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MEDIA RELEASE

**OCG Welcomes Government's Commitment to Establish
Single Anti-Corruption Agency in Current Legislative Year**

Kingston; May 11, 2012 – The Office of the Contractor General (OCG) welcomes the Government's commitment, given yesterday, during the Governor General's Throne Speech in Parliament, to pass legislation during the current Legislative Year to "rationalize Jamaica's institutional arrangements for fighting corruption, by consolidating them under a single anti-corruption agency having strong powers".

"Although the details of what the Agency will look like are yet to be disclosed, the OCG, nevertheless, believes that the Portia Simpson-Miller Administration must be commended for the bold and decisive step that it has taken to come to grips, once and for all, with Jamaica's pervasive corruption problem", said Contractor General, Greg Christie.

Jamaica has been consistently ranked by Transparency International (TI), the international anti-corruption watchdog, as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. For the past ten (10) years, it has never scored higher than 4.0 on TI's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), where a score of 10 is perceived to be least corrupt and 1 as most corrupt.

The Contractor General has repeatedly advocated, since March 2010, for the establishment of a Single Independent Anti-Corruption State Agency for Jamaica, to consolidate the functions of the Integrity Commission, the Corruption Prevention Commission and the OCG, and to vest in that Agency the mandate, among other things, to criminally investigate and to independently prosecute all corruption and related criminal offences.

The OCG has also consistently expressed the view that the Special Prosecutor Bill, which was introduced before Parliament by the former Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) Administration, did not go far enough to seriously address Jamaica's corruption woes.

As conceptualized, the Bill had excluded the OCG from its purview, despite the fact that it is universally recognized that the largest opportunity that exists, in monetary terms, for corruption in any country, lies in the illicit manipulation of the award of Government contracts and the divestment of lucrative State assets.



The OCG also supports the Administration’s caveat that “there will be explicit provisions to prevent abuse of the authority” of the Agency.

The caveat is consistent with one of the fundamental elements of the OCG’s documented proposal for the structuring of the Agency, namely that “the Agency and its leadership should be subjected to certain institutional checks and balances, inclusive of appropriate recall mechanisms for the leadership of the Agency, to ensure the Agency’s operational probity, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness”.

“I have recently discussed the Administration’s ongoing evaluation of the OCG’s Proposal with the Minister of Justice, Senator the Hon. Mark Golding. I am satisfied that credible and good faith efforts are being pursued by the Administration to conceptualize and, hopefully, to implement, in the near term, an appropriate consolidated institutional arrangement to effectively and to efficiently fight corruption in Jamaica”, said the Contractor General.

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