



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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE CONTRACTOR GENERAL ADOPTS ‘ZERO TOLERANCE’ APPROACH AND TAKES STEPS TO INITIATE PROSECUTION OF HEADS OF OVER 60 PUBLIC BODIES

Kingston, February 5, 2007 – The Office of the Contractor General (OCG) has announced its decision to recommend to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) that the Accounting and/or Principal Officers of over 60 delinquent Public Bodies should be prosecuted under Section 29 of the Contractor General Act for failing to comply with a lawful requisition of the OCG.

The OCG’s ‘Zero Tolerance’ stance follows the failure of the delinquent Public Bodies to submit their 2006 4th Quarter Contract Award (QCA) Reports on or before the prescribed deadline of January 31, 2007.

In a letter, which was dated February 1, 2007, the OCG has asked the DPP to guide it in its preparation of its formal referral of the matter.

The requirement for Public Bodies to file quarterly reports of their contract awards in the value range of \$250,000 and \$3,999,999.99, is a special anti-corruption initiative of Contractor General, Greg Christie. It was launched effective with contracts which were awarded as at May 1, 2006. It is intended, among other things, to bring probity, transparency and independent scrutiny to the award of Government contracts which fall beneath the \$4 million threshold.

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The requirement is an ongoing one and all procuring Public Bodies are now legally obliged to submit QCA reports to the OCG within 30 days of the ending of each calendar year quarter.

Previous efforts on the part of the OCG to have Public Bodies file their 2006 2nd and 3rd Quarter QCA reports had met with resistance from several state agencies. Most 2006 2nd and 3rd Quarter Reports were filed only after the Contractor General, on October 30, 2006, threatened over 190 Public Bodies with prosecution and further extended the filing deadline to November 30, 2006 and then to January 12, 2007. The deadline for the submission of the 2006 4th Quarter QCA Reports was January 31, 2007.

The Contractor General, who is presently in Singapore attending a Commonwealth Anti-Corruption Management and Governance Training Programme, had previously warned that any further refusal by Public Bodies to comply with the requisitions of his Office would be met with prosecution.

“Jamaica’s anti-corruption laws have not, in the past, been steadfastly enforced. Scant regard is also being paid by key stakeholders to efforts to bring probity, transparency and accountability to the public sector procurement process. The OCG, however, does not intend for this to continue. It has therefore entered into force a ‘Zero Tolerance’ stance. Every Accounting and Principal Officer of every Public Body must respect the lawful requisitions of the OCG. When lawful demands are made for the provision of information regarding the award of Government contracts, it is the OCG’s expectation that those demands will be met”, Mr. Christie said.

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