



**JOINT CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL
FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

The Professional Centre Bldg., 1st Floor Unit B202,
11-13 Fitzblackman Drive, Wrightson Rd. Ext.,
Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

E-mail: jcctl1@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.jcc.org.tt>

Tel: (868) 623-9396

Fax: (868) 623-2949

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Contact: Desiree Arthur-Lopez jcctl1@gmail.com (868) 623-9396

**November 17, 2011 – Port of Spain, TT—
JCC Press Briefing on PUBLIC PROCUREMENT**

Welcome to Members of the Media attending this important briefing.

Let me introduce our colleagues –

The Peoples' Partnership's [manifesto](#), at page 18, commits to –

Procurement

- *Prioritise the passing of procurement legislation and appropriate rules and regulations*
- *Establish equitable arrangements for an efficient procurement system ensuring transparency and accountability by all government departments and state enterprises...*

The Public Procurement legislative process has paused, with the work of the original Joint Select Committee of Parliament having been preserved for a new JSC to take over in this session.

We were advised that the new JSC is to be appointed shortly to complete the work of the original Committee and we would like to note for the record that our Private Sector/Civil Society group stands ready to resume work on this.

Our group comprises

- The JCC
- Trinidad & Tobago Chamber of Industry & Commerce
- Trinidad & Tobago Manufacturers' Association
- Trinidad & Tobago Transparency Institute

As such, we are the leading Private Sector/Civil Society stakeholders with the intention of our proposals being to promote Transparency, Accountability and Value-for-Money in the expenditure of Public Money.

The new Public Procurement systems we are proposing will enhance competition, reduce political interference in the award of contracts and act as an effective anti-corruption measure. All of those objectives will be of great benefit to our nation, particularly the silent majority, by which we are referring to the unborn citizens of the future.



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Our position on the legislative process is that, given the far-reaching consequences of these proposals, the government must publish the draft legislation for public comment before the matter is debated in Parliament. One of our greatest concerns on this Public Procurement matter is with respect to the Uff Report. The Minister of Justice is responsible for the implementation of the 91 recommendations in the Uff Report and JCC has written to Minister Volney on three occasions to offer our assistance in any working group that Ministry might have established. We have never had a reply, but we will continue to insist that the Uff Enquiry has to have a meaning for the progress of our nation and that has to mean that its recommendations are implemented.

As an active part of the drive for new, effective Public Procurement systems, we also have serious, shared concerns on the Invader's Bay situation and those are highlighted at <http://www.jcc.org.tt/invadersbay.htm>. We have all written to the Minister of Planning & the Economy to state our objections and all attended a meeting with Minister Dr. Bhoë Tewarie and Minister Stephen Cadiz on 26th September. We note that our concerns have not been addressed and that the said Minister is reported to have said that "*...The winning proposal for the Invaders Bay development project will be revealed within two weeks...*"

The lack of a proper Needs Assessment is a glaring omission in this Invader's Bay matter, as a result of which there were no clear rules for project evaluation at the time the RFP was published. When we asked the Ministers during our meeting, we were told that those evaluation rules would be finalised after the submissions were received. We regard that as completely unacceptable in terms of transparency and proper process in tendering.

Related to that is the fact that the RFP issued by MPE is itself silent as to the existing three strategic plans for the Port-of-Spain area, such that this would appear to be taking place without proper context. There needs to be wide public consultation on this proposed development if proper levels of transparency and participation are to be achieved.

There is also the issue of the urgent need to diversify our economy, so that we can develop non-energy sources of foreign exchange earnings. This proposed development is an excellent opportunity to address that issue of foreign exchange leakage during the construction and operation phases.



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We offered MPE to revise the RFP, so as to conform with their 12-month deadline for start-on-site, but they refused this.

The approach being taken on Invader's Bay to date represents a continuation of the old, which makes it effectively a breach of trust and promise to the national community.

We once again urge the MPE to take the opportunity to withdraw this RFP and revise the process.

Thank you, we will take questions now...