



JOINT CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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JCC PRESS RELEASE

The Joint Consultative Council for the Construction Industry - JCC – is completely opposed to the recently-proclaimed provisions of the Trinidad and Tobago Administration of Justice (Indictable Proceedings) Act 2011 which have the effect of creating a loophole to allow the high-profile persons accused in the Piarco Airport scandal to escape trial. The Bernard Commission was an expensive and critical Enquiry into the Piarco Airport scandal which revealed evidence of massive corruption, bid-rigging, bribe-paying, back-fitting and other practices which amounted to a series of criminal assaults on our nation's Treasury. The JCC played a leading role in calling for and submitting evidence to the Bernard Commission which exposed abuse of power and corrupt practices in some of the highest offices in our country. There have been high-level convictions and imprisonments arising directly from the Bernard Commission, yet there has been no action on effectively prosecuting the accused parties in our own Courts.

“The effect of the new laws which were proclaimed would have been to create a legal means for those accused persons to escape a trial and oblige the Court to have made a verdict of not guilty. The JCC deploras such an intended result in this matter as being contrary to good order and seemingly intended to promote the notion that white-collar crime pays.”

The JCC is calling for ***immediate*** corrective action by the Attorney General and the Minister of Justice, including repealing the recently-proclaimed sections of this Act, to ensure that the trials of the Piarco Airport scandal accused can proceed as promised on several occasions to the public. ***Justice must not only be done, it must be seen to be done.*** Even after the necessary immediate corrective action, the JCC is calling on the Prime Minister to make a formal, full statement to the Parliament to give an accounting for the manner in which this most important matter has been handled, including why it was thought advisable to have those particular clauses of this new law proclaimed at the particular moment of celebrating our country's 50th anniversary of Independence.

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 and Tobago Chapter of the International Facility Management Association

Given the specific assurances given to the Parliament as to the pre-conditions to the government's intended proclamation of this new law, the role of the President in assenting to these particular clauses at that particular moment of national celebration and maximum distraction is a matter for serious concern.

Publish the Bernard Report now

The JCC is repeating its call for the immediate publication of the full Report of the Bernard Commission into the Piarco Airport scandal.

Implement the Uff Report recommendations now

The JCC is calling on this administration to implement the Uff Report recommendations now as promised in the 2010 election campaign. The JCC completely rejects the position of the Minister of Justice that the Joint Select Committee on Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Property is handling that implementation process. Only one of the 91 recommendations of the Uff Report has any relation to the work of that Joint Select Committee, so those need to be implemented now.

If this administration is serious about attacking the wave of white-collar crime which is drowning our country, the Uff Report recommendations will be implemented now.

Public Procurement reform now

The JCC is renewing its call for the immediate implementation of a new Public Procurement system to eliminate the waste and theft of Public Money. This administration campaigned on a promise to implement the new Public Procurement system within one year of the May 2010 election, so we are way overdue for those new laws.

The JCC and its colleagues in the Private Sector/Civil Society group have submitted a complete DRAFT BILL to the Joint Select Committee, so that needs to become law now.

If this administration is serious about attacking the wave of white-collar crime which is drowning our country, the DRAFT BILL on Public Procurement and disposal of Public Property as prepared by the Private Sector/Civil Society group will be immediately tabled in Parliament for debate and enactment

In this, our nation's 50th year of independence, our Parliament re-convened during its vacation to approve Financial laws on the request of a foreign government.

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The JCC is calling for Parliament to be reconvened for the immediate correction of this gross error in proclaiming this new law.

The JCC is also calling on this administration to make the passing of new Public Procurement laws an urgent priority.

Thank you for your support on these important issues of national development.

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