



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

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MEDIA RELEASE

**OCG's Concerns over JEEP Deepen as Ministry's Permanent Secretary
Alleges that she is being kept out of the Loop**

Kingston; March 21, 2012 – The Office of the Contractor General (OCG) ended its unannounced visit to the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing (MTWH) yesterday, after conducting an interview with the Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Audrey Sewell, during which she forthrightly attested to the OCG that she could provide it with no further information regarding the Jamaica Emergency Employment Programme (JEEP), or its projects, as she was being kept out of the loop about the Programme.

The Permanent Secretary also went as far as to allege that she had learnt about this week's planned launch of the JEEP, by the Government, through the media, although she is the Accounting Officer for the Programme.

The Permanent Secretary, who, by law, is accountable for any money which is spent by the MTWH, inclusive of the \$5.5 billion which the Ministry says it has already earmarked for the JEEP, told the OCG that she was then in the process of drafting a Memorandum to the MTWH Minister, Dr. Omar Davies, to express her deep concerns about the Programme and how it was being administered.

In her Confidential Memorandum to Minister Davies, dated yesterday, March 20, a copy of which was later shared with the OCG, the Permanent Secretary told the Minister that “**I am writing to express my concern that there is a lack of information flow to me regarding the Jamaica Emergency Employment Programme**”.

The Permanent Secretary's Memo to the portfolio Minister continued as follows:

“I call attention (to) the fact that the Programme is being closely monitored by the OCG, and recently I was written to by the Contractor General and asked to respond to specific questions regarding the Programme.

In my response, I informed the Contractor General that as soon as information becomes available, he would subsequently be advised of some of the outstanding matters.



It is therefore of concern that I learnt through the media of the planned launch of the Programme and the allocation of \$10M per constituency.

I am requesting that I be advised as soon as possible whenever decisions are taken about the Programme, especially as they relate to expenditure since they have implications for procurement”.

A team of six (6) OCG Inspectors had made the unannounced visit to the Ministry to sequester certain critical information and documentation, regarding the JEEP. The information had been previously requisitioned by the OCG, from the Permanent Secretary, by way of letter that was dated February 27, but had remained outstanding despite the fact that the Programme was being officially operationalized.

Among the pieces of information which are still outstanding to the OCG, and in respect of which the Permanent Secretary has asserted that she still has no knowledge, are the following:

- (a) Evidence of the Ministry of Finance, Planning & the Public Service’s support for the Programme.
- (b) An Implementation Schedule for the Programme, and its associated projects.
- (c) A list, and site location, of all the works projects that are to be implemented under the Programme.
- (d) Details of the criteria for the selection and prioritization of the works projects that are to be implemented under the Programme.
- (e) Details of the Procurement Methodologies which will be utilized, to engage contractors and subcontractors for the relevant projects.
- (f) An indication of how the projects will be monitored/managed.
- (g) A listing of the names of the Project Managers for the Programme/Projects along with their contact numbers.

In light of the foregoing, the OCG believes that the public should be aware that there are now grave concerns, issues and questions, regarding the integrity of the Government’s JEEP, which are in need of immediate address, clarification and remedial action. Among them are the following:

1. The fact that, as at March 20, 2012, the lawful Accounting Officer of the MTWH, the Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Audrey Sewell, was not seized with relevant documents or information regarding the overall ambit, project description, implementation schedule,



procurements, management or administration of the JEEP, although the Programme is purportedly underway.

2. The fact that the Permanent Secretary is unaware of which Public Body entity or entities is/are implementing and overseeing the JEEP projects which Jamaica House, in a Monday, March 19, 2012 Media Release, had reportedly stated were already underway in the St. Catherine and Clarendon communities of Cow Pen, Windsor Road, Thompson Town Road, Alston, Bog Walk, Limit and Spauldings.
3. The fact that the MTWH Permanent Secretary has asserted that she only learnt about the information regarding the projects, which are reportedly being implemented under JEEP, by way of the media. The Permanent Secretary has also asserted to the OCG that the planned launch of the JEEP was communicated to her through the media.
4. In light of the disclosures which were made to the OCG by the Permanent Secretary, and the absence of the requisite paper trail which is mandated by law, it is apparent that the referenced JEEP projects have commenced without the proper procurement documentation, approvals and oversight. In point of fact, the Permanent Secretary has disclosed to the OCG that even the JEEP Operations Manual is still in a draft stage.
5. On the eve of the launch of JEEP, the Program is still not yet subjected to any appropriately documented system of accountability under the laws of Jamaica. The Permanent Secretary and the JEEP Project Director, who are lawfully accountable, under the Financial Administration and Audit (FAA) Act, for the JEEP and its expenditures, seem to have no knowledge of the JEEP projects which have already been implemented or are to be implemented. There also appears to be credible questions as to whether the requirements of the Government Procurement Procedures and the Contractor General Act are being complied with.
6. The foregoing brings into question not only the legitimacy, but also the legality of the management, oversight, accounting and procurement regimes which currently govern the JEEP, and whether it is the political directorate which is in charge of the administration of a national Programme which involves the expenditure of over \$5 billion of taxpayers' money.

Having regard to the gravity of the matters which the Permanent Secretary has alleged in her Confidential Memorandum of March 20, 2012 to the Minister of Transport, Works and Housing, Dr. Omar Davies, the OCG, in the interest of public transparency, and in the exercise of the special discretionary powers that are reserved to it under Section 24 (1) (b) of the Contractor General Act, has taken the decision to make the contents of the said Memorandum public and to append a scanned copy of same to this Media Release.

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**Office of the Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Transport, Works &
Housing**

URGENT

Memo

CONFIDENTIAL

**To : Dr. the Hon. Omar Davies
Minister**

**From : Audrey V. Sewell, JP
Permanent Secretary**

Date : March 20, 2012

Subject : Jamaica Emergency Employment Programme (JEEP)

I am writing to express my concern that there is a lack of information flow to me regarding the Jamaica Emergency Employment Programme.

I call to attention the fact that the Programme is being closely monitored by the Office of the Contractor General, and recently I was written to by the Contractor General and asked to respond to specific questions regarding the Programme.

In my response, I informed the Contractor General that as soon as information becomes available, he would subsequently be advised of some of the outstanding matters.

It is therefore of concern that I learnt through the media of the planned launch of the Programme and the allocation of \$10M per constituency.

I am requesting that I be advised as soon as possible whenever decisions are taken about the Programme, especially as they relate to expenditure since they have implications for procurement.

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TEAM
[Signature]
2:20 pm
20/3/12