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**NEWS RELEASE:**

**INTEGRITY COMMISSION BEGINS INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGED  
ELECTRONIC MAILS**

The Integrity Commission of Trinidad and Tobago, in the exercise of its mandate under Section 33 (a) of the Integrity in Public Life Act (IPLA), has commenced an investigation to determine the authenticity of alleged electronic mails as provided to the Commission by the former President Professor George Maxwell Richards.

The Commission has had response from an international electronic mail service provider and is moving ahead with its investigation.

In June the Commission advised the national community that, based on public statements and matters raised relative to copies of electronic mails forwarded for authentication to the Commission's Chairman by the then President of the Republic, advice was requested from Senior Counsel as to whether those matters can be investigated by the Commission under the provisions of the Integrity in Public Life (IPLA) Act, Chapter 22:01.

The Senior Counsel advised that the Commission indeed has the jurisdiction to consider and enquire matters where there have been breaches of the IPLA and where an offence has been committed under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Senior Counsel's advice was concluded as follows:

“It is clear from the above provisions and in particular section 138(d) of the Constitution and section 5(e) and (f) and section 33(a) of the Act read together with section 24(1) and (2), section 27(1) and section 29(1) of the Act that the Commission is vested with jurisdiction to investigate the matters raised in the purported e-mails to determine whether the conduct of any person who falls under the purview of the Commission is dishonest, corrupt or conducive to corruption.

“The Commission also has the jurisdiction to consider and enquire whether there have been breaches of the Act (which would include breaches of the Code of Ethics) or whether an offence has been committed under the Prevention of Corruption Act, Chap. 11:11. Of that there can be no doubt.

“It is now public knowledge that the purported e-mails are currently the subject of a police investigation which is being monitored by the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions. It is entirely a matter for the Commission to determine whether, notwithstanding the police investigation, it wishes to exercise its own jurisdiction under the Act to carry out its own investigations utilizing its powers under the Act to determine whether the purported emails disclose dishonest or corrupt conduct, conduct conducive to corruption or breaches of the Act on the part of persons in public life or persons who fall under the purview of the Commission. It should be noted that by section 5(2) (b) of the Act, the Commission may at any time make use of the services of the police if it considers it appropriate to do so. It should further be noted that by section 34 (7), if after an investigation has been conducted, the Commission is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that an offence has been committed, it is required to make a report to the Director of Public Prosecutions who may take such action as he thinks appropriate and by section 31(3), it shall report to the Director of Public Prosecutions any breach of the Code of Conduct by a Member of Parliament.”

It should be noted that Chairman Kenneth Gordon has recused himself from consideration in this matter.

August 30<sup>th</sup> 2013