



# Top officials to be charged

## Lindquist submits report on Desalination Plant contract

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Friday, March 17, 2006

Criminal charges are expected to be laid against a number of top public officials, a local contractor and foreign national for their alleged involvement in the controversial, multi-million dollar Desalination Plant contract that was handed out under the former UNC Government.

The charges are to be laid following submission of a 1,000 page report, the result of a four-year investigation done by foreign forensic investigator, Bob Lindquist, the Director of Public Prosecutions yesterday, sources said.

Lindquist has recommended that several top officials involved in the deal be charged with several counts of bribery and fraud in relation to the Desalacott corruption investigation.

DPP Geoffrey Henderson, in a brief telephone interview yesterday evening, declined all comment on the matter but Attorney General John Jeremie had hinted at possible charges in the Senate last Tuesday.

He had declared that the 20-year contract, awarded to Desalacott in August 1999, was about to be terminated due to fraud and bribery. The Point Lisas plant has since cost Government \$175m per year. Under the contract, WASA could obtain Desalacott if the contract is terminated for fraud and bribery, Jeremie said.

He had also warned that police action against the perpetrators is imminent.

Sources said the investigation which took four years involved America's FBI detectives who spent weeks gathering thousands of documents and was formally completed this week.

The desalination contract was handed out in August 1999 under the UNC administration by the Ministry of Public utilities then headed by Ganga Singh in a Water for All project. Lindquist's investigations were launched in 2001 by then Attorney General Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj and it was continued under the PNM who assumed office in 2002.

Singh is now in London attending a parliamentary seminar and could not be reached for comment yesterday.

The foreign national-a broker-is facing extradition charges once the Anti-Corruption Bureau gets the go ahead.