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# Press Release

## **The Equal Opportunity Tribunal to begin Trials in October**

Commencement of Trials at the Equal Opportunity Tribunal since the appointment of the new Chairman Her Honour Madam Justice Mrs. Donna Prowell-Raphael.

**Chaguanas, October 5, 2018:** On October 10<sup>th</sup> Trials will resume at the Equal Opportunity Tribunal. These are the first trials since the appointment of the new Chairman Her Honour Madam Justice Mrs. Donna Prowell Raphael on April 03<sup>rd</sup>, 2018. Justice Prowell-Raphael will be sitting with Lay Assessor Ms. Leela Ramdeen.

Over the last six months the new Chairman along with the staff have been working tirelessly to implement new systems and structures. In a statement issued by Chairman/Judge of the tribunal at the opening of the law term, H.H Mrs. Donna Prowell-Raphael, J. expressed optimism that stakeholders will be better served with the state-of-the-art initiatives made despite the potentially financially paralysing situation of the facility.

Among other innovations, Attorneys can now expect to receive email reminders of court deadlines and dates, while video conferencing for case management through desktops, laptops even cell phones may soon be a reality.

The tribunal is a superior court of record enjoying similar status to that of the High Court and the Industrial Court with powers to impose fines, make orders for damages and/or grant injunctions to persons who feel they are being discriminated against.

The Tribunal (though often mistaken for it) is not the same entity as, or a part of, the Equal Opportunity Commission. The Tribunal's functions are judicial – and are independent and distinct from the conciliatory role and functions of the Commission.

The Commission receives complaints of discrimination for conciliation under the Act. Complaints that cannot be resolved by conciliation or remain unresolved after conciliation can be referred by the Commission to the Tribunal for judicial adjudication and determination.

October 5, 2018