



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 Fax: (868) 628-2563/ 625-5749
jcctt1@gmail.com www.jcc.org.tt

November 26, 2012

The Honourable Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar, S.C.

Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
Office of the Prime Minister
13-15 St Clair Avenue
Port of Spain

Dear Honourable Prime Minister:

We, the undersigned groups, are moved to write you in an attempt to defuse the escalating crisis that has been triggered by the hunger strike on which Dr. Wayne Kúblalsingh has embarked on behalf of the Highway Re-route Movement.

We share the common concern that if left unresolved, this stand-off between the Government and the Highway Re-route Movement has the potential to lead to loss of life, heightened social tension and a destabilized economic environment in which the Point Fortin Highway project and other major national development initiatives may become mired.

We note that while the Highway Re-route Movement has been the most vociferous against the Mon Desir /Debe link to the Point Fortin Highway, it has not been alone in expressing concern about aspects of this seven billion dollar-plus project. You may recall the concerns raised by the Joint Consultative Council (JCC) as representatives of the construction industry.

We are aware that we may not be seized of all the facts and that any action as is proposed here can have cost implications with respect to the existing construction contract. However cognizance must be taken of the following:

- a) That those who are affected negatively by any development process need specific attention;
- b) That environmental issues are national issues and go way beyond the concerns of a specific community;
- c) That this project involves a large consumption of public money thus the efficacy of the process must be clear in the public domain;
- d) In addition when peaceful protest takes this extreme form the public needs to be clear on the underlying causes;

Given the heightening public interest in this matter and the crisis conditions that threaten to engulf Dr. Kúblalsingh, we propose the following in the interest of bringing the crisis to an immediate end and, thereafter, for proceeding towards an outcome with strong public trust.

Association of Professional Engineers of Trinidad & Tobago - Board of Architecture of Trinidad & Tobago
- Institute of Architects of Trinidad & Tobago - Institute of Surveyors of Trinidad & Tobago -
Trinidad & Tobago Society of Planners - Trinidad and Tobago Contractors Association - Trinidad & Tobago
International Facility Management Association

We thus propose:

- a) That if an independent review exists on matters pertaining to the Hydrology, Drainage, Environmental Engineering, Transport and Highway Engineering and Economic Analysis, then this review should be made public immediately;
- b) If such an independent technical review does not exist, then a technical **review committee** should be established with the specific mandate as outlined in the proposal below to enquire into the portion of that link to the Point Fortin Highway which has significant environmental implications.

We strongly urge that if this proposal is accepted by both parties, your government does not initiate construction work in areas under review along the segment outlined above, thus giving the technical committee an opportunity to report on its findings.

We also strongly hope that with acceptance of this approach by your government and giving the proposal outlined below an opportunity to work, it may bring to an end the current stand-off with the Highway Re-route Movement.

Proposal

- 1) That Independent Senator Dr. James Armstrong be approached to chair the technical review committee;
- 2) The technical review committee should not involve persons who have had any involvement in the project to date;
- 3) The technical teams should include personnel with disciplines in Hydrology, Drainage, Environmental Engineering, Highway and Transport and Economic Analysis. The JCC will support Senator Dr. James Armstrong in identifying persons that are independent and have the necessary technical competence in the disciplines outlined above;
- 4) The technical review committee should be given all existing data, documents, reports drawings, maps etc. related to the project;
- 5) All persons involved in the project so far should make themselves available to the technical review committee for discussion and clarification;
- 6) That the terms of reference of the independent review committee be set up and made public within forty eight hours;
- 7) That all documents submitted to the review committee be made public by means of a web site;

//3...

- 8) That the independent review committee be mandated to make specific recommendations in the public interest;
- 9) That the technical review committee be mandated to outline proposals that could be of benefit to the project in social, environmental, and economic terms;
- 10) That the independent review committee's report be made available to you Madam Prime Minister, the Highway Re-route Movement and the public at the same time;
- 11) That we the citizens through our Government pay for this independent technical review;
- 12) That the review team report in a period not exceeding three months.

We look forward to your acceptance of this proposal and if required, an early meeting with you.

Civil Society groups:-

Trinidad and Tobago Transparency Institute (TTTI)

Joint Consultative Council for the Construction Industry (JCC)

Federation of Independent Trade Unions and NGOs (FITUN)

Women Working for Social Progress Working Women

Yours faithfully,

**JOINT CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL
FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**



Afra Raymond, BSc, FRICS
President

Association of Professional Engineers of Trinidad & Tobago - Board of Architecture of Trinidad & Tobago
- Institute of Architects of Trinidad & Tobago - Institute of Surveyors of Trinidad & Tobago -
Trinidad & Tobago Society of Planners - Trinidad and Tobago Contractors Association - Trinidad & Tobago
International Facility Management Association



JOINT CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL
FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Narine Singh
PRESIDENT
**Association of Professional Engineers
of Trinidad and Tobago**

Ganga Persad Kissoon
PRESIDENT
**Institute of Surveyors of
Trinidad and Tobago**

Mervyn Chin
PRESIDENT
**Trinidad and Tobago
Contractors Association**

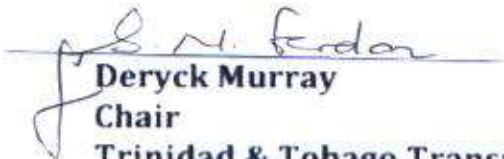
Jenifer Smith
PRESIDENT
**Trinidad and Tobago
Institute of Architect**

Arnim Cozier
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
**Trinidad and Tobago
Society of Planners**

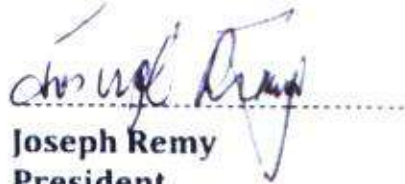
Tyrell Melville
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
**Trinidad & Tobago International
Facility Management Association**

Civil Society Groups

-5-



Deryck Murray
Chair
Trinidad & Tobago Transparency
Institute



Joseph Remy
President
Federation of Independent
Trade Unions & NGO's



Merle Hodge
Convener
Women Working for Social Progress (Working Women)

Association of Professional Engineers of Trinidad & Tobago - Board of Architecture of Trinidad & Tobago
Institute of Architects of Trinidad & Tobago - Institute of Surveyors of Trinidad & Tobago
Trinidad & Tobago Society of Planners - Trinidad and Tobago Contractors Association - Trinidad & Tobago
International Finance Management Association