



JOINT CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

3 pages

19th May, 2015

START OF PRESS RELEASE

Port of Spain- After years of heavy campaigning the JCC is pleased to note that the Public Procurement & Disposal of Public Property Act (No 1 of 2015) was approved by Parliament on 16th December 2014 and assented to by President Carmona on 14th January 2015.

This progress was the result of solid collaboration between the kindred associations in the Private Sector Civil Society group - Joint Consultative Council for the Construction Industry (JCC); Trinidad and Tobago Transparency Institute (TTTI); Trinidad and Tobago Chamber of Industry and Commerce; Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association (TTMA); American Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Trinidad and Tobago (AmCham); Federation of Independent Trade Unions & NGOs (FITUN); Trinidad and Tobago Coalition of Service Industries (TTCSI) and the Trinidad and Tobago Local Content Chamber

Although the new law has been passed, the Office of Procurement Regulation (OPR) is not yet operational.

The JCC is now calling for urgent implementation of the new law to tackle the continuing waste and theft of Public Money with which our country is beset.

The proper implementation of the new law requires the appointment of experienced, independent and steadfast persons to the OPR; the writing and approval of effective Regulations and the settling of administrative arrangements.

The JCC is also noting the supportive position in respect of this new law as stated by the Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Keith Rowley, at the T&T Chamber of Industry & Commerce meeting on Friday 1st May, 2015.

The JCC notes with serious concern the sod-turning for the long-awaited 150-bed Arima General Hospital on Thursday 7th May 2015. This project is to be built under a Government to Government (G2G) Arrangement with the Peoples Republic of China at an estimated cost of between \$1.5 Billion and \$1.8 Billion TTD. This seems to be a sole-selective award of yet another major contract to China Railway Construction Ltd.

Clause 7 (2) of [the Act](#) relates to G2G arrangements and it states that contracts for *"...the procurement of goods, works or services shall be governed by this Act and shall promote the socio-economic policies of Trinidad and Tobago and shall adhere to the objects of this Act..."*

G2G procurements under the new Act would therefore all have to satisfy the objects of the Act and that would be bolstered by clause 7 (3) which obliges the Regulator to publish the results of the mandatory S.29 vetting of prospective contractors/suppliers. The standard safeguards are enhanced in the case of G2G procurements by clause 7 (3) which requires the results of the due diligence vetting to be laid in Parliament as an additional layer of transparency.

In the present case of the Arima General Hospital project, the JCC would request that the State answer these important questions -

- How was Value for Money ensured in this project?
- Has the total cost been established for this project? In relation to the reported range of construction cost from \$1.5 to \$1.8 Billion, what is the justification for that \$300M gap?
- Did the selected contractor satisfy a rigorous due diligence review?
- What, if any, are the enforceable measures to guarantee proper Local Content in this project?

Without timely and complete answers to those elementary questions, one could readily suspect that this is yet another mega-contract which does little to serve the Public Interest

The new law would have dealt solidly with those specified concerns. But that Act remains unimplemented to our collective detriment.

We need to end the era of Impunity for Crooked Elites and Wayward Public Officials. To make that change, the JCC is calling on our fellow citizens and kindred associations to join us in the call to

'Implement the new Public Procurement & Disposal of Public Property Act NOW!'

END OF RELEASE