



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

No. :

TELEPHONE No. : 929-8560/6466

FAX No. : 929-7335

E-mail: general@ocg.gov.jm

OFFICE OF THE CONTRACTOR-GENERAL  
17 KNUTSFORD BOULEVARD  
P.O. Box 540  
KINGSTON 5  
JAMAICA, W.I.

## PRESS RELEASE

### **CONTRACTOR GENERAL SEEKS SUPPORT OF PRIME MINISTER AND RE-ITERATES ENFORCEMENT OF DEMAND RELATING TO CONTRACTS UNDER \$4 MILLION IN VALUE**

Newly appointed Contractor General, Greg Christie, says that he has asked the Prime Minister, the Hon. Mrs. Portia Simpson-Miller, to strengthen the resources of the Office of the Contractor General (OCG).

He has also asked her to ensure that all Ministries of Government and Public Bodies comply with his requisition to provide to him particulars of every Government contract which is awarded that is between a value of J\$250,000 and J\$4 million. The new OCG, anti-corruption regime took effect yesterday, May 1, and the Contractor General has re-iterated that it will be enforced.

The request, for the Prime Minister's support, was made by Mr. Christie in a Courtesy Call which he paid upon Mrs. Portia Simpson-Miller, last Friday.

The Contractor General told the Prime Minister that for the past 7 years, his Office had been running at a 20% deficit below the staffing complement which Parliament had approved for it in May 1999.

...more



- 2 -

He said that he had made several written representations to the Cabinet Office on the matter since assuming his office on December 1, 2005. He said his Office currently had only 8 Inspectors to physically monitor and investigate thousands of Government contracts island-wide and that its operating budget was far from being adequate.

And, in alluding to his recent requisition for all Public Bodies to provide him with relevant particulars of contracts awarded between a value of J\$250,000 and J\$4 million, the Contractor General told the Prime Minister that this was one way in which technology could be utilized to assure transparency in this category of Government contracts.

The Contractor General reiterated that the requisition was one which was very easy to comply with. He said that all that it required was for every Public Body to complete a simple computerized form, once every month, providing mainly one to three word answers to questions which are strategically asked about the contracts which it had awarded.

The computerized form, which has been specially designed by the OCG and which is available for download from the OCG's website, must then be submitted electronically to the Public Body's controlling Ministry. Each of the 14 Government Ministries, in turn, would then be required to merge all of the data which it receives into one spreadsheet, using the same OCG computerized form, and submit it to the Contractor General on a compact disc.

...more



- 3 -

Once in the hands of the OCG, the data would then be instantly published on the OCG's website, thus ensuring full transparency of the particulars of these contract awards.

Currently, the particulars of all Government contract awards of \$4 million and above, in value, are published on the OCG's website. Very little, however, is known about contracts which fall under the \$4 million threshold.

Mr. Christie explained that the OCG intends to flag the electronic data which it receives, using special computerized technologies, to assist it to identify breaches of the Government's procurement procedures.

"This will enable us to more intelligently inform our manual contract monitoring and investigation activities and to deploy our limited field resources accordingly ", Mr. Christie indicated.

And the Contractor General, wants to publicly confirm that the OCG's Requisition stands and that it will be enforced against all Ministries and Public Bodies.

In calling attention to the necessity for full compliance and the support of the Government, he warned that "the little evidence which we have would suggest that the contract grouping which is below \$4 million is plagued with procurement procedure violations of alarming and widespread proportions. The problem appears to be pervasive and has raised the real

...more



specter of a breeding ground for corruption in the public sector procurement process. It is therefore my considered opinion that to continue to ignore it would be nothing short of irresponsible”.

Mr. Christie has also said that there is absolutely nothing which is bureaucratic or impossible about the OCG’s electronic requisition. “What alternative mechanism would you offer to effectively deal with the problem?” he has asked.

“Short of manually monitoring each of these contract awards, a feat which would be impossible to achieve even if the OCG had 500 field inspectors, there is no other methodical, reliable or practical way of knowing which Public Bodies are violating Government’s established procurement procedures, when they are violating the procedures and how and to what extent they are doing so”, Mr. Christie reasoned.

The Contractor General also observed that completing and filing statutory requisitions, on the pain of criminal prosecution if false information is provided, is how the modern world monitors, flags and enforces compliance with most of its regulatory, revenue and anti-corruption laws.

“That is what tax returns, customs forms and other routine statutory declarations are all about. The OCG’s requisition is by no means any different, except that it is technology driven. The data which is supplied will require very little human resources to input, publish and evaluate”, he said.

----- END -----



Contact: Andrea Hoo Fung  
Communications Officer  
Office of the Contractor-General  
17 Knutsford Boulevard  
Kingston 5

Phone: 929-6460

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2006