

**Press Release
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PLP concerned about independence of Freeport Container Port Investigation

For Immediate Release

The PLP expresses concern that the International Labour Organization (ILO) led investigation at the Freeport Container Port (FCP) may not be independent or objective as indicated by the Minister with responsibility for Labour, Senator Dion Foulkes.

The PLP has been reliably informed that employees of the FCP who participated in this investigation are required to undergo a debriefing by the Human Resource Dept. before being interviewed by the ILO investigator. This raises serious concerns of objectivity and independence as it appears that management of the FCP were “managing”, “manipulating” and “controlling” the nature and flow of information during the investigative process. As the investigation involves a critical and forensic analysis of the health and safety policies of the FCP by a third party, the process must be transparent and independent.

It is worthy of note that an officer from the Ministry of Labour conducted an investigation at the FCP. The PLP calls on the government to reveal to the public the findings of the investigation. These findings may shed light on why a further investigation by the ILO was required.

The PLP also notes that shortly after the tornados struck the Island of Grand Bahama on 26th March 2010, the Prime Minister visited the affected site in Freeport and declared it safe based on conjecture at best; he also absolved management of any safety violations or wrongdoing. The actions of the Prime Minister severely compromised the integrity of any investigation short of a Commission of Inquiry; therefore, the PLP is again calling for a Commission of Inquiry in the public interest.

In light of the ill-advised comments made by the Prime Minister after consulting with FCP management team coupled with conflicting reports from the rank and file employees at the FCP, it is the considered view of the PLP that a Commission of Inquiry remains the most appropriate course of action in identifying the root causes of the loss of life and property damage in the wake of the tragedy on 26th March 2010.