went out of business and the availability of serviced lots in urban and suburban areas reduced considerably. It is also recognized that there are a number of deficiencies in the system of State Land Administration. In addition, the system of Property Law in Trinidad and Tobago severely restricts the operation of a viable Squatter Regularization Programme which seeks to grant formal



tenure by leases. Substantial changes in existing property and inheritance laws need to be made if squatters are to be regularized and obtain a deed within a reasonable time frame. These factors also inhibit the establishment of a land bank needed both for regularizing and relocating squatters and for the poor and landless generally.

6.7 High Import Content in Housing Construction

A significantly high proportion of the resources that go into housing construction including machinery and equipment, materials, finishing and fixtures is imported. As such the housing sector is intensely vulnerable to international fluctuations in supplies and currency fluctuations. A slowdown in critical supply of key inputs to the sector usually translates into increased cost as demand outweighs supply. With respect to currency fluctuations, imported inputs are usually paid for in mainly three international currencies, the Pound Sterling, the Japanese Yen and the United States dollar. These currencies have over the last decade or so appreciated against the Trinidad and Tobago dollar, as a direct result of successive devaluation/depreciation of the Trinidad and Tobago dollar. The obvious result of this process is the increased cost of imported inputs and by extension a high cost of housing construction.

6.8 Institutional Arrangement - Organizational Structure to Facilitate Delivery

The institutions and regulatory agencies involved in the delivery of housing at the moment do not work in tandem with one another. Moreover their legal requirements and administrative modus operandi are not conducive to the effective delivery of housing. The land organization structure should be one in which duplication and unnecessary delays are absent.

6.9 Pricing Policy and Delivery Mechanism

The existing pricing policy does not facilitate an equitable and efficient allocation of resources to the low income segment of the population. Additionally the present mechanism in operation for the delivery of houses by the state agencies retards the delivery of affordable homes to beneficiaries in the low and very low income groups. The pricing policy and delivery mechanism should therefore be based on careful needs assessment and an effective demand analysis.

6.10 Maintenance of the Existing Housing Units

Generally inadequate or total lack of maintenance of units by single unit households have contributed to the deterioration of the housing stock. This is moreso in the area of rental housing. The 1993 PADCO survey indicated that while at least 70% of private owner rentals have efficiently maintained their buildings, this was not necessarily so for public rental units. The major problem of the maintenance of public rental units is that of inadequate funding. The overall result is that of a deterioration of the value of the housing stock.

6.11 Involvement of Community Based Organizations in the Development of a Holistic Settlements Approach.

The development of a community depends on inputs from Government and Non-Governmental organizations. In the past, settlements were established without inputs from Community - based Organizations and Non-Governmental bodies. As a result, such settlements have not developed into integrated wholesome communities and have, in fact, created significant socioeconomic and cultural problems.



7 - NEW POLICY ON HOUSING AND SETTLEMENT

7.1 Philosophy

The new Government's policy for the Housing and Settlements Sector is based on a philosophy expounded in the Manifesto of the current administration which recognises that housing and viable settlements are critical to the development process in both social and economic terms. The Government has therefore committed itself to "establishing viable settlements" and in this context "to distribute, develop and make land available at affordable prices to persons to build their homes". It is "also committed to pass appropriate legislation to give to squatters on land belonging to the State and those of State Enterprises security of tenure. Steps would be taken for loans at special rates of interest to be available to poor persons for their home construction".

7.2 Policy Framework

The policy framework of the Government has been influenced by the constraints being experienced in the sector. It is guided by the following basic principles:-

- i The facilitation of the provision of shelter for all our citizens is enshrined in the constitution. Shelter is seen as a fundamental right;
- ii There is a two fold advantage in improving our housing stock and the living conditions in our settlements. The dignity of our people will be enhanced and this along with improved physical living conditions will lead to greater productivity and positive economic benefits. Investment in physical infrastructure and housing will have economic multipliers, and create employment;
- iii Our shelter and settlements policy will address historical imbalances. Gender, politics, region, and vested interests will be considered within a framework of equitable national development;
- iv A comprehensive and sustainable settlements approach will be the objective of policy rather than limited welfare approaches in the context of inequitable operations of land and housing and finance markets.

7.3 Overall Policy Guideline

- i The emphasis will be on establishing a land bank for settlements and developing appropriate financing and other technical support mechanisms to allow individuals to build their own homes with necessary technical support. Access to land and security of tenure are thus seen as corner stones for sustainable shelter and settlements policy;
- ii A range of tenure and housing options is being proposed to suit individuals and families at different stages in their life cycle as well as different economic situation and cultural background. This involves a revision of the previous policy direction of providing only single family owner-occupied residences. This will mean a more vibrant rental market and a range of shelter densities.
- iii The structure of fiscal incentives that has served the more fortunate in the society will be reviewed to ensure equity and efficiency in the allocation of fiscal resources;
- iv There will be an operation of a land market that is efficient and responsive to a range of needs;
- v State lands and resources will be utilized to meet the needs of those who are unable to meet the market conditions.

7.4 Specific Policy Measures

Specific Policy Measures currently being implemented and new proposals are as follows:



7.4.1 New Land Management Initiatives

Initiatives which are being taken to improve the management of the land resources include the following:

- i The Urban and Regional Planning Act - The existing Town and Country Planning Act is being revised to enable the planners and decision-makers at all levels of Government and society to stimulate, guide, manage and participate in the sustainable development of land-based resources in an equitable manner, taking account of the economic and social needs of the people and the importance of protecting the environment of Trinidad and Tobago. The Act seeks to:
 - Foster recognition of a duty to use land with due regard for the wider interest of both present and future society.
 - Maintain and improve the quality of the physical environment.
 - Achieve orderly, economic and beneficial development and;
 - To protect and conserve the cultural heritage of Trinidad and Tobago as expressed in its natural and built environments.
- ii Environmental Management Act (EMA) - Through the enactment of the EMA and the establishment of an Environmental Management Authority, Government is seeking to develop a national strategy for sustainable development and the balance of economic growth with solid environmental practices. The Environmental Management Authority will co-ordinate, facilitate and oversee the execution of the national environmental strategy and programmes, promote public awareness of environmental concerns and establish an effective regulatory regime which will protect, enhance and conserve the environment. Among the specific functions of the Authority is to develop and establish national environmental standards and criteria and to monitor compliance with the standards.
- iii A New Administration and Distribution Policy for Land - The aim of this policy is to maximize the benefits which the society gains from national land resources and ensure a balance between use and sustainable development through the securing of greater efficiency in the use and management of land resources. The objectives to achieve this aim as stated in the White Paper on the New Administration and Distribution Policy for Land include:-
 - Prevention of prime agricultural lands from being used for non-agricultural purposes by ensuring a system of zoning.
 - Provision of adequate security of tenure for tenants of state lands.
 - Discouraging land speculation and developing mechanisms to bring idle land into production.
 - Promotion of development, that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.

The policy proposes the following reforms of the institutional, administrative and legislative framework:-

 - i Co-ordination of the roles and activities of the seven Ministries and agencies with responsibility for land administration and distribution.
 - ii Review of the existing system of property taxation and revision of the Agricultural Small Holdings Tenure Act.
 - iii Establishment of a National Land Information System - under the existing system, land information is collected and stored by individual agencies for their specialized requirements. In an effort to reduce duplication, prevent loss of revenue and investment opportunities and inefficiencies in land management, an integrated graphic and non-graphic national information system will be developed.
 - iv Restructuring of the Lands and Surveys Division to promote greater efficiency in the discharge of the functions of this Division.
 - v Formation of Seabed Advisory Committee to deal effectively with marine related infrastructure and coastal reclamation.

7.4.2 Gender Issues

Networking among women's groups is an essential step for the strengthening of a position women in human settlements development. In this context, policy will be generated towards further encouraging women to contribute their creative talents, energies and national leadership qualities in creating viable settlements. This can be achieved through the strengthening relationships with Community - based Organizations and women's groups.

In addition, special attention will be given to single women who are heads of households and therefore perform multiple roles with view to enhancing living conditions of their families.

7.4.3 Development Community Based Projects

A network of organizations involving governmental and non-governmental agencies: community-based organizations, professional associations and relevant persons from both the public and private sector will be developed. The network would facilitate the provision of support services to the communities, co-ordinate activities, monitor and evaluate developments, and create an environment for the development of viable community based projects.

7.4.4 Joint Ventures and Community Partnerships

This government is aware that the State cannot resolve all the problems of the settlement sector. The state will accelerate the existing range of joint-venture arrangements with the social partners including the private sector, NGO's professional and community groups. Further the government will seek to reduce the cost of lands and shelter units produced in the private sector and extend the reach of the formal sector into the low income range.

The government recognises that the informal sector, including squatters, serves many nationals, and that appropriate mechanisms including joint ventures will need to be developed to bring these actors into the mainstream of development activity and improve their eligibility for state support and incentives. Such joint ventures would include combinations of state land and technical resources with community based organizations to mobilize sweat equity, community and self help. Such partners would include Sou-Sou Lands, CNIRD, FEEL and HABITAT for Humanity. These will be co-ordinated with the Self-Help Commission, Employment through the Infrastructure upgrading of the URP (Unemployment Relief Programme) and the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corp). The Government already has a Community Development Fund which will be used to support the work of settlements CBO's.

7.4.5 The Approval Process

A contribution to the improvement in the approval process will be accomplished by the organization of a "one-stop" shop for the approval of land and housing development plans. This entails, where possible, the housing of all the main agencies under one roof and the ready access to key personnel in other relevant agencies.

It is proposed the main agencies to be housed are:

- The Ministry of Housing and Settlements
- Town and Country Planning Division, Ministry of Planning and Development
- Land and Surveys Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Marine Resources

7.4.6 Regularization of Squatters on State Lands

The core of the regularization process is focused upon the regularization of the squatters on State lands. While previous attempts have put the regularization of land tenure at the end of cumbersome planning, infrastructure upgrading and land administrative procedures the new approach is first geared towards the establishment of a secure environment that encourages the compliance of the beneficiaries.



The core elements include a statutory lease for all squatters on state lands based on specific criteria for regularization. For those requiring relocation the State will develop new settlements that will also be open to all landless citizens. For non-citizens with appropriate credentials amnesty will be effected to allow comprehensive regularization and upgrading of infrastructure on a community settlement approach.

The state will review and amend the entire approach to the planning of settlements and design and implementation of infrastructure and shelter units.

The squatting on private lands will be covered by the same procedures governing state lands. This involves appropriate standards and upgrading procedures by means of partnership between the land owners, the squatting community and the state; with the state functioning as a facilitator and guarantor.

7.4.7 Financing Mechanism

Funding is required at the lower end of the mortgage market which the established financial institutions are unwilling to service because of the "high risk" nature of this segment of the market. This is the area where Government's attention will be focused. Various scenarios would be explored towards:

- i The establishment of a Housing Fund for the low income earners; and
- ii The sourcing of grant funding from international agencies for lending by non-government organizations.

7.4.8 Social indicators

Social indicators will be used to monitor and evaluate and where necessary influence the development of Settlements in Trinidad and Tobago.

8 - PLAN OF ACTION

8.1 Strategy

The Government's strategy for implementing its policy decision basically conforms to the United Nation Commission on Human Settlements (HABITAT) "Global strategy for shelter in the year 2000" which recommends that "Government should adopt a facilitation role in order to activate the full potential of all elements of the society involved in shelter production". This enabling approach would be enhanced by government adopting a proactive facilitative approach which allows all sections of the society involved in shelter construction the opportunity to meet their housing requirements according to their own priorities and capabilities.

The strategy would include the following:

- i The development of a land bank *i.e.* the identification of all unused lands in the country currently zoned for residential use and the effective and efficient acquisition of land throughout Trinidad and Tobago for the implementation of settlements housing programmes based on the existing development pattern and where possible on the potential growth poles.
- ii The adoption of cost efficient land use planning and infrastructure standards. This would necessitate a revision of the current land use planning strategy to facilitate new housing developments.
- iii The revision of standards pertaining to the housing sector.
- iv The establishment of an appropriate institutional and organizational structure to facilitate, *inter alia*, the effective and efficient management of Housing and Settlements programmes inclusive of the fast tracking of the necessary approvals.

- v The pursuing of a process of incremental development in keeping with cultural norms pertaining to community participation, land use and shelter construction.
 - vi A revision of the current procurement strategies and distribution mechanisms for serviced lot
 - vii The review of building design and construction techniques to ensure that optimum use is made of indigenous resources.
 - viii The revision of legislation governing the housing sector.
 - ix The reduction of subsidies levels to a minimum and where necessary, the targeting of these subsidies to identifiable households or most needy groups. Such subsidies would be implemented in a way where they would encourage cost recovery and increase the supply of housing e.g. through differential pricing and cross-subsidization. In order to encourage the construction sector, a system of tax and investment incentives would be implemented. In the case of home owners, tax relief and other incentives would be provided on mortgage interest
 - x The establishment and operation of well organized and motivated Community Based Organizations with the objectives, inter alia, of having new developments integrated within the existing communities; and
 - xi The improvement of the current provision of the Approved Mortgage Company Programmes.
 - xii The encouragement of NGO's/Co-operative for the development of well knit communities and maintenance of homes and;
 - xiii The enhancement of the national aesthetics
- These strategies are designed to:
- Improve income and employment opportunities
 - Provide affordable shelter for all our citizens
 - Enhance the participation of all citizens in the social and economic life of Trinidad and Tobago, and
 - Improve the physical environment while paying attention to the natural environment to support sustainable development for this and future generations.

8.2 Land Availability and Efficient Land Market

For the land requirements over the next five years and beyond to be fulfilled, an action-oriented land management and development approach is crucial for integrating land availability and land affordability with visionary perspectives on land-use in a context of simultaneous physical planning and implementation and with linkages to urban rehabilitation and rural revitalization. In this regard there are two factors that are pivotal to such an approach.

- i The IDB funded Land Rationalization and Development Programme which seeks to address the fundamental issues of land tenure, land registration, land information, environmental protection and land legislation would inform all attempts to improve the efficiency of land markets.
 - ii The extensive State Landholding under the jurisdiction of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago as well as private lands, can provide those strategic areas which are required to make more lands available for settlement and shelter development. Such lands would include:
 - State lands with urban and/or rural residential potential e.g. Waller Field and Carlsen Field.
 - State lands utilized by State agencies for housing and settlement purposes viz the Ministry of Housing and Settlements, National Housing Authority, Project Construction Unit, Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Committee and the National Insurance Property Development Company.
 - Lands owned by State Companies. Two such companies require special mention since their lands impact on sections of all the domains in Trinidad - CAROLINE (1975) LIMITED, and PETROTRIN.
 - State lands under the jurisdiction of the Tobago House of Assembly.
- The three basic actions required to increase the efficiency of land markets and reduce the



negative price effects of land use and development controls are:

- i Reducing the demand/supply imbalance for land by involving the consideration of economic, social and physical implications of different land use plans and zoning regulations.
- ii Lowering subdivision standards so as to achieve differentiation in their requirements for low, medium and high income households while putting in place mechanisms to facilitate incremental development and maintenance of the environment.
- iii Decreasing the complexity of the approvals process and reducing the time required to obtain land-use and development approvals.

These imperatives are essential to the establishment of practical and achievable standards that can effectively balance the needs of affordability and accessibility to land and shelter by low and moderate income families in conformity with environmental considerations.

8.3 Standards

The affordability, availability and accessibility to land and housing in the formal market is directly affected by the cost involved in detailed planning and infrastructural standards. The reformulation of the government's shelter policies therefore will involve the revision of development standards so as to achieve the following objectives:

- i Ensuring that development standards reflect the financial capabilities of both the intended beneficiaries and the economy as a whole;
- ii Achieving greater efficiency and equity in the use of limited government resources for housing and infrastructure development;
- iii Creating affordable development options which respond to the overall dimensions of low and moderate income housing demand;
- iv Improving incentives and/or removing disincentives to the future supply of housing in order to stimulate the private sector to increase its level of production and to fill any gaps in the formal housing delivery system;
- v Reducing the incidence of unauthorized land development by increasing the number of affordable plots available on the formal market to all income groups;
- vi Reducing the gap in time between land development and housing construction so that both government and individual household resources are more efficiently utilized and;
- vii Employing well targeted, measurable and transparent subsidies which do not distort the performance of local land markets and financial markets.

8.4 Incremental Development

Low income sites will be developed to lower initial standards and then incrementally upgraded over time. (See proposed Standards for Incremental Development - TABLE 4, page 34)

The advantages of this approach are as follows:

- i It will allow low income families more time to order their priorities and make more efficient use of their resources.
- ii It will reduce the initial cost of a residential plot and allow the potential home owner to devote a greater amount of resources to the construction of a housing unit.
- iii It will satisfy growing low and moderate income housing demand without having to resort to substantially increased levels of government subsidy. Mechanisms such as site valuation, land and building taxes and infrastructure service charges will all be taken into consideration in implementing this approach.

8.5 Development Permission Approvals

The complexity and number of steps involved in obtaining a development approval would be reduced through:



TABLE 4 - Standards for Incremental Development

| Development Types | Recommended Standards |
|--|---|
| TYPE A High Income Private Sector | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Hierarchy of Asphalt roads with curbs and slippers. 2 Paved drainage. 3 Full water supply with storage (as required.) 4 Sewer Collection System. 5 Sewer treatment Plant. 6 Fire Hydrants. 7 Electricity Supply. |
| TYPE B Public Sector Sites and Services Private Sector Land Development | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Asphalt roads with paved curbs and slipper drains. 2 Paved drainage. 3 On lot Water Supply. 4 Septic Tank/Soakaway Filter Trenches. 5 Electricity. 6 Fire Hydrants - One per 20 Lots. |
| TYPE C Public Sector Sites and Services Private Sector Low Income Developments | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Roads with base Course and compacted with gravel Surface. 2 Earthen Road Drainage, Grass Verges 3 Paved Mainline Drainage.. 4 On lot Water Supply. 5 Septic Tank/ Soakaway/ filter Trenches. 6 On Lot Electricity Supply. 7 One fire Hydrant per 50 lots. |
| TYPE D Regularisation of Spontaneous Settlements Squatter Relocation/Containment Sites | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Graded Roadway and Gravel sub-base. 2 Earthen Drainage except for culvert crossings/bridges. 3 Public Standpipe Water. 4 Main Water Supply to lot. 5 Communal Washing/Bathroom Facilities. 6 On Lot Cesspits or Septic Tank Soakaway. 7 Electricity Supply. |

Source: PACDO/Laughlin & Associates - 1994

- i Formal coordination of all involved agencies
- ii The establishment of:
 - Procedures for the formal setting of different levels of standards
 - Procedures for environmental impact assessments and building preservation
 - Procedures for successful implementation of land parcellation and land readjustment schemes
- iii The identification of special development districts (Land Bank)

8.6 Appropriate Legislation

The proposed Urban and Regional Planning Act (URPA) now in draft form is expected to be enacted by the end of this year. The Act would create linkages with other appropriate legislation to ensure that action-oriented implementation is achievable in the sector.

In essence the URPA would address:



- i Decentralization of planning and development control functions;
- ii Formal coordination of all agencies involved in the development approval process;
- iii Procedures for the formal setting of different levels of planning, subdivision and building standards;
- iv Procedures for environmental impact assessments and building preservation;
- v Procedures for successful implementation of land reparation/land readjustment schemes;
- vi Public participation in the planning and development control process;
- vii Establishment of special development districts; and
- viii Establishment of a regional planning framework to enable development of historically neglected areas.

8.7 Housing Finance

As already explained, fundamental problems have been identified in the existing housing finance system.

These include high level of informal housing, the number of houses being built outside of the major urban centres, the inaccessibility to housing finance by the low and moderate income groups, the reduced ability of the public sector to fund the mortgage market and to provide subsidies to improve access and affordability out of budget provisions and substantial housing requirements over the next decade.

Accordingly, the Housing Finance Programme would address these key issues through the following institutions and mechanisms:

- i The IDB-Assisted Loan Programme
- ii The Approved Mortgage Companies Programme
- iii Mortgage Indemnity Insurance
- iv The Credit Union and informal sector lending and
- v Other financing mechanisms

8.8 Community Based Management

This entails the formation of co-operatives and community groups to initiate self-help and self reliance activities to assist in the incremental development of these settlements. It would also aid in building cohesiveness and maintenance of these communities.

8.9 Managing Information

This is a vital component for the work of the Ministry of Housing and Settlements since it relates to the important linkages with information systems at the Central Statistical Office, Town and Country Planning Division, Water and Sewerage Authority and the Land Information System being implemented by the Land and Surveys Department.

The Ministry of Housing and Settlements would put in place mechanisms to service its clientele and inform the wider society of its operations.

8.10 Institutional and Organization Structure

In order to undertake the entire range of programme management in all its manifestation, that is, planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and the redirection of strategies where necessary to achieve the objective the following institutional arrangements as identified at TABLE - 6 are proposed (page 38).

8.11 Schedule of Implementation

Land, settlement, shelter and finance with the appropriate relevant legislation and institutional structure will be co-ordinated to turn adversity into opportunity in Trinidad and Tobago.

TABLE - 5 provides the proposed implementation plan.



8.12 Technical Assistance Requirements

The Trinidad and Tobago Programme recognises that international financing and technical assistance is needed to play a contributing role in the resolution of the problem of housing the entire population.

Key issues to be considered are:

- i The projected demand for 115,000 housing units in Trinidad and Tobago between the years 1995 and 2005;
- ii Approximately 42% of the demand is low income group and the poor ;
- iii Financial investment needed in the sector is estimated at 18.6 billion dollars (TT dollars);
- iv Anticipated subsidy is approximately TT\$3.6 billion dollars;
- v Approximately half of the financial outlay and most of the subsidy would be targeted to the low income group.

Specific assistance required can be in the form of:

- Finance at little or no interest rate for land development, infrastructure and Housing and Settlements development;
- Grant funds for meeting specific costs of the settlements programme;
- Technical assistance or the provision of consultants in specific areas of:
 - a Housing Finance - for tailoring an appropriate approved mortgage lending scheme to beneficiaries of low-cost housing.
 - b Computer hardware and relevant software - for project planning and management in the housing and settlements sector.
 - c Technical assistance (finance) to facilitate professionals and planners including NGO and CBO organizations involved in the housing and settlements sector for:-
 - Formal training at the post graduate level in settlements, land administration, housing finance, and legal aspects associated with the sector, and
 - On-the-job training and through placements in countries with similar experiences as Trinidad and Tobago.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago accepts that the enjoyment of housing is a fundamental human right and its policies are framed accordingly.

MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND SETTLEMENTS
GOVERNMENT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
MARCH 28, 1996



| STAGES & ACTIVITY STREAMS | 1996 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1997 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1998-2000+ | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|----|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|------|---|---|---|----|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|------------|--|--|--|--|
| | Months | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | | |
| STAGE I - ESTABLISH POLICY AND PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK | Cabinet Review and Approval | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Prepare/Pass Urban & Regional Planning Act | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Designate Strategic Land Development Areas | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Set Differential Standards | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Revise Approval Procedures | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Strengthen Approved Mortgage Companies Programme | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Implement Credit Union Reform & Technical Assistance Programme | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Implement Land Rationalisation Programme | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| STAGE II - ESTABLISH ORGANIZATION & MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE | Establish Ministerial Coordinating Committee | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Organise Strategic Implementation & Management Unit (SIMU) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Organise Programme in Key Ministries | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Establish Coordinated Systems & Procedures | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Begin Programme Promotion | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| STAGE III - IMPLEMENT STRATEGY & PROGRAMME FOR LAND MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Continuous Implementation Activities and Review Process | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

TABLE - 5 - PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN LAND AND HOUSING DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND PROGRAMMES 1995 - 2000+

TABLE 6 - PROPOSED ORGANISATIONAL & MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE FOR IMPLEMENTING LAND & SETTLEMENTS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, 1995 - 2000

