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**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Customs Restructure Agreement**

The Government is astonished at the premeditated falsehoods spread by some anonymous customs officers to undermine an agreement that has taken over two years to negotiate.

It is a complete fabrication that the agreement says, intends or will lead to any customs department role in immigration duties. Immigration duties are already in the hands of a professional body of men (SIL and the RGP) with whose service the Government is very well satisfied.

The principal features of the voted down agreement was a consolidated pay rise of 12% in exchange for flexibility in respect of duties all of which are, in any event, in every Customs Officer's job descriptions. The Government regrets the failure of its attempt to obtain flexibility by constructive consensus.

Following the rejection of a Customs Review Agreement which was good for all sides, but best of all for Custom Officers, the Government will formally discontinue all further negotiations in relation to customs review issues.

If the agreement has been voted down because customs officers genuinely do not want it based on an accurate understanding of its contents, then so be it. But the Government believes that some Customs Officers may have been misled by a campaign of distortion, misrepresentation and mis-information, motivated by factors other than the best interests of young, professional customs officers with their whole career in front of them.

Accordingly, the Government will leave the agreement on the table for a further 14 days from today. If the agreement is not accepted by 5pm on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2009, it will be formally withdrawn by the Government. The matter will then be at an end.

A Government spokesman said:-

“Anyone who has any doubt about the political motivation and orchestration of this situation need only read the otherwise inexplicably simultaneous statements on the matter by the weekly GSLP publication. Its attempt to link this issue with fabricated nonsense about Spain and the Cordoba Agreement is just another deceit and manipulation of workers (at their financial expense) by people masquerading as pro-worker socialists! To be sure that no customs officer has been an unwitting victim of these politically motivated manipulations the Government is offering custom officers a 14 day reflection period.”