

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 54TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION
(2006-2008) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON THURSDAY, 26TH JUNE, 2008
IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (70)

Speaker (1)

The Hon. Hari N. Ramkarran, S.C., M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly

MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT (41)

(i) **People's Progressive Party/Civic (40)**

(ii) **The United Force (1)**

The Hon. Samuel A.A. Hinds, M.P., (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice), Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications

The Hon. Clement J. Rohee, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs

The Hon. Shaik K.Z Baksh, M.P., Minister of Education

The Hon. Dr. Henry B. Jeffrey, M.P., Minister of Foreign Trade and International Co-operation (Absent – on leave)

The Hon. Dr. Leslie S. Ramsammy, M.P., (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne) Minister of Health

The Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, M.P., (Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo), Minister of Foreign Affairs

*The Hon. Dr. Ashni K. Singh, M.P., Minister of Finance

The Hon. Harry Narine Nawbatt, M.P., Minister of Housing and Water (Absent – on leave)

The Hon. Robert M. Persaud, M.P., (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne), Minister of Agriculture

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*Non-elected Minister

The Hon. Dr. Jennifer R.A. Westford, M.P., (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni),
Minister of Public Service (Absent – on leave)

The Hon. Kellawan Lall, M.P., Minister of Local Government and Regional
Development

*The Hon. Doodnauth Singh, S.C., M.P., Attorney General and Minister of
Legal Affairs (Absent – on leave)

The Hon. Dr. Frank C.S. Anthony, M.P., Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

The Hon. B. H. Robeson Benn, M.P., Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

**The Hon. Manzoor Nadir, M.P., Minister of Labour

The Hon. Priya D. Manickchand, M.P., (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)
Minister of Human Services and Social Security

The Hon. Dr. Desrey Fox, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Education

The Hon. Dr. Bheri S. Ramsaran, M.D., M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Health

The Hon. Jennifer I. Webster, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Finance

The Hon. Manniram Prashad, M.P., Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce

*The Hon. Pauline Sukhai, M.P., Minister of Amerindian Affairs

Mr. Donald R. Ramotar, M.P.

Ms Gail Teixeira, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Harripersaud Nokta, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P., Chief Whip

Ms Bibi S. Shadick, M.P., (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Island/West Demerara)

Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, M.P.

Mr. Albert A. Atkinson, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni)

***Non-Elected Minister**

****Elected Member from the United Force**

Mr. Komal Chand, C.C.H., J.P., M.P., (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Island/West Demerara)

Mr. Bernard C. DeSantos, S.C., M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mrs. Shirley V. Edwards, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Mohamed F. Khan, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supernaam)

Mr. Odinga N. Lumumba, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Moses V. Nagamootoo, J.P., M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Mohabir A. Nandlall, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Neendkumar, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

***Mr. Steve P. Ninvalle, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Parmanand P. Persaud, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supernaam)

Mrs. Philomena Sahoye-Shury, C.C.H., J.P., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Housing and Water

Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, M.P.

Mr. Norman A. Whittaker, M.P., (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)

Members of the Opposition (28)

(i) Members of People's National Congress Reform-One Guyana (22)

Mr. Robert Corbin, M.P., Leader of the Opposition

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

Mrs. Clarissa S. Riehl, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Mr. E. Lance Carberry, M.P., Chief Whip (Absent – on leave)

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P.

Mr. Anthony Vieira, M.P.

***Non-elected Member

Mr. Basil Williams, M.P.

Dr. George A. Norton, M.P.

Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P.

Mr. Keith Scott, M.P.

Ms Amna Ally, M.P.

Mr. Dave Danny, M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Aubrey C. Norton, M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Ernest Barnabas Elliot, M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mrs. Judith David-Blair, M.P., (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni)

Mr. Mervyn Williams, M.P., (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Island/West Demerara)

Ms Africo Selman, M.P.

Dr. John Austin, M.P., (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne) (Absent)

Ms Jennifer Wade, M.P., (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)

Ms. Vanessa Kissoon, M.P., (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice) (Absent)

Mr. Desmond Fernandes, M.P., (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)

Mr. James K. Mc Allister, M.P. (Absent)

(ii) Alliance for Change (5)

Mr. Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P.

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.

Mrs. Sheila Holder, M.P.

Ms Latchmin Budhan Punalall, M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. David Patterson, M.P.

(iii) Guyana Action Party/Rise Organize and Rebuild (1)

Mr. Everall N. Franklin, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

OFFICERS (2)

Mr. Sherlock E. Isaacs, Clerk of the National Assembly

Mrs. Lilawtie Coonjah, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The sitting commenced at 2.10 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Death of Mr. Arthur Raymond Chung, Former President of Guyana

The Speaker announced that Mr. Arthur Raymond Chung, former President of Guyana, had died on Monday, 23rd June, 2008 and that Mr. Chung served as President of Guyana from 17th March, 1970 to 6th October, 1980.

The Speaker said that he was asked by the Protocol Division of the Office of the President to inform Members that the viewing of the body will take place on Sunday, 29th June, 2008, from 10.00 a.m., to 2.00 p.m., at the National Cultural Centre and that the Funeral Service will be on Monday, 30th June, 2008, from 10.00 a.m., and thereafter to the Seven Ponds for interment.

6.

Thereafter, Members stood in silence for one minute as a mark of respect for the late President Chung.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS-

By the Minister of Finance:

The Guyana Securities Council Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2007.

(Circulated)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS-

Presentation and First Readings

1. **VISITING FORCES BILL 2008 – Bill No. 5/2008**

The Minister of Home Affairs, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to make provision for armed forces of certain States visiting Guyana and for related purposes.

2. **STATUS OF VISITING POLICE FORCES BILL 2008 – Bill No. 6/2008**

The Minister of Home Affairs, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to provide for the presence, activities, privileges and immunities of members of foreign police forces and civilian personnel in Guyana and for matters connected therewith.

3. **HIJACKING AND PIRACY BILL 2008 – Bill No. 7/2008**

The Minister of Home Affairs, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to make special provisions for punishment for the offences of armed robbery, hijacking and piracy and for matters connected therewith.

PUBLIC BUSINESS-

(i) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTION

IMPACT OF GLOBAL FOOD PRICE INCREASES

The Minister of Agriculture moved the following motion:

WHEREAS globally there is an increase in food prices caused mainly by four factors, namely; increase in the price of fossil fuels, effects of Climate Change, increase in production of bio-fuels, and growing demand for food in large emerging economies;

AND WHEREAS that the increase of food prices, amounting to over 80% over the past year and a half, is having a devastating effect on the supply and affordability of food for populations in both developing and developed nations;

AND WHEREAS that various multilateral and regional institutions, including the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the World Bank, the World Food Programme and CARICOM, have already called for urgent action and heightened collaboration to tackle this global crisis;

AND WHEREAS Guyana, having recognised this crisis and its impact within the CARICOM region, is working with its sister CARICOM partners to transform Guyana into a major player in the development of Food security in the region;

AND WHEREAS the Government has established an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Food Prices tasked with monitoring this emerging situation on a constant basis and to make recommendations on action that may be needed to be taken to cushion the impact on the Guyanese population, especially the poor and vulnerable,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly takes note of the impact of Global rising food prices on the cost of living in Guyana and supports the interventions taken by the Government to cushion the impact of these global price increases on our population, especially for the vulnerable groups;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly undertakes to follow the implementation of these governmental interventions that include increasing the disposable income of ordinary Guyanese; subsidizing the cost of accessing utility services, implementing the Ministry of Agriculture's GROW MORE campaign and its concomitant budgetary interventions; zero-rating of all essential food items, diesel and agricultural inputs; monitoring exports of some essential agricultural commodities to ensure adequate local supply and monitoring of prices and supply of various food commodities; and assistance to single-headed households;

AND BE IT ALSO RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly be provided with the deliberations of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Food Prices on a quarterly basis, set up by Cabinet to review the impact of rising food prices on Guyanese and make recommendations intended to cushion the impact;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly recognizes that the situation requires national action, and sustained efforts and engagement with critical sectors and groups to confront this challenge locally and regionally.

(Notice Paper 237 (M69 Govt 41) published on 2008-04-29)

Mr. Winston Murray spoke to the motion.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4.05 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 5.05 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

The Minister of Labour

Mr. Anthony Vieira

Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan

The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 7.32 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 8.15 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Mr. Basil Williams

Mr. Norman Whittaker

Mrs. Jennifer Wade

The Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

ADJOURNMENT

At 9.53 p.m., on a motion by the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications, the sitting was adjourned to 2.00 p.m., on Tuesday, 1st July, 2008.



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HON. HARI N. RAMKARRAN, S.C., M.P.,
Speaker of the National Assembly

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam.

26th June, 2008.