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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

## **Henry awaiting report on Palisadoes meetings**

Transport and Works Minister, Hon Mike Henry, is awaiting a comprehensive report out of a number of meetings that are being held among stakeholders to the US\$65 million Palisadoes Shoreline Protection and Rehabilitation Programme over recent days, following major hitches resulting mainly from violent intimidation on the project site.

Minister Henry, who is on official business in Trinidad and Tobago, has been in touch with various stakeholders, but intends to fully address the matter after analysing a comprehensive report to be done after the ongoing series of meetings are completed.

The minister, who brought the written security concerns of main contractor, China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC), to the attention of the Police Commissioner, also urged political responsibility from the hierarchy of the Opposition People's National Party (PNP), especially in the Eastern Kingston and Port Royal constituency in which the Palisadoes project is located.

In noting the Opposition's claim that the security issues on the project site were being used to mask other issues there, Minister Henry said strong-arm tactics were long-established and integral features of the constituency, "and those who don't know it and never expected such issues to arise on the mega project, just don't exist. Everybody knows how East Kingston politics operates and who have flexed the real muscles there traditionally, so to deny the undeniable is pretty much futile, I believe."

He said it was in the national interest for the project to be completed without any repetition of the level of intimidation that has recently emerged, saying that was his goal in going forward. However, he said the pivotal sources of the recent problems needed to be fully addressed, to minimise the likelihood of any repetition. He said the political scenario in the constituency had to be seriously considered, including the interest of the Jamaica Labour Party's (JLP) caretaker representation there, despite its noted absence from the agitation there.

Minister Henry also cited the need for the police report on the matter to be brought into the picture, especially since the Member of Parliament (MP) had dismissed all assertions of any criminal involvement by political elements in the ongoing problems on the worksite. The minister said the MP, in calling for police investigation and not just security support, needed to be mindful of getting more than he bargained for from the request, as enough clear details were emerging of numerous dubious activities among political elements in respect of the Palisadoes project.

The minister said from the overall report that is expected, he intends to chart an amicable way forward, “hopefully with the co-operation of the sometimes antagonistic Opposition political forces in the area.”

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