

THE CONTRACTOR GENERAL'S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

As mandated by Section 28(2) of the Contractor General Act, it is my esteemed honour, to submit, to the Honourable Houses of the Parliament of Jamaica, this publication, the twenty-ninth (29th) Annual Report of the Office of the Contractor General, for the calendar year 2015. The content and accompanying narratives of this Report are predicated on the legislative mandate of the OCG, as an Independent Anti-corruption Commission of the Jamaican Parliament and the Office's responsibility in assisting in the promotion of good governance.

In particular, the OCG, under Section 4(1) of the Contractor General Act, is mandated to monitor the award and implementation of Government of Jamaica (GOJ) contracts, with the aim of ensuring that such awards are made impartially, on merit and under circumstances which do not involve impropriety or irregularity. Similarly, the Contractor General is mandated under the prevailing conditions, to monitor "*the grant, issue, suspension or revocation of any prescribed licence...*" In addition to these legislative responsibilities, the Contractor General, under Section 15(1) and 16 of Contractor General Act, is empowered to formally investigate any matter associated with the award of Government contracts, the issuance of Government licences and permits, procurement procedures and the registration of Contractors.

Further to the powers which are conferred on the OCG, the Office also provides technical and administrative support to the National Contracts Commission (NCC). This support enables the NCC to effectively execute its functions as mandated under Section 23 of the Contractor General Act. Of note, however, there are advanced undertakings, by the Government, to separate the NCC from the OCG – a move which we endorse.

Notwithstanding the functions and the overall mandate of the OCG, as an Independent Commission of Parliament, it is necessary to note that the OCG is not endowed with prosecutorial power. As such, the Office, in some instances, after the conduct of its investigations, makes a referral to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions in order for the decision to prosecute or not to prosecute to be given due consideration. Referrals by the OCG are also made to other relevant authorities for further action, pursuant to Section 21 of the Contractor General Act.

The OCG, in the execution of its mandate is constrained by a number of factors, which include, but are not limited to a lack of human and financial resources. However, the Office throughout 2015 remained committed to its Mission Statement, which states as follows:

"The Mission of the Office of the Contractor General is to effectively discharge the requirements of the Contractor Act and, in so doing, to:

- Monitor and investigate the award and implementation of contracts, licences, permits, concessions and the divestment of government assets;*
- Improve and make fair and equitable, the system of awarding contracts, licences, permits, concessions and the divestment of government assets;*
- Ensure that all public sector agencies give the widest possible opportunity to qualified persons to bid for contracts and divestments or to apply for licences and permits;*
- Create a positive image of the public procurement process by promoting integrity, professionalism, transparency, efficiency and, in so doing, to thereby engender public confidence."*

CORRUPTION PERCEPTION INDEX (CPI) 2015: JAMAICA' S RANKING

The improved ranking of Jamaica on the 2015 CPI, is remarkable and the ranking of 69th among 168 countries assessed is a move which some anti-corruption practitioners and stakeholders have concluded is being perceived that Jamaica is moving forward in combating corruption and building integrity after nine years of essentially being in the same position. With regard to Jamaica's improved 2015 ranking, Prof. Trevor Munroe noted as follows:

“As regards to Jamaica, the CPI 2015 results indicate that after nine years of marking time and more or less standing still... the CPI 2015 shows Jamaica advancing 16 places from number 85 of 175 countries in 2014 to number 69 of 168 countries in 2015”

On the contrary, and as it relates to the issue of corruption and its perception in Jamaica, the United States Department of State 2015 Human Rights Report for Jamaica indicated, *inter alia*, the following in Section 4 (*Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government*) of the said report:

[In Jamaica] *“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but the government did not implement the law effectively, and officials sometimes engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. The government continued efforts to interdict and prosecute officials’ corrupt practices and raise public awareness on corruption. Media and civil society organizations, however, continued to criticize the DPP for being slow and at times reluctant to prosecute corruption cases. For example, the DPP did not order an investigation of a former mayor for nepotism in the award of public contracts until after a court, in December, ruled in favor of the Contractor General in deciding the DPP could prosecute.*

CONTRACT MONITORING

During the year 2015, the OCG monitored a total of eight hundred and sixty-two (862) procurement opportunities undertaken by public bodies. Of the 862 procurement opportunities monitored, five hundred and fifty-eight (558) were non-construction opportunities, while the remaining three hundred and four (304) were construction related.

Chart (1): The Chart below illustrates the number of procurement projects monitored by the OCG between 2012-2015

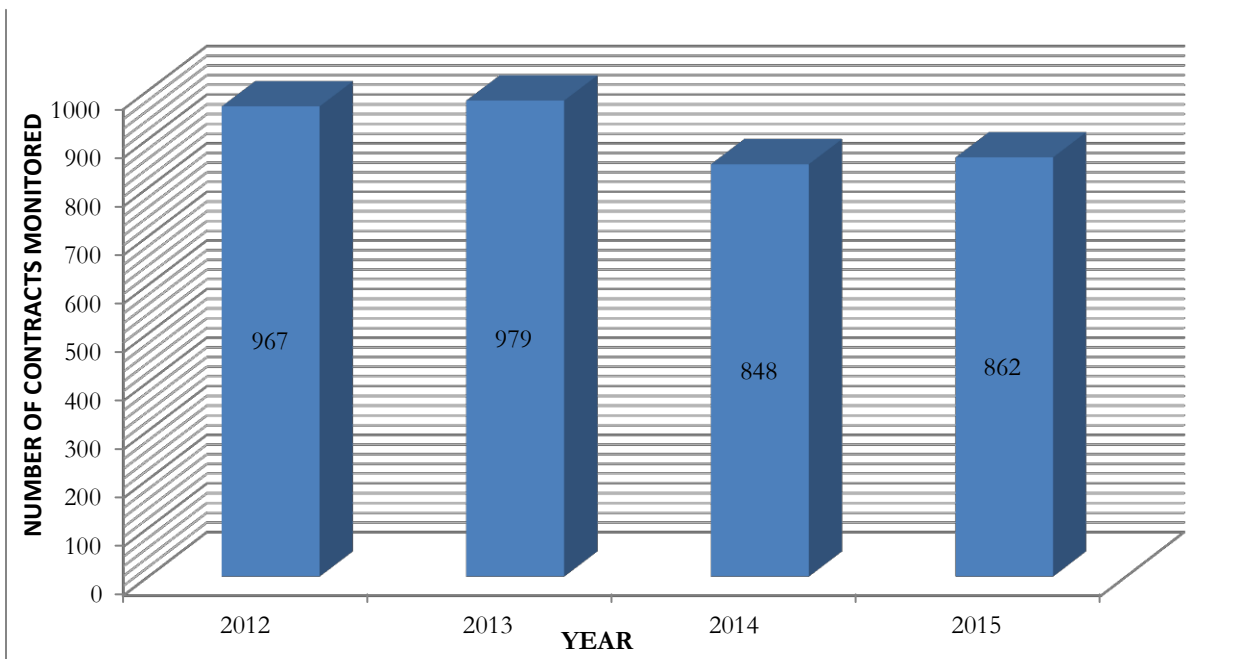
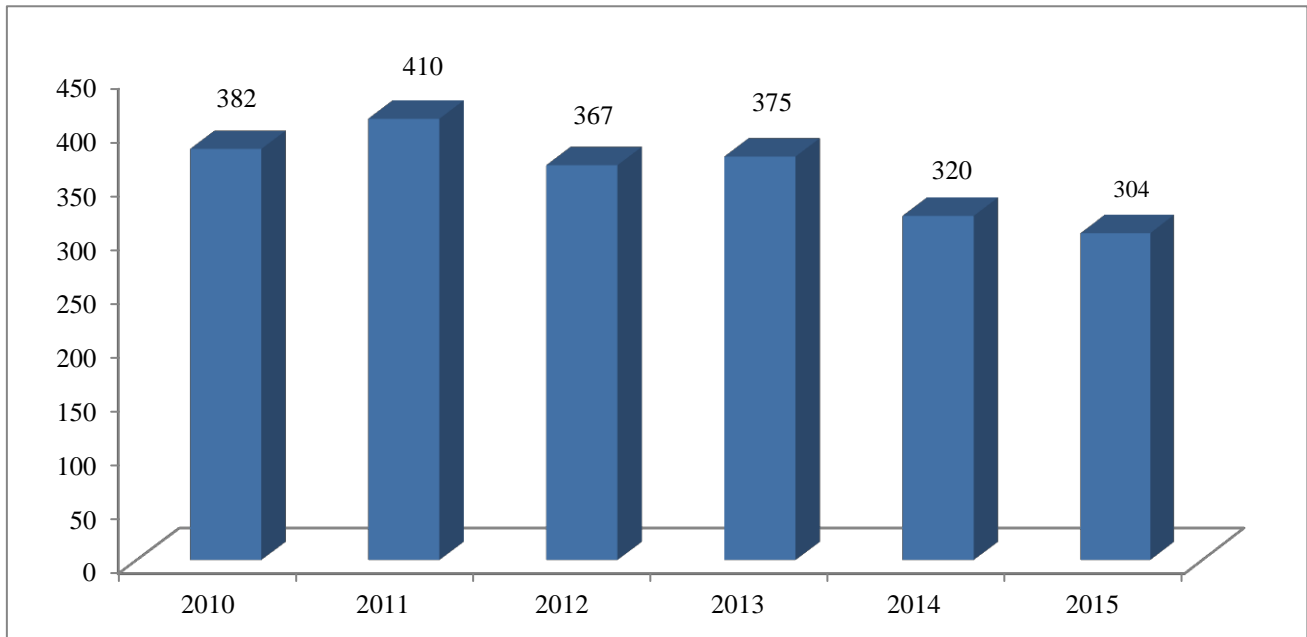


Chart (2) illustrates the number of construction contracts monitored during the period 2010-2015:



Based on the number of construction contracts monitored in 2014 (320) and the figure for 2015 (304), this represents a 5 % decrease in the number of construction contracts that were monitored when compared with the preceding year.

Quarterly Contracts Award (QCA)

The OCG has recorded 100% compliance with regard to the submission of QCA Reports for the year 2015. In conjunction with the OCG's Information Systems Division, work continues with the development of an assessment tool which will allow for, *inter alia*, the communication of feedback to Public Bodies and aid in the Division's analysis of reports received, and will in turn; assist in its Audit programme.

Land Divestment

The OCG continued its monitoring of the divestment of Government-owned lands in 2015. In the previous years, the OCG continued to monitor divestment transactions in the absence of an approved procedural document to ensure that the principles of transparency and fairness were upheld in the land divestment processes undertaken by the relevant government entities. The year 2015 saw the finalization and publishing of the Policy Framework and Procedures Manual for the Divestment of Government-Owned Lands, which provides clear guidelines and procedures to facilitate a standardization and harmonization of the land divestment policies and procedures.

During 2015, the OCG noted that there was still an issue of protracted divestment processes for several properties for varied reasons to include awaiting Cabinet Approval. This and other issues are highlighted in some of the individual land divestment undertakings which are detailed in the relevant section of this report.

A total of seventy nine (79) GOJ land divestment processes were monitored by the OCG in 2015. The twenty-nine (29) land divestment undertakings highlighted in this report represent some of those divestment opportunities monitored, which saw activity or were of concern to the OCG during 2015.

The GOJ Policy Framework and Procedures Manual for the Divestment of Government-Owned Lands

The Ministry of Water, Land, Environment & Climate Change (MWLECC), has overall responsibility for the drafting of the Government of Jamaica (GOJ) land divestment document and has included the OCG's input in the amendment of said document since 2010; allowing for the OCG's review and comments and/or recommendations, where deemed necessary. On March 27, 2015, the Policy Framework and Procedures Manual for the Divestment of Government-Owned Lands was launched and a follow up letter dated July 29, 2015 was sent to all Permanent Secretaries to advise them of the policy now in effect and requested that the Manual be brought to the attention of all Departments and Agencies under their purview.

Prior to the publication of the Manual, a multiplicity of standards were being used by the various Agencies to divest Government-owned lands, for which they are custodians. There were no established guidelines or procedures for the divestment of Government-owned lands which resulted in inadequate transparency of the divestment process.

The procedures outlined in the Manual relate specifically to the divestment of Crown Lands, however, all Entities that dispose of Government-owned land should be guided by the policies and procedures stated in the Manual. The Policy Framework and Procedures Manual for the Divestment of Government-Owned Lands 2015, states, *inter alia*: "The general aim of this policy therefore, is increased transparency and efficiency in the process by which government-owned lands are divested by all public sector entities."

Having regard to the formulation and publication of the Manual, the OCG commends all stakeholders on this tremendous milestone and remains committed to ensuring that the divestment of Government Lands will be in keeping with approved standards.

The Land Divestment Advisory Committee (LDAC)

The Land Divestment Advisory Committee (LDAC) plays an advisory role to the Minister of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change (MWLECC), in relation to the divestment of government-owned lands. The Committee is ably supported by the Land Administration and Management Division, within the MWLECC.

The Land Divestment Advisory Committee (LDAC) is mandated to, among other things:

Examine, evaluate and make recommendations to the Minister, on Applications forwarded by the Commissioner of Lands for divestment of Crown Lands.

1. Review recommendations for Applicants to receive subsidies, discounts and/or incentives for the Lease/Sale of lands under exceptional and special circumstances and finalise recommendations for the Minister's approval.
2. Convene regular monthly meetings in order to ensure timely divestments. It should be noted that special/extraordinary meetings may be convened depending on the volume or urgency of particular matters.

The LDAC is guided by policy directives issued by the Minister; and as such, may only consult the Minister on fundamental matters of policy. All matters discussed at LDAC Meetings are confidential.

The LDAC is comprised of fifteen (15) members drawn from the Public and Private Sectors, including a Chairman. Committee members are appointed by the portfolio Minister, for a period not exceeding three (3) years. The Chairman of the Committee is Mr. Hensley Williams, Attorney-at-Law. The tenure of the previous Committee ended on March 31, 2015 and on June 1, 2015. Mr. Hensley Williams, Attorney-at-Law, assumed the position of Chairman for the Committee with a new LDAC.

A representative from the Office of the Contractor-General (OCG) sits in on the meetings of the LDAC in the capacity of an Observer based upon a request from the Contractor General.

LDAC Activity for 2015

Five (5) meetings were convened by the LDAC in 2015 and a total of fifty-eight (58) submissions were made by the Commissioner of Lands for the consideration of the Committee. Of this amount, forty-nine (49) were 'New Applications' and nine (9) were 'Re-Submissions'. Forty-eight (48) applications were recommended by the Committee.

Of the Applications recommended for divestment, sixteen (16) were for the regularisation of illegal occupants. Ten (10) of these submissions were for the regularization within land settlement schemes and the divestment of one hundred and twenty six (126) lots.

The Ministry reported that as at December 2015, the responsible Minister had approved forty-seven (47) of the Applications submitted for his consideration, with an expected revenue of J\$197,208,000.00

Of the Applications approved by the Minister, seventeen (17) were for Lease, with an expected revenue of J\$12,778,000 per annum and thirty (30) were for Sale, with an expected revenue of J\$184,430,000.

Contracting Under Emergency Circumstances

In its effort to be enlightened about the Emergency Contracting procurement procedures that were utilised by certain Public Bodies in 2015, the OCG requisitioned the following Institutions by way of a letter which was dated July 21, 2016:

- Petrojam Limited;
- National Water Commission;
- National Solid Waste Management Authority;
- Ministry of National Security;
- The National Housing Trust;
- National Works Agency;
- The Ministry of Local Government and Community Development (and by extension, all Parish Councils/KSAC);
- Ministry of Transport, and Mining; and
- Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries.

The Public Bodies were requested to provide the OCG with information with respect to contracts which were awarded utilising the "Contracting under Emergency Circumstances Procurement Procedure", between the period January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015.

Further to this, the Public Bodies were asked to submit the following information on a spreadsheet that was provided by the OCG:

1) Name of Contractor; 2) Description and Location of Works; 3) Engineer's Estimate; 4) Justification for use of Emergency Contracting Procedure; 5) Contract Award Date; 6) Project Start Date; 7) Project Scheduled Completion Date; 8) Project Completion Date; 9) Original Contract Sum; 10) Final Contract Sum; 11) Variation Sum; 12) Expenditure to Date; 13) Justification for Variation; and 14) Remarks.

Variations and Cost Overruns

The GoJ Handbook of Public Sector Procurement Procedures defines a cost overrun as, “...an increase in the contract sum resulting from escalation in the price of labour and/ or material” and a variation as “...a change to the deliverable(s) under a contract caused by an increase or decrease in the scope of work to be performed, amount/type of goods to be supplied or services to be provided, and must be directly related to the specific contract.”

Public sector contract cost overruns, variations & any other price adjustments (CCOV)

The OCG requisitioned one hundred and ninety-nine (196) Public Bodies - of that number ninety-four (94) or forty-eight percent (48%) indicated that they did not encounter any cost overruns, variations or any other price adjustments during the 2015 period, with regard to the procurement of good, works and services. During the previous year, 2014, one hundred and ninety-nine (199) Public Bodies were requisitioned and, of these, ninety-nine (98) or 49% specified that their procurement of goods, works and services did not yield any cost overruns or variations. This represents a slight decrease of one percent (1%) in Entities that reported the non-occurrence of cost overruns and variations.

This marks the second period wherein Public Bodies have been asked to submit figures representing the amounts spent on Any Other Price Adjustments for their procurements, in addition to that which was spent on Cost Overruns and Variations. This was instituted in an effort to capture and record all the additional costs being incurred by Public Bodies during the procurement processes.

The information requested was relevant to all projects of value greater than J\$500,000.00, for which monetary disbursements for Cost Overruns, Variations and/or Any Other Price Adjustments were made during the calendar year 2015, irrespective of the date of contract award. In this regard, the CCOV data which was submitted by the Public Bodies indicated that the combined goods, works and services contracts valued approximately J\$22.04 billion from which emanated cost overruns, variations and any other price adjustments of approximately J\$998.0 million, J\$2.75 billion and J\$126.4 million, respectively.

Figure 1 illustrates a Comparison of CCOV between the years 2014 and 2015 for Public Bodies for Goods Contracts.

Figure 1

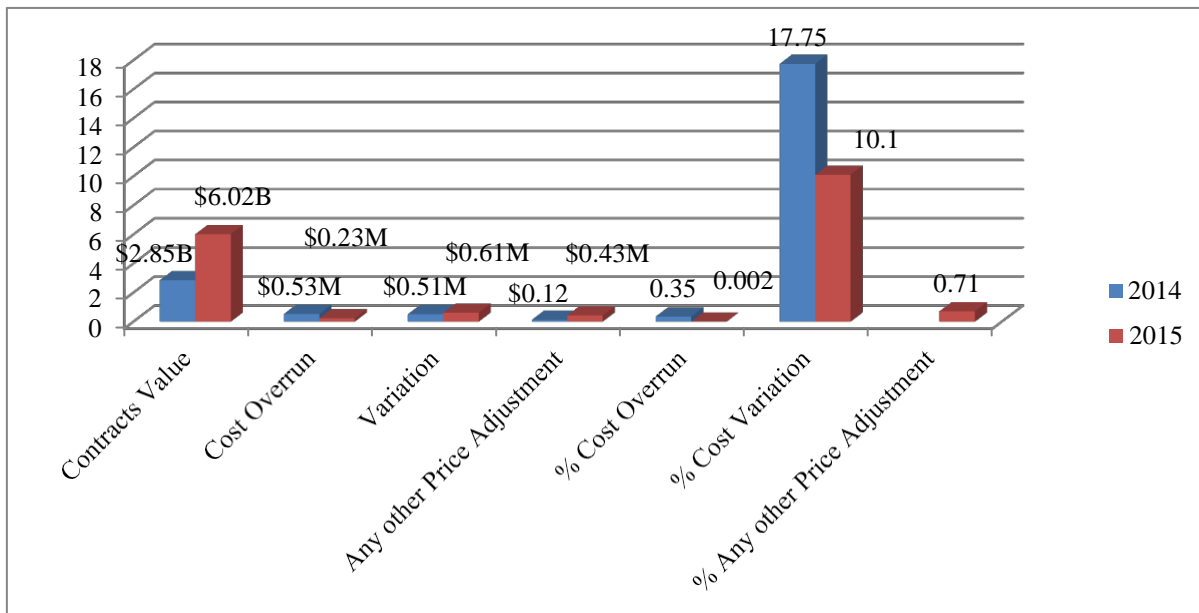


Figure 2 illustrates a Comparison of CCOV between the years 2014 and 2015 for Public Bodies for Works Contracts.

Figure 2

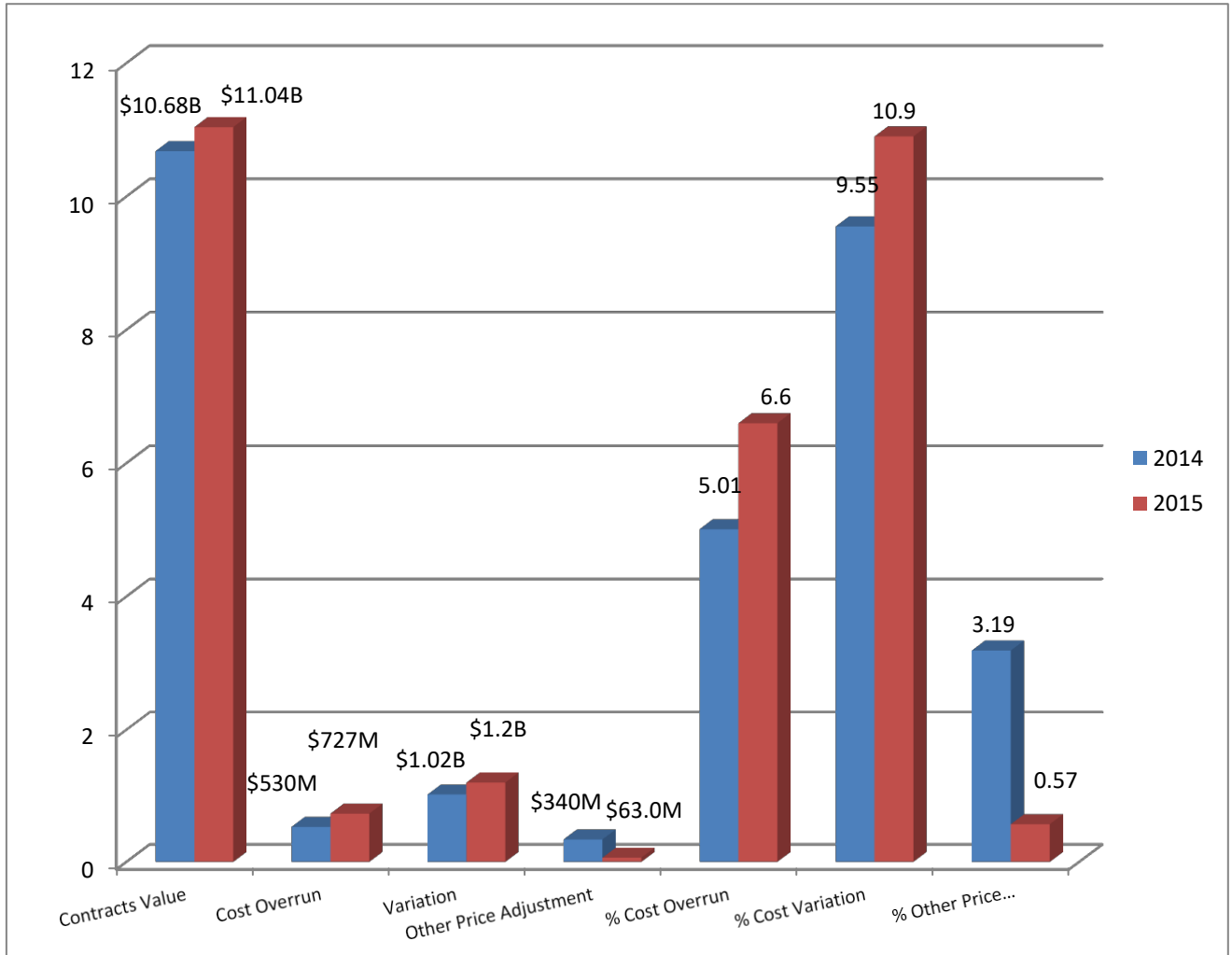
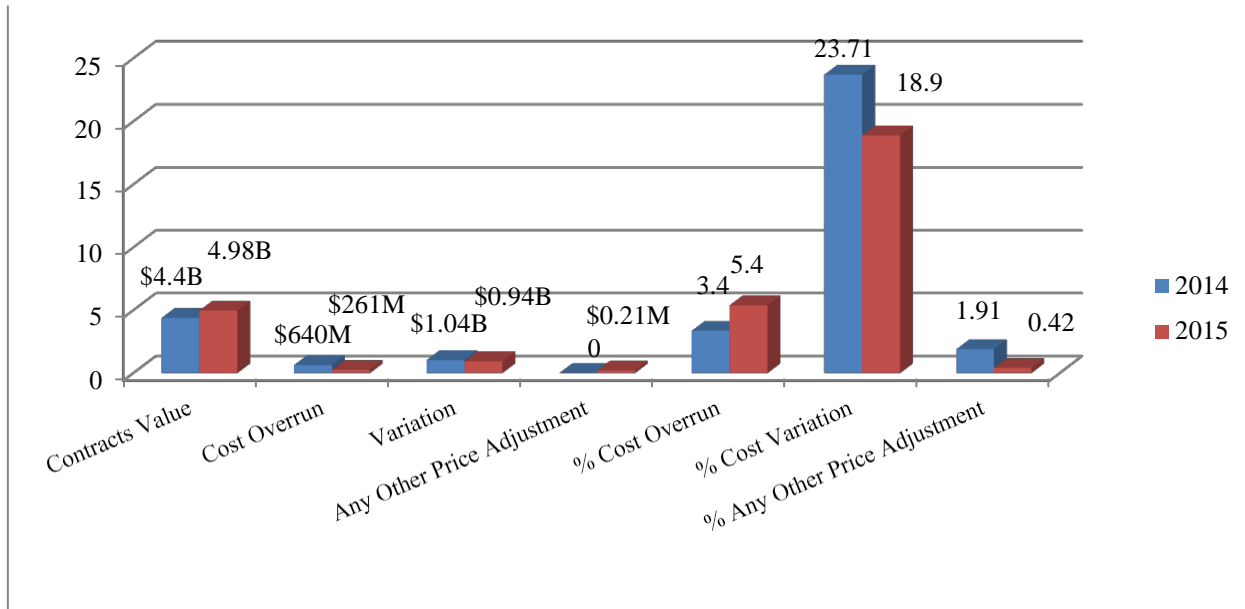


Figure 3 illustrates a Comparison of CCOV between the years 2014 and 2015 for Public Bodies for Services Contracts

Figure 3



OCG OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

Having regard to the operational and management apparatus of the OCG, the Office discharges its mission and core functions through three (3) operating divisions; namely, the Inspectorate Division (divided into (1) the Construction and (ii) the Non-Construction, Licenses and Permits Units), the Special Investigation Division, and the Technical Services Division. These Divisions are further supported by two (2) additional Divisions; namely, the Corporate Services Division and the Information Systems Division.

TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION

The Technical Services Department’s (TSD) function is twofold. Whilst its operates as one of the monitoring arms of the Office of the Contractor General, with respect to pre-contract awards, the TSD is also assigned the substantial role as the Secretariat of the National Contracts Commission (NCC) which was established by way of an amendment to the Contractor General Act in 1999 and which is mandated under Section 23C of the Act to promote efficiency in the process of award and implementation of Government contracts to ensure transparency and equity in the award of such contracts.

The NCC which is comprised of eight (8) Commissioners is fully supported by the OCG through the provision of technical, financial and administrative resources as stipulated in Section 23J of the Contractor General Act. Nevertheless, both the NCC and the OCG are distinct Commissions.

As the Secretariat for the NCC, the TSD carries out, *inter alia*, the following activities to facilitate the smooth functioning of the NCC in accordance with Section 23D of the Act:

1. Acceptance of applications for registration, review and assessment of contractors’ resources for inclusion on the list of Public Sector Registered Contractors and the maintenance of all associated databases.
2. Representation of the NCC on its Sector Committees which are established to conduct assessments on Public Bodies’ submission of recommendations for award of contracts above established thresholds, to ensure probity and transparency.

3. Presentation of recommendations for registration and award of contracts at the meeting of the NCC which is held once per week, for the approval/endorsement of the Commissioners.
4. All administrative functions including the preparation of all items of correspondence.

Staffing

The Department continues to fulfil its obligations through a complement of twelve members of staff which is comprised of: one (1) Director, two (2) Managers, five (5) Technical Officers, one (1) Supervisor and two (2) Records Officers.

Contractor Registration and Endorsement of Contract Award Recommendations

In 2015, the TSD assiduously continued to carry out its function whilst strategically implementing procedures and policies to improve the quality of the application process and simultaneously reduce the processing time.

It was observed that some Contractors/Suppliers encountered difficulties in submitting properly completed application forms for processing and on their visit to the NCC; the said application could not be accepted. While the Contractor/Supplier would be advised of the reasons, a more formal and detailed approach was developed in an effort at ensuring that the Contractor/Supplier was fully apprised of the deficiencies with the application form. Consequently, a checklist detailing the referenced deficiencies was developed and provided to the Contractors/Suppliers where applicable. This tremendously improved the efficiency of the TSD's operation and improved the level of customer service. E-mail notifications and text messaging are currently being utilized in an effort to advise contractors and suppliers of their registration status instead of telephone calls. Whilst the foregoing is used as a cost reduction tool it was also deemed to be an effective method of communication with Contractors/Suppliers to:

1. Inform Contractors/Suppliers of the completion of the processing of their application and the availability of their NCC registration documents.
2. Systematically remind Contractors/Suppliers of the approach of their NCC registration date of expiry and the need to reapply for registration eight (8) weeks prior to expiration.

Whereas the TSD experienced a reasonable increase in the number of companies registered for both Works Grades 1– 4 Contractors and Goods and Services, a significant decline of 25% was noted for the registration of Grade 5 Contractors. A general reduction in the number of new applications has also been noted for all three Registries.

In respect of recommendations for award of contracts, during 2015 Four Hundred and Sixty three (463) recommendations for award of contracts were endorsed by the NCC with a total monetary value of \$37,177,932,480.00. The downward trend in the number of endorsed recommendations for award of contract continued, moving from 568 in 2013 and 515 in 2014 to 463 in 2015. Despite the noticeably downward trend in the number of endorsed recommendation for award of contracts, there is an upward trend in the monetary values, moving from \$32,381,633,026 in 2013 to \$36,602,001,634 in 2014 to \$37,177,932,480.00., in 2015. Further detailed analysis can be found in the relevant sections of this report.

New Developments

Electronic Government Procurement System

In its continued effort to increase the efficiency and transparency of the Government of Jamaica procurement process, the Ministry of Finance and Public Service through its Procurement and Asset Policy Unit (PAPU) on July 31, 2015 launched the Electronic Government Procurement System (e-GP System) which is being implemented on a phased basis.

The e-GP System facilitates:

1. The creation and publishing of Tenders for Goods, Services and Works procurement;
2. Supplier submission of electronic bids for Tender opportunities;
3. Electronic opening of Tenders; and
4. Tender Evaluations and Contract management.

The e-GP System utilizes the European Union's Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV), a single classification system, which standardizes the references used by contracting authorities and entities to describe the subject of procurement contracts.

To facilitate the implementation of the e-GP System, the NCC, through the TSD, reconciled the European Union's CPV with the NCC's Registration system by mapping the current NCC categories of registration to the appropriate CPV codes.

With respect to on-going operations, the TSD also validates the registration of suppliers/contractors prior to their participation in an electronic procurement via the e-GP System.

New Specialist Sector Committees

During 2015 the NCC took a decision to replace the existing eight (8) Sector Committees with five (5) Specialist Sector Committees. Implementation will be effected in 2016 following which, Procuring Entities will no longer be assigned to a particular Sector Committee. Instead, recommendations for award of contracts and other associated matters are to be routed to the new Specialist Sector Committees based on the type of procurement as follows:

1. Goods;
2. Works;
3. Consultancy and General Services;
4. Information and Communication Technology (ICT); and
5. Insurance.

To this end, the NCC in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and Planning solicited applications for the staffing of the new Specialist Sector Committees and embarked on the execution of other necessary activities to ensure successful implementation of the Specialist Sector Committees in 2016.

Prescribed Licences Project

Pursuant to Section 4(1) b of the Contractor General Act, one of the functions of the OCG is to:

“monitor the grant, issue, suspension or revocation of any prescribed licence, with a view to ensuring that the circumstances of such grant, issue, suspension or revocation do not involve impropriety or irregularity and, where appropriate, to examine whether such licence is used in accordance with the terms and conditions thereof”.

Accordingly, in January 2015 the OCG relaunched its Prescribed Licences Information Database which captures a listing of all licences and permits issued by the relevant authority and outlines the regulatory framework applicable to each prescribed licence. This information is accessible on the OCG’s website.

Licensing authorities were requisitioned to update the database and to maintain and verify on an ongoing basis, the accuracy and currency of the information on the database relating to it. Based on this exercise the OCG was able to identify approximately 415 prescribed licences issued by the relevant licensing authorities.

The OCG has drafted a detailed process document for the monitoring of licensing activities and intends to launch a pilot project as a precursor to the full roll out of a comprehensive monitoring program. Several entities will be requested to participate in the Pilot Implementation project which is expected to commence in the second half of 2016. The monitoring process will seek to assure compliance with applicable legislation, policies and procedures.

Challenges and Concerns

A level of deficiency has been identified in some of the Evaluation Reports prepared by Procuring Entities as it relates to the undertaking of detailed reviews of Bidders’ compliance with not only the eligibility criteria, but also the mandatory qualification requirements which are included in the Bid Documents. Procuring Entities are therefore encouraged to pay particular attention to the qualification requirements in assessing tenders.

Registration and Re-registration of Contractors

Suppliers of Goods and Services

For the year 2015, nine hundred and sixty-three (963) applications were received for registration. One hundred and thirty six (136) of these were new applicants; whilst eight hundred and thirteen (813) were renewals and fourteen (14) were for additional categories to be added to registered companies.

For the year, the NCC registered a total of nine hundred and sixteen (916) companies as suppliers of goods and services; this figure includes some applications received in late 2014. Of the nine hundred and sixteen (916) approvals, one hundred and fifteen (115) were to new applicants, while eight hundred and one (801) were renewals. Fourteen (14) previously registered companies also applied and were approved for additional categories.

Table 1 below illustrates the number of registrations granted by the NCC during the period 2008 to 2015.

Table 1

Year	New Registration	Re-Registration	Total Registration Granted
2015	115	801	916
2014	143	639	782
2013	155	726	881
2012	293	1104	1397
2011	234	1162	1396
2010	316	1221	1537
2009	520	1278	1798
2008	697	1176	1873

In 2015 there was a 17% increase in Goods and service registration when compared to the 2014 period. The increase may be attributed to the registration cycle of contractors.

As at December 31, 2015, the total number of companies/businesses with valid registration on the NCC database was one thousand and eighty-nine (1,089). This figure does not reflect the total number of companies/businesses registered with the NCC throughout the year, as the registration period for each company varies according to the date of approval.

Table 2 below reflects the number of registered companies/businesses on the NCC database in all the categories of Goods and Services as at December 31, 2015. Please note that the same company/business may be registered in more than one (1) category.

Table 2

GOODS		SERVICES	
Category Name	Number of Registered Contractors	Category Name	Number of Registered Contractors
Audio Visual Goods	36	Agricultural Services	7
Chemical and Pesticides	14	Audio Visual Services	26
Computers and Supplies	119	Catering	35
Electrical and Communication Supplies	88	Computers and Related Services	75
Electrical Appliance and Equipment	94	Courier Services	10
Furniture Supplies	57	Customs Brokerage	16
General Supplies	196	Garaging and Automotive Repair Services	28
Guns and Ammunition	1	General Services	199
Hardware and Haberdashery	60	Information Technology Services	81
Industrial, Construction, Equipment and Machinery	81	Insurance Services	17
Janitorial, Sanitation Supplies	53	Janitorial, Sanitation Services	59
Marine Supplies	10	Lithographic and Printing Services	42
Medical Pharmaceutical Equipment and Supplies	78	Marine Services	17
Merchandise	31	Photovoltaic and Wind Powered Systems	2

Motor Vehicle and Spares	18	Renewable Energy Systems	9
Motor Vehicle Spares and Accessories	69	Safety and Security Services	48
Musical Instruments	2	Solar Water Heater Installations	3
Office Equipment Supplies	62	Towing and Wrecking	2
Petroleum Products	7	Transportation and Haulage	149
Photographic Equipment and Supplies	20	Total	825
Safety Products	63		
School Furniture	44		
Stationery Supplies and Books	69		
Textiles and Garments	23		
Total	1295		

Notes:

- One company/business may be registered in more than one (1) category
- The category of Catering includes Canteen Concessionaire Services
- The category of General Services includes the following: Pesticide Control Services, Equipment Rental, Real Estate Services, Advertising, Graphic Design, Training, Equipment Maintenance, Event Planning, Debt Collection Services, and Funeral Services amongst other areas of specialisation.

Grades 1- 4 Works Contractors

In 2015, there was a marginal increase in the total number of Grades 1-4 Works Contractors, moving from one hundred and seventy four (174) in 2014 to one hundred and ninety-nine (199) in 2015. The percentage increase was 14%.

The number of new Grades 1 - 4 Works Contractors that were registered decreased by approximately 17%, from twenty eight (28) in 2014 to twenty three (23) in 2015. Re-registered Works Contractors had a 24% increase, moving one hundred and thirty four (134) in 2014 to one hundred and sixty seven (167) in 2015.

In 2015, the increase in the re-registered Works Contractors can be attributed to normalization of the increase in the registration period from twelve (12) months to eighteen (18) months. This initiative, which commenced in 2013, had a negative impact on the number of Grades 1-4 Contractors who would normally seek re-registration in 2014.

Grade 5 Works Contractors

In relation to the total registration of Grade 5 Works Contractors, the OCG noted that in the case of newly registered Grade 5 Contractors, there was a decrease of 150%, moving from five (5) in 2014 to two (2) in 2015. Re-registered Grade 5 Works Contractors remained the same as the previous year 2014, that is, there was no increase or decrease.

Table (3) below illustrates the number of registered Grades 1-4 and Grade 5 Works Contractors for the period 2011 – 2015.

Table 3

Year	WORKS GRADE 1-4						Total
	WORKS GRADE 1-4			WORKS GRADE 5			
	NEW	R-r	Total	NEW	R-r	Total	
2015	23	167	190	2	7	9	199
2014	28	134	162	5	7	12	174
2013	34	161	195	-	7	7	202
2012	11	207	218	4	13	17	235
2011	8	211	219	10	9	19	238

New: New Registration

R-r: Re-registration

National Contracts Commission Endorsement of Contract Award Recommendations

During 2015, a total of four hundred and sixty three (463) recommendations for the award of contracts were endorsed by the NCC, with an aggregated value of Thirty Seven Billion, One Hundred and Seventy Seven Million, Nine Hundred and Thirty Two Thousand Four Hundred and Eighty Dollars (J\$37,177,932,480).

There was a minimal decrease in the total number of endorsed contracts of approximately 10%, moving from five hundred and fifteen (515) in 2014 to four hundred and sixty seven (463) in 2015 and an increase in the value of endorsed contracts of approximately 2% over the previous period, 2014.

Table 4 below illustrates the total number of contracts which were endorsed by the NCC between 2011 and 2015:

Table 4

Year	No. Works	Value of Works \$J	No. Goods	Value of Goods \$J	No. Services	Value of Services \$J	Total No. of Endorsed Contracts	Total Value of Endorsed Contracts \$J
2015	145	9,139,132,963	174	14,916,718,060	144	13,122,081,457	463	37,177,932,480
2014	191	16,497,976,969	196	8,843,909,031	128	11,277,836,441	515	36,619,722,441
2013	180	11,769,078,879	144	8,737,706,750	244	11,874,847,397	568	32,381,633,026
2012	148	10,314,568,600	151	4,628,846,414	213	9,289,546,639	512	24,232,961,653
2011	175	14,137,796,921	162	8,052,332,407	218	7,821,048,775	555	30,011,178,103

NCC Endorsed Contracts by Method of Procurement

Of the four hundred and sixty three (463) contract award recommendations, which were endorsed by the NCC in 2015, the Direct Contracting procurement methodology was utilised in one hundred and ninety one (191) instances, which represents 41% of the total NCC endorsements. The Local Competitive Bidding procurement methodology was utilised in one hundred and fifty nine (159) instances, which represents 34% of the total NCC endorsements and was therefore, the second most frequent procurement methodology undertaken.

NCC Endorsed Contracts by Value Range

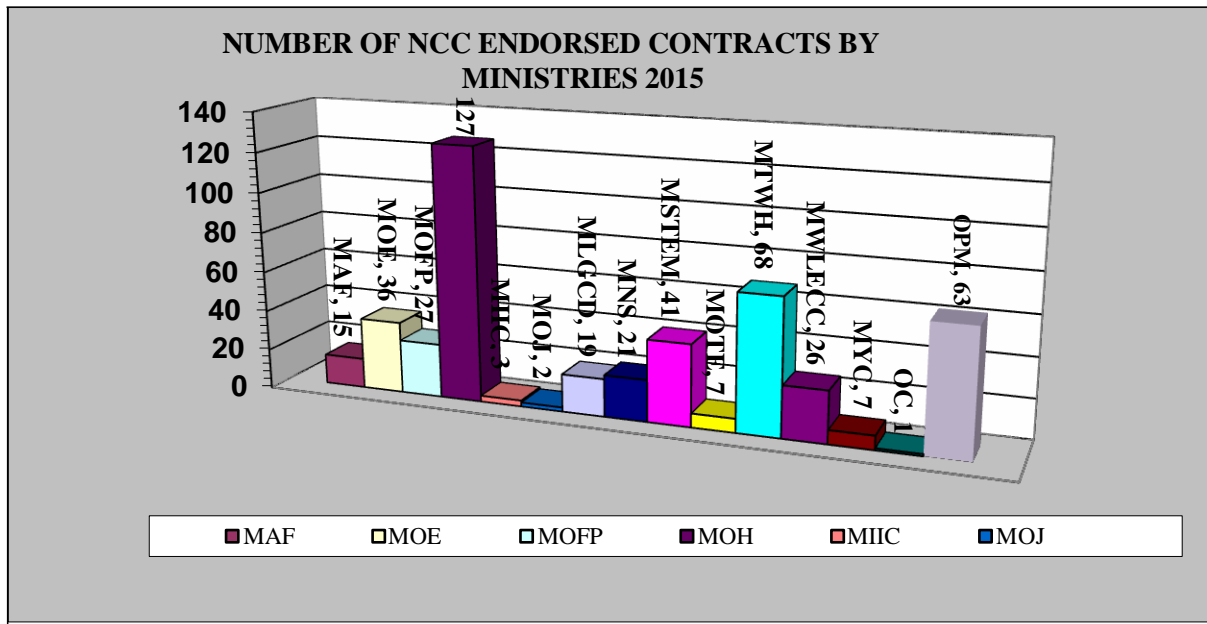
The Table below illustrates the value ranges of the contracts which were endorsed by the NCC during the year 2015.

Table 5

Range	Number of Contracts	Percentage of Total Value of Endorsed Contracts	Total Value of Endorsed Contracts J\$
Under \$5M	14	3	29,228,900
\$5M - \$15M	60	13	549,159,720
Over \$15M - \$ 39,999,999.99M	198	43	5,007,147,608
Over \$40M - \$150M	136	29	10,226,928,339
Over \$150M	55	12	21,365,467,913
Total	463	100	37,177,932,480

*Percentages are rounded off to the nearest value.

Figure 4



Legend

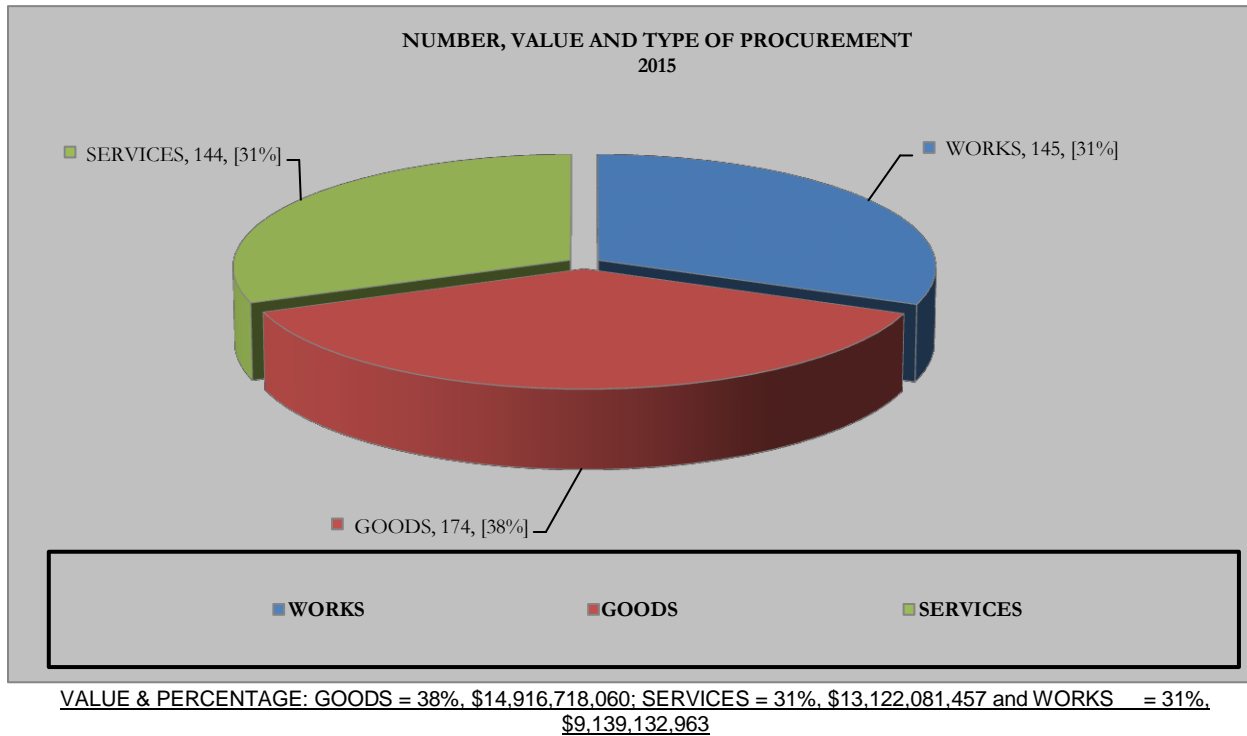
- | | | | |
|-----------|---|-----------|--|
| 1. MAF | Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries | 9. OPM | Office of the Prime Minister |
| 2. MIIC | Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce | 10. OC | Office of the Cabinet |
| 3. MTW | Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing | 11. MFPS | Ministry of Finance and Planning |
| 4. MOE | Ministry of Education | 12. MNS | Ministry of National Security |
| 5. MYC | Ministry of Youth and Culture | 13. MOE | Ministry of Health |
| 6. MWLECC | Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change | 14. MOTE | Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment |
| 8. MSTEM | Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy & Mining | 15. MLGCD | Ministry of Local Government and Community Development |

In 2015, the Ministry of Health and its related agencies, accounted for the highest number of NCC endorsed contract recommendations with a total of one hundred and twenty-eight (127) endorsements.

Number and Type of NCC Endorsed Contracts

Figure 3 below illustrates (a) the three (3) types of procurement; (b) the total number of contracts which were endorsed for each of the referenced type of procurement; (c) the aggregated value of the endorsements for each type of procurement; and (d) the referenced aggregated value of each type of procurement, expressed as a percentage of the cumulated endorsements in 2015.

Figure 3



Consultancy Contracts

During 2015, the NCC endorsed thirty five (35) recommendations for the award of contracts which were by nature consultancy contracts. These contracts amounted to J\$1.6B and accounted for approximately 4.5% of the total endorsed recommendations for the award of contract.

NCC Sector Committees

The NCC, through its eight (8) Sector Committees, reviews the recommendations for the award of contracts that are valued over J\$15,000,000.00 which are submitted by the Government Procuring Entities for the approval of the National Contracts Commission. The Sector Committees consist of members with particular expertise in varying fields within the Public Sector. During the year 2015, the NCC Sector Committees convened one hundred and forty-four (144) meetings, at which a total of four hundred and ten (410) recommendations for the award of contracts were reviewed.

National Contracts Endorsements

The number of works contracts that were endorsed by the National Contracts Commission (NCC) during the reporting year amounted to one hundred and forty five (145), which had a total value of J\$9,139,132,963 .00. Of these contracts, seventy-four (74) came under the scrutiny of the OCG’s Construction Contracts Division.

CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION: ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE & HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

During 2015, the OCG welcomed eight (8) new staff members, whilst ten (10) of our colleagues separated from the organisation. Of this number, three (3) persons went on Retirement.

The OCG's approved Organisational Structure remains at sixty-three (63) posts. There were no vacant positions as at December 31, 2015. Appendices X - Organizational Chart and XI - Staff Situation 2015, provide further details in relation to staff.

Staff Training

The OCG remains committed to providing an environment in which its staff members develop professional best practices, through both external and internal training.

The OCG, in 2015, registered its officers in one hundred and fifty-three (153) opportunities, in forty-one (41) internal and external training programmes, seminars, workshops and/or conferences, both locally and overseas. It is to be noted that in several instances, the training opportunities were sponsored by international partners, thus were at no significant expense to the OCG.

Of the training programmes attended by OCG staff, five (5) were focused on developing Investigation Skills; seven (7) were focused on developing procurement knowledge and twelve (12) were organised with an Anti-Corruption theme/objective. Other training opportunities were geared toward job-related development. Details of the training opportunities to which the OCG staff were privy, is documented in Appendix XII - Schedule of OCG Staff Training for the Year 2015.

The Human Resource Management Department remains committed to identifying quality training opportunities aimed at enhancing the human resource asset of the OCG and increasing its capacity to discharge its mandate in a more effective and efficient manner.

Summer Internship Programme

The OCG recognises the lack of internship opportunities with which students at the tertiary level are faced. Needless to say, where this necessary condition of their respective programme is not met, it affects their ability to successfully complete or delays the completion of that programme of study. In this vein, and in an effort to contribute to youth empowerment and education, the OCG, for the second time in 2015, facilitated Summer Internship for six (6) students. The programme lasted between eight (8) to ten (10) weeks. Of the six (6) students, three students (3) were from the Norman Manley Law School, two (2) students were accepted from the Department of Government, and the other was a final year law undergraduate student.

The students are exposed to all aspects of the OCG's operations, in keeping with their area of study. Students from the Norman Manley Law School for instance, in addition to being sensitised to activities undertaken by all Divisions within the OCG, were exposed to Court proceedings and internal Judicial Hearings. They are also required to draft Legal Opinions on matters of importance and are given the opportunity to participate in other activities professionally and socially.

Upon commencement of the programme, Summer Interns were provided with a schedule of targets to meet over the period of engagement, and through supervision were required to complete assignments in a timely manner. Payment for the Interns is minimal and is taken from the Budget allocation for Training.

The OCG hopes to continue with the Internship Programme in the coming years, to enable valuable exchange in support of Graduate and Post-Graduate Programmes.

Awards and Recognition Programme

The OCG continued its Annual Awards and Recognition Ceremony, with respect to staff performance during 2015, with a ceremony at which the Employee of the Year was recognised, along with an additional five (5) nominees for the highly coveted award. The event was hosted in December 2015 and formed part of the OCG's Christmas Party proceedings.

The Social Activities Committee

The Social Activities Committee (SAC) is a committee, whose members are nominated by the OCG staff. The SAC has the responsibility of promoting social interaction and creating an environment of comradeship amongst the OCG staff.

During the reporting period, the SAC hosted or coordinated the following events/activities:

For the year 2015 the following social activities were undertaken by the SAC:

1. Quarterly Birthday Socials
2. Mother's Day Treat
3. Father's Day Treat
4. OCG Sports and Fun Day
5. Games Evening
6. Christmas Tree-Lighting Ceremony

Fundraising activities undertaken by the SAC, to support planned activities for 2015, were:

1. Fruit Sales
2. Breakfast morning
3. Cookie Sales
4. Cake Sales
5. The operation of a Coffee Machine (2013, 2014, 2015)

The Committee, along with the support of other staff members, continues to facilitate the OCG's participation in the annual Emancipation/Independence (Emancipendence) celebrations, which is hosted by the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) and held between July and August each year. The undertaking sees friendly competition in various categories, among several Public Bodies.

Emancipendence 2015 saw the participation of ten (10) Public Bodies, namely: The Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ), Development Bank of Jamaica Limited (DBJ), Housing Agency of Jamaica Limited (HAJL), Jamaica Social Investment Fund (JSIF), Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture (MOEY), National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA), Passport Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA), Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN), Urban Development Corporation (UDC) and the Office of the Contractor General (OCG).

The OCG placed second in the Dancing and Ultimate Warrior competitions and third in both the Track & Field and Quiz competitions and finished a commendable 5th overall.

Office Management Department

The Office Management Department has direct responsibility for the procurement and the management of all OCG assets. The Department purchased capital items and other goods and services in the Calendar Year 2015; largely from the OCG's 2015/2016 Recurrent Budget.

The OCG's Recurrent Budget of Two Hundred and Thirty-three Million, Six Hundred and Fifty Four Thousand Dollars (\$233,654,000.00), provided for the purchase of other goods and equipment and capital expenditure, capped at Eighteen Million Eight Hundred and Forty Eight Thousand Dollars (\$18,848,000.00) and Two Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$2,500,000.00), respectively. In the foregoing regard, only eight percent (8%) and one percent (1%), respectively, of the total Recurrent Budget Allocation provided for the purchase of goods and equipment and capital items. The remainder of the Budget, provided for the rental of property, utilities and staff-related expenses.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS DIVISION

Throughout 2015, the Office of the Contractor General's (OCG's) Information Systems Division (ISD) continued to provide technological support for the operations of the OCG and the National Contracts Commission (NCC). This was accomplished through the provision of software development, systems administration and support services to the ISD's internal stakeholders.

Support of Strategic Portfolios: The OCG and the NCC Websites

The OCG utilises and maintains the following two (2) websites:

1. The Office of the Contractor General's website – www.ocg.gov.jm
2. The National Contracts Commission's website – www.ncc.gov.jm

The websites provide pertinent information on matters which relate to the work of the OCG and the NCC. The primary purpose of the websites is to promote transparency in the Government of Jamaica's (GOJ's) Procurement and Contract Award Processes. The websites also seek to ensure that relevant and timely information, which relates to the monitoring and investigative functions of the OCG, are easily accessible to all stakeholders.

Twitter - @OCGJamaica

The OCG Twitter account forms a part of a strategic objective to provide a more effective and efficient channel through which to communicate information about its various operating mandates to the public. The Twitter account is intended to better leverage the organization to disseminate information to its stakeholders in a clear, accurate and timely manner.

In 2015, messages sent by the Twitter communication were viewed 6,342 times per month, totaling 76,100 views for the year.

OCG Web Portal

The OCG's Web Portal was developed to advance the receipt, consolidation and assessment of contract awards which were made by Public Bodies. The system was launched in the third (3rd) quarter of 2012 and facilitated an expansion in the scope of the Quarterly Contract Awards (QCA) Regime. Public Bodies are now required to report on all contracts awarded over J\$500,000.00, which would include contracts that required the endorsement of the NCC.

Public Bodies' contract award information submitted via the OCG's Web Portal are published on the OCG's website and may be accessed via the URL <http://www.ocg.gov.jm/ocg/view/qca-consol> or by scanning the following graphic with a mobile device.

Procurement Notice Board

The GOJ Procurement Notice Board is an online tool used to search for procurement opportunities issued by Public Bodies. Suppliers and the general public may search the notice board for these opportunities based on keyword, category, agency or required grade. Members of the public also have the option to register in order to receive email notifications whenever the notice board is updated with a procurement opportunity that matches their interest.

The Procurement Notice Board may be accessed via the URL <http://procurement.gov.jm> or by scanning the following graphic with a mobile device.

Prescribed Licences Information Database (PLID)

The OCG's Prescribed Licences Information Database (PLID) facilitates the systematic and formal monitoring, by the OCG, of the licensing activities executed by GOJ Public Bodies.

The PLID system is comprised of a public and private portal, both of which can be accessed from the OCG's website. Access to the private portal is restricted to Public Bodies, and facilitates the capture of information related to the Public Bodies' licensing activities. The public portal allows the general public access to view information captured by the PLID system.

THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION

During the year 2015, the Office of the Contractor General (OCG) concluded two (2) Special Investigations, which were conducted pursuant to the discretionary powers, which are reserved for the Contractor General (CG), under Sections 15 and 16 of the Contractor General Act (1983).

Having regard to the mandatory requirements of Section 20(1) of the Act, upon conclusion the Reports of Investigation, the matters were promptly submitted to "the principal officer of the Public Body concerned and the Minister having (portfolio) responsibility therefor." Further, and as provided under Sections 21 and 28(2) of the Act, the said Reports of Investigation were laid before both Houses of Parliament.

The two (2) published Reports of Investigation which were submitted to Parliament are as follows:

1. Special Report of Investigation Conducted into the Circumstances Concerning the Award of Certain Contracts to One Touch Construction and Equipment Limited, formerly One Touch Tours and Equipment Limited, by the St. Thomas Parish Council.- published March 2015; and

2. Special Report of Investigation Conducted Concerning Allegations of Nepotism, Conflicts of Interest, Irregularity/Impropriety in the Award of Government Contracts at the Hanover Parish Council to Persons Affiliated with the then Mayor.-published March 2015.

Once an Investigation Report is submitted by the Contractor General, to the Houses of Parliament, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President of the Senate, are thereupon, obliged, by Section 28(3) of the Act, to table the Reports in each House "as soon as possible".

Pursuant to Section 28(4) of the Act, and in the public's interest, the complete contents of the aforementioned two (2) Reports were also uploaded to the OCG's website, upon the respective tabling of each, for public viewing. The reports are currently available for viewing or download from the OCG's website at <http://www.ocg.gov.jm>.

It is to be noted that during the reporting period, in addition to the two (2) Investigation Reports which were completed and published, the Special Investigations Division conducted investigations into a total of thirty-nine (39) other matters that were either brought forward or commenced in 2015. Of the thirty-nine (39) Investigations which were ongoing in 2015, twenty (20) commenced in 2015. In addition, three (3) investigations were placed on hold, pending judgement by the courts.

Additionally, formal Referrals have been made by the OCG, regarding the offending Public Officers, to the appropriate State Authorities for the requisite action(s) to be taken by them in keeping with the requirements of Section 21 of the Act. During the reporting period, a total of five (5) Referrals were made to the respective State Authorities, for their independent determinations to be undertaken, based upon the findings of irregularities and impropriety, and in consideration of the recommendations and conclusions made in the OCG's Investigation Reports.

COMMUNICATION OF PROCUREMENT RELATED CONCERNS BY THE OCG TO PUBLIC BODIES

In relation to the captioned, once matters of concern arise in relation to any stage of a procurement process, the Office communicates the concern to the offending public body. Over the years, the Office during its monitoring, has identified multiple instances of deviation from the GOJ procurement procedural guidelines and in all cases, communicated same to the respective public bodies and made recommendations regarding corrective action to be taken.

PUBLIC BODIES' NON-ADHERENCE TO GOJ PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES

As obtained in previous years, the OCG, in 2015, also observed that some public entities continued to either disregard or are ignorant of the GOJ procurement stipulations. The major procurement related concerns for the OCG were as follows:

1. The failure of Public Bodies to establish Procurement and Evaluation Committees;
2. The failure of Public Bodies to prepare contract documents;
3. The failure of Public Bodies to ensure effective Procurement Planning; and
4. Non-disclosure of conflict of interest.

In relation to the matter of conflict of interest and the failure of some public officers and officials to disclose same, the OCG has observed that this phenomenon continues to be a major public procurement related irregularity. As a result, the OCG hereby reminds public officers and officials to recuse themselves from decision making processes which involve the award of GOJ contracts in scenarios which pose potential or actual conflicts of interest, particularly where there is the slightest hint and/or suggestion of nepotism, whether real or perceived.

OCG 2015 ANTI-CORRUPTION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Having regard to Jamaica's Vision 2030, and the need for galvanising our collective efforts for the attainment of "Effective Governance", the OCG during the year 2015, had embarked on a number of anti-corruption outreach activities.

In 2015, the OCG successfully executed the Inaugural Fraud and Anti-Corruption Conference, which was a three (3) day event held between the 9th and the 11th of March, 2015, in partnership with the Canadian High Commission (Jamaica), the British High Commission (Jamaica), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union (Jamaica), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and National Integrity Action (NIA).

The Conference was convened under the Theme: "**Confronting Corruption: Empowering a Generation, Transforming a Nation**".

The Conference included a number of local, regional and international Speakers and Presenters, who presented on varying themes including:

- ✓ Ms. Renee Cummings, Criminologist/Criminal Psychologist - Theme: "Children, Crime & Corruption – A Case Study in Trinidad & Tobago";
- ✓ Ms. Catherine Trujillo, Acting Deputy Inspector General, U.S Agency For International Development – Office of Inspector General - Theme: "Independent Oversight Authorities – Combatting Fraud, Waste & Abuse. Is it Possible?";
- ✓ Dr. Omar E. Hawthorne, Lecturer, Department of Government, University of the West Indies, Mona – Theme: "Infawma fi dead" culture: A Case Study of Protection for Whistleblowers in Jamaica";
- ✓ Mr. David Green, CB, QC, Director, Serious Fraud Office, London – Theme: "Problems around the Investigation and Prosecution of Corruption Cases."

The OCG was heartened for the successful participation which its Inaugural Conference achieved. In particular, Day 1, Session 1 of the Conference was primarily geared toward the youth. In this regard, two hundred and thirty-five (235) students and teachers, from one hundred and seven (107) schools from across the island, were in attendance.

The Official Opening Ceremony, which was held in the afternoon of Day 1 of the Conference included the participation of approximately one hundred and forty-two (142) Local and International Officials, delegates and stakeholders. Days 2 and 3 of the Conference was again well supported with approximately four hundred (400) participants.

In addition to the OCG's effort to ensure that the Office contributes to the realization of VISION 2030, Jamaica is a Signatory to, and ratified the 'United Nations Convention Against Corruption' (UNCAC) on the 16th September 2005 and 5th March 2008, respectively.

In recognition of the obligations under the UNCAC, the OCG convened the Conference in light of the following objectives:

1. *To effectively address and deliver upon Jamaica's obligations under the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and more specifically, Articles 60, 61 and 62.*
2. *To provide a unique opportunity for stakeholders to utilise this platform to facilitate greater levels of inter-agency coordination.*

3. *To foster an effective exchange of ideas through open and candid discussions on issues concerning integrity, law enforcement and Jamaica's obligations under regional and international Laws and Conventions.*
4. *To sensitise our youth to issues concerning corruption and the impact of fraud.*
5. *To officially launch an Essay and Poster Competition aimed at students in partnership with the National Integrity Action (NIA).*
6. *To promote cooperation and to stimulate critical discussions amongst all relevant stakeholders, inclusive of local, regional and international practitioners, members of civil society, the private sector and the media, as appropriate.*

With reference to UNCAC, detailed, hereunder, are the relevant extracts from the Convention:

Article 60 – Training and technical assistance

1. *Each State Party shall, to the extent necessary, initiate, develop or improve specific training programmes for its personnel responsible for preventing and combating corruption. Such training programmes could deal, inter alia, with the following areas:*
 - a) *Effective measures to prevent, detect, investigate, punish and control corruption, including the use of evidence – gathering and investigative methods;*
 - b) *Building capacity in the development and planning of strategic anti-corruption policy;*
 - c) *Evaluation and strengthening of institutions, public service management and the management of public finances, including public procurement, and the private sector;*

Article 60 (2), (3), (4) are also relevant. Citing:

2. State Parties shall, according to their capacity, consider affording one another the widest measure of technical assistance, especially for the benefit of developing countries, in their respective plans and programmes to combat corruption, including material support and training in the areas referred to in paragraph 1 of this article, and training and assistance and the mutual exchange of relevant experience and specialized knowledge, which will facilitate international cooperation between State Parties in the areas of extradition and mutual legal assistance.
3. State Parties shall strengthen, to the extent necessary, efforts to maximize operational and training activities in international and regional organizations and in the frameworks of relevant bilateral and multilateral agreements or arrangements.
4. State Parties shall consider assisting one another, upon request, in conducting evaluations, studies and research relating to the types, causes, effects and costs of corruption in their respective countries, with a view to developing, with the participation of competent authorities and society, strategies and action plans to combat corruption.

Further, *Article 61 – 'Collection, exchange and analysis of information on corruption'* and *Article 62 – 'Other measures: implementation of the Convention through economic development and technical assistance'* are fundamental principles and practices to be embraced, considered by all and acted upon for the benefit of our citizens and country.

Poster and Essay Competition

In recognition of these factors, Transparency International also recognizes that:

“Engaging youth is essential for success in curbing corruption; youth represent a significant portion of the population (especially in developing countries) and are generally more open to social change and political transformation, since they may have less interest in maintaining the status quo.”

The Essay and Poster Competition, was envisioned, to give students an opportunity to express their views and make recommendations in relation to the fight against corruption and, it is anticipated that this will stimulate thought and become a much needed catalyst for change amongst the youth.

INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY, 2015: BACKGROUND

Jamaica has consistently ranked poorly on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI), which is published by Transparency International annually, with the consistent score of 38 and a rank of between 83 and 85 out of between 175 and 177 countries over the last three (3) years. The score obtained indicates the perceived level of public sector corruption on a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 relates to a high level of corruption and a score of 100, which indicates no corruption. A country's rank indicates its position in relation to the other countries indicated in the Index.

CPI scores associated with Jamaica have been decried over the years by local interests and steps have been taken to reduce the level and perception of corruption locally. However, the OCG, recognising that there is no one entity or effort which can effectively impact the 'squeeze' of corruption on the nation, considered the available options, with a view to not just sensitising the public to the matter of corruption but also to reach the youth who will someday be the adult generation and leaders of this country and thus, hopefully be the generation of change.

Similarly, engagement of the youth in recognition of International Anti-Corruption Day 2015, was seen as a necessary endeavour in keeping with the OCG's youth-centric thrust.

INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY (IACD) 2015

International Anti-Corruption Day is an annual joint international campaign, which is spearheaded by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

In 2015, International Anti-Corruption Day (IADC) 2015 was celebrated on Wednesday, the 9th of December. In recognition of the significance of the day, which was celebrated under the Theme: *“Break the Corruption Chain”*, the OCG, with its unwavering quest of engaging the youth in the fight against corruption, partnered with the UNDP and several local and international stakeholders executed several youth-based activities prior to, and on IACD.

Activities Executed

In particular, and in an effort to engage the youth and raise awareness amongst them regarding the mandate of the OCG and the overall relevance of corruption and ant-corruption related issues, the OCG participated in several youth assemblies in Kingston and St. Andrew. The Office's participation in the assemblies involved the distribution of OCG pamphlets and the display of the framed artwork for the first to third placed awardees in the OCG's Poster Competition. The OCG team also made presentations to students on the value systems touching and concerning honesty and dishonesty, and the role of the youth in combating corruption.

As it relates to the wider populace, the Contractor General, the UNDP's Country Representative and several local stakeholders, participated in several media interviews on issues of corruption and the perceptions thereof. In addition, three (3) Billboards were launched on the 9th of December, two (2) in Kingston and the other in Montego Bay. During the launch, remarks were delivered by the OCG, the Major Organised Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency (MOCA), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Subsequently two (2) youth fora were held, one (1) in the Kingston and St. Andrew Metropolitan area, and the other in Montego Bay, St. James. The objectives of the youth fora were as follows:

1. To identify and discuss corrupt practices within different segments of our society and the links which form the chain of corruption;
2. To identify the relationship between gender and corruption; and
3. To discuss appropriate measures that can be taken by the youth to reduce their vulnerability to corrupt practices within our society.

In addition to these activities, the OCG attended and participated in a number of regional and international anti-corruption activities which were held in 2015. Of note, in my capacity as the Contractor General of Jamaica, I attended and presented at the Commonwealth Caribbean Association of Integrity Commissions and Anti-Corruption Bodies Conference that was held in Grenada from 22 – 26 June, 2015. Subsequently, the OCG was also represented at the Global Conference on Anti-Corruption Reform in Small Island States, which was held in Mauritius from August 17 – 21, 2015. A presentation entitled "*The Role of the Contractor-General's Office to prevent and combat corruption*" was made by the OCG at the referenced Conference.

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL 2015 REPORT

Jamaica's 2015 ranking on the TI Corruption Perceptions Index indicated that Jamaica progressed by 16 places higher than it did in 2014. The report ranked the island 69th of 168 countries in the ranking. Having regard to the favourable ranking, Jamaica was said to be moving in the right direction in the fight against corruption. The National Integrity Action (NIA) also praised the results, saying that it will be an encouragement to investment and job creation, as well as increasing public confidence in anti-corruption efforts. On a point of caution, the NIA "*warned that to continue tackling corruption will require the continued strengthening of law enforcement, and the tackling of social attitudes that tolerate corruption.*" It was also acknowledged by the Jamaica Observer on January 27, 2016 that "*a recent NIA-commissioned poll showed that only 5% of Jamaicans felt that the government was effectively leading the fight against corruption.*"

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The OCG remains cognizant of the important mandate of the Office and recommit itself to the task of ensuring probity in the public procurement process. The Office is also aware of the importance of ensuring that the objectives of Jamaica Vision 2030 are realized. In this regard, the OCG will continue to endeavour that its role in public governance is executed without fear or favour.

Based on the OCG's adverse findings which have emanated from the procurement of goods and services by Public Bodies, the OCG finds it prudent to recommend that Public Bodies should demonstrate greater care in the management of public assets and the divestment thereof in instances where required. The OCG is also concerned about the continued occurrences of Contract Variations, Time and Cost Overruns being incurred on projects. As indicated in previous publications, while such occurrences are not indicative of corruption, these practices can significantly worsen the country's economic debt burden and result in overall economic imprudence.

Another grave concern for the OCG is the repeated incidents of conflicts of interest in the award and execution of government contracts. Having regard to this issue, the OCG uses this opportunity to remind public bodies of the importance of Section 36 of the Regulations governing the Contractor General Act. The referenced section states as follows:

“36. (1) It is the duty of any public officer directly or indirectly involved with the procurement process and particularly in the preparation of bidding documents, evaluation, contract negotiations and contract management and payments to-(a) *declare to the head of his entity or chairman of the entity's procurement committee any potential conflict of interest in relation to a proposed Government contract;*(b) *declare to the head or chairman, any relationship with a bidder, supplier, contractor or consultant and refrain from taking part in either the decision making process or the implementation of any prospective Government contract where such a relationship exists.*(2) *Every personal relationship shall be disclosed in writing or, if in a meeting orally and then minuted, and any person who has made such a disclosure of personal relationship shall not sit in any meeting while deliberations on the subject matter are being conducted.*(3) *A prospective contractor with potential or actual conflict of interest in relation to goods, works or services under a proposed Government contract shall be ineligible to bid or to submit any proposal.*(4) *A conflict of interest exists in the case of a firm previously hired by the Government to provide related services for any project design, preparation or implementation; and that firm and all its affiliates shall be ineligible to provide goods, works or services for any contract which relates in whole or in part to those earlier services provided by it to the Government.*(5) *In this regulation, a "personal relationship" means consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree.*

As it regards the fight against corruption, no one entity can rightfully claim ownership or birthright or present itself as having the panacea to combating corruption. In our quest for the attainment of probity, accountability and transparency in our nation's governance affairs, collaboration is fundamental, there is no one-size-fits-all in anti-corruption legislation and institutional arrangements. There is no omnipotent institution or agency which can eradicate corruption without the participation and contribution of all stakeholders. In reflection of the adverse effects of corruption, the UNDC reminds us that:

“Corruption is an insidious plague that has a wide range of corrosive effects on societies. It undermines democracy and the rule of law, leads to violations of human rights, distorts markets, erodes the quality of life, and allows organized crime, terrorism and other threats to human security to flourish.”¹

While we reflect on the number problems confronting our society and the fact that the state needs to be more responsive to the challenges confronting us, it is simultaneously incumbent on all of us to ensure that we play our part in the advancement of Jamaica. The state alone cannot solve society's numerous problems or provide the remedies for all governance deficits. A meaningful democracy must strengthen civic voices, demonstrate effective and responsive governance systems and promote the interest of all its citizens. I, therefore urge all of us to make the necessary contribution in order to ensure that Jamaica becomes a prosperous democracy where its citizenry can live harmoniously.

Let us be grateful to God, for the past year's achievements and may He continue to give every one of us the strength and courage that we need to address the challenges confronting Jamaica and may we be inspired to give our energy and time required to make Jamaica a place of choice to live and raise our families.

Dirk Harrison
Contractor General of Jamaica

¹ UNDC, 2013