

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE AND
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**



**A n n u a l R e p o r t
2004**

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MISSION STATEMENT

To formulate and advocate a coherent and effective trade policy that will advance Guyana's multilateral, regional and bilateral trading interests; identify opportunities for developing new markets for existing goods and services and new exportable goods and services; and combine conventional and other approaches to the critical issue of resource mobilization through technical cooperation with the developing countries and the donor community of the industrialized states, multilateral financial and development-oriented institutions.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific states
BLAC	Business and Labour Advisory Committee
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARIFORUM	Caribbean Forum
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CGSE	Consultative Group on Smaller Economies
COTED	Council for Trade and Economic Development
CRNM	Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery
CSME	Caribbean Single Market and Economy
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EU	European Union
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
HCP	Hemispheric Cooperation Programme
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
IMCC	Inter-Ministerial Consultative Committee
OAS	Organization of American States
RIF	Regional integration Fund
TCBS	Trade Capacity Building Strategy
TNC	Trade Negotiations Committee

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SUMMARY

The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation maintained the momentum of the previous year in its 2004 work programme for the Departments of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation.

In **Foreign Trade**, the Ministry's agenda centered on the Free Trade of the Americas (FTAA) theatre of negotiations, specifically as it relates to the Hemispheric Cooperation Programme (HCP) and CARICOM's proposal for a Regional Integration Fund (RIF). Under the HCP initiative, Guyana was able to identify priority areas for much needed technical assistance. These were collated with those of the other CARICOM Member States and captured in a single document for transmission to the FTAA Tripartite Committee.

Guyana was able to make a very useful contribution toward the establishment of the Regional Integration Fund (RIF), which is an integral component of the FTAA, and especially important for CARICOM Member States' participation in the integration effort of this hemisphere.

The Ministry continued to forge ahead with efforts to minimize threats to Guyana's trade in sugar and rice. A number of lobbying activities were undertaken in collaboration with other African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries to protest the European Union's plan to reform its sugar regime, under which Guyana benefits from preferential market access. Guyana's rice also faces challenges from the European Union, which has cut its price for this commodity by 50%. Efforts will continue to ensure that the local rice industry receives compensation equitable and comparable to that offered to EU rice producers. Proposals are also to be made by Guyana on the removal of quota and duty, reduction of the security deposit, and review of the tranche system.

As the Ministry responsible for over-seeing the successful implementation of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME), efforts were made to create awareness in the public and private sectors and the wider society on the CSME initiative. The Business and Labour Advisory Committee (BLAC) was established to lend support to this process.

In 2004, negotiations progressed with a number of non-traditional trading partners for the creation of trade and cooperation agreements. The National Advisory Committee on External Negotiations (NACEN) guided much of the Ministry's work programme for foreign trade.

Guyana continued to enjoy tangible benefits from its bilateral partners as a result of an active International Cooperation programme. In 2004, China, Cuba, Japan and, India were some of the countries that provided significant technical assistance to Guyana, which will contribute to poverty reduction and the overall improvement of the quality of life of Guyanese.

Every effort will be made to build on the success achieved by the Ministry in 2004 as it seeks to fulfill its mission in foreign trade and international cooperation for the benefit of all Guyana.

John Isaacs,
Permanent Secretary

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2004

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN TRADE

1.0 **MULTILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS**

1.1 **Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)**

The Ministry's agenda in 2004 focused on two specific issues in the FTAA negotiations. These were the Hemispheric Cooperation Programme (HCP) and CARICOM's proposal for a Regional Integration Fund (RIF).

At the FTAA Ministerial meeting in Miami in November 2003, Trade Ministers encouraged countries to finalize their National Trade Capacity Building Strategies (TCBS) under the HCP, and to organize sub-regional roundtable meetings with the donors with the help of the Tripartite Committee. The Ministers also mandated the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) and the Consultative Group on Smaller Economies (CGSE) to conduct technical work to identify possible financing facilities or mechanisms in the FTAA.

Even though the FTAA negotiations stalled early in 2004 work continued on these two issues at both the regional and national levels, in CARICOM.

1.1.1 **Hemispheric Cooperation Program (HCP)**

Trade Capacity Building Strategy (TCBS)

In June 2004, CARICOM countries met in Barbados to review their National TCBS with a view to identifying continuing national needs and common needs that could be addressed regionally, across the CARICOM countries.

In preparation for this meeting, Guyana's priority areas were identified and presented to the RNM. The results of this meeting were assembled into a single RNM document entitled "**CARICOM Priority Areas for Trade-Related Assistance Under the Hemispheric Cooperation Programme**", which was circulated to Member States.

In keeping with the decision of the June meeting, the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) met with representatives of the FTAA Tripartite Committee (IDB, ECLAC and OAS) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), in Washington DC on October 1, 2004, to present the list of regional priorities (project areas). At this meeting it was agreed that the donors would review the project areas to ensure that the priority areas identified were not already benefitting from other funding programmes. It was also agreed that the CRNM, in collaboration with the CDB and the IDB, will work towards a regional roundtable meeting to be held in March 2005.

Guyana's TCBS was completed in October 2003 in response to the mandate of the FTAA Trade Ministers for the development of the Hemispheric Cooperation Programme (HCP).

Management of the Hemispheric Cooperation Programme (HCP)

At the 4th Special CARICOM Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) Meeting in July 2004, CARICOM Trade Ministers urged Member States to respond to specific decisions of the FTAA Miami Ministerial meeting, and submit their comments or proposals to the CRNM on the following:

- (i) the characteristics of a Permanent Committee on the application of the treatment of differences in the level of development and size of economies so that it forms part of the institutional framework of the FTAA; and
- (ii) the modalities and procedures for the management and implementation of the HCP, once the FTAA negotiations are completed.

In September 2004, Guyana submitted to the CRNM its 'Preliminary Comments' on both issues. These matters remain open for submissions from FTAA countries and the CGSE will resume discussion on them as soon as the FTAA negotiation is restarted in early 2005.

Canadian Funding of Hemispheric Cooperation Programme (HCP) Projects

Canada committed CDN\$24 million to the HCP, to be disbursed through a facility established in the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Of this amount, CDN\$6.5 million was allocated for HCP project financing for the countries of the Caribbean, Central America, and Bolivia.

For Guyana, the sum of CDN\$300,000 was allocated to be utilized/dispensed in two tranches of CDN\$150,000 each. The first disbursement was committed to projects initiated/developed in 2004. The second disbursement will be done in 2005.

At its 4th Special Meeting in July 2004, the COTED urged "Member States (that had not yet done so) to prepare and submit project profiles to draw down on resources committed by Canada to the Hemispheric Cooperation Programme".

In September 2004, an IDB Trade Consultant visited Guyana in connection with follow-up work on the HCP, but in particular, to discuss project financing (from the Canadian funds) for possible (trade-related) areas, based on the priority areas identified in Guyana's TCBS.

1.1.2 Regional Integration Fund (RIF)

Advancing the RIF Proposal with other countries

At the Miami Ministerial meeting in November 2003, CARICOM found a useful ally in Venezuela, among others, to advance the concept of a funding mechanism, such as the RIF proposal.

At the 13th TNC Meeting in April 2003, Venezuela had tabled a proposal on the need for **Compensation Funds** in the FTAA process. This proposal closely mirrored CARICOM's earlier proposal for a "Regional Integration Fund" (RIF) in the FTAA. On the occasion of President Chavez's visit to Guyana in February 2004, the two countries discussed the issue with a view to collaborating closely in the FTAA process when the negotiations resume.

Technical Work on the RIF proposal

At the 4th Special Meeting of the CARICOM Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) in July 2004, the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) informed the meeting that it had commissioned Dr. Havelock Brewster "to work on the CARICOM proposal for the Regional Integration Fund."

In November 2004, the CRNM circulated the draft paper prepared by Dr. Brewster for Member States' consideration and comment. The draft paper is being studied by the Ministry with a view to putting up appropriate comments.

1.2 African, Caribbean and Pacific Group (ACP) and European Union (EU)

1.2.1 CARIFORUM/EU Economic Partnership Agreement

In April 2004, the CARIFORUM region successfully launched the regional negotiations for Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the European Union. Since the launch, the region's principal negotiators engaged their EU counterparts and reached agreement on a timetable for the negotiations. CARIFORUM is well ahead of the other ACP regions that launched negotiations with the EU. The CARIFORUM Technical Officials and Experts continue to meet to discuss key issues for the third encounter of the principal negotiators of both sides. Guyana's impact assessment study on the EPA is yet to be finalized.

1.2.2 Reform of the European Union Sugar Regime

Guyana, in collaboration with the Sugar Association of the Caribbean (SAC) and the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries took an aggressive stand against the EU proposals aimed at reforming its sugar regime a move that would result in loss of the preferential market access that these countries enjoy in the EU market.

A number of lobby initiatives to EU Member States, EU Members of Parliament, NGOs, beet producers/ refiners, including empowering the Guyanese diaspora in London, were undertaken.

CARICOM will continue to negotiate for a regional quota for sugar so that any shortfall in one Member State's supply to the EU could be supplied by another Member State, thus ensuring maximum supply to the EU market.

1.2.3 Cut in the European Union Intervention Price for Rice

The 50% cut in the EU Intervention price for rice create implications for the competitiveness of Guyana's rice in the EU market. Representation is being made to develop a "Complementary Rice Enhancement Proposal" to address the impact of the reform and improve the competitiveness of the industry. At the ACP level, request was made for compensation equitable and comparable to that offered to EU rice producers. Concrete proposals are also to be put forward by Guyana on the removal of quota and duty, reduction of the security deposit, and review of the tranche system.

2.0 REGIONAL TRADE ARRANGEMENTS

2.1 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CARICOM SINGLE MARKET AND ECONOMY (CSME)

2.1.1 Meetings of the National CSME Focal Points

The CSME Unit of the CARICOM Secretariat convened the 2nd and 3rd Meetings of National CSME Focal Points, in February and June 2004, respectively. These meetings were convened in Barbados, and focused, *inter alia*, on:

- The role of the Focal Points and the CSME Unit in the implementation process of the CSME;
- The status of implementation of the CSME within each Member State; and
- Outstanding actions and issues for consideration regarding the implementation of the CSME, and maintaining the various timelines.

Guyana's Focal Point participated in these meetings.

2.1.2 Meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Consultative Committee (IMCC)

A meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Consultative Committee (IMCC) was convened, in September 2004. Discussions focused on recommendations made during the National One-Day Summit on the CSME, which was held in December 2003; decisions emanating from the 25th Meeting of the CARICOM Conference of Heads of Government; the status of Guyana's implementation of the CSME, and public education initiatives.

The IMCC is the forum for consulting/collaborating, and sharing of information amongst Government Ministries, Agencies and Departments, on the process leading up to the implementation of the CSME, and make recommendations on the way forward. The IMCC also has responsibility for:

- Dissemination of information on CSME related issues;
- Discussion of proposals relating to the CSME emanating from Ministries, the CSME Unit, the private sector, the social partners, and/or the Community Secretariat;
- Ongoing monitoring and reviewing of the progress of implementation of the CSME, nationally, as well as, regionally; and
- The bringing together of technical advice from relevant Ministries.

2.1.3 Building Awareness on the CSME

During the latter part of 2004, the Ministry prepared and circulated a questionnaire on the CSME, with a view to assessing the level of awareness of the CSME, especially within the public sector.

A half-day awareness session, aimed at providing information on the status of Guyana's preparations for the implementation of the CSME, was convened in October 2004. This session targeted both the public and private sectors.

2.1.4 Workshop on Trade Facilitation under Protocol II (Rights of Establishment, Provision of Services and Movement of Capital) of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas

The CARICOM Secretariat during 2003 and 2004 contracted three consultants to study the Trade Policy and Facilitation aspects of Protocol II.

Following the completion and presentation of the various reports to the CARICOM Secretariat, a stakeholders' workshop aimed at examining the major findings and recommendations contained in the respective reports, was convened, in collaboration with the Ministry. The workshop was convened in October 2004.

2.1.5 Establishment and Launch of the Business and Labour Advisory Committee (BLAC)

Recognizing the need for structured interaction among the private, labour and social sectors on issues being treated with under the CSME, the Ministry formed and formally launched the Business and Labour Advisory Committee (BLAC), in November 2004. This was done in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security.

This body was established to:

- Initiate proposals for discussions at the National and Regional levels;
- Discuss proposals and analyze these proposals in relation to their impact on various sectoral interests and develop positions;
- Make representation to Government on matters affecting their sectoral interests; and
- Develop and initiate strategies for implementing decisions.

2.1.6 10th Special Meeting of the Conference of Heads Government

In November 2004, the Conference of CARICOM Heads of Government met for the 11th Special Session to discuss matters pertaining to the CSME. Key decisions emanating from this Meeting included:

- Re-committing to the December 31, 2005 timeline for the establishment of the Single Market;
- January 2008 timeline for the establishment of the Single Economy;
- Extension of the current categories of persons enjoying free movement;
- High priority be given to the establishment of security databases to support the use of (machine-readable) photo-IDs for intra-regional travel; and
- The introduction of a common passport.

The Ministry continues to collaborate with other key agencies to ensure that these decisions are fully implemented.

2.2 Removal of Non-Tariff Barriers to Guyana's Exports to CARICOM Markets

Guyana consulted bilaterally, as well as at the CARICOM level, for the removal of non-tariff barriers affecting Guyana's exports to CARICOM markets, notably Suriname (logs and rice), St. Lucia (rum), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (rum), and Trinidad and Tobago (poultry and beef).

The issues with Suriname and St. Lucia were resolved satisfactorily. Discussions are continuing with St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as at the CARICOM level. These matters were raised at the 17th and 18th Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) meetings.

Further, Guyana will continue to hold bilateral discussions with Trinidad and Tobago on the trade in sugar to ensure that this is conducted in the spirit and intent of the CSME. Guyana's primary concern is the erosion of market share resulting from the importation of highly subsidized sugar from extra-regional sources.

2.3 Initiatives for Improving Guyana's Export of Rice

In 2004, Guyana continued to press for the full implementation of the Regional Standard for Rice; an effective Regional Monitoring Mechanism, and a Regional Safeguard Mechanism or an increase in the Common External Tariff (CET).

2.4 The Common External Tariff (CET) Suspension Mechanism

The implementation of the Common External Tariff (CET) is one of the fundamental aspects of the establishment of the Caribbean Community. This commits Member States to progressively remove tariffs as part of the efforts to deepen the integration process. The CET is also a means of strengthening the productive sectors and to accelerate the process towards international competitiveness for local and regional industries.

An important aspect of the operation of the CET regime is the ability to request exemption from duties payable on goods imported from outside of the region.

In 2004, the Ministry commenced an inventory of **Requests for Suspension** of the CET by Member States, on imports, along with an **Inventory of Waivers** that have been granted to Member States. This Inventory is updated on a monthly basis.

The Ministry works closely with the Ministry of Tourism, Industry, and Commerce on this initiative, particularly in ascertaining Guyana's ability to supply products for which suspension is requested.

In July 2004, this inventory was circulated to private sector agencies, including the Guyana Manufacturers Association, Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Private Sector Commission, and the Guyana Office for Investment (GOINVEST), as a means of building awareness on possible trade opportunities, which Guyana can seek to capture in the region.

During the year, the Ministry secured waiver of the CET on imports, on behalf of two local companies.

2.5 Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

In January 2004, the Ministry apprised Cabinet on the need for the formulation of a national policy on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), and the work undertaken by the Ministry toward this end. Cabinet was invited to examine different policy options available, and to decide whether any of them should be adopted for implementation in Guyana.

Dr. Oudho Homenauth of the National Agriculture Research Institute (NARI) is Guyana's representative on the CARICOM Technical Working Group on GMOs.

2.6 CARICOM BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

2.6.1 CARICOM/Cuba and CARICOM/Dominican Republic Trade Agreements

On March 1, 2004, the Government of Guyana implemented and enforced all the relevant procedures (legal and administrative) to give effect to the CARICOM/Cuba and CARICOM/Dominican Republic Trade Agreements in Guyana

The Ministry subsequently transmitted to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat the notification of Authorized Signatures of government officials to sign the 'Rules of Origin' on behalf of the Government of Guyana.

These agreements were signed on July 5, 2000 and August 22, 1998, respectively.

2.6.2 CARICOM/Costa Rica Free Trade Agreement

On March 09, 2004, Jamaica's Prime Minister P.J. Patterson signed, on behalf of CARICOM, the Free Trade Agreement between CARICOM and Costa Rica. President Abel Pacheco signed on behalf of Costa Rica. The signing took place in Jamaica.

This Ministry commenced work on the implementation and ratification process of the trade agreement, so as to ensure that the local private sector benefits from the trading opportunities created under the Agreement.

2.6.3 CARICOM-Colombia Trade Agreement

The lists of products which were previously identified for phased reduction of duty for CARICOM and Colombia under the Agreement are now enjoying duty free entry into these markets.

The Ministry, by way of newspaper advertisement, notified the public, especially producers, importers and exporters, about the existence of the CARICOM-Colombia Trade Agreement, and encouraged them to take advantage of the trade opportunities available under the agreement.

2.6.4 CARICOM/Canada Trade Agreement

The 4th Meeting of the CARICOM Exploratory Group working on negotiations for a CARICOM-Canada Trade Agreement was convened on May 28, 2004, in Barbados. The objective of the meeting was to take stock of

discussions among CARICOM officials in the Joint Working Group on the possible scope and content of an enhanced trade agreement between CARICOM and Canada.

The formal mandate for negotiations was issued in July 2004 by CARICOM Heads of Government to give way for the commencement of negotiations with Canada. Negotiations are yet to commence, however, as the Canadian officials have not yet received a negotiating mandate.

CARICOM's objectives in an enhanced trade arrangement with Canada are to: (i) *preserve, build on and broaden the scope of the current instruments of trade and economic co-operation;* (ii) *where possible, to deepen disciplines to improve market access for CARICOM exports of goods and services;* (iii) *to broaden the country coverage to include all CARICOM states;* (iv) *to stimulate increased flows of Canadian investment into the region;* and, (v) *to provide a comprehensive framework for development cooperation initiatives.*

2.6.5 CARICOM-Venezuela Trade and Investment Agreement

CARICOM and Venezuela are currently discussing proposals to strengthen the Agreement by the granting of tariff preferences to Venezuela, and by the expansion of the CARICOM lists of products for duty-free access into Venezuela.

Early 2004, the CARICOM Secretariat requested all Member States to review the Venezuelan product list, and submit their positions on the products which may not be granted duty-free access into the markets of the CARICOM Most Developed Countries (MDCs).

The Ministry collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, the Customs and Trade Administration, the Private Sector Commission, the Guyana Manufacturers' Association, and the Consultative Association of Guyanese Industries Limited, to identify those products which, in Guyana's view, may not be granted duty-free access into the markets of the CARICOM MDCs.

3.0 BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

3.1 Guyana/Brazil Partial Scope Agreement

On March 1, 2004, Guyana implemented and enforced all the relevant procedures (legal and administrative) to give effect to the Guyana/Brazil Partial Scope Agreement in Guyana.

In April, the Ministry submitted to Guyana's Embassy in Brazil the notification of Authorized Signatures of Government officials to sign the 'Rules of Origin' on behalf of the Government of Guyana.

The CARICOM Secretariat was notified subsequently about the implementation of this Agreement, as well as the First and Second Additional Protocols, which were signed to amend the agreement.

3.2 Guyana/Cuba Memorandum of Understanding on Trade

In April 2004, a Memorandum of Understanding on Trade was concluded between the Republic of Guyana and the Republic of Cuba. The MOU was signed by the Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, Honourable Clement J. Rohee and His Excellency Jose Inclan Embade, Cuban Ambassador to Guyana. This agreement is aimed at promoting collaboration between the private sector of both countries.

3.3 Other Agreements

Negotiations aimed at securing trade agreements with Colombia, Tunisia, Syria, Lebanon, Ukraine, and Turkey, continued during 2004.

Guyana tabled two draft agreements to the Government of **Colombia** one on trade, and the other for the establishment of a Guyana/Colombia Business Development Council. Guyana is awaiting a response from the Government of Colombia on the draft agreements. These agreements form part of an initiative to strengthen existing bilateral relations between Guyana and Colombia.

A draft agreement between Guyana and **Tunisia** was submitted for the approval of Cabinet. The Ministry remained in contact with the authorities in **Syria** and **Lebanon** in an effort to finalize agreements between Guyana and these countries.

Guyana informed the **Ukrainian** authorities in September of its concurrence with the draft text of the Agreement, and proposed that the Agreement be concluded. Guyana is awaiting a response from the Ukrainian authorities.

In September, the draft text for an Agreement between Guyana and **Turkey** was submitted for the consideration of the Turkish authorities. Guyana is awaiting a response from the Turkish authorities.

3.4 Joint Business Development Councils

Joint Business Development Councils were established with a number of bilateral partners, as an adjunct to technical cooperation programmes underway with these countries. These councils are aimed at fostering commercial relations between Guyana and these countries.

3.4.1 Guyana/India Joint Business Council

At a meeting of the Guyana side of the Guyana/India Joint Business Council in July 2004, areas of interest to the Guyana side were discussed. These were subsequently forwarded to the Indian side for consideration. The Guyana side will continue to communicate with the Indian side on these, and plans for the convening of the inaugural session of the council.

3.4.2 Guyana-Cuba Joint Business Development Council

The Guyana side received, for consideration and necessary modification, a Plan of Action, from the Cuban side, which is intended to guide the activities of the council. The Guyana side met in November 2004, and considered the proposed Plan of Action. A few modifications were made to the plan, which was re-submitted to the Cuban side, for concurrence. The Guyana side will remain in contact with the Cuban side to ensure the Plan of Action is finalized.

3.4.3 Guyana/China Joint Business Development Council

The agreement facilitating the establishment of a Guyana/China Joint Business Development Council was signed in August 2004, by H.E. Song Tao, Chinese Ambassador to Guyana, and Hon. Clement J. Rohee, Minister of Foreign Trade & International Cooperation. The agreement is expected to serve as a mechanism

for exchanges and development of closer trade and investment ties between the private sectors of Guyana and China.

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

In the year under review, the Department of International Cooperation successfully pursued cooperation programmes with Guyana's bilateral partners, and several multilateral institutions, resulting in a number of tangible benefits to the country.

1.0 BILATERAL COOPERATION

1.1 CHINA

1.1.1 Chinese Medical Protocol

The renewal of the Guyana-China Medical Protocol was signed on March 30, 2004, by the Hon. Clement J. Rohee, Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation and H.E. Song Tao, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Guyana. The Protocol will facilitate continuous medical cooperation between the two countries.

Under the new Protocol, Guyana will benefit from the services of a 15-member Medical Team (the sixth batch), to be attached to the Georgetown Public Hospital and the Linden Hospital Complex. China has been lending this type of assistance to Guyana since 1993.

1.1.2 Guyana International Conference Centre (GICC)

The Ministry facilitated the signing of the Construction Contract for the Guyana International Conference Centre (GICC). The contract was signed on March 30, 2004, by Mr. Kenneth Jordan, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Public Works and Communications, and Mr. Zhao Zhongning, General Manager of the Foreign Aid Section of the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC).

The Chinese team for the construction of the conference centre arrived in Guyana in August 2004, and construction officially commenced on September 1, 2004.

Cabinet approved the establishment of an Oversight Committee, which was tasked with the responsibility of monitoring the progress of this project. Additionally, the Committee provides a forum for the resolution of technical issues, and monitors the progress of the project. The committee comprises representatives of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Foreign Trade & International Cooperation, the Office of the President, the Ministry of Public Works and Communication, and the Chinese Embassy.

It is expected that the GICC will be completed in November 2005, and will provide state-of-the-art conference support facilities for meetings hosted by the Government of Guyana, the CARICOM Secretariat, as well as local, regional and international organizations. The construction of the GICC will be funded through grant aid provided by the Chinese government.

1.1.3 Bamboo Craft Project

This project is progressing satisfactorily. To date, a total of thirty-one individuals have benefitted from the bamboo craft training. The first and second batches of trainees graduated on February 11, 2004 and June 11, 2004, respectively. At present, twenty-two persons are undergoing training in bamboo craft.

The Ministry facilitated the processing of a request by the Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce for the extension of the project by twelve months. A request was also made for a Bamboo Cultivation and Harvesting Expert.

This project commenced in June 2003.

1.1.4 CCTV9/NCN Cooperation Programme

Consultations between a Chinese technical team, which visited Guyana during the period June 23 July 05, 2004, and a team of officials from the Government Information Agency (GINA) and the National Communications Network (NCN), resulted in an agreement for the implementation of the CCTV9/NCN Cooperation Programme.

Through this cooperation programme, Guyana will enjoy twenty-four hours broadcast of CCTV9, China's lone English channel. Programming will include news, educational programmes, cultural programmes, sports, etc.

Consultations between the Chinese and Guyanese officials in relation to this programme were facilitated by this Ministry.

1.1.5 Visit by Chinese Foreign Minister

A High Level Chinese delegation, led by H.E. Li Zhaoxing, Chinese Foreign Minister, visited Guyana during the period October 02-03, 2004. Consultations on technical and economic cooperation were held between the Hon. Clement J. Rohee and the Chinese Foreign Minister. The Chinese Foreign Minister pledged support for special and differential treatment for ACP countries at the WTO.

During the visit, two bilateral agreements were signed by the Minister and the Chinese Ambassador to Guyana. These were an Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation for a grant of ¥30M RMB Yuan, and Exchange of Notes for the Implementation of the CCTV9/NCN Cooperation Programme.

1.1.6 Extension of Term of Table Tennis and Martial Arts Coaches

In December 2004, the Hon. Clement J. Rohee, Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, and H.E. Shen Qing, Chinese Ambassador to Guyana, signed Exchange of Notes for the extension of the term of deputation of the table tennis and martial arts coaches. The coaches are expected to continue training, which commenced on their previous tour of duty in 2003.

1.1.7 Training

Two officials from the Ministry of Education were selected to participate in the 2004 Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) training courses in China. The courses were Computer Applied Technology and Computer Software Technology, respectively.

The Exchange of Notes for the participation of these officials was signed in June 2004, by the Hon. Henry Jeffery, Minister of Education and His Excellency Song Tao, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Guyana, and was facilitated by this Ministry.

1.1.8 Chinese International Trade Fair

A number of local companies participated in the Chinese International Trade and Investment Fair, which was held in Xiamen City, China, during the period September 9-13, 2004. This was at the invitation of the Government of the People's Republic of China to the Government of Guyana. Also in attendance was Mr. Geoffrey Da Silva, Chief Executive Officer, GO-INVEST. Guyana's participation in the fair served as an opportunity to facilitate exchanges between local companies and their Chinese counterparts.

1.2 JAPAN

1.2.1 Grant Aid

A total of nine project proposals were submitted to the Government of Japan in August 2004, at the invitation of that country, for consideration for funding in the 2005/2006 fiscal year.

The Ministry held consultations with Mr. Shigemaro Aoki of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), to outline the procedures for requesting assistance under the Japanese Technical Cooperation and Grant Aid Scheme. Several other Ministries also participated.

1.2.2 New Amsterdam Hospital Project

The construction of the New Amsterdam Hospital project is progressing ahead of schedule, and Phase II of construction is expected to be completed shortly. It is anticipated that the new hospital would be handed over to the Government of Guyana by the Government of Japan in 2005.

This project is being funded by the Government of Japan, under its Official Development Assistance (ODA) Programme.

1.2.3 Agreement on Technical Cooperation between the Governments of Guyana and the Government of Japan

An Agreement on Technical Cooperation between the Government of Japan and the Government of Guyana was finalized, and is expected to be signed early 2005. Among the benefits to be derived from this agreement will be training, deputation of Japanese experts, donation of equipment, and other forms of technical assistance.

1.2.4 Japanese Non-Project Grant Aid

In October 2004, the Ministry facilitated the release of G\$77.8 million from Japanese Non-Project Grant Aid for utilization in the completion of the CARICOM Secretariat Headquarters.

1.2.5 Training

The Ministry facilitated the participation of two officials from the Ministry of Health in a training course on hospital waste management. The course was conducted in Japan during July 29 - August 21, 2004.

A total of thirty-five training courses in Health, Education, Information Technology, Tourism, etc., were identified for participation by Government officials during the same fiscal year.

1.3 INDIA

1.3.1 Guyana/India Joint Commission

Consultations for the convening of the Fourth Session of the Guyana/India Joint Commission were held. It is expected that the Joint Commission meeting will be convened in 2005.

1.3.2 Solar Photo Voltaic Water Pumps

The commissioning and formal handing over of five solar photovoltaic water pump systems, supplied by the Government of India, was done in September 2004. The pumps were placed in Regions 1, 5 and 9, to enhance the supply of potable water to those regions.

1.3.3 Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)

The Ministry commenced consultations with the Ministry of Finance, the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA), the Guyana Office for Investment (GOINVEST), and the Attorney General's Chambers with a view to responding to a draft Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement submitted by the Government of India, and the Bilateral Investment Treaty currently being negotiated between the Governments of Guyana and India. These negotiations will continue in 2005.

1.3.4 National Agriculture Research Institute (NARI)/Indian Centre for Agricultural Research (ICAR) cooperation

A team of two scientists from the Indian Centre for Agriculture Research (ICAR) visited Guyana in October 2004, and conducted field studies in the area of hybridization. It is expected that this field of study would form the basis for continued cooperation between NARI and ICAR under the Work Plan signed between the two agencies.

1.3.5 University of Guyana/Indira Gandhi National Open University collaboration

The University of Guyana received a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) of India, in November 2004. When signed, the MOU is expected to

facilitate the development of the local education sector, and in particular provide access to Indian expertise in teaching and research for both distance and open learning.

The Ministry will continue to serve as facilitator in this collaborative effort.

1.4 REPUBLIC OF KOREA

1.4.1 Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)

The Korean Government responded to comments on the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) between the two countries, submitted by the Government of Guyana in August 2004. This facilitated the finalization of the treaty which will be signed by the two sides at a mutually convenient time.

The BIT is expected to produce significant economic benefits for Guyana by promoting and expanding relations between the private sectors of both countries.

1.4.2 Training

The Government of Korea invited Guyana to participate in two training courses for the 2004/2005 fiscal year. The Ministry facilitated the nomination and participation of candidates in these training courses.

1.5 MALAYSIA

1.5.1 Training

The Malaysian Government invited the Government of Guyana to nominate candidates to pursue post-graduate studies and short term training courses in Malaysia, as part of the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme.

The Ministry facilitated the nomination and participation of a number of Guyanese officials in these training courses.

1.6 RUSSIA

1.6.1 Agreement of Cooperation

An Agreement of Cooperation between the Chambers of Commerce of Guyana and Russia is currently under consideration by the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI). This agreement is expected to resuscitate the cooperation programme between the two countries by expanding and improving mutually beneficial commercial, economic, scientific and technological ties between business entities in Russia and Guyana.

1.7 COLOMBIA

1.7.1 Guyana/Colombia Joint Commission

During 2004, the Ministry commenced identification of areas of strength of Colombia, which can give scope and add momentum to the technical cooperation programme between Guyana and Colombia. This was in preparation for the 3rd Session of the Guyana/Colombia Joint Commission, which is anticipated to be held early 2005.

The realization of the Joint Commission is important to relations between Guyana and Colombia.

1.9 CUBA

1.9.1 Guyana/Cuba Joint Commission

The Twenty-Second Session of the Guyana/Cuba Joint Commission was convened in March 2004. This session of the Joint Commission reviewed the progress of the work programme of the Twenty-First Session, which was held in Cuba, in November 2001. The areas of specific focus were health and education.

New initiatives for the intensification of technical and other forms of cooperation for the ensuing Work Programme 2004-2006 were identified. The projects that formed part of this work programme included the provision of experts to promote cultural cooperation, and post-graduate training for the Health and Education sectors.

The agencies that participated in the Twenty-Second Session of the Guyana/Cuba Joint Commission were the Ministries of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation; Health; Education; Agriculture; Fisheries, Crops and Livestock; Culture, Youth and Sports; Foreign Affairs; Finance; and Public Service; the Office of the President, the Guyana Office for Investment, as well as, the private sector agencies.

1.9.2 Cuban Medical Expertise

In 2004, Guyana continued to benefit significantly from medical and other technical expertise from the Government of Cuba. In the year under review, there were forty-three Cuban medical experts in Guyana, including in the areas of radiology, occupational therapy and ophthalmology.

1.9.3 Protocol of Cooperation in the area of Transportation

Negotiations on a Protocol of Cooperation in the area of transportation and the establishment of a Central Transport Planning Unit concluded in 2004. The protocol is expected to be signed soon. This protocol will serve to consolidate the cooperation and economic ties between Guyana and Cuba.

2.0 MULTILATERAL COOPERATION

2.1 COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

2.1.1 Visit by Commonwealth Official

The Chief Planning Officer of the Commonwealth Secretariat visited Guyana in February 2004, for consultations with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation and other Government Ministries. During these meetings, ministries were reminded about the established procedure for the procurement of technical assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Following consideration of several project proposals submitted by a number of Ministries, the Commonwealth Secretariat agreed to assist with the placement of a Legal Draftsman at the Ministry of Legal Affairs.

2.1.2 Regional Workshop

A Regional Workshop, organized by the Commonwealth Secretariat, was held in September 2004, in Guyana. The workshop focused on Organic Agriculture, and was one of three project proposals submitted to Commonwealth Secretariat by the Government of Guyana. Participants in the workshop were drawn from CARICOM Member States.

This Ministry assisted in organizing the workshop.

2.2 The Latin American Economic System (SELA)

In September 2004, the Ministry received three proposals from the Latin American Economic System (SELA) Secretariat, in relation to the restructuring of that organization. The proposals were examined and the country's views regarding the proposals for restructuring were submitted to SELA. These proposals were discussed by the committee that monitors SELA activities, and it was decided that Guyana should continue to make its subscriptions to SELA pending formal decisions from the secretariat on the restructuring process.

2.3 ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

2.3.1 Scholarships and Training

In 2004, Guyana continued to benefit from scholarship awards and offers of short-term training courses, and invitation for participation in workshops and seminars, from the Organisation of American States (OAS).

This Ministry, Guyana's focal point for the OAS, facilitated the participation of Government officials in various workshops and seminars hosted by the OAS.

2.4 ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC)

2.4.1 Workshop on the Project Life Cycle

The Ministry, in collaboration with ECLAC, convened a workshop on the Project Life Cycle, in June 2004. The workshop was geared at equipping participants with the skills in formulating project proposals to meet the

requirements and guidelines of the international donor community. Among the agencies that participated were the Ministries of Health, Foreign Affairs, Amerindian Affairs, Agriculture, Finance, Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Home Affairs; the Office of the President and the University of Guyana.

The workshop was the first step in the formulation of a Strategic Plan for International Cooperation, for Guyana.

2.5 VOLUNTARY SERVICE OVERSEAS (VSO)

The Agreement between VSO and the Government of Guyana for the dispatch of volunteers to Guyana expired in May 2004. Consultations commenced soon after on a proposed Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for 2004-2008. The established theme for the period was 'Strengthening Guyana's Decentralization Process by Supporting the Building of Local Capacity of Regionally-focused Organizations and Institutions'.

The Proposed CSP for 2004-2008 targets three programme areas: disability, education and secure livelihoods. The identified programmes are in keeping with Guyana's development agenda, and are, therefore, expected to produce tremendous benefits for the people of Guyana.

In November 2004, the Hon. Clement J. Rohee and Ms. Sheila Nardone, Regional Programme Manager of Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the Country Strategic Plan to continue the placement of volunteers in Guyana.

3.0 CAPACITY BUILDING

3.1 Training

During the year under review, the Ministry's staff benefitted from local and overseas training, in areas relevant to trade policy and international cooperation. Areas of focus included Negotiating Skills; Settlement of Trade Disputes; Domestic Regulations governing the provision of Services; Agriculture; Trade and Investment; Taxation; Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Measures; Trade in Services; Government Procurement, and Techniques of Negotiations on Intellectual Property. These training courses form part of technical assistance to Guyana from regional and multilateral organizations, including the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Organization of American States, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

The Ministry maintains a policy that requires staff members who benefit from overseas training to share their newly acquired knowledge with colleagues in 'report back sessions'. These sessions have proven to be very effective.

4.0 MINISTRY-WIDE ACTIVITIES

4.1 Human Resources

During 2004, nine persons were recruited at the auxiliary and technical levels. There were six resignations at these levels. At the end of 2004, the Ministry's staff totaled 32.

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE AND
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**



**A n n u a l R e p o r t
2005**

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Tel: (592) 226-5064, 226-1607-9 Fax: (592) 226-8426; 223-0900 Email: minister@mofitic.gov.gy Website: www.mofitic.gov.gy

MISSION STATEMENT

To formulate and advocate a coherent and effective trade policy that will advance Guyana's multilateral, regional and bilateral trading interests; identify opportunities for developing new markets for existing goods and services and new exportable goods and services; and combine conventional and other approaches to the critical issue of resource mobilization through technical cooperation with the developing countries and the donor community of the industrialized states, multilateral financial and development-oriented institutions.

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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

- 1.0 Bilateral Cooperation
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MINISTRY – WIDE ACTIVITIES

SUMMARY

During the reporting period the Ministry focused on the three key trade policy areas of external negotiations, capacity building and institutional strengthening; and trade facilitation through the Ministry's public awareness and stakeholder participation in trade development.

External negotiations: Regarding the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Ministry's main focus was on the ongoing Doha Development Round Negotiation, which was launched at Doha in 2001, and preparations for the 6th WTO Ministerial Conference, held in Hong Kong in December 2005.

At the Ministerial Level Guyana continued to function as the CARICOM Ministerial Spokesperson on WTO Matters. In that capacity the Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation hosted visits of the newly appointed WTO Director – General and the Trade Minister of Hong Kong (in his capacity as Chairman of the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference), to Georgetown in May and November respectively.

The FTAA negotiation remained stalled during 2005. However at the 4th Summit of the Americas (SOA), held in Argentina in November 2005, there was general agreement for the FTAA negotiation to be restarted in 2006. This agreement however was conditioned by appropriate progress to be made in the WTO Doha negotiations.

With respect to the ACP-EU trade relations the third phase of the negotiations of Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the CARIFORUM and the EU was launched on September 30, 2005. This phase will conclude in December 2006.

In the commodities sector the Ministry worked closely with the sugar industry and the Ministry of Agriculture to finalise the Industry's Action Plan on Sugar in order to respond to the reforms being undertaken by the European Union in the EU sugar market. A first draft of the Action Plan is expected to be available in January 2006 for consideration by National Stakeholders.

The Ministry also collaborated with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB) in connection with an EU financing project for the rice industry. One component of the project, which is expected to become operational in 2006, is a Credit and Financing Scheme which was agreed in 2005 and which is intended to assist farmers/millers to secure finance for their operations. Also, in relation to rice a Donor Financing Conference on the Rice Industry was held in Georgetown on October 10-12, 2005.

Regional trade arrangements: On the regional scene the Ministry pressed ahead with agreements for Guyana's implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), in light of the December 31, 2005 deadline for the scheduled implementation across the region. On November 3, 2005 the Ministry organized a stakeholders meeting with a CARICOM High – level Technical Team to discuss special concerns which Guyana has with the CSME implementation, including particular concerns of the private sector.

Services: Following nearly three years of dedicated work by the Ministry, in collaboration with key service – provider agencies in the private sector, the Guyana Coalition of Service Providers (GCSP) was launched in June.

John Isaacs,
Permanent Secretary

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2005

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN TRADE

I.0 TRADE ISSUES

In the trade area the focus was on the three key areas of external negotiations, capacity-building and institutional strengthening; and trade facilitation through the Ministry's public awareness and stakeholder participation in trade development.

I.0 MULTILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS

1.1.2 World Trade Organization (WTO)

In the WTO the Ministry's main focus has been on the current Doha Development Round Negotiations and preparations for the recently concluded 6th WTO Ministerial Conference, held in Hong Kong on December 13-18, 2005. The Doha Negotiation was launched in 2001 with a mandate to complete same by the end of 2004. The collapse of the talks at the Cancun Ministerial in 2003 proved a major setback to the overall negotiations and affected the originally agreed 2004 deadline.

At the Hong Kong Conference a new deadline of end 2006 was reaffirmed for the completion of the negotiation. Guyana continued to work closely with its CARICOM partners in the region's joint approach to the negotiation and to function as the region's spokesperson on WTO matters. In this regard, MOFTIC had, in the context of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED), hosted visits of the new WTO Director General in May, on the eve of his announced selection to the post, and the Minister of Trade of Hong Kong, in November, in his capacity as Chairman-designate of the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference.

- **Services Offers**

Guyana's *Initial Offer* in the DDA Services Negotiations was presented (through the RNM) to the WTO Services Division on February 23, 2005 during a Special Session of the Council for Trade in Services (CTS). *Revised Offers* will be considered in 2006.

1.1.3 The FTAA Negotiation

The FTAA negotiation remains stalled as a result of continuing disagreement among major trading countries such as Brazil and the USA over the contentious issue of agricultural subsidies.

At the 4th Summit of the Americas (SOA), held in Argentina in November 2005, there was general agreement for the FTAA negotiation to be restarted in 2006. This ambition, however, is linked to appropriate progress being made in the WTO negotiations.

MOFTIC will continue to collaborate with CARICOM Member States and the RNM in the possible recommencement of negotiations in 2006. MOFTIC will also continue to press for a Regional Integration Fund (RIF) for the smaller economies of the FTAA.

1.1.4 ACP-EU Trade Relations

On the ACP-EU front the third phase of the negotiation for a CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) was launched on September 30, 2005 and will last until December 2006. Two preliminary Phases have been completed. Phase 1 of the negotiations covered matters at the ALL-ACP level, including the negotiating structure, scope and content of the negotiations. The Phase II Negotiation was conducted at the CARIFORUM level and addressed matters aimed at deepening and enhancing CARICOM's regional integration process, taking into consideration the level and involvement of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Having gathered a better understanding of the regional integration process the negotiations will address specific issues in the third phase.

Intense negotiations under the Phase III Work-programme are expected to commence at the regional level in January 2006. The negotiations will be informed by the positions adopted by the EU at the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Conference in trying to arrive at common positions on elements of the agreement.

The Phase III Work Programme will place special emphasis on the following areas:-

- Market Access in agriculture and non-agriculture
- Services and Investments
- Trade related Issues
- Legal and Institutional issues

In the meanwhile the CARIFORUM Regional Negotiators and technical officials are meeting on an ongoing basis in order to develop the region's negotiating positions on the different issues.

1.1.5 SUGAR

- Reform of the EU Sugar Regime

In November 2005, the EC Commissioner for Agriculture announced the Commission's decision for a 36% cut in the price of sugar to be implemented over a four year period, commencing from 2006.

The ACP, including Guyana and other CARICOM sugar exporting countries, had lobbied key officials of the EU Commission, the EU member of Parliament and countries for a reduction, if not delay in the proposed price cuts. Several consultations were held in 2005. Guyana's Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, in his capacity as CARICOM's spokesperson on Sugar, was integrally involved in the organization, coordination and consultation among CARICOM Member States and with ACP/EU Counterparts. Further to the proposed 36% price cut, The EU Parliament will pronounce on the Community's Sugar Reform in January 2006.

- **9th ACP Ministerial Conference on Sugar, Kenya**

The 9th ACP Special Ministerial Conference on Sugar was convened on September 22-26, 2005 in Kisumu, Kenya. The theme for the Conference was “Promoting the Sustainable Development of the ACP Sugar Sector”. At the conclusion of the Conference an Action Plan and a Declaration on Sugar were issued.

Guyana's Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation represented Guyana at this important Conference. Key to the Conference was discussions on the strategies for promoting the sustainable development of the ACP sugar industries vis-a-vis the EU initial reform proposal for a 39% cut in price of sugar. While the region accepted the need for reform they call for the reform to be just, fair and equitable and for it to be politically, economically, socially and environmentally sustainable and consistent with EU policies on trade, agriculture and development cooperation.

- **EU Action Plan**

The EU Action Plan on Accompanying Measures requires each Sugar Protocol country to submit by December 2005 a National Action Plan detailing the support and assistance that will be required by the local industry as a result of the negative impact of the EU reform proposal, in the transition process and broader diversification and adaptation programme.

Preparation of the Guyana National Action Plan is well advanced and is in keeping with the long term development objectives of the country and sustainability of the industry. The first Draft Action Plan for Guyana is to be submitted by the Consultant for consideration at the national level in January 2006. Consultations are ongoing between MOFTIC and stakeholders of the industry and the EU Delegation in Guyana.

It has become clear that the EU's 40 Million Euros proposed to assist countries in 2006 will be highly inadequate to meet the requirements of the countries that will be affected. In addition, there is a great level of uncertainty among ACP exporters as to the availability of the proposed funds, which is expected to be divided among the countries concerned, as well as the necessary funding thereafter. The ACP is calling for additional resources to be made available from the EU Budget and not a re-allocation of existing EDF resources.

CARICOM is expected to lose 90 million euros annually in revenues. Of this amount, Guyana alone will lose 40 million euros annually.

- **Visit by ACP/EU Parliamentary Representative Glennys Kinnock**

A Team headed by Co-president of the ACP/EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, Ms. Glenys Kinnock visited Guyana on October 14-16, 2005 to have a first hand look at the sugar industry. The delegation visited the Albion Sugar Estate and appreciated the high level of contribution of the industry to the economy and the severe impact the proposed EU reform will have on people, their livelihood and the communities surrounding the industry. She held discussions with workers and residents at Albion.

In subsequent discussions with Guyana's Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation and stakeholders of the industry on Saturday, October 15, 2005, Ms Kinnock signalled her support for Guyana's efforts in seeking to do whatever was necessary to deal with the challenges posed by the EU's actions. She stated that there was not sufficient sensitivity to nor understanding of the needs of small countries like Guyana and that the EU has a duty to address the social and economic difficulties such countries would face in light of the impending reform. She promised that on her return to Europe she would have discussions with EU Commissioner for Trade, Mr. Peter Mandelson.

1.1.6 RICE

- **EU Financing Project**

Under an EU financing project Guyana stands to benefit from approximately € 11 million to be expended on a number of projects identified in the rice sector aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of the rice sector. One component of the EU Project is a Credit and Financing Scheme which was agreed in 2005 and which is intended to be a revolving fund that will assist farmers/millers to secure finance for their operations based on the procedures and guidelines to be adopted. The national Project Monitoring Unit has been established. Work is ongoing and it is expected that in early 2006 all arrangements will be finalized and disbursement of funds under the Scheme will be ready.

- **Donor Financing Conference**

A Donor Financing Conference on the Rice industry was held in Georgetown on October 10-12, 2005. A document highlighting the conclusions of the Conference is being studied by the relevant agencies for follow-up action in 2006.

2.0 REGIONAL TRADE ARRANGEMENTS

2.1 CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME)

2005 has been an especially important period for the CSME project, bearing in mind the December 31 deadline for its scheduled implementation across the region. On December 25 President Jagdeo signed the relevant documents signaling Guyana's readiness to meet the December 31 deadline.

MOFTIC has special mandate from the Cabinet to coordinate the country's national preparations for the CSME implementation. On November 3, 2005 the Ministry organized a stakeholders meeting with a CARICOM High-level Technical Team to discuss special concerns which Guyana has with the CSME implementation, including particular concerns of the private sector.

On October 13 a CARICOM Audit Team visited Guyana to assess the country's progress in the implementation of the CSME. The Team examined the status of domestic legislations which needed to be in place in order for Guyana to be CSME-ready for the December 31 deadline.

On September 22-23 Guyana was represented at the Seventh Meeting of Officials on Free Movement. At this meeting CARICOM Member States were required to give an update regarding their national consultations for the expansion of category 46 of the Revised Treaty, present a status report regarding the number of persons who are moving in the present categories, as well as highlight any concerns which Member States might have concerning this issue.

The Inter-Ministerial Consultative Committee (IMCC) on the CSME was convened on June 08, 2005.

MOFTIC participated in a workshop on 'Investment Opportunities in New Services' which was organized by the Caribbean Export Development Agency in March 2005. The workshop sought to apprise investors/entrepreneurs of the business opportunities that have been created by the liberalization of trade in services within the CSME, as well as the expansion of opportunities arising from the access to markets outside the CSME.

With respect to public awareness of the CSME and its opportunities, booklets provided by the CARICOM Secretariat were distributed (by MOFTIC) on a continuous basis via the national library, political parties and the public and private sectors.

2.2 Market Access

The Ministry continued to press Guyana's case for improved market access in CARICOM. Pending before the COTED are proposals to secure better access for poultry and beef exports from Guyana. Sugar and rice remain on the COTED agenda and though much progress has been made with regards to these two commodities the Ministry remains vigilant in terms of the application of the CET by member states and the avoidance of unnecessary non-trade barriers.

Sugar - The Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation has held initial consultations on the region's position regarding refining sugar. Consultations were held with Trinidad and Tobago in terms of investment and operation of a regional sugar refinery.

Rice - At the COTED Guyana continued to press for an effective regional Monitoring mechanism on Rice to facilitate the trade in the region. Instances of non-payment of the appropriate level of the CET on extra-regional rice by some member states continue to be a problem to regional suppliers like Guyana. In this regard, Guyana estimated its loss in market access for 2004, despite its demonstrated ability to supply at US\$13,993,141.

Cement - The Ministry continue to monitor the trade in cement and the availability of the product and the supply capability of the main regional supplier to meet demands, especially for the booming building and construction sector, in Guyana. Based on reports received, there was adequate cement on the local market during the last quarter of the year.

Poultry - This Ministry made representation on behalf of DIDCO at the COTED concerning the inspection of the Company's processing facilities and submission of the CARICOM Inspection Team's Report which was long outstanding. The inspection was undertaken at the request of Trinidad and Tobago to ascertain the Company's ability and preparedness to produce and supply chicken to that member state. The authorities in Trinidad and Tobago had denied entry of the poultry pending an Inspection of the processing facilities.

In keeping with the findings and recommendations of the Inspection Team, DIDCO proceeded to implement the recommendations and make the necessary adjustments and indicated its readiness for the Team's follow-up visit. Arrangements for the second visit are being worked out. No new date has been proposed but the visit should take place early in 2006.

Beef - At the 18th COTED in January 2005 MOFTIC made representation on behalf of the "Rising Sun Abattoir and Beef Processing Company" for a CARICOM Team to inspect the facilities based on reports of denied access to the Trinidad and Tobago market. The visit of the Team took place in February 2005. The long awaited report from the CARICOM Team was submitted to MOFTIC in October 2005. The report is being examined and considered by the relevant agencies.

Due to the delay in the submission of the Report by the CARICOM Team, the Company has lost the secured market for 2 container loads of beef per month – losses estimated in excess of US\$3 million (in terms of annual sales). This does not include specific expenditures incurred by the Company in terms of loans and other financial commitments to banks. The Ministry intends to pursue this matter with the COTED.

2.2 The Common External Tariff (CET)

In 2005 Guyana responded positively to supply a number of Agriculture and Industrial products requested by CARICOM member states including corrugated waxed cartons, rice, copra, peanuts, vegetable fats, wood and wood products and pharmaceuticals. The number of responses in 2005 reflected a 100% increase in the number of positive responses.

The Ministry has created an Inventory of Requests for Suspension of the CET, Requests for Certificate under the Safeguard Mechanism, Waivers that have been granted on products for several industries along with an analysis of the CET. This Inventory is aimed at providing the local Private Sector with timely information on the various market access opportunities available within the region. The Inventory is updated on a monthly basis and includes categories such as Tariff Headings, Description of the Product, Requesting Company, Rate of Duty, Period of Suspension and Guyana's ability to supply.

MOFTIC will also be posting the Inventory of CET Suspension Requests on its website at www.moftic.gov.gy for easy access to the Private Sector and general public to examine and identify possible trading opportunities on a current basis.

Guyana / T&T Trade

Guyana initiated discussions with Trinidad and Tobago by lodging a formal request with that member state for improved market access for Guyanese goods and services, with a view to correcting the existing imbalance of trade between the two countries.

3.0 CARICOM BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

- **CARICOM-Costa Rica**

Initiatives to expand trade should be helped by the CARICOM–Costa Rica Free Trade Agreement which was implemented by Guyana on September 21 of this year. Costa Rica which also ratified the Agreement in September proposed a phased tariff reduction schedule to CARICOM which would require 100% reduction by January 1, 2008. This schedule will pose no difficulty for Guyana since the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) has implemented the first phased reduction of 25% effective from October 1, 2005 with the second 25% reduction scheduled for January 1, 2006. The third and fourth phased reductions on January 1, 2007 and January 1, 2008, respectively, will allow Guyana to achieve the proposed timeline for the complete phased tariff reductions.

- **CARICOM-DR**

The CARICOM-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement which was the first free trade agreement to be signed by CARICOM continues to be subject to a process of negotiations with respect to the list of agricultural products which would be subject to special trading arrangements. Performance under the Agreement has been mixed but both sides have been in pursuit of resolutions to difficulties which have arisen through dialogue in the Joint Council provided for in the Agreement. Guyana nominated its representatives on both the Joint Committee on Rules of Origin and Customs Cooperation and the Agricultural Experts Group. These Representatives will also pursue Guyana's interests at the level of the Joint Council.

- **CARICOM-Canada**

In January 2001, CARICOM Heads of Government and then Prime Minister of Canada agreed to commence exploratory discussions on improving trade arrangements occurring between CARICOM and Canada in preparation for the expiry of the current WTO waiver CARIBCAN in December 2006. The Canadian Government has communicated its interest in negotiating a Free Trade Agreement with CARICOM which would include trade in goods, services, investment, government procurement and competition policy along with side agreements on Labour and Environment. In 2005 Guyana, in preparation for these negotiations, submitted to the RNM information on issues such as trade flows between Canada and Guyana, identification of Guyana's sensitive sectors and consultations with the private sector to identify market access restrictions in the form of non-tariff measures and other barriers to trade which should be addressed during the course of the negotiations.

- **CARICOM-Cuba**

To date only nine Member States have completed the requirements for the Implementation of the CARICOM-Cuba Trade Agreement since its signing on July 5, 2000. These are Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Belize, Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago, Dominica and Grenada and Cuba. Further, Guyana, Belize, Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Trinidad & Tobago have submitted the list of authorized signatures and the stamps necessary for those documents used to export goods to Cuba.

Cuba has expressed its desire to elevate the Agreement into a Free Trade Agreement to include trade in services. In addition Cuba submitted to CARICOM an additional list of products for which it is seeking preferential access into the markets of CARICOM MDCs. In its response, Guyana has identified seventy three (73) products on the Cuban product list which should retain the Most Favoured Nation Rate of Duty - i.e. no duty free treatment. This request by Cuba is on the agenda for the upcoming Sixth Meeting of the CARICOM/Cuba Joint Commission, scheduled for January 2006.

- **CARICOM-Venezuela**

Both CARICOM and Venezuela have agreed to engage in discussions on the problems and non-tariff barriers being faced by CARICOM exporters to Venezuela and on Venezuela's request for preferential access to the CARICOM market. CARICOM Secretariat has commenced consultations with member states on Venezuela's request for reciprocal preferences. On August 3, 2005, a Preparatory Meeting to the Sixth Meeting of the CARICOM/Venezuela Joint Council was held. Guyana has identified 71 products that are considered sensitive and which should retain the Most Favoured Nation Rate of Duty under the Agreement with Venezuela.

The CARICOM/Venezuela Joint Council meeting is scheduled for 2006 to discuss outstanding issues of 2005, on a date that is yet to be determined.

4.0 TRADE FACILITATION

4.1 Services Sector

Following nearly three years of dedicated work by the Ministry and key service-provider agencies in the private sector, the Guyana Coalition of Service Providers (GCSP) was launched on June 3, 2005. This was an important achievement in terms of our necessary focus on the development of the services sector as a key contributor to export growth and job creation. The GCSP is expected to function as the principal focal point and stakeholder in the national consultative process regarding the trade in services negotiations at all levels.

4.2 Trade Information

On September 30, 2005 the **Organization of American States** in collaboration with the MOFTIC established the Guyana segment of the **Caribbean Trade Reference Centre (TRC)**. The TRC consist of a trade information database, designed to meet the needs expressed by the CARICOM countries in their National Trade Capacity Building Strategies (TCBS) for greater and easier to access trade-related information. The Database includes full texts of trade agreements, bilateral investment treaties, national legislation in trade-related disciplines, trade and tariff data, and relevant articles and studies. The objective of the Trade Information System database is to provide a simple and user-friendly mechanism to access regional and country-specific information related to trade and trade negotiations and to help the government bring this information to its public.

Three (3) TRC Units were located in Guyana at the Foreign Trade Division of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, the NACEN Secretariat and the **Institute of Development Studies (IDS)** at the **University of Guyana**. Copies of the Trade Information Database on Compact Discs (CDs) were also widely disseminated to trade-related government agencies, private sector agencies and other interested users, for access on their own computers.

5.0 CAPACITY BUILDING

- **Staff Training**

In the face of persistent staff constraints the Ministry continued to optimize use of various donor-funded capacity building opportunities at the regional and WTO levels., in an effort to maintain and strengthen much needed institutional capacity among its staff. Training workshops and seminars organized by the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) played a crucial role in the enhancement of staff skills.

- **Information Technology**

2005 was very important in terms of the Ministry's IT capacity building. During the year the USAID, under the GTIS Project, provided computers and related accessories to strengthen staff capabilities and the Ministry's computerization programme. All MOFTIC staff now have access to PCs and the internet. The GTIS also commenced work to improve the Ministry's website to make it more functional and user-friendly to both staff and the public. This task will intensify in 2006.

6.0 MOFTIC PUBLICATIONS

In an effort to educate and enlighten the wider society on its work, the Ministry continued to disseminate information on matters relating to its agenda, and critical trade-related issues, as well as issues relating to international cooperation. During 2005, the following publications were produced, with input from the Ministry's staff:

- (i) Three (3) issues of the *MOFTIC Digest*;
- (ii) Review of Guyana's Foreign Trade 2003-2004;
- (iii) A compilation focusing on the very important issue of the reform of the EU Sugar regime – *Reform of the European Union Sugar Regime – ACP Sugar Industries Under Threat*

These publications were circulated locally and to Guyana's overseas Missions.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

A. BILATERAL COOPERATION

7.0 NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK (GUYANA INFORMATION NEWS AGENCY) / CCTV 9 COOPERATION PROGRAMME

With the facilitation of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, the Design Contract for NCN/CCTV Cooperation Programme was finalized and signed on June 03, 2005, the Head of the Government Information Agency (GINA), and the Chinese Embassy.

The Design Contract will facilitate the design and construction of the components of the cooperation project.

8.0 BAMBOO CRAFT PROJECT

The Chinese Bamboo Craft technicians pursued a one year training programme in Guyana with Guyanese. Training was also held in China. Two candidates from the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce participated in the TCDC training course on Bamboo Craft Production and all expenses were covered by the Chinese Government. The outcome of such training has been a result of the introduction of Bamboo furniture on the local market.

9.0 CHINA-CARIBBEAN ECONOMIC AND TRADE COOPERATION TRADE COOPERATION FORUM (CCETCF)

The China-Caribbean Economic and Trade Cooperation Forum (CCETCF) was convened during the period February 02 – 05, 2005 in Kingston, Jamaica. Guyana was represented by the Advisor to the President on Trade and Investment, along with fifteen representative from seven Guyanese business firms. The objective of the Forum was to increase trade and investment in the future and to provide opportunities for exchanges between CARICOM private sector companies and their Chinese counterparts.

During the forum, a Framework Agreement was signed between CARICOM member states and the People's Republic of China. The Framework Agreement is expected to guide future fora and facilitate closer ties and future exchanges between the Caribbean and the People's Republic of China.

9.1 WORKING VISIT OF THE PRIME MINISTER TO CHINA

The Hon. Prime Minister Samuel Hinds paid a working visit to the People's Republic of China during the period July 20 – 27, 2005. The following three agreements were signed

- The Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation of ¥ 30M Yan Grant ;
- The Exchanges of Notes for dispatch of a technical team for the Ferry Vessel Project ,
- The Exchange of Notes for the donation of raw materials and equipment from G&C Sanata Inc, respectively.

9.2 EXTENSION OF TERM TABLE TENNIS AND MARTIAL ART COACHES

The Hon. Clement J. Rohee, Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation and H.E. Shen Qing, Chinese Ambassador to Guyana signed the Exchange of Notes, to facilitate the extension of deputation of the table tennis and martial arts coaches for a period of one year, effective from their date of arrival, In April 2005, the coaches arrived in Guyana and commenced their stint with the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports

9.3 G & C SANATA TEXTILES COMPANY INC.

An Exchange of Notes for the formal handing over of the equipment and raw material of G&C Sanata was signed during the Hon. Prime Minister's visit to the People's Republic of China. A team of technical persons are expected in Guyana at the end of December to jointly evaluate the project and to hand over formally to the Government of Guyana.

9.4 CHINESE MEDICAL BRIGADE

In April 2004, the Hon. Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation signed a Protocol to facilitate the dispatching of the sixth batch of Chinese medical doctors. In June 2004, the sixth batch of Chinese medical doctors arrived in Guyana to commence their two year stint. Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation has been in constant consultations with the Ministry of Health in monitoring the work of the Chinese doctors. A Chinese Medical Team from the Jiang Su Province visited Guyana in September 2005 and had consultations with the Ministry of Health for the possible expansion of the Chinese Medical Brigade. This project is presently under consideration by the Chinese side.

9.5 NINTH SESSION OF THE GUYANA/CHINA JOINT COMMISSION

The Ninth Session of the Guyana/China Joint Commission was scheduled to be convened during the last quarter of 2005. However due to time constraints, both the Guyanese side and the Chinese side were unable to agree on a mutually convenient time for the convening of the Joint Commission.

The Upcoming session of the Guyana/China Joint Commission is now expected to be held in the first quarter of 2006.

9.6 GUYANA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE (GICC)

To mark the completion of the superstructure of the GICC a short ceremony was held at the construction site on June 10, 2005. The project was expected to be completed in November 2005. However, due to severe floods experienced in January, the new completion date for the GICC has been extended to December 15, 2005. Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation is currently preparing for the Handing Over Ceremony for the Guyana International Conference Centre in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works and Communications and the Chinese Embassy. The Handing over Ceremony is slated for January 2006.

9.7 FERRY BOAT PROJECT

On July 22, 2005, the Exchange of Notes for the dispatch of a survey team to Guyana to conduct the initial feasibility study on the project was signed. The survey team is expected to arrive in Guyana in the first quarter of 2006. It is also expected that the Design and Construction contracts would be finalized and signed in 2006.

10.0 JAPAN

10.1 NEW AMSTERDAM HOSPITAL PROJECT

The New Amsterdam Hospital which was rehabilitated by the Japanese Government at a cost of US\$13.2M, through the Japanese General Grant Aid was officially handed over to the Government of Guyana on February 20, 2005.

10.2 JAPANESE NON-PROJECT GRANT AID FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CARICOM SECRETARIAT HEADQUARTERS

The Government of Japan in 2002 officially provided ¥500,000,000, Japanese Yen (US\$4.2M) to the Government of Guyana under Japanese Non-Project Grant Aid towards the construction of the CARICOM Secretariat Headquarters. In 2005, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation facilitated the release of the final two tranches of funds generated from the Japanese Non-Project Grant Aid. The Secretariat Headquarters at Lilendaal was officially commissioned by the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community on February 18, 2005.

10.3 TRAINING COURSES

The Japanese Government for most of 2005 has continued to offer training courses to Guyanese officials in Japan. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation has facilitated the dissemination of applications to relevant Government Agencies and departments as well as the transmission of nominations to the Japanese Government for consideration.

10.4 JAPANESE GENERAL AND NON-PROJECT GRANT AID

In August 2005, the Government of Guyana was invited by the Japanese Government to submit project proposals for possible funding in the 2005/2006 fiscal year. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation submitted a total of eight project proposals for consideration by Cabinet. However, Cabinet only approved one project for submission to the Government of Japan. The project proposal for the Rehabilitation of the East Coast Conservancies was the only project proposal which was submitted to the Government of Japan.

On December 08, 2005 the Government of Guyana received official notification from the Government of Japan that ¥ 500,000,000 Yen was approved by the Japanese Government under Non-Project Grant Aid for funding of project(s) mutually agreed on by both Governments. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation is in the process of facilitating the signing of the Exchange of Notes for the implementation of the Non-Project Grant Aid approved by the Government of Japan. The Exchange of Notes is expected to be signed during the accreditation of the new Japanese Ambassador to Guyana in January 2006.

10.5 CORRIVERTON POTABLE WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

The Agreed Minutes for a Preliminary Study for this project was signed on June 27, 2005. The estimated cost of the proposed project is approximately US\$8M, and some 50,000 residents, in Corriverton and its surrounding environs would stand to benefit from this project.

On November 20, 2005, JICA dispatched a Basic Design Team to carryout a study and gather information for the Basic Design of the Corriverton Potable Water Project. The Team held a series of meetings with Guyana Water Inc. the Ministry of Housing and Water and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation. The team completed their work at the end of December 2005. The Exchange of Notes for the implementation of this project is expected to be signed in May/June 2006. Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation will continue to facilitate the implementation of this project.

10.6 JAPAN TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME

A Technical Cooperation Agreement between the Government of Guyana and the Government of Japan was signed on February 18, 2005. The Agreement is expected to facilitate the possible opening of an office in Guyana by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Guyana is expected to benefit from the dispatch of Japanese Overseas Volunteers under this agreement. This initiative will foster closer relations between Guyana and Japan.

On June 21, 2005, the Chief Advisor for the Project for the Promotion of Sustainable Marine Fisheries Resource Utilization met with officials of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation and the Ministry of Fisheries, Crops and Livestock. Discussions focused on how Guyana could benefit from the project which is being implemented in Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana and Belize.

Guyana is expected to benefit in the areas of training, deputation of experts and donation of equipment under the project. Four (4) officials of the Fisheries Department of the Ministry of Fisheries, Crops and Livestock benefited from a training course held in Trinidad and Tobago. The project is fully funded by the Japanese Government.

10.7 VISIT BY OFFICIAL FROM THE JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY (JICA)

An Official of the Regional Support Office of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) based in Mexico visited Guyana during the period September 05 – 10 2005 and held consultations with the Ministries of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, Health, Education and Fisheries Crops and Livestock. The Japanese Government is yet to make a decision on whether Japanese Volunteers should be dispatched to Guyana. In this regard, priority areas for the dispatching of Japanese Volunteers are under consideration.

11.0 INDIA

11.1 INDIAN TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION (ITEC) PROGRAMME

At present there are three ITEC experts in Guyana, namely, a Legal Officer attached to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a Dairy Consultant attached to the National Dairy Development Programme of the Ministry of Fisheries, Crops and Livestock and a Town Planner attached to the Ministry of Housing and Water.

11.2 NARI/ICAR

In pursuance of a Memorandum of Understanding which was concluded between National Agriculture Institute (NARI) and ICAR in January 22, 2003, a team of scientists arrived during March 14 – 19, 2005 and conducted field studies in hybridization. The Government of Guyana is pleased with this achievement since the agriculture sector will be enhanced with this development.

11.3 SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC WATER PUMPS

The Ministry of Housing and Water Inc. received five Solar photovoltaic water pumps as gifts from the Government of India. The pumps will be installed in the following regions:

- St. Cuthbert's Mission Region 4
- Kato, Region 8
- Sand Creek Region 9
- Yupukari, Region 9
- Aishalton Region 9

Water sources were tested at Kato and St. Cuthbert's Mission and found to be adequate. However, only Kato site, installation can proceed and not St. Cuthbert's Mission, since Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF) is yet to complete design and tender documents for same. Water sources at Aishalton, Sand Creek and Yupukari are yet to be tested. A date for the final installation and commissioning of the pumps is to be determined. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International continues to monitor this project.

11.4 UNIVERSITY OF GUYANA G/INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY COOPERATION

The Indira Gandhi National Open University and the University of Guyana are currently examining cooperation between the two institutions. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation continues to monitor this cooperation programme.

11.5 CARICOM/INDIA JOINT COMMISSION

The Inaugural Session of the CARICOM/India Joint Commission was convened on February 15, 2005 in Paramaribo, Suriname. The objective of the Guyana/India Joint Commission is for India to share its development expertise and appropriate technologies with CARICOM in the spirit of South-South Cooperation.

11.6 FOURTH SESSION OF THE GUYANA/INDIA JOINT COMMISSION

The Fourth Session of the Guyana/India Joint Commission was to be convened during the third quarter of 2005. Both the Guyanese and the Indian sides are expected to review the work programme emanating from the Third Session of the Joint Commission and to discuss new areas of possible cooperation. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation will follow up with the High Commission of India for possible dates for the convening of the Joint Commission in the first quarter of 2006.

11.7 BILATERAL INVESTMENT TREATY

The Indian Government has proposed a Bilateral Investment Treaty with Guyana. To this end, a team from India visited in mid July 2005 to negotiate this Agreement. Substantial progress was achieved in harmonizing the text of the agreement and both Governments are expecting to conclude this Agreement in the new year.

11.8 DOUBLE TAXATION AGREEMENT

The Indian Government has tabled a Double Taxation Agreement, for the Government of Guyana's consideration. The agreement is expected to be signed in the new year.

12.0 REPUBLIC OF KOREA GRANT AID

With the objective of improving cooperation between the Government of Guyana and the Republic of Korea, Guyana received computer equipment under the Korean Grant Aid Programme for 2005. It is expected that the Government of Guyana will continue to benefit from Korea Grant Aid in the coming year.

12.1 BILATERAL INVESTMENT TREATY

A Bilateral Investment Treaty Agreement between Korea and Guyana was finalized and signed on August 15, 2005. The Government of Guyana has put internal procedures in place for the implementation of this Agreement. Guyana is expected to benefit from Korean investments through the implementation of this agreement.

13.0 KUWAIT

13.1 DOUBLE TAXATION AGREEMENT

On October 3, 2005, a Kuwaiti team visited Guyana and negotiated a Double Taxation Agreement. Much success was achieved towards harmonization of the text. However, some outstanding issues are still to be addressed by both countries. This Agreement is also expected to be finalized and concluded in 2006.

13.2 DRAFT AGREEMENT ON THE AVOIDANCE OF DOUBLE TAXATION

On October 3 – 6, 2005, the Government of the State of Kuwait and the Government of the Republic of Guyana in an effort to promote mutual economic relations, commenced negotiations on the Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion. Outstanding areas are yet to be agreed upon. It is expected that this Agreement would be concluded in the first quarter of 2006.

14.0 MALAYSIA

The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation in collaboration with the Public Service Ministry facilitated the participation of a number of Government officials at technical training courses under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) .All courses under the MTCP are fully funded by the Malaysian Government.

15.0 SPAIN

15.1 BILATERAL INVESTMENT TREATY

Negotiation on a Bilateral Investment Treaty between Guyana and Spain was completed. The Spanish authorities have been asked through their Embassy in Caracas to indicate a suitable date for the signing, thus the Ministry is optimistic that signing would take place in the first quarter of 2006.

16.0 RUSSIA

In an effort to resuscitate Guyana's bilateral cooperation programme with Russia, the following three agreements were proposed and near finalization.

- AGREEMENT ON ECONOMIC TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION
- AGREEMENT ON COOPERATION IN CULTURE, SCIENCE, SPORTS AND TOURISM
- AGREEMENT ON THE PROMOTION AND RECIPROCAL PROTECTION OF INVESTMENTS

17.0 SWITZERLAND

17.1 BILATERAL INVESTMENT TREATY

The proposed Bilateral Investment Treaty between Guyana and Switzerland was finalized and signed on December 13, 2005 in Hong Kong during the 6th WTO Ministerial Conference. Guyana will put in place the internal procedures for implementation of the Treaty.

18.0 NIGERIA

18.1 AGREEMENT ON THE TECHNICAL AID CORPS

An Agreement on Technical Aid Corps was finalized and signed in October 2005. The Ministry of Legal Affairs and the Ministry of Health will benefit from Nigerian Legal and Medical personnel to be deployed under the scheme.

19.0 ARGENTINA

A draft Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between Guyana and Argentina has been finalized.

Guyana awaits notification from the Argentine authorities for a possible date for the signing of the Agreement.

20.0 BARBADOS

20.1 BILATERAL COOPERATION

During the month of October 2005, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation convened two-Inter-Agency meetings with stakeholders to discuss possible cooperation between Guyana and Barbados. The objective of the meeting was to prepare for the Inaugural session of Guyana/Barbados Joint Commission. The Inaugural Session of the Guyana/Barbados Joint Commission is scheduling for early 2006.

30.0 COLOMBIA

30.1 GUYANA/COLOMBIA JOINT COMMISSION

The Third Session of the Guyana/Colombia Joint Commission was expected to be convened during a visit by the Colombian Foreign Minister to Guyana in 2005. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation is optimistic that the Joint Commission would be convened in the new year. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation has commenced preparation for the convening of the Joint Commission.

Benefits are to be derived from the conclusion of the following two agreements to be signed at the Joint Commission Meeting:

- **Trade Agreement:** this agreement is expected to promote, facilitate and develop economic and trade cooperation between the two countries on a long term and stable basis.
- **Joint Business Development Council:** this agreement will provide a forum for both parties to enhance dialogue between the Private Sector of both countries, promote bilateral trade relations and establish mechanism to foster increased trade and investment opportunities.

31.0 CUBA

31.1 Guyana/Cuba Joint Commission

Guyana has been benefiting from the significant presence of a Cuban Medical Brigade and other technical expertise. Currently there are forty one (41) Cuban medical experts in Guyana.

Three specialists in the areas of Radiology, Occupational Therapy and ophthalmology will be joining the current brigade of Cuban medical doctors in Guyana.

32.0 BRAZIL

32.1 GUYANA/BRAZIL TECHNICAL COOPERATION

The Governments of Guyana and Brazil signed two Complementary Agreements and a Protocol of Intent with regards to technical cooperation projects. The Complementary Agreements are aimed at strengthening cooperation in the field of Cashewnut and Soyabean production.

The Protocol of Intent is also aimed at strengthening cooperation in the Production and Use of Combustible Ethanol. Under this agreement, Guyana's Agricultural Sector stands to benefit immensely from the transfer of Brazilian skills, technology and science.

32.2 RATIFICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRANSPORT AGREEMENT (IRTA)

Cognizant of the benefits that would flow from Guyana/ Brazil Cooperation the two Governments ratified an International Road Transport Agreement. Ratification of the IRTA gives effect to the agreement.

32.3 FIRST MEETING OF THE AMENDMENT COMMISSION

The First Meeting of the Amendment Commission under the IRATA is expected be convened in Boa Vista, Brazil in 2006. The meeting will deliberate on matters of interest to the Brazilian and Guyanese sides. An evaluation of implementation for Agreements as well as Amendments to the agreement are to be considered. The Ministry of Home Affairs which is the implementing agency for the (IRTA) on the Guyana side has convened meetings in preparation for the Amendment Commission Meeting.

32.4 NATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE (NCC) ON GUYANA/BRAZIL CROSS BORDER PROJECTS

During 2005, the Twelfth, Thirteenth and Fourteenth Sessions of the NCC were convened to deliberate on the way forward relative to the bridge across the Takatu river as well as construction and maintenance of the Brazilian/Lethem road, the implementation of the Guyana-Brazil International Road Transport Agreement; the Multi-Purpose Complex; and the formulation of a development plan for Region Nine.

33.0 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

In an effort to modernize Guyana's Intellectual Property (IP) legislation in keeping with Guyana's obligations under the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Agreement (TRIPS) at the World Trade Organization, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation has commenced the process of drafting new IP legislation. To date, new legislation on Geographical Indications has been passed in Parliament and the accompanying regulations have been completed and are currently under consideration.

The draft Copyright Bill of 1999 has also been revised and is under consideration by Cabinet Sub-Committee on Trade.

B. MULTILATERAL COOPERATION

34.0 COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

The January 2005 floods impacted negatively on the Guyanese populace, specifically on the coastal plains. In light of this, the Government of Guyana requested assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat for the provision of a Water Engineer and a Sanitary Engineer to assist the GOG in the post flood reconstruction phase. The Commonwealth Secretariat has approved this request. To this end, the outstanding Terms of Reference for the Water Engineer has been finalized, and the Commonwealth Secretariat is in the process of identifying expert(s) with knowledge of Water Engineer with a Degree in Civil Engineer+ Post Graduate qualification in Water Engineering or six years experience in the water sector for dispatching to Guyana. It is expected that the Government of Guyana will receive the technical experts in the first quarter of 2006.

35.0 SELA

With the prominent and active role of Caribbean members in the decision making process of SELA, the Permanent Secretariat for SELA has informed of a proposed name change from Latin America Economic System to Latin America and Caribbean Economic System. Member of SELA were requested to indicate whether the name change would represent an amendment to the Panama Constitution or just a terminological adjustment to the convention. The Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation and Legal Affairs are consulting on this issue.

36.0 ORGANISATION OF AMERICAN STATES TRAINING

Participants were nominated to participate in, a seminar on Container and Passenger Profiling from November 29- Dec 2, 2005 in Florida and Organization and Management of Agro Business in Grenada from November 14 -18, 2005. Nominations were also made for participation in a Regional Forum on Maritime Security, a Regional Seminar on Integrity Standards and pursuance in studies in a masters Programme on Natural Resource and Environmental Management and Industrial Control Engineering for the Graduate Academic studies programme for the 2005/2006 period.

The Organisation of American States under its Multilateral Fund of the Inter-American Council For Integral Development (FEMCIDI) 2005/2006 programme has awarded funding to two project proposals submitted by the CARICOM Secretariat and the University of Guyana. With regards to the CARICOM Secretariat, the project is "A Strategy for the Professional Preparation of Instructors/Teachers for the Delivery of Primary Level Enhanced Spanish Curriculum". The approved funding for this project is US\$52,376.

University of Guyana, will benefit from a “Building Capacity in the Education Sector for Sustainable Human Development” project. The approved funding is US\$73,400. Execution of these projects commenced on October 31, 2005.

37.0 DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGY FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

In pursuance of decisions made at the Ministry's 2005 Retreat to formulate a National Strategy for the International Cooperation, a consultant from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was attached to the Ministry from October 3 – 21, 2005, to develop a National Strategy. A report is expected in the first quarter of 2006, will serve to give guidance as well as some prospects on the dynamics of International Cooperation in the globalized world.

38.0 VOLUNTARY SERVICE OVERSEAS

The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation facilitated the placement of a new batch of volunteers from the Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), during the month of August 2005. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation will continue to facilitate requests for new VSO volunteers and extensions of the terms of deputations of the current volunteers in the new year.

MINISTRY – WIDE ACTIVITIES

39.0 INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS DAY

The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation in collaboration with Local and International Organizations have been engaged in coordination and facilitation of activities to mark the observance of International Volunteers Day 2005. Activities such as lecture sessions, mobile clinics and the Main Event were held over a two-week period in recognition of the critical contributions of volunteerism in Guyana.

40.0 STAFFING

In 2005, five persons joined the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation while six have resigned.

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE AND
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**



**A n n u a l R e p o r t
2006**

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MISSION STATEMENT

To formulate and advocate a coherent and effective trade policy that will advance Guyana's multilateral, regional and bilateral trading interests; identify opportunities for developing new markets for existing goods and services and new exportable goods and services; and combine conventional and other approaches to the critical issue of resource mobilization through technical cooperation with the developing countries and the donor community of the industrialized states, multilateral financial and development-oriented institutions.

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- 3.0 Capacity Building
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SUMMARY

In 2006, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation continued to develop and build upon work commenced in 2005 to ensure continuity and the achievement of the Ministry's main objectives.

Trade

During 2006 the Ministry, in keeping with its mandate for the external trade negotiations, sought to intensify its work in the immediate WTO post-Hong Kong period. The Ministry advanced its public outreach and dialogue with stakeholders outside of Georgetown and commenced work on a study of the services sector of Guyana.

Doha Round: On June 19, 2006 the Ministry coordinated the regional preparations for, and hosted, a “Meeting Between Caribbean and South American Trade Ministers” in Georgetown, to discuss ways of narrowing differences between the two sides on key issues in the current WTO Doha Round negotiations. The meeting arose out of an initiative by Caribbean Trade Ministers to engage their South American counterparts, as part of the Region's strategic approach to strengthen its alliances with developing countries partners in the multilateral trading environment. The two sides agreed to have follow-up meetings and to consider establishing a permanent mechanism for continuing dialogue on matters of mutual interest. A similar meeting with the Central Americans is scheduled for early 2007.

Services Sector: In May the Ministry, with the technical and financial support of the USAID-GTIS Project, commenced work related to a study of the services sector in Guyana. The Ministry was convinced of the need to conduct urgent technical research on the local services sector in light of the various external trade negotiations in which Guyana is involved, bearing in mind that all those negotiations include trade in services. The draft Final Report was completed in November and circulated to key stakeholder agencies for consideration. In a related activity, during August the Ministry collaborated with the Guyana Coalition of Services Providers (GCSP) and the Commonwealth Secretariat (COMSEC) to commence work on a study in the professional services. The main objective of the project is to develop a strategic programme for the export promotion of professional services in Guyana with a view to diversify the economic base of Guyana which is heavily dependent on export of commodities. All activities under this project should be fully implemented by the end of May 2007 with the delivery of an action plan and strategy for the export promotion of professional services from Guyana.

Sugar Protocol: In 2006, continued to treat as top priority the matters relating to allocations to Guyana under the EU Accompanying Measures for countries affected by the reform of the EU Sugar Regime. Discussions on the modalities for disbursement were finalized for the 2006 allocation and further consultation and discussions were undertaken for the allocations for 2007-2008. The re-allocation of any permanent shortfall under the SP arrangements and the retention of the shortfall in the region to which the country belongs will be continued both at the ACP Consultative Group level and CARICOM, in 2007.

International Cooperation

In 2006 the Ministry continued its effort at mobilizing financial and human resources aimed at achieving poverty reduction and the improvement of the standard of living of Guyanese people through the convening of Joint Commissions and expanding bilateral cooperation programme. The Ministry was successful in facilitating debt cancellation by two major bilateral partners. The Ministry facilitated the conclusion of over 25 bilateral agreements which aimed at enhancing economic and technical cooperation with our bilateral partners. The health, education, agriculture and social sectors were the main beneficiaries of these agreements. The agreements provided valuable resources both financial and human to these sectors which dieing need for these resources existed.

In 2007, the Department of International Cooperation will continue to expand and implement cooperation programmes agreed on bilaterally and multilaterally. Additionally, the department will continue its effort to mobilize resources to match needs of major sectors which are vital to Guyana's development.

John Isaacs,
Permanent Secretary

FOREIGN TRADE

1. MULTILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS

1.1 WTO Negotiations

Work on the post-Hong Kong Negotiations in the WTO continued to be the focus of the Ministry. The deadline established by the WTO for the completion of activities elaborated in the Doha Development Work-programme was not completed by December 2006 as scheduled. MOFTIC, in collaboration with the NACEN, organized post-Hong Kong fora to update key stakeholders on the proposed follow-up to the HK Ministerial Conference and to strategize on Guyana's preparation for the recommencement of the negotiations. Substantial progress at the WTO to resume the negotiations was made in July 2006.

Technical work in relation to the Doha Negotiations intensified. The Ministry deepened its inter-agency consultations on tariff liberalization approaches and strategies for Guyana. MOFTIC worked closely with the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) and Guyana Embassy Brussels to ensure Guyana's active participation in the Negotiations and country submissions in the various negotiating areas, mainly agriculture and non-agriculture, market access negotiations, services and trade facilitation. Additionally, MOFTIC participated in technical work at the regional level in keeping with CARICOM's coordinated approach to the region's external trade negotiations.

In May the Ministry commenced work related to a study of the services sector in Guyana. The USAID-GTIS Project provided the technical assistance for the study. The final report will be available in the first quarter of 2007.

On June 19, 2006 the Ministry coordinated the preparation and hosting of a "Meeting Between Caribbean and South American Trade Ministers" in Georgetown, to discuss ways of narrowing differences between the two sides on key issues in the current WTO Doha Round negotiations. The meeting arose out of an initiative by Caribbean Trade Ministers to engage their South American counterparts, as part of the Region's strategic approach to strengthen its alliances with developing countries partners in the multilateral trading environment. The two sides agreed to have follow-up meetings and to consider establishing a permanent mechanism for continuing dialogue on matters of mutual interest.

The Ministry implemented its outreach in October to the private sector stakeholders in Berbice and Linden as part of its programme to widen its public-private sector dialogue on the external trade negotiations and general trade policy development. This process will continue in 2007 and will extend to other regions of Guyana

1.2 ACP-EU Trade Arrangements

ACP Ministerial:

ACP Council of Ministers at their 83rd and 84th Meeting in December 2006, respectively, reviewed their position regarding various political, economic and social issues affecting the ACP countries individually as well as a group. These meetings provided the fora for consultation with the other ACP Group of countries to strategise and respond to issues affecting the Group for which solidarity and support is required, particularly, in the WTO and EPA Negotiations.

The Revision of the Cotonou Agreement between the ACP and the EU was concluded. The revised Agreement would be adopted in member countries in 2007.

1.2.1 Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).

Negotiations are continuing in the six geographical regions of the ACP. The ACP reviewed the status of the negotiations in the different geographical regions and reiterated its position that EPA should allow for the deepening and strengthening of the regional integration at a pace that is politically, economically and socially justifiable and sustainable for the respective ACP regional groupings.

The ACP continues to reinforce its concerns that the EPA should be developmental focused. They recognized the need to prioritize national and regional policy formulation and to build implementation capacities in ACP countries in preparation of any trade liberalization and other commitments being proposed by the European Commission in the context of the negotiations.

ACP Ministers responsible for EPA negotiations will continue to examine from the overall ACP perspective, all outstanding issues and make recommendations on the way forward.

1.2.2 CARIFORUM / EU EPA Negotiations.

In 2006 CARIFORUM and the EU continued the negotiations on EPA. Work in Phase III of the negotiations was intensified in all the negotiating groups namely, market access for Agriculture and non-agriculture, services and Investment, Trade related issues and Legal and Institutional Issues.

National consultations coordinated by the Ministry, were conducted by the CRNM and involved both the private and public sectors. The Consultations was wide ranging and covered the different clusters of issues aimed at sensitizing Guyana business community on the EPA negotiation, to inform Guyana's proposals / positions on the different issues and to derive and develop inputs into CARIFORUM (regional) position.

The Ministry continues to be involved in preparatory work at the CARIFORUM Technical Working Groups level. The Principal Negotiators of the EC and CARIFORUM and Ministers signed off on work on the third phase of the negotiations and commence work on Phase IV and the final phase is scheduled to be completed by December 31, 2007.

CARIFORUM's negotiations with the EU are on track and in keeping with the timetable and schedule developed and agreed between the two sides. Despite difficulties in some areas, CARIFORUM Heads of Government reiterated the region's commitment to the completion of the Agreement in time for the entry into force of the new agreement on January 1, 2008 and in keeping with the end of the WTO waiver on December 31, 2007.

Key, among the concessions secured by CARIFORUM is a separate chapter in the Agreement to address Development concerns of the region. Work is forging ahead by CARIFORUM at the Technical Working Group and the Expert Group levels to develop the region's negotiating positions particularly in the outstanding areas on Trade Liberalisation, securing "variable geometry" and modes to commitments in the EPA.

A draft framework for the Agreement with the EU is under consideration at the national and regional levels. The Ministry's main focus is on the draft text of an EPA which is being drawn up by the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) and the CARIFORUM's proposal for liberalization in tariffs.

MOFTIC continues to engage the private sector and other key agencies in the formulation of Guyana's position on the various issues and feedback to the CRNM. Work will intensify as the deadline for completing the negotiations approaches.

1.3 Sugar

Top priority continued to be given to work on the GUYSUCO's Action Plan for *the* Industry in the face of the EU Agricultural sector reforms.

The GUYANA Action Plan on Accompanying Measures was completed and submitted to the EU in keeping with the deadlines established. Guyana's plan was favourably considered and accepted. Work was also advanced in discussions with the EU for the release of the Funds allocated to Guyana for 2006. Arrangements with the EC for the 6.0 million Euros were completed in 2006. The first installment of the funds should be forthcoming no later than the first quarter of 2007. This funds is earmarked for a Packaging facility for GUYSUCO.

Discussions will continue with the EU and the relevant agencies in Guyana on modalities and conditions for disbursement with respect to allocations to Guyana for 2007-2008.

Guyana continues to make representation on behalf of CARICOM and was key in securing support at the ACP level for the adoption of key Decisions and Resolutions on Sugar. Discussions are continuing at the industry and Ministerial levels on the future of sugar in CARIFORUM and to ensure that the CARIFORUM /CARICOM region is positioned to meet the challenges in the EU. The re-allocation of any permanent shortfall under the SP arrangements and the retention of the shortfall in the region to which the country belongs will be continued both at the ACP Consultative Group level and CARICOM.

The EU Delegation, GUYSUCO Officials and other Stakeholders of the industry remained engaged at the national level.

1.4 Rice:

During 2006, Guyana continued to press for an effective regional Monitoring Mechanism for the production and Trade of rice in the region. Guyana submitted to the CARICOM Secretariat the necessary information for the Regional Monitoring Mechanism. Guyana, in November 2006, brought to the 22nd COTED attention the issue of the trade in genetically modified Rice (LL601) in the region and the implication for the regional rice industry and was able to secure a commitment at COTED that member states will monitor the import of rice from extra-regional sources and demand the appropriate sanitary certificate for all rice and rice products directly or indirectly sourced from third countries.

Under the EU support programme to improve the competitiveness of the CARIFORUM Rice Industry, this Ministry worked closely with the rice industry stakeholders to expedite an EU-supported Credit Financing Facility to enable the early disbursement of funds for the Guyana Rice industry restructuring and competitiveness.

2. REGIONAL TRADE ARRANGEMENTS

2.1. CSME Implementation

The implementation of the CSME and related public awareness was a priority during 2006. The Ministry, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the USAID-GTIS Project, co-sponsored public awareness programmes which was concluded in July 2006. The Public Education Initiative focused on a number of activities which were carefully designed to meet people of all ages and all regions across Guyana. The main events were as follows;

- CSME debate competition for secondary and tertiary levels
- CSME library corner
- A forum at the University of Guyana
- CSME Awareness Parade
- Caribbean Vizion Educulture School Tour
- CSME Essay Competition for Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Levels

In addition, a Drama Series was aired on National Television throughout the months of August and September 2006 showing one episode per week on television stations each day.

Special focus was also given to expediting outstanding work on the removal of restrictions and implementation of pertinent legislations. Guyana was successfully able to remove the restrictions and put the necessary legislative arrangements in place to ensure compliance in the CARICOM Single Market. (CSM)

At the 17th Special Meeting of COTED convened in September 2006, Guyana advanced work in the preparation of proposal for Article 164 Treatment for local industries.

Further work in the preparation and finalization of Guyana's proposal for Article 164 treatment for the local industries and submission for consideration of the COTED will be undertaken. The Ministry worked closely with partner agencies in the public and private sectors to expedite outstanding work on the Development Fund and pertinent legislation.

Guyana continued in 2006 to press for a comprehensive review of the CET to ensure stability and transparency in the operation of this important trade instrument of CARICOM.

Guyana defended its Article 156 rights in the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas for the retention of the provision despite claims made by member countries that Guyana does not continue to benefit for PL 480 Assistance.

2.2 Workshop on the CSME Trade Instruments

The Ministry was not able to advance work to sensitize the Private sector about the various trade instruments under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas. This is deferred to 2007.

2.3. CARICOM Trade Agreements

CARICOM is expected to engage its bilateral trading partners in negotiation for improved market access in goods and non-goods sectors such as services and investments under trade agreements with the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Cuba and Costa Rica.

- The CARICOM-Dominican Republic 4th Joint Council meeting and the Agricultural Experts Meeting will be held in the first quarter.
- The Sixth Meeting of the CARICOM/Cuba Joint Commission is scheduled for January.
- Exploratory talks between CARICOM and MERCOSUR are ongoing between the two blocs. The Ministry will collaborate with the private sector and the RNM to formulate a Guyana list of exportable products for MERCOSUR's consideration.

3. BILATERAL TRADE ARRANGEMENTS

3.1. Guyana-Brazil Partial Scope Agreement

At the bilateral level Guyana and Brazil convened the first meeting of the Administrative Commission under the Guyana-Brazil Partial Scope Agreement, during the first quarter. The functioning of the Commission is important to the operations of the Agreement. During President Lula's state visit to Guyana in February 2005, H.E and President Jagdeo "welcomed the positive steps taken by the two countries to strengthen bilateral trade and to implement the Partial Scope Agreement. They agreed that the two sides should urgently activate the Joint Administrative Commission under the Agreement."

A Workshop in Guyana to be spearheaded by Brazil in August 2006 on "How to Export to Brazil" was not materialized due to difficulties from the Brazilian side. The Ministry remained committed to spearhead Guyana's preparation for this workshop. Collaboration with the Brazilian Embassy and the private sector will be continued in 2007.

An extraordinary meeting of the Guyana-Brazil PSA Administrative Commission was scheduled for Boa Vista, Brazil in October 2006. This meeting did not take place. Consultation with the Brazilians on a new date will be done in early 2007.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The Department of International Cooperation worked closely with the following bilateral partners and multilateral institutions in order to agree on economic, social and technical programmes aimed at mobilizing critically needed resources.

BILATERAL COOPERATION

CHINA

Guyana/China Trade Agreement

China's Chamber of Commerce has indicated an interest in establishing relations with the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce. This meeting, initially scheduled for December 2005, has been rescheduled to February 2006. The February Meeting did not materialise also. As such, The Ministry continues to liaison with the Chinese authorities to schedule the meeting.

National Communications Network (Guyana Information News Agency) / CCTV 9 Cooperation Programme.

The Design Contract for NCN/CCTV Cooperation Programme was finalized and signed on June 03, 2005 between the Head of the Government Information Agency (GINA), and the Chinese Embassy.

The Government of Guyana's request for the construction of an additional hut is under consideration by the Government of the People's Republic of China. The Design Contract which facilitates the design and construction of the components of the cooperation project is expected to be tabled by the Chinese Government shortly.

The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation facilitated consultations between National Communication Networks (NCN) and the Chinese side to move this process forward.

Bamboo Craft Project

In 2006 two candidates from the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce participated in the TCDC training course on Bamboo Craft Production in China. The aim of the training course was to further advance the knowledge of the local trainees who had benefited from training conducted by the Chinese technicians. The outcome of such training has been a result of the introduction of Bamboo furniture on the local market.

Table Tennis and Martial Arts Coaches

During 2005-2006 the Government of Guyana benefited from training sessions conducted by table tennis and martial arts coaches. Cabinet has approved the extension of the tour of duty of the table tennis as requested by the Ministry of Culture. This request was conveyed to the Chinese side. The Government of the People's Republic of China has favourably considered the request by the Government of Guyana and has submitted a draft Exchange of Notes for the deputation of One Table Tennis Coach to Guyana for the duration of one year. The draft Exchange of Notes is under consideration by the Ministry of Culture Youth and Sports.

G & C Sanata Textiles Company INC.

An Exchange of Notes for the formal handing over of the equipment and raw material of G&C Sanata to the Government of Guyana was signed during the Hon. Prime Minister's visit to the People's Republic of China in July 2005. Sanata Textiles was handed over to the Government of Guyana formally on February 10, 2006. The Privatization Unit is in the process of looking for potential investors to take over and operate the plant.

Chinese Medical Brigade

The sixth batch of Chinese medical doctors completed their two years stint and departed in May 2006. They were replaced by the seventh batch of medical doctors. The seventh batch of doctors consists of 15 specialists who are attached to the Georgetown Hospital and the Linden Hospital Complex respectively.

A Chinese Medical Team from the Jiang Su Province visited Guyana in September 2005 and had consultations with the Ministry of Health for the possible expansion of the Chinese Medical Brigade. The Government of Guyana has requested three (3) additional doctors to the 8th Medical Brigade Team. This request is currently under the consideration by the Government of China.

Ninth Session Of The Guyana/China Joint Commission

The Ninth Session of the Guyana/China Joint Commission was convened on February 16, 2006. The Chinese delegation was headed by the Assistant Minister of Commerce, Mr. Fu Ziying while the Guyanese delegation was headed by the Hon. Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, Mr. Clement J. Rohee.

The Joint Commission concluded with the signing of the following Agreements on Cooperation:

1. Agreement of Cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation of Guyana and the Trade Development Bureau of the Ministry of Commerce of China
2. Agreement Establishing the Guyana-China Joint Business Development Council.
3. Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation: 10Mil RMB Grant.
4. Handing Over Certificate of US\$30,000 for Flood Relief.

At the 9th Session of the Guyana/China Joint Commission both Governments agreed to the areas of cooperation that will comprise the 2006/2007 work programme.

Investment Symposium

The Investment Symposium was convened during the 9th Session of the Guyana China Joint Commission and discussions were held between members of the Private Sector in Guyana and representatives from China Council for the Promotion of International Trade on future areas of cooperation within the private sectors in both countries.

Guyana Green Farm

Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation received an investment plan submitted by Guyana Green Farm expressing its intention to invest US\$30,000 into resuscitating the operations of the company. Construction work has commenced at Guyana Green Farm Inc. Several Green House Farms have been constructed and the vegetables produced are being sold on the local market. The company also has plans of exploring the potentials of the International Market.

Ferry Vessel Project

The Hon. Prime Minister Samuel Hinds paid a working visit to the People's Republic of China during the period July 20 – 27, 2005. During this visit an agreement for the dispatch of a survey team to Guyana for the ferry vessel project was signed.

A Survey Team for the Ferry Vessels Project visited Guyana in January 2006 and conducted a feasibility study. Negotiations on the Ferry Vessels project were carried out and the Government of China is awaiting the completion of the stelling by the Guyanese side to accommodate the RORO type vessels. The budget and design of the ferry vessels were submitted for the consideration of the Government of Guyana in September 2006.

The Governments of Guyana and China were engaged in negotiation for the ferries to be constructed in Guyana due to the high cost of transporting the vessels from China. This request is currently engaging the attention of the Chinese Government.

Rescheduling of Debts

During the 9th Session of the Guyana/China Joint Commission the Government of China agreed to write off all the Government of Guyana debts which are due for repayment by December 2004.

The Agreement for the debt write off is expected to be tabled by the Chinese side shortly.

Deputation Of Geologists

The Government of Guyana and the People's Republic of China agreed in principal during the 9th Session of the Guyana/China Joint Commission to dispatch two Geologists to the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) for a period of three. The geologists are expected to assist the GGMC with regional geochemical survey, technical advice and training to local geochemical technicians. The draft Agreement for the deputation of two geologists was tabled by the Chinese Government and negotiations to finalize the Agreement were carried out.

Guyana International Conference Centre (GICC)

The Guyana International Conference Center was officially handed over by the Government of the People's Republic of China to the Government of Guyana on February 16, 2006.

The Furnishing Contract for the GICC was signed between the Ministry of Public Works and Communications and the Government of the People's Republic of China in on October 26, 2006.

The Furnishing Contract will facilitate the provision of furnishing for the GICC to the sum of 3.7 MRMB

A number of defects at the Guyana International Conference Center were identified and the lists of defects were submitted to the Chinese side for correction. A five member team arrived in Guyana in October 2006 to affect maintenance and correction works to the GICC.

Memorandum of Understanding to Facilitate Travel by Chinese Tourist Groups to Guyana

During the 9TH Session of the Guyana/China Joint Commission which was convened in February 2006, the Chinese Government signaled their intention to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate travel by Chinese Tourist Groups to Guyana. The draft MOU was tabled by the Chinese side in June 2006 and negotiations aimed at finalizing the MOU was carried out between the two sides.

The Guyana Tourism Authority agreed to the final draft of the MOU in September 2007.

Deputation of Chinese Youth Volunteers

The Exchange of Notes for the Deputation of Chinese Youth Volunteers to Guyana was signed between the Government of Guyana and the Government of China in on October 5, 2006 between the Hon. Dr. Henry Jeffrey, Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation and H. E. Shen Qing, Chinese Ambassador to Guyana.

Through this Agreement, Chinese Volunteers are expected to provide their services in the social sectors within Guyana for one year. These sectors include Health, Education, and Agriculture. The Ministry of Health, Education and Agriculture have indicated interests in receiving the volunteers with the criteria that would be applicable to their Ministry. The Volunteers resumes have been forwarded to the aforementioned Ministries for their consideration.

Skeldon Sugar Modernization Project

Construction work on site at Skeldon commenced on January 10, 2006, the Civil Engineering process as well as the installation process have commenced. An extension of the completion date was requested by the Chinese construction company CNTIC and was agreed to by GUYSUCO. The Government of Guyana has agreed to extend the completion date by 115 days at the request of CNTIC. The Skeldon Sugar Modernization is expected to be completed in 2008.

Training Courses

The Chinese Government for most of 2006 has continued to offer training courses to Guyanese officials in China. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation has facilitated the participation of Guyanese officials in these training courses. Among the areas which Guyanese Officials received training were, bamboo craft production, mushroom cultivation, intellectual property rights, television broadcasting and trade.

JAPAN

New Amsterdam Hospital Project

The New Amsterdam Hospital which was rehabilitated by the Japanese Government at a cost of US\$13.2M, through the Japanese General Grant Aid was officially handed over to the Government of Guyana on February 20, 2005. A bilateral meeting was held with Japanese Counsellor on February 17, 2006 and the issue of defects at the New Amsterdam Hospital was discussed. The Government of Guyana and the Government of Japan are currently engaged in discussion regarding the defects and its correction for the New Amsterdam Hospital.

Training Courses

The Japanese Government for most of 2006 has continued to offer training courses to Guyanese officials in Japan. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation has facilitated the dissemination of invitations to relevant Government Agencies and departments. In August, the Public Service Ministry identified possible training courses which the Government of Guyana is desirous of participating in during the 2007/2008 fiscal year. This information was communicated to the Japanese Embassy in Port-of-Spain.

Japanese General And Non-Project Grant Aid

The Exchange of Notes for a grant of ¥500 Millions Yen under Japanese Non-Project Grant Aid was signed on February 17, 2006. A meeting was held in March 2006 with representatives from the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, Bank of Guyana, Crown Agent and the End-users of the Grant Aid, to discuss issues pertinent to the procurement procedures and the Procurement Agreement was signed between MOFTIC, MOF, Crown Agents and the Governor of the Bank of Guyana. This grant is expected to be utilized for the improvement of electricity supply and drainage and irrigation in Guyana.

A Committee Meeting is expected to be held on January 24th, 2007 to discuss the implementation process of the Japanese Non-Project Grant Aid.

Corriverton Potable Water Supply Project

The Agreed Minutes for a Preliminary Study for this project was signed on June 27, 2005. The estimated cost of Phase one (1) of the proposed project is approximately US \$ 6M, and some 50,000 residents, in Corriverton and its surrounding environs would stand to benefit from receiving portable water supply upon the completion of this project.

The Exchange of Notes for the implementation of the Corriverton Potable Water Project was signed on July 24th, 2006 between Hon. Clement J. Rohee, Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation and Mr. Kaoru Tsurita, Charge d' Affaires, Embassy of Japan in Port of Spain, Trinidad.

The Japanese consultants commenced work on the design of the project immediately after the signing of the Exchange of Notes. The Guyana Water Incorporated has completed all of the relevant land preparations to facilitate the construction process. Construction work for phase one of the project is expected to commence in February 2007.

Japanese General and Fisheries Grant Aid

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation are collaboratively working on a project proposal that the Government of Guyana would like to pursue with the Government of Japan under the Guyana/Japan Bilateral Relations and for signing off during H.E. President Jagdeo's State visit to Japan during the 2nd Quarter of 2007.

Dispatch of Jockey to Guyana

The Government of Guyana has indicated interest in receiving the services of Senior Japanese Volunteers under the Guyana/Japan Technical Cooperation Agreement. The Japanese Government has indicated that Guyana is one of the countries which consideration is being given for the dispatch of Japanese Volunteers to provide assistance within the social sectors in Guyana. The health, education and agriculture sectors are expected to be the main beneficiaries of the Japanese Senior Volunteers.

INDIA

Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme

The Government of Guyana continues to benefit under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme, (ITEC). During the last quarter of 2006, the Department of International Cooperation facilitated the deputation of deputed two (2) Legal experts to the Ministry of Legal Affairs. The Government of India has agreed to extend the period of deputation of ITEC experts from two years to three years.

Visit of Indian Secretary of Foreign Affairs

During the month of July, the former Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, Hon. Clement J. Rohee, convened a meeting with Mrs. Shashi Tripathi, Secretary, and Ministry of External Affairs of India.

Minister Rohee noted the benefits accrued to Guyana under the ITEC Programme. Mrs. Tripathi also supported the Minister's view and reiterated that ITEC is important to both sides and to date has yielded extremely favorable results and informed that the Government of India is interested in adding a few fields to the capacity building with Guyana such as: Foreign Service training and Security training.

Investment opportunities were also discussed and Minister Rohee expressed his appreciation at the possibility of Indian investment in the pharmaceutical, mining and agro-processing sectors. The Guyana Chamber of Commerce would be task with the responsibility of identifying specific areas of future investment.

Bilateral Investment Treaty

With regards to the progress of the Bilateral Investment Treaty between Guyana and India, significant achievement has been reached in the harmonization of the text. The text of the Agreement was further discussed during the visit by the Indian Secretary of External Affairs and additionally, information was provided to the Indian side for clarification. Both Governments are expecting to conclude this Agreement in the New Year.

Double taxation Agreement

To date, the Government of Guyana has perused the Double Taxation Agreement tabled by the Indian Government and submitted comments on the proposed Agreement to the India side for their consideration. The final text of the agreement is expected to be agreed on and signed in the New Year.

KOREA

Republic of Korea Grant Aid

In February 2006, Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation received computer equipment under the Korean Grant Aid Programme for 2005. The computer equipment were used to enhance the Ministry's performance and aided in the effective completion of assignments. In May 2006, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation facilitated the submission of an application for Korean Grant Aid amounting to US \$ 70,000. The application was favorably considered and in September 2006, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs benefited from the donation of Korea vehicles that will assist the Government of Guyana during the Rio Group Summit which is expected to be held in February 2007.

Bilateral Investment Treaty

A Bilateral Investment Treaty Agreement between Korea and Guyana was finalized and initialed on August 15, 2005. The Hon. Rudolph Insanally, Minister of Foreign Affairs and His Excellency, Mr. Shin Soong Chull, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Guyana signed the Agreement for the Promotion and Protection of Investments on July 31, 2006. This agreement is expected to further promote and protect investments made by investors so as to accord fair and equitable treatment that will be conducive to the simulation of individual business initiative, stimulate foreign direct investment and will increase the prosperity of both countries. The Government of Guyana has put internal procedures in place for the implementation of this Agreement. Guyana is expected to benefit from Korean investments through the implementation of this agreement.

KUWAIT

Double Taxation Agreement

The Double Taxation Agreement between Guyana and Kuwait was discussed at Cabinet Sub-Committee on Trade in April 2006, and an agreement was reached that the Government of Guyana will agree to the proposals made by the Kuwaiti side. This was communicated to the Kuwaiti Government through the Kuwaiti Mission in Geneva. A response is pending from the Kuwaiti side with regards to the proposals made by the Guyanese side. The finalization of the Agreement is expected in 2007.

MALAYSIA

The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation in collaboration with the Public Service Ministry facilitated the participation of a number of Government officials at technical training courses under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP). All courses under the MTCP were fully funded by the Malaysian Government.

SPAIN

Bilateral Investment Treaty

Negotiations on a Bilateral Investment Treaty between Guyana and Spain were completed. The Spanish authorities have been requested through their Embassy in Caracas to indicate a suitable date for the signing, thus the Ministry is optimistic that signing would take place in the first quarter of 2007.

RUSSIA

Negotiations on the Agreement on Cooperation in Culture, Science, Sport and Tourism between the Governments of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the Russian Federation were completed and on July 18, 2006, representatives on both sides initialed the final text of the Agreement. Both Governments are in the process of putting internal arrangements in place for the signing of the Agreement.

NIGERIA

Technical Aid CORPS Programme

Under the Technical Aid CORPS Programme, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation facilitated the deputation of five (5) Nigerian experts in April 2006. Under this Scheme, Nigerian Experts were deputed at the following Ministries: Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, Ministry of Legal Affairs, and Ministry of Health respectively. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation and Ministry of Legal Affairs both benefited from the services of legal expert and the Ministry of Health benefited from the services of three (3) medical doctors.

BARBADOS

The Inaugural Session of the Guyana/Barbados Joint Commission which was scheduled for early 2006 was not convened as planned. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation has commenced preparations for the Inaugural Session of the Joint Commission to be convened in the first Quarter of 2007.

COLOMBIA

Third Session of the Guyana/Colombia Joint Commission

The Third Session of the Guyana/Colombia Joint Commission was held on April 6, 2006 in Georgetown, Guyana. The Guyanese Delegation was led by Mr. John Isaacs, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation and the Colombian Delegation was led by His Excellency Mr. Enrique Vargas, Ambassador of Colombia to Guyana.

The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation on behalf of the Government of Guyana presented proposals for a Scientific and Technical Cooperation Programme for the period 2006-2007 in the areas of education, solid waste management (health), public works and communications, commerce and investment. Accordingly the Colombian side has agreed to implement the following projects proposed by the Guyanese side:

- Technical assistance in Solid Waste Management
- Technical assistance in Solid Waste Management, Pilot Projects
- Technical assistance in Special Waste management in Hospitals
- Technical assistance in Scientific Metrology Infrastructure
- Technical assistance in Establishment of a Free Trade Zone
- Designing a quality secondary program for remote hinterland and riverain communities
- Attachment of Port State Officers
- Spanish Course for Public Service Officials

CUBA

23rd Session of the Guyana/Cuba Joint Commission

The 23rd Session of the Guyana/Cuba Joint Commission was convened during the period November 22-24, 2006 in Havana, Cuba. The Guyanese delegation was headed by Hon. Dr. Henry B. Jeffrey, Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation and comprised of representatives from Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, Guyana Sugar Corporation, Barama Company Limited and the Office of the President respectively. The Cuban delegation was led by Mrs. Marta Lomas Lorales, Minister for Foreign Investment.

The exchanges between the Governments of the Republic of Cuba and the Republic of Guyana were fruitful. Both Governments have committed to ensuring that the New Cooperation Programmes and "Projects and Offers" emanating from the discussions of His Excellency, President Bharrat Jagdeo and President Fidel Castro during President Jagdeo's visit to Cuba in February 2006 would be implemented in a timely manner.

The health sector is expected to receive Cuban experts to fill vacancies for an interventional cardiologist at the Georgetown Public Hospital Georgetown and one radiologist, urologist and anesthetist at the New Amsterdam Hospital. The other Ministries: Public Works and Communication; Culture Youth and Sports, Agriculture as well as the University of Guyana and the Guyana Sugar Corporation are also beneficiaries of the new cooperation programme.

The convening of the 23rd Session of the Guyana/Cuba Joint Commission has further strengthened the friendly relations that exist between the Governments of the Republic of Guyana and the Republic of Cuba. The 24th Session of the Guyana/Cuba Joint Commission is expected to be convened in Georgetown, Guyana in November 2007.

BRAZIL

Guyana/Brazil Commission on the International Road Transport Agreement

In accordance with the provision under the Guyana/Brazil International Road Transport Agreement that was signed between the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil on February 7, 2003 the Inaugural Session **Guyana/Brazil Commission on the International Road Transport Agreement** was convened on June 19, 2006 in Georgetown, Guyana. The Commission agreed to ensure periodical evaluation of the implementation of the Agreement and inclusion of amendments it considered should be included in the annexes.

With the establishment of this Commission, it is expected that the people of Brazil will benefit from trade access to the Atlantic and road linkages with Suriname and French Guyana, while Guyana benefits from trade and access to Brazil and other Latin American countries via the Brazil network of roads.

Complementary Agreement on the project “Training Program for Technicians and Farmers in Modern Techniques of Cashew Production and processing to boost the Development of Cashew Industry in Guyana:

In an effort to enhance the Cashew Industry in Guyana, there was exchange of knowledge and experience and training between experts from National Agriculture Research Institute of Guyana (NARI) and the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) for the implementation of the Complementary Agreement.

The Agreement aim at providing Guyanese experts with training relating to environmental planning, land choice and preparation, soil management, disease control, harvest and post harvest, commercialization and other areas for the implementation of the cashew industry project.

National Coordinating Committee (NCC)

During 2006, the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Sessions along with two Special Sessions of the NCC were convened to deliberate on the way forward with regards to facilitating cross border activities between Guyana and Brazil. Discussions were held on the bridge across the Takatu River as well as construction and maintenance of the Brazilian/Lethem road, the implementation of the Guyana-Brazil International Road Transport Agreement; the Extra-Ordinary Session of the Guyana/Brazil Commission on the International Road Transport Agreement; the Multi-Purpose Complex; and the formulation of a development plan for Region Nine and Ten.

MULTILATERAL COOPERATION

Intellectual Property Rights

In an effort to modernize Guyana's Intellectual Property (IP) legislation in keeping with Guyana's obligations under the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Agreement (TRIPS) at the World Trade Organization, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation has commenced the process of drafting new IP legislations. To date, a new legislation on Geographical Indications has been passed in Parliament and the accompanying regulations have been completed and are currently under consideration.

The draft Copyright Bill of 1999 has also been revised and is under consideration by Cabinet Sub-Committee on Trade.

Mr. Charles Fung-A-Fat, Deputy Chief Parliamentary Counsel of the Ministry of Legal Affairs participated in the Regional Ministerial Level Meeting on IP for Caribbean Countries which was held in Bridgetown, Barbados on November 2 and 3, 2006. Based on the Ministerial Declaration and in accordance with Guayna's IP needs, the areas of priority for the Government of Guyana in the ensuring work programme were communicated to WIPO in November 2006.

Commonwealth Secretariat

The January 2005 floods impacted negatively on the Guyanese populace, specifically on the coastal plains. In light of this, the Government of Guyana requested assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat for the provision of a Water Engineer and a Sanitary Engineer to assist the GOG in the post flood reconstruction phase.

This request was approved by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Terms of Reference for the Sanitary and Water Engineers was finalized. Consequently, the technical experts were identified and their CVs forwarded to the relevant agencies by Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation. The Guyana Water Incorporated and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development have both indicated their order of preference for these technical experts and word is being awaited from the Commonwealth Secretariat on their deputation.

In an effort to effect much needed legislative amendments to Guyana's Traffic Laws relating to ticketing, radar guns, tint and breathalyzers, Marriage Act, Immigration Act, Criminal Offences Act, and Citizenship, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation facilitated a request to the Commonwealth Secretariat made by the Ministry of Home Affairs for a Legal Draftsman to assist in this regard. Hence, the Ministry awaits a response from the Secretariat on this issue.

The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation has also sought the assistance of the Commonwealth Secretariat for the provision of a master tailor to conduct upgrading workshops for established tailors most of whom would have been in the profession for some years but have no formal qualifications in tailoring thus, raising the level of tailoring in Guyana.

SELA

With the prominent and active role of Caribbean members in the decision making process of SELA, the Permanent Secretariat for SELA, at the Latin American Council XXXI Regular Meeting, approved the decision to proceed to change the name of SELA to adopt the denomination "Latin American and Caribbean Economic System" without changing the acronym "SELA."

Organization Of American States

Training

The Organization of American States, in its effort to contribute to Guyana's development, made a number of offers to the Government of Guyana for training programs and workshops to facilitate the training of Guyanese officials. In this regard, Guyanese Officials were nominated for the following seminars:

1. Hemispheric Strategy to promote the participation Women in Port Affairs from April 25-27, 2006 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.
2. Regional Forum on Port Cruise Management, held in Barbados on September 25-29, 2006.
3. CICAD Group of Experts Meeting held August 21-25, 2006 in Argentina.
4. OAS XXXIII course on International Law which was scheduled for July 31-August 25, 2006 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
5. "Voice over IP-Regulatory, Technological and Market Considerations" which was held May 22 – June 30, 2006
6. "CITEL Fellowship for online Course-Centre of Excellence for the Americas" which were July 10 – August 11, 2006.
7. CICTE training program on Security Surveys and Assessments scheduled for Grenada 8-12 January 2007.

Projects

The Organisation of American States under its Multilateral Fund of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (FEMCIDI) 2005/2006 programme has awarded funding to two project proposals submitted by the CARICOM Secretariat and the University of Guyana. With regards to the CARICOM Secretariat, the project is "A Strategy for the Professional Preparation of Instructors/Teachers for the Delivery of Primary Level Enhanced Spanish Curriculum". The approved funding for this project is US\$52,376.

University of Guyana benefited from a “Building Capacity in the Education Sector for Sustainable Human Development” project which commenced on October 31, 2005. The approved funding is US\$73,400.

CARICOM has submitted the 2007 Work Plan and Progress Report for “A Strategy for the Professional Preparation of Instructors/Teachers for the Delivery of Primary Level Enhanced Spanish Curriculum” for the consideration of the OAS.

The OAS indicated that there is a temporary pause in the award of the 2006 graduate (PRA) and undergraduate scholarships (SPECAP). The Ministry of Foreign Trade & International Cooperation is to be notified of the new mechanisms and criterion relative to scholarships for 2007.

Voluntary Service Overseas

The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation facilitated the placement of a new batch of volunteers from the Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), during the month of August 2006. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation will continue to facilitate requests for new VSO volunteers and extensions of the terms of deputations of the current volunteers in the New Year.

International Volunteers Day

The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation in collaboration with Local and International Organizations engaged in coordination and facilitation of activities to mark the observance of International Volunteers Day 2006. Activities such as lecture sessions, parade, mobile clinics, NGO Forum Showcase and the Main Event were held over a two-week period during November 26 to December 10, 2006 in recognition of the significant contributions of volunteerism in Guyana.

Staffing

In 2006, five persons joined the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, while one Officer resigned and a Confidential Secretary assumed duties outside of the Ministry, in a similar capacity.