



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **CAISO: Sex and Gender Justice launches the Model LGBTI+ Workplace Policy for Trinidad and Tobago**

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**CAISO: Sex and Gender Justice**, in partnership with the Equal Opportunity Commission and with funding from the British High Commission to Trinidad and Tobago, today launched a Model LGBTI+ Workplace Policy for Trinidad and Tobago.

The Model Policy is the result of an iterative process enabled by the professional services of Dr. Wynette Harewood and Janet Peters of the Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business, who engaged private sector employers, and employees from the LGBTI+ community in Trinidad and Tobago, in its development. Expert reviews of the draft policy were conducted by the Equal Opportunity Commission, Chamber business committees, civil society and other stakeholder groups, to ensure that it was fit-for-purpose, achievable and fully supportive of the LGBTI+ employee's ability to find an equal place at work.

The Model Policy offers workplaces - small and large, public and private - and the stakeholders around them who wish to close the gaps in LGBTI+ workplace equality, measures for implementing change. Closing these gaps and ensuring LGBTI+ people find an equal place at work are critical, not just for matters of fairness and equity, but also for the economic resilience of companies and the national economy.

The launch event, "Finding an Equal Place at Work" featured remarks from Chairman of the Equal Opportunity Commission, Mr. Ian Roach and Her Excellency, Harriet Cross, High Commissioner of the United Kingdom to Trinidad and Tobago.

"While Sexual Orientation is not yet covered under the Equal Opportunity Act, the Commission has called for amendments to be made to sexual orientation as a status of discrimination. In the meantime, this policy is important to protect the rights and support the LGBTI+ Community in the world of work. The Commission unreservedly recommends that employers implement this model policy and other appropriate policies to create or foster a culture of inclusivity. I am hopeful that one day, with the work of CAISO, the Commission and other allies, that this ethos will spread from the workplace to all spaces." - Ian Roach, Chair of the Equal Opportunity Commission.

"The policy is an opportunity for organizations to start important discussions with their staff, and is a step towards creating safer and fairer workplace environments for everybody...which is frankly not just important for LGBTI+ persons or their allies, but for everyone in these workplaces." - H.E. Harriet Cross, UK High Commissioner

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The event also featured a brief presentation by Liam Rezende of the Open for Business coalition on the findings from the just released “The Economic Case for LGBT+ Inclusion in the Caribbean” research (which was also launched today and the report available online). The CAISO launch featured a roundtable panel discussion which engaged the significance of the Model Policy for LGBTQI+ employees, their employers, human resource practitioners and advocates of LGBTQI+ rights. The Panel included: Xoe Sazzle (Trinidad & Tobago Transgender Coalition); Teresa White (ANSA McAL); Dr Wynette Harewood (Lok Jack Global School of Business), and Kellog Nkemakolam (CAISO: Sex and Gender Justice).

"The ability to implement policies like (the Model LGBTI+ Workplace policy) in the workplace, can literally save lives." - Xoe Sazzle, Community Liaison Officer, T&T Transgender Coalition

"If people can't be who they are and can't be authentic to themselves, how can they bring trust to the employment relationship?" - Teresa White, Shared Chief Services Officer, ANSA MCAL

Fourteen (14) companies have already signed on as early adopter Champions of the Model Policy, namely: *Advisors Next Door; AMCHAM; ANSA MCAL Group; Davyn Limited; DeSiu Masks; Esau Oilfield Supplies Limited; Heliconia Cakery; Imjin Security Services; Katrina Therapy Centre; MEP Publishers; Marine Minded Network; Nao Films; Regency Recruitment and Resources; and Republic Financial Holdings Limited.*

Stakeholder engagements will continue as CAISO works to invite more champions to adopt, implement and support the Model Policy. CAISO calls upon all workplaces to create enabling environments for LGBTI+ inclusion through not only implementing a LGBTI+ workplace policy, but also through providing LGBTI+ sensitivity training for all staff and management. The CAISO team is available to offer support to any workplace that wants to champion and implement our model LGBTI+Workplace Policy.

“LGBTI+ communities remain at risk of discrimination and violence. CAISO has been calling for legal protections in the Equal Opportunity Act for a decade. It is beyond time to end legal discrimination. Our model LGBTI+ workplace policy fills a serious gap and directly offers employers tools to prevent workplace discrimination“. - Angeliq V. Nixon, Director, CAISO.

The public is invited to view the launch video on CAISO's Facebook page @caiso and to read more about the Model Policy at [www.caisott.org/lgbti-workplace-policy](http://www.caisott.org/lgbti-workplace-policy).

**CAISO: Sex and Gender Justice** is a feminist Civil Society Organisation committed to ensuring wholeness, justice and inclusion for LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex) communities, by developing analysis, alliances and advocacy. **For more info on the policy or our work generally, visit [caisott.org](http://caisott.org) or email us at [info@caisott.org](mailto:info@caisott.org).**

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