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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTRACTOR GENERAL ANNOUNCES SUCCESS WITH MAJOR GOVERNMENT CONTRACT AWARD ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE

Kingston, January 11, 2007 - Contractor General, Greg Christie, has announced a 100% compliance success rate with his recent demand for 191 Public Bodies to file their 2006 2nd and 3rd Quarter Contract Award (QCA) reports with the Office of the Contractor General (OCG) or to show cause why they should be exempted from doing so. The final deadline which had been set for meeting the demand was January 12, 2007.

The record and unprecedented response from all 191 Public Bodies follows a warning of criminal prosecution which was issued by the Contractor General, on October 30, 2006, to Permanent Secretaries and Public Body Heads. At the time of the warning, as many as 165 of the 191 Public Bodies which had been requisitioned, had ignored the requisition despite the expiry of the preliminary deadline.

Mr. Christie had warned then that the unlawful and flagrant disregard by Public Bodies and Officials of the requisitions of the OCG, especially as they related to the supply of critical contract award data, was systemic, had reached alarming proportions and would not be tolerated by him.

“It is now abundantly clear that the OCG is compelled to act and must do so forthrightly and dispassionately if it is to effectively discharge its several mandates under the law”, the Contractor General had then remarked.

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The requirement for Public Bodies to file quarterly reports of their contract awards, in the value range of \$250,000 and \$4,000,000, is a special anti-corruption initiative of the Contractor General. It was launched effective with contracts which are awarded as at May 1, 2006.

The requirement is an ongoing one and all procuring Public Bodies are now legally obliged to submit their QCA reports, in the prescribed format, within 30 days of the ending of each calendar year quarter. Any procuring Public Body or Accounting Officer who fails to fully comply with the requisition will now become liable to automatic criminal prosecution without warning.

“The below \$4 million category of Government contract awards represents what I would like to characterize as the final un-chartered frontier of the Government contract awards territory”, the Contractor General said.

Whereas the National Contracts Commission is currently mandated to independently scrutinize and endorse all recommendations for Government contract awards with values of \$4 million and above, the process which involves the award of contracts, below \$4 million in value, has for years been presided over by the Government Ministry and/or the Public Body which ultimately makes the award”.

“There has been very little or no independent methodical scrutiny of the process and so the OCG’s QCA regime has been designed to adjust the status quo in a very radical way”, says Mr. Christie.

“The regime is structured to bring probity, scrutiny, transparency, competition, discipline and compliance with the Government’s procurement procedures, to the sub \$4 million contract award process. We will utilize special information technologies to assist in the analysis of the QCA data and we will make the

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results public. Additionally, the OCG's inspectorate will now be repositioned to more efficiently and effectively execute its core contract monitoring and investigative functions. In a nutshell, Public Bodies which have been acting outside of the rules will now be identified and brought to book", Mr. Christie said.

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