



**JOINT CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL FOR
THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

The Professional Centre Building
1st Floor Unit B202, 11-13 Fitzblackman Drive, Wrightson Rd. South, Port of Spain
Tel: (868) 623-9396/ 627-2522 Fax: (868) 625-5749
jcctt1@gmail.com www.jcc.org.tt

14th May, 2013

Senator Dr. the Honourable James Armstrong
Chairman
Independent Review Committee of the
Debe to Mon Desir Segment of the
San Fernando to Point Fortin
Highway

Dear *James,*

Highway Review Committee

The JCC is writing to convey our sincere thanks to you and the members of the Highway Review Committee for the outstanding efforts you all put into the production of the groundbreaking HRC Report.

The JCC and its Civil Society Kindred Associations - the Trinidad & Tobago Transparency Institute (TTTI), the Federation of Trades Unions and NGO's (FITUN) and Working Women for Social Progress (Working Women) - made our intervention - <http://www.jcc.org.tt/JCC-PMreroute.pdf> - into this regionally unprecedented hunger-strike set against a large-scale national development project, with the intention of restoring public trust to what had become a potentially explosive situation. Most importantly, we were attempting to replace the negative ideals of 'might is right' and degrading brinksmanship with the progressive ideals of fact-based decision-making.

The HRC comprised nineteen (19) eminent regional experts covering the range of pertinent issues as detailed in our Press Release of 5th December - <http://www.jcc.org.tt/releases/5dec2012-hiway-reroute.pdf> - and it must be noted that you all worked diligently and with a high degree of professionalism through two of our festive seasons of Christmas and Carnival to produce the required Report within the demanding 60-day timescale.

The HRC toured the area under consideration, met with public officials from NIDCO and various Ministries as well as the Highway Re-Route Movement and other interested parties, so as to consider the diverse perspectives and the factual record.

...//2 The HRC's Report

Association of Professional Engineers of Trinidad & Tobago - Trinidad & Tobago Institute of Architects
Trinidad & Tobago Society of Planners - Trinidad & Tobago Contractors' Association
Institute of Surveyors of Trinidad & Tobago-Trinidad & Tobago Chapter of the International Facility Management
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The HRC's Report - <http://www.jcc.org.tt/highway-report.pdf> - was delivered to JCC, NIDCO and the Highway Re-Route Movement, as previously agreed, on 4th February and your team then found itself immersed in a further demanding exercise of answering various queries arising from the State and its implementing agency, NIDCO. Those numerous queries were professionally handled by the HRC, with its Report being published on 4th March. It is important to note that despite the challenges, all the findings and recommendations of the submitted Report were retained in the published Report as noted in your transmission letter of 4th March 2013 - <http://www.jcc.org.tt/JCC-hiway-review.pdf>. The detailed record of the correspondence between NIDCO/other State Agencies and the HRC is now available at <http://www.jcc.org.tt/JCC-hiway-addendum.pdf>.

It now remains for the main parties to the original dispute and indeed, the wider public, to learn the many valuable lessons contained in this study. The Report has no statutory weight, so the degree to which its findings are observed is entirely a matter for the parties concerned. That said, the HRC Report is of real significance as a professional study of the facts of this controversial, large-scale development. The JCC is of the view that as the first Civil Society project review undertaken in the Caribbean, your collective efforts as embodied in the HRC Report are both historic and critical to a new development path which takes proper cognisance of the objective facts.

We are also aware that the HRC Report is now receiving attention in wider circles beyond those who are involved in the 'profession of the land and physical development'. Indeed, some commentators have dubbed it the '*Armstrong Report*' and we are sure it will form an imperishable element in the building of a new way of developing our Caribbean societies.

The JCC was also pleased to receive on 19th April, NIDCO's contribution of \$742,400 towards a total expenditure in excess of \$1,100,000.

In that connection, the JCC is also giving special recognition to the efforts made by your team through reduced honoraria which allowed the JCC to manage the finances of this demanding exercise.

James, Colleagues, please accept our deepest, most respectful thanks for a very tough job- Well Done!

Yours sincerely,
**JOINT CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL
FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**



Afra Raymond, BSc, FRICS
President

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