

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND SESSION OF
THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA (2002 – 2006)**

**SECOND
INTERIM REPORT OF
THE SPECIAL SELECT COMMITTEE
ON THE
NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF THE
GUYANA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Presented to the National Assembly

By

The Chairman of the Committee

On

1st February, 2006.

**THE SPECIAL SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE
NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF THE
GUYANA NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

MEMBERSHIP

Members of the People's Progressive Party/Civic (6)

The Hon. Dr. Leslie S. Ramsammy, M.P.

The Hon. Manzoor Nadir, M.P.

Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P.

Mr. Odinga N. Lumumba, M.P.

Mrs. Pauline R. Sukhai, M.P.

Dr. Moti Lall, C.C.H., M.P.

Members of the People's National Congress/Reform (4)

Mr. Winston S. Murray, C.C.H., M.P.

Mrs. Clarissa S. Riehl, M.P.

Mr. E. Lance Carberry, M.P., Chief Whip

Dr. Carl Max Hanoman, M.D., M.P.

Member of the Rise, Organise and Rebuild (1)

Mr. Ravindra Dev, M.P.

Second Interim Report

The Special Select Committee on the Needs Assessment of Guyana National Assembly which was appointed on 27th October, 2005, and mandated to report to the National Assembly by January 31, 2006, submitted to the National Assembly on 23rd January, 2006, the Select Committee's first Interim Report on its findings of its examination of those recommendations in the Report of the Commonwealth Senior Parliamentary Staff Advisor to the Guyana National Assembly and Addendum of the Needs Assessment of the National Assembly together with recommendations in Study I of the Guyana Fiduciary Oversight Project Report (the Bradford Report). In that first Report the Select Committee submitted its position in respect of twenty six recommendations contained in Sir Michael Davies original (1st) Report and in the Addendum to that Report.

Examination of Remaining Recommendations

The Select Committee, thereafter, proceeded to examine the remaining recommendations contained in Sir Michael Davies' Report.

The Select Committee now submits below in columnar form its recommendations on those remaining areas with which it has been able to deal definitively to date:

Column 1: recommendations from the Davies First Report and from the Addendum; and

Column 2: the Committee's recommendations:

Recommendations	Committee's Recommendations
Sir Michael Davies' First Report	
1. A settled parliamentary calendar should be observed and sittings held on a regular basis.	The Committee accepts this recommendation in principle, but the Committee believes that the existing

<p>2. (i) Time should be allowed for the proper scrutiny of legislation and bills should be presented to the Assembly before publication.</p> <p>(ii) There should be two weeks between publication of a Bill and its Second Reading.</p> <p>(iii) The Standing Orders should be amended to prevent Ministers moving that bills be considered in committee "forthwith".</p> <p>The Standing Orders should not allow for Bills to be taken through all their stages in one day.</p> <p>3. Specific time should be set aside for debates on Committee Reports and on Government's response to them.</p>	<p>Standing Orders adequately provide for this. The Committee therefore recommends that the National Assembly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Retain the existing Standing Orders, and (ii) Urge the Government to indicate on a quarterly basis its parliamentary programme, provided that provisions are contained therein for modifications to such programmes. <p>The Committee considers these three recommendations as interrelated and recommends as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) that the National Assembly refer the following amendment of the Standing Order to the Standing Orders Committee for implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substitute the words "An interval of not less than seven days" for the words "An interval of not less than three days at the beginning of Standing Order No. 46 (2). (ii) that the National Assembly retains Standing Order No. 46 (3) while providing for the publication of a Bill in the Official Gazette no less than 7 days before the second reading. (iii) that the provision of Standing Order No. 46 (2) pertaining to the proceeding with a Bill forthwith be modified to discourage the practice while at the same time enabling the Government to proceed with the various stages of a Bill at the same sitting in the case of an emergency. <p>The Committee acknowledges that all Sectoral Committee Reports are currently presented to the National Assembly and</p>
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	<p>adopted by a motion in accordance with Standing Order No. 76 (5). It recommends that the National Assembly adopt this recommendation and refer it to the Standing Orders Committee for the amendment of Standing Order No. 76 in order to formalise this practice, by amending the title from "Report from Select Committee" to "Report from Select Committee or Sectoral Committee" and by amendment of Standing Order 76 (5) by inserting the words "or Sectoral" after the word "Select" where it appears in Standing Order 76 (5).</p>
<p>Sir Michael Davies' Addendum (Summary)</p>	
<p>1. The Order Paper should no longer be sent outside the Parliament building to any member of the Government until it is finalised.</p>	<p>A majority of Members of the Committee accepts that the Government must retain its right to be engaged in ensuring that its business are on the Order Paper as required. On the other hand the Members of the PNC/R record their agreement with the recommendation as written. The Committee, therefore, recommends that this recommendation be referred to the National Assembly for a decision.</p>
<p>2. The notice for questions should be reduced to no more than 14 days.</p>	<p>The Committee recommends that the National Assembly adopt this recommendation and refer it to the Standing Orders Committee for implementation.</p>
<p>3. Amendments to legislation should be tabled in advance so that they can be circulated. Manuscript amendments should be discouraged.</p>	<p>The Committee agrees that Standing Orders Nos. 31 (6) and 51 (2) adequately provide for the needs of the Assembly and, therefore, recommends that the National Assembly retain the existing Standing Orders 31 (6) and 51 (2).</p>
<p>4. The concept of Opposition time one day a month should be agreed. The Opposition should be encouraged to use the opportunities that already exist to question the Government.</p>	<p>The Committee agrees that this recommendation is provided for by Standing Order No. 20(2) but, notwithstanding, recommends that the National Assembly adopt it and refer it to the Parliamentary Management Committee for scheduling of "Opposition Time".</p>

<p>5. While recognizing that the annual turn-over of sectoral committee chairpersons was a political compromise, consideration should be given to allowing greater continuity so as to enhance the performance of the committees.</p>	<p>The Committee notes that by its Resolution No. 19 passed on 15th May, 2003, the National Assembly adopted a mechanism for chairing of Sectoral Committees. It therefore recommends that this mechanism be retained.</p>
<p>6. Consideration should be given to reaching agreement with the University on internships.</p>	<p>The Committee recommends that the National Assembly refer this recommendation to the Parliamentary Management Committee for its consideration of the principle of internship.</p>
<p>7. In order to reach out to the public and the private sector, some "open days" might be arranged where MPs could meet representatives of NGOs and the business community.</p>	<p>The Committee agrees that the Sectoral Committees and Special Select Committees provide for the interactions suggested in the recommendation and recommends that current practice continue.</p>

Submission of Interim Report

The Committee, because of the constraint of time and because of its expanded mandate, recognises that it cannot complete its work prior to the deadline set at January 31, 2006, by the National Assembly. It therefore submits this Second Interim Report and requests the National Assembly to extend the life of this Committee to the end of February, 2006.



Hon. Dr. Leslie S. Ramsammy, M.P.,
 Minister of Health,
**Chairman, Special Select Committee on the
 Needs Assessment of the Guyana National Assembly.**

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30th January, 2006.