



Any reply or subsequent reference to this communication should be addressed to the Contractor-General and the following reference quoted:-

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MEDIA RELEASE

Trinidad and Tobago Parliament Invites Contractor General to Share Experiences Aimed at Assisting in Reform of Country's Procurement Framework

Kingston; January 12, 2012 – Jamaica's Contractor General, Greg Christie, has accepted an invitation to pay a one-day visit to Trinidad and Tobago to hold *in camera* discussions with members of that country's Joint Select Parliamentary Committee on Public Procurement, as the Committee seeks to gain a first-hand and expert account of the operation and oversight of Jamaica's procurement systems.

The Trinidad and Tobago Government is currently engaged in the process of reforming its procurement framework to secure, among other things, improved levels of effectiveness and transparency in the award and oversight of Government contracts. In consequence, the Parliament has been reviewing certain legislative proposals which have been submitted to it for pre-legislative scrutiny.

In his letter of invitation to the Contractor General, which was dated January 3, 2012, the Speaker of the Trinidad and Tobago House of Representatives, the Hon. Wade Mark, advised that the Parliament's Joint Select Committee on Public Procurement had become "aware of the progress that has been made in Jamaica since the establishment of the country's Office of the Contractor General (OCG)".

The Committee was, therefore, of the view that "it would be beneficial to hold discussions with the Contractor General of Jamaica in order to hear of the experiences of your Office and to gain a better understanding of the procurement process and the system as it operates in Jamaica".

The Trinidad and Tobago Joint Select Parliamentary Committee on Public Procurement has among its members its Chair, the Minister of Planning and the Economy, the Minister of Legal Affairs, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Education, the Attorney General and the Leader of the Opposition.

Only recently, in September 2011, a similar overture for assistance was made to the Contractor General by the Deputy Governor of the Cayman Islands (CI) Government, the Hon. Donovan Ebanks. Subsequently, on November 28, 2011, an official CI Government Delegation, which was led by the country's Premier, the Hon. McKeever Bush, met with the Contractor General and other OCG officials in Jamaica when they were briefed on the OCG's role in the monitoring and investigation of Government of Jamaica contracts and licences. While in Jamaica, the CI Delegation also received briefings from the Office of the Financial Secretary and the National Contracts Commission.



The Contractor General is scheduled to travel to Trinidad on Sunday and to return to the island on Tuesday. He will be accompanied by Mr. Craig Beresford, the OCG's Senior Director of Monitoring Operations, Corporate Communications and Special Projects, and Ms. Sashein Wright, Special Projects Assistant to the Contractor General, Communications Officer and Special Investigator.

The OCG, which is an Independent Anti-Corruption Commission of the Parliament of Jamaica, is vested with the exclusive statutory and quasi-judicial authority to monitor and to investigate the award and termination of all Government of Jamaica contracts and licenses – this with a view to ensuring probity, impartiality, merit, propriety and the absence of irregularity in the Jamaica Public Sector procurement, contract award and licensing processes.

The OCG's jurisdiction currently covers the activities of roughly 200 ministries, agencies, departments and statutory corporations of Government. Together, they issue more than 600 different categories of licences and permits, and award in excess of 11,000 high-value construction, goods, services and asset divestment Government contracts, each year, valuing an estimated \$110 billion, or an amount which is equivalent to roughly one-fifth of the overall annual expenditure budget of the Government of Jamaica.

The award of Government contracts and licences, and the divestment of State-owned assets, are recognized as constituting the single largest corruption enabling conduit that exists today in any country in the world.

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