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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BIGWU CALLS FOR INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION AND IMMEDIATE SAFETY ASSURANCES FOLLOWING PERENCO OFFSHORE CRANE ACCIDENT

The Banking, Insurance and General Workers Union (BIGWU) expresses its grave concern over the crane accident at Perenco's offshore Sama'an field, which reportedly resulted in injury to a worker. While the Union is relieved to learn from the Company that the injured worker received medical treatment and has since been discharged from hospital, this incident raises serious questions about the safety and integrity of crane operations, particularly where such equipment is used to transfer personnel between offshore platforms and vessels.

The Union wishes to make it abundantly clear that **the safety of workers is not negotiable, and no operational requirement, production target or commercial consideration can take precedence over the preservation of human life.** The fact that the injured worker is not a member of the Union, as pointed out by Perenco in its response to our enquiries, is entirely irrelevant to the fundamental issue of occupational health and safety. The Union's concern extends to every worker operating within these potentially hazardous environments, irrespective of union membership or employment status.

We are particularly concerned that Perenco employees have expressed serious apprehension about the continued use of cranes for personnel transfers. Their concerns are legitimate and must not be dismissed or treated as an inconvenience to operations. These workers are entitled to know that the equipment upon which their lives depend has been properly inspected, maintained and certified as safe for its intended purpose.

BIGWU therefore calls on Perenco to immediately suspend crane personnel transfers wherever the safety of such operations has not been independently verified, pending a comprehensive assessment by suitably qualified, independent technical experts. We further call for a thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding the crane collapse, including the identification of its root cause, and an assessment of whether similar defects or operational deficiencies may exist in other cranes operating throughout the Angostura Field.

The Union also expects Perenco to engage meaningfully with BIGWU, as the Recognised Majority Union, and to provide the relevant findings, safety assessments and corrective measures arising from the investigation, subject to applicable legal requirements. The employees who have raised these concerns must be assured that they will not be subjected to intimidation, victimisation or any adverse treatment for exercising their legitimate right to raise occupational safety concerns.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act of Trinidad and Tobago places clear responsibilities upon employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of their employees. These obligations are not satisfied merely by responding to an accident after it has occurred. They require employers to identify foreseeable hazards, assess risks and implement effective preventive measures before workers are exposed to danger.

We must not wait for a fatality before decisive action is taken. The fact that this incident did not result in the loss of life must not diminish its seriousness. A crane collapse during offshore operations is a potentially catastrophic event, and it is imperative that every reasonable measure be taken to prevent a recurrence.

BIGWU expects Perenco to demonstrate, through concrete action rather than general assurances, that the safety and well-being of its workforce remain paramount. The Union will continue to engage the Company and the relevant regulatory authorities to ensure that the concerns raised by employees are properly addressed and that no worker is required to undertake personnel transfers using equipment or procedures whose safety remains in legitimate doubt.

Workers have a right to earn a living without risking their lives unnecessarily in the process. That right must be respected and protected.

In the Service of the Working Class


Debbie Ann Otley
PRESIDENT