

**Report on Constituencies Meetings
January 23-February 7, 2006**

PART 1

**Summary of Recommendations
For the Ethnic Relations Commission
& Commissioners of the ERC**

ERC's role in the Elections

- The ERC should intervene to prevent campaigning of a racist nature.
- The ERC should have an education programme that targets first time voters.
- The ERC should look into the source of campaign funding
- The ERC should monitor bottom-house political meetings
- The ERC should ensure that the rules are observed on Polling Day.
- The ERC must examine the preparations for Elections and ensure GECOM is doing its work.
- The ERC must maintain a presence after the Elections.
- The ERC must work with the Police for a safe elections environment.
- The ERC should observe the Elections and should place surveillance cameras at the place of polls.

Public Education

- The ERC's Public Education Programme should address laws on ethnicity - what constitutes racial excitement
- The ERC should provide literature of its work to schools and other learning institutions
- The ERC should work to re-introduce singing of national songs in schools.
- The ERC should work with school's PTAs
- The ERC's public education programme should be expanded to include the use of banners, flyers etc.
- The ERC must work with women on educating them to resist instigations aimed at ethnic discrimination.

Improving ERC's image

- The ERC must have the courage to be honest – ‘call a spade a spade’.
- The ERC must ensure that politics does not infiltrate the Commission.
- The ERC must work to eliminate the stigma of it being seen as part of a political administration.
- The ERC must be more pro-active.
- The ERC should not only investigate but also give judgment.

ERC's General Work programme

- The ERC must act as a facilitator to have people's concerns addressed.
- The ERC must network with all relevant stakeholders in communities.
- The ERC must use every opportunity to work through religious institutions.
- The ERC should work to promote the type of gender balance that is found in the National Assembly in local government organs.
- The ERC must look at the possibility of promoting the cooperation of Police and religious organizations.
- The ERC should work with political parties and groups to get them to understand the cultures of others.

Investigative

- The ERC needs to address ethnic issues especially in Region Four.
- The ERC must examine how aid to communities and individuals is distributed.
- The ERC must look into intolerance and racial discrimination at places of employment.
- The ERC should investigate house lot and land distribution policies and practices.
- The ERC must examine the policies and practices at financial banking institutions.

For Political Parties and Politicians

General Recommendations

- There needs to be Constitutional reform to address the system of Proportional Representation
- Politicians and political parties need to move away from the apparent racist core they now present
- Political parties need to work together in instances of natural disasters.
- There needs to be a system that would make elected representatives more accountable.
- Politicians need to ensure there is a system to promote a more inclusive political culture.

For 2006 Elections

- Parties must campaign on truth.
- Parties should be given funds for scrutineers who will work from before Elections through to the final count.
- There needs to be a system to ensure the ruling party does not use State resources for campaigning.
- Parties need to conduct a voter's education programme educating voters not to vote on race but on issues.
- Parties need to make a joint statement calling for peace.
- Reference to '28 years' should stop.
- Parties need to adhere to a code of conduct.
- Politicians need to avoid racial remarks and statements that could excite violence or discrimination.
- The ruling party, the Government and opposition parties need to provide the religious community with a clear and plausible outline of what measures they intend to put into operation to ensure a peaceful environment for the next ten months.
- All presidential candidates should publicly affirm their supporters accept the results of the Polls as certified by GECOM.

For the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM)

- GECOM must provide sanitized Preliminary and Final Voters Lists – no padding, no duplication and the bio-metrics issue must be clarified.
- The issues of ‘diaspora’ ‘resident’ and ‘residency’ must be explained – how do they work.
- GECOM must engage in a voters education programme.
- GECOM must employ more persons to adequately do its work.
- GECOM must ensure a smooth elections process.
- Only GECOM should announce results and there should be no piece-meal announcement of results.
- All registrations should be done at Polling Stations where electors are expected to vote.
- All allegations relating to the elections must be dealt with immediately.

For the Police Force and Law Enforcement Agencies & their Agents

General Recommendations

- Opportunities for promotion within the Police Force and the Army must be examined.
- Persons making reports to the Police must not be victimized.
- Security should be spread to all communities.
- Emergency telephone numbers should be published
- The public should be informed of all security agencies.
- Police ranks need to act professionally.
- There needs to be an ethnic balance in the Police Force and Army. This would mean addressing the type of foods and time for worship.
- Police protection must be provided to all on elections day.
- Law enforcement agencies need to enforce the laws.
- The number of guns on the streets must be addressed.

Recommendations for 2006 elections

- Law enforcement agencies need to ensure that political campaigning events are not disrupted.
- The Police Force needs to ensure a safe elections climate – free from fear and intimidation.
- Community Policing Groups should play a vital role in the elections environment.

For Media Agencies and Operatives

- The media must be monitored
- Attention should be paid to the quality and content of television programmes
- The church should be given access to the media
- Information on the Labour Exchange should be published
- Talk-Show Hosts should promote peace and harmony
- Media houses that break the Code of Conduct should be penalised
- There should be fairer coverage of national issues
- Media operatives need to be more professional and responsible
- Television and radio jingles should be used to promote peace
- There should be programmes to educate youths on ethnic and other issues
- The Advisory Committee on Broadcasting needs to be more proactive
- Opinions should be left out of the news.

General Recommendations

- Sports should be used to promote togetherness.
- There is need for more Marriage Officers in Region Two
- Communities should be empowered to stop contractors of civil works who are not doing a good job.
- There should be half-way houses for children and delinquent youths.
- Youth Development Programmes should be planned especially for East Coast of Demerara youths.
- Professional Social Workers should be recognized.
- Prefixes such as 'Indo' and 'Afro' should not be used to describe Guyanese.
- Young people should be taught parenting skills.
- There is need for a Youth Policy.

PART 2

Recommendations by Constituency

Christian Constituency

Region Six (January 30th 2006)

1. Confrontational clashes should be avoided also statements that will incite racial disturbances.
2. GECOM should maintain accuracy in the preliminary and final voters lists.
3. There should be professionalism among security forces.
4. Media houses should be more balanced in their reporting.
5. There should be sensitization seminars as to the effects of racial issues on the nation.
6. A code of conduct for political parties should be re-enforced.
7. The ERC must maintain its integrity as a separate entity.
8. The ERC must work to foster a better relationship among the political parties that are contesting the elections.
9. The ERC must provide guidance where necessary.
10. Political parties should be asked to focus on policies for development.
11. There should be a structure that makes the elected representatives more accountable to the people.
12. The sense of alienation from the political process that is felt by the people should be eliminated.
13. There should be a change in the political culture that prevails to one that is more inclusive.
14. The media, especially television should be used to educate the youths especially to these issues.
15. Education on these issues should start in the formative years in the school system.
16. The education process on ethnic and religious issues should be year round and not at elections time only.
17. Advocacy should be made in the churches for peace with justice and love.
18. The electorate should be educated to vote along the lines of policy and not race. They should be educated to resist race based politics.
19. Politicians and others must be discouraged from using language that incite.
20. Persons must be open-minded and not judgmental.
21. Religious persons must stand up for others regardless of their ethnicity and in spite of negative consequences.
22. The religious community must sensitise people to stand up for truth.
23. The religious community must reject people who try to sow seeds of division and refer such cases to the ERC.
24. The ERC should be used as a channel to give voice to the concerns of the 'grassroot'.
25. The Church should make its voice heard when issues of morality are at stake.

26. There should be unity among the churches in addressing matters.
27. The ERC must be a reflection of the voice of the people.
28. The ERC must act as a facilitator for the people.
29. ERC members must preserve the integrity of the ERC and of the Commission.

Region Five (January 31st 2006)

30. Moral education should be re-introduced in schools.
31. National songs/patriotism should be taught in schools.
32. Respect for the other person's values should be taught.
33. Moral values should begin in the home.
34. Children should be taught to socialize.
35. 'Indo' and 'Afro' and other prefixes before 'Guyanese' should stop.
36. The ERC should try to erase from persons minds, the thought of seeing themselves as 'Afro' or 'Indo' Guyanese.
37. There should be a formal training session for Police ranks before elections teaching them how to deal with the electorate.
38. Adults should desist from using youths to create havoc in the society.
39. Persons should not be intimidated during the elections period.
40. Persons should be encouraged to use legal systems before going to the extreme.
41. The Media should behave responsibly.
42. Posters and pictures of Presidential candidates should not be placed on fences or public places.

Region Two (February 1st, 2006)

43. Christians need more representation at the highest level.
44. Christian groups need togetherness. Their leaders need to work together.
45. Politicians often make statements that affect the unity of the church. Christian leaders need to stand by their Christian position.
46. There should be prayers during elections and in disasters.
47. There should be a special commission to represent small congregations.
48. Churches should have equal access to land.
49. Politicians use the church to spread their message. There should be no campaigning in the church.
50. Political affiliation should not be used for membership/leadership in congregations.
51. The pastoral role of the church should include ministering to politicians.

Regions Three, Four & Bartica (February 2nd, 2006)

52. Politicians should not use inflammatory or racial statements.
53. GECOM should ensure names of all eligible registrants are on the official voters list in the areas where they live.
54. All registrations should be done at the polling stations where electors are expected to vote.

55. In the interest of peace and security all Presidential candidates should publicly affirm their supporters accept the will of the people as it is certified by GECOM.
56. Prevent language that seeks to incite conflict by Politicians, commentators etc.
57. Educate the masses on how to recognize and respond to inflammatory language.
58. Ensure that the process for elections is transparent.
59. There should be forum for improving race relations and improving understanding of others culture and history.
60. There should be respect for each other's religions without necessarily agreeing with it.
61. The universality of a common humanity should be taught in homes, schools and churches.
62. There should be stiffer penalties for breaching elections laws.
63. All allegations elections wise should be dealt with adequately.
64. The laws need to be flexible for any individual who attains office but yet right when it comes to compliance with the rules.
65. There should be reconciliation between and among the leaders in the churches so that they can all speak in a single voice.
66. There should be a request for the ruling party, the opposition and the Government to provide the Christian community with a clear and plausible outline as to what measures they intend to put into operation to ensure a peaceful environment over the next 10 months.
67. There should be teams from the religious community to scrutinize and monitor the elections proceedings.
68. The ERC should issue a monthly or quarterly magazine showing the progress it has made during the period with contributions from its members.
69. The ERC should extend its involvement into schools and youth groups and have representation in all the district councils.
70. The ERC should establish net works with all stakeholders in as many communities as possible.
71. The ERC should try to erase the stigma of being seen as part of a political administration. This can be done by having a more transparent public relations.
72. The ERC should try to avoid any sign or give a sense of discrimination in its activities.
73. The ERC should meet church groups or leaders individually as early as possible.
74. The ERC should involve local religious observers for the elections and these observers should be given the same recognition as the overseas observers.
75. The ERC should hold communities/ political rallies prior to election with the aim of helping to keep the peace.
76. The ERC should be granted observer status for the Elections.
77. The ERC should look at the possibility of having religious teams work with the police in communities and at the stations.
78. The ERC should place surveillance cameras at the place of polls.
79. The ERC should work with all religious groups to sensitise their congregation on how to cope with election crisis.

80. GECOM should ensure there is a clean voters list.
81. Political leaders need to assure their people.
82. There must be confidence in the electoral process.
83. Timings on the day of elections must be observed.
84. Voters lists must be placed at public places – shops etc.
85. Political campaigning must be based on issues and not on personal character.
86. Police protection should be provided on election day.
87. Religious leaders need to play an integral part in creating a peaceful elections environment.
88. Religious leaders should encourage people to go out and vote but after voting remain at home. Call it a family day.
89. The ERC should work with schools and youth groups to deal with racism.
90. This type of meeting should be continuous not only at elections.
91. ERC should embark on a campaign of peace and harmony.
92. The media should provide balanced reporting.
93. Political parties should be encouraged to discuss issues and not make false promises.

Linden (February 7th, 2006)

94. People should be treated with respect.
95. GECOM should educate the masses about what they should do in order to be eligible to vote on elections day.. This should be published daily utilizing all means of communications available.
96. GECOM should employ more persons.
97. Security should be spread to all communities.
98. Emergency telephone numbers should be published.
99. The public should be informed of all the security agencies.
100. Community policing groups should play a vital role.
101. GECOM need to ensure that their electoral process is smooth. They must be accountable and produce a transparent voters list.
102. Government should emphasize and practice integrity.
103. A stop should be put to the bringing up of past events eg. '28 years ago'.
104. NGOs are involved in projects across the country. They should be able to withhold funds from communities which do not follow the rules that are laid down.
105. The behaviour of political parties and their servants should be monitored and where necessary drastic action should be taken.
106. Issues and not race should be the underlying motives for political parties.
107. The ERC should operate like a 'watch dog' committee and make its presence felt in every community.
108. Money should be made available to the ERC so that they can encourage racial harmony with banners, flyers, etc.
109. The ERC should be able to penalize and punish people who break the code of conduct (media and politicians).
110. There should be fairer coverage of national issues eg. The national debate. In Linden, people only see the Government's side of the budget. They do not see the debate because the debate has two sides.

111. Christian leaders should educate people that in the eyes of God all have one blood. All have been created equally.
112. There should be workshops and seminars to educate the people and these should take place in all communities where the inhabitants are encouraged to participate.
113. People should be educated on equality.
114. The Police must be firm, polite and sensitive in dealing with the Electorate.
115. The media should operate in a professional way when giving their reports. They must act responsibly and in the best interest of the nation. If not they should be censored.
116. Television and radio jingles should be used to promote peace.
117. Politicians should avoid racial remarks and focus on the Party's plans or proposals to move the nation forward.
118. The ERC should function as an independent body.
119. The ERC should establish committees in each region for the purpose of information and feed-back.
120. The ERC should do publications of their work as well as publications promoting peace.
121. All political parties should desist from any racial slurs.

Hindu Constituency

Region Five (January 31st 2006)

1. The ERC should look into the practice of religious conversion. It is breaking up families.
2. School children should be encouraged to interact more.
3. Respect for religions and culture should be practiced by all
4. Persons should be encouraged to share their culture.

Region Two (February 1st, 2006)

5. Religious leaders must be more proactive in stopping the politicians stirring up trouble in their community.
6. There is need to get prayers back into the schools – of the three main religions.
7. There is need for the preaching of moral values in the schools.
8. The opportunities for promotion within the Army and Police Force should be looked at.
9. The ERC should visit all learning institutions and provide them with literature for promoting peace.
10. There must be respect for each other's religion.
11. Sport should be used to promote togetherness.
12. Religious leaders should avoid inflammatory statements and rhetoric in their preaching.
13. Attention should be paid to the quality of television programmes

Regions Three, Four & Bartica (February 2nd, 2006)

14. There needs to be an ethnic balance in the security forces and this would require the types of food to be addressed as well as allowance being made for time to worship.
15. Political 'back-biting' must stop.
16. Politicians must be made to fulfill promises.
17. Politicians need to know what to say and how to say it as everything they say impacts on people's lives.
18. Books attacking Hindus as 'hate mongers' must be fully addressed.
19. The Advisory Committee on Broadcasting must be more proactive.
20. There should be a mixing of the races in the housing schemes.
21. Racism is being advocated in the schools. This must stop.
22. There is need to reach out to the 'others' to initiate dialogue. This could help promote peace.
23. For major events of the security sector, the major part is conducted according to the Christian religion. This should be addressed.
24. History has taught Indians and Africans to hate each other this must stop.
25. There is a perception that Indians support a particular political party and this causes them to be victims of violence. Education and sensitization seminars should target this.
26. Hindus need to understand the needs of others.

27. ERC must be more proactive.
28. The security forces need to be professional. There should be training sessions for them in this regard.
29. Indians who mix with Africans are seen as 'sell outs'. This must not be.
30. There is division within the Hindu community which must be overcome.
31. Hindu leaders are not fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.
32. The ERC should not only investigate issues but should have a committee to pronounce and give judgment.
33. The ERC needs locations in the communities or Regions.
34. Community leaders should be empowered by the ERC to look into ethnic issues.
35. More young people should be encouraged to get involved in the ERC's work.
36. The ERC should have a wider education programme.
37. Political parties should issue a joint statement calling for peace.
38. Talk-show hosts should be sensitized on the need to talk about peace and the importance of accurate reporting.
39. There should be a peace pledge for the nation.
40. Opinions should be left out of the news.
41. The ERC should have some say in the slogans used by political parties.
42. The ERC should maintain a presence after the elections and keep working.
43. There should be inter-faith services before, during and after the elections to promote unity and peace.
44. Only GECOM should announce results and there should be no piece-meal announcements.
45. Media houses must ensure balanced reporting especially NCN.
46. Organizations need to practice tolerance.
47. Religious tolerance should be encouraged.
48. Parties should discuss issues and not make false promises.
49. More consistent services should be offered at public service agencies.
50. Inter-organisation activities should be promoted. This can help foster peace.
51. The ERC should promote a peace identification- pledge or symbol.
52. The ACB must be more proactive and should look at the music that is being played on the airways.

Muslim Constituency

Region Six (January 30th, 2006)

1. Religious leaders need to play a more vital role in fostering harmony and peace
2. Persons should respect the views of others.
3. There should be religious tolerance
4. Religion should be taught in schools.
5. There is need for society to have higher moral values.
6. Music and television programmes contribute to the decline in moral behaviour. These should be addressed.

Region Two (February 1st, 2006)

1. The Elections ground is biased in favour of the ruling party. They have access to utilize State resources for campaigning. There should be some measure to prevent this from happening.
2. Measures should be put in place to prevent one party from disrupting another campaigning activity.
3. Bottom-house meetings should be carefully monitored to ensure racial excitement is not taking place.
4. The ERC should look at employment practices.
5. Religious leaders should look to implement their religious teachings in all their activities

Regions Three, Four & Bartica (February 2nd, 2006)

7. Commissioners need to interact with Constituencies more to get ideas to what is happening.
8. The ERC should use the television more often to sensitise the public on its work programme.
9. Circulation should be sent to Masjids, Mandirs and Churches on the work of the ERC.
10. Muslims and members of other constituencies should be used as foot-soldiers to help the ERC to achieve its goals.
11. The ERC should make known its source of funding to dispel perception that it is a political organisation.
12. ERC should publicize cases as a deterrent to others not to discriminate.
13. ERC should promote justice and good governance by bringing the claims of the marginalised groups to the front number.
14. ERC should work harder to bridge the racial divide.
15. ERC should lobby Parliament to have more enforcement powers.
16. Volunteers from masjids, temples and churches should be used for ensuring we have a non-violent election.
17. Voters list used should be verified to eradicate distrust.
18. ERC should try and get GECOM and the Political Parties to agree on a voters list.

19. Violence is more pronounced during elections time, therefore, there should be more dialogue with political parties and civil society groups to ensure a non-violent election.
20. There should be a day for prayers before this elections to put the country in a peaceful mode.
21. The ERC work is largely promotional. The ERC should therefore prioritize its functions in time of need. Priorities ought to be different at elections time.
22. Parliamentary systems should be changed to Bicameral to give greater voice to those on the ground. (RDC, NDC etc.)

Women's group (January 23rd, 2006)

1. The ERC must look to ensure strict rules are observed on Polling Day. The 100 yards rule must be observed.
2. The ERC should meet and work with the hierarchy of the Police Force to ensure a safe elections climate.
3. There should be half-way houses for children and delinquent youths.
4. The ERC should examine issues related to employment – age and experience barriers.
5. The ERC should look at the ethnic composition at Government Ministries.
6. The ERC should look at policies of private schools-Muslims or Hindu schools.
7. The ERC should work to re-introduce the singing of national songs in schools.
8. The ERC should promote the same type of gender balance found in Parliament at the levels of the NDC and RDC.
9. Educate women on how to resist instigation to racial or ethnic discrimination.
10. The Code of Conduct for political parties must be advertised more.
11. Some political parties promote violence by what they say. The ERC should work to put a stop to this.
12. Women are more burdened by national problems. The ERC should offer counseling.
13. There should be ERC workshops on a larger scale.
14. The film 'The Little Red Dot' should be shown on national television.
15. Youth development programmes should be planned especially for the East Coast of Demerara.
16. The ERC must address ethnic issues especially in Region Four.
17. The ERC should work with in all levels of schools.
18. The ERC should work with PTA bodies.
19. Professional social workers should be recognized.
20. The recommendations out of this workshop must be utilized as far as possible.
21. Religious groups must actively promote peace.
22. Prefixes such as 'Indo' or 'Afro' should not be used in front of 'Guyanese'.
23. Surveys should be conducted to find out what persons do not like about other ethnic groups.
24. Young persons especially need to be taught parenting skills.
25. Persons making reports to the Police should not be victimized.
26. The ERC should scrutinize political advertisements.

27. Something should be done about the number of guns on the streets.
28. On Polling Day, persons must feel free to vote without intimidation by other members of the public.
29. The ERC must work to ensure that there is no discrimination at the place of employment, in the awarding of contracts, scholarships, land distribution.
30. ERC must work with political parties for the parties to promote ethnic harmony during their campaigning.
31. Parties must refrain from saying bad things about the other party.
32. On polling day, persons should be allowed to vote and go home.
33. There is need to examine the process at banking institutions.
34. Campaigning in Churches should be prohibited.
35. The ERC should work to ensure that the voter's list is sanitized

Youth Constituency (January 27th, 2006)

1. The ERC should work to ensure that teachers training include ways of dealing with ethnic discrimination.
2. The ERC should encourage the mixing of the races in the schools.
3. The ERC should work to prevent discrimination against youths trying to obtain jobs. The issue of experience should be addressed.
4. House lots should be given to couples, not only to persons with children. ERC should look at the practice at the Ministry of Housing. The ERC should look to see if there is any political interference in terms of who gets a house lot.
5. The ERC should monitor all levels of political meetings especially those at the bottom-house. It is reported that many racial statements are made at these meetings.
6. The ERC should work to ensure that all vacancies especially those in the public service are advertised.
7. Information on the Labour Exchange should be publicized.
8. The ERC should examine how aid is distributed to ensure political affiliation has no influence in the process.
9. The ERC should advertise more and increase its public education and awareness programme. There should be advertisements showing what happened during the last elections – the violence, with calls not to have it repeated.
10. Residents in all communities need to be educated on how to vote. Vote based on issues not on race.
11. There is need to change the nature of governance.
12. The ERC should look at the root cause of violence – the perpetrators concerns as well as those of the victim.
13. The ERC needs to appear as transparent if it is to make an impact.
14. Talk-Show hosts should be encouraged to promote peace and harmony.
15. Stakeholders need to come up with a 'Youth Policy'.
16. There should be a national statement that violence would not make a change for the better, only the polls.
17. There is need for facilities for youths especially in Sophia and other under developed areas.

Labour Movement (February 6th, 2006)

1. If there is to be lasting peace, political leaders, religious leaders, unionists, the private business sector – all must work together.
2. There must be proper investigation of crime by the State.
3. The ERC is not fulfilling its mandate – its expressions are seen as prejudicial –If the Government is providing resources such as vehicles to Commissioners, how can they appear not to be ‘owned’ by the Government.
4. People have been losing respect for the ERC. Commissioners are competent but have they have locked themselves in a particular path. The ERC must be seen as credible.
5. The ERC must come up with recommendations to mold the nation.
6. The ERC must go beyond what it is doing. It must do things to eliminate violence.
7. The ERC must address factors of poverty and the sharing of national wealth.
8. The ERC must look a the distribution of house-lots. The TUC had identified a plot of land, after spending money the land was not released (8th March 2000)
9. The ERC must be fair in addressing complaints . A former complainant was subsequently employed by the ERC. This was seen as a collaboration and does not lend to a good image of the ERC.
10. The ERC must look at how vacancies are being filled.
11. If the ERC should address the question of Elections, it will become more discredited. The ERC should work in communities and use its strength to ensure the country is better.
12. The ERC should advise politicians to clamp down on rhetoric. People don’t want to hear of the past. They want to see the moving away from the old politics of ‘cussin out’
13. Letters in the newspapers need to be addressed. The print media ought not to have people distorting the past. The ERC must see to this.
14. The prefixes of ‘Indo’ and ‘Afro’ should not be used before ‘Guyanese’ by the print media.
15. The Determination of Employment and Severance Pay Act does not deal with persons qualifying themselves and leaving the company for better jobs. The ERC should look into this.
16. The ERC should work to eliminate stereotyping.
17. On Labour Day, there is seen a withdrawing of certain groups from the Labour Day activity and they benefit from the address by the Head of State. On Labour Day there should be one rally.
18. The issue of drugs need to be addressed .
19. Youths do not have a good perception of the ERC. It is seen as ‘Edghill ERC’
20. The ERC is looking at things in a superficial manner – the subliminal message must be understood.
21. Persons must stand up and tell political leaders they are wrong if they are so.
22. The perception of ethnic discrimination may be based on social issues. The ERC must put these issues into the correct perspective.
23. The ERC needs to look at the small bottom-house meetings.
24. Commissioners need to be present. All the Commissioners were never seen at any one meeting.

25. Labeling of union actions as 'political' is not right. The Government should not engage in this type of behaviour

Private Business Sector (February 2nd, 2006)

1. Cultural groups should be involved as a constituency group.
2. The ERC should intervene to prevent political campaigning of a racist character.
3. The ERC needs some 'muscle'.
4. The ERC's public education programme should address laws on ethnicity.
5. There should be Constitutional reform to address the system of Proportional Representation.
6. Political parties have a racist core. It is time Guyana move away from this.
7. The ERC should look at the source of financing for political campaigning.
8. There is need for persons and groups to understand the culture of 'others' and to build trust. If the ERC could work with the two main races to get them to understand the culture of the other, this could help build trust.
9. The ERC must have the courage to call a spade a spade'.
10. Once campaigning starts people divide into political camps and by default into racial camps. This is not good for Guyana and causes division. ERC should have a public education programme to address this.
11. There should be public education on what constitutes racial excitement.
12. The ERC must address the preparation for elections. Ensure GECOM is doing its job and that donor agencies money are properly spent.
13. There is need for GECOM to produce a comprehensive, clean, sanitized list. No duplication or padding and the biometrics issue must be clarified.
14. The media must be monitored.
15. The ERC must ensure that politics does not infiltrate the Commission.
16. There must have regular interaction with the media to spread the message of the ERC.
17. The ERC may need to use someone to set an example – shaming.
18. The ERC should target youths, especially those voting for the first time, that voting should not be about race but about issues.
19. The ERC should identify causes of violence then go into a process of mediation. This could be done in partnerships with groups seeking the same goal.
20. Political parties need to campaign on truth.
21. Political parties need to work together in cases of natural disasters.
22. Political parties need to make mature statements.
23. Political parties should be given funds for scrutineers who will work from before the elections until the final count.
24. GECOM needs to clarify the issues of the 'diaspora'- 'residents' and 'residency' how does it work.

PART 3

Constituency Meetings Evaluation

The meetings with the constituent groups of the Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC) were held from January 23rd through to February 7th, 2006.

A total of eight meetings were held.

Women	- January 23 rd , 2006
Youth	- January 27 th
Private Sector	- February 2 nd
Labour Movement	- February 7 th
Christians, Hindus & Muslims Reg. # 6	- January 30 th
Christians, Hindus & Muslims Reg. # 5	- January 31 st
Christians, Hindus & Muslims Reg. # 3 – 4 and Bartica	- February 2 nd
Christians, Hindus & Muslims Reg # 2	- February 1 st
Christians – Linden	- February 7 th

A total 325 persons attended the meetings.

Questionnaires were distributed to all persons attending the meetings.

The questionnaire looked at:

- **The Secretariat's preparation for the meetings** –
(3) Were you given adequate notice to prepare for the meeting?
- **The conduct of the meeting** –
(1) Did you find the meeting useful?
(2) Did the meeting allow sufficient time for sharing of views?
- **Suggestions for improvement** –
(5) What would you suggest be done to improve the next meeting?
- **ERC's Public Education** -
(6) Do you now have a better understanding of the mandate of the ERC?

Out of the 325 questionnaires distributed 179 were completed and returned or 55.1%.

DATA COLLECTED

- The Secretariat's preparation for the meetings –

(3) Were you given adequate notice to prepare for the meeting?

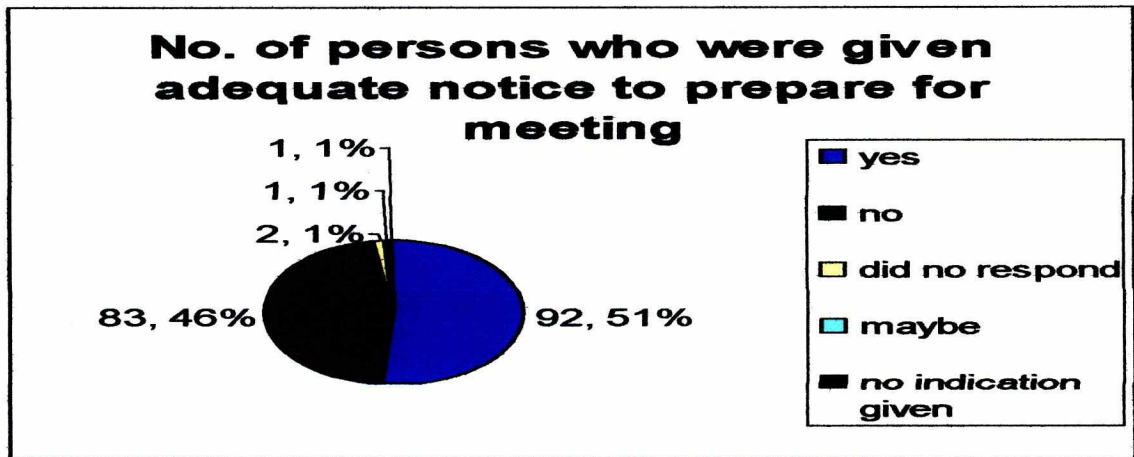
92 said yes

83 said no

2 did not respond to the question

1 said maybe

1 said "two day" giving no indication of whether there was adequate time or not



- The conduct of the meeting –

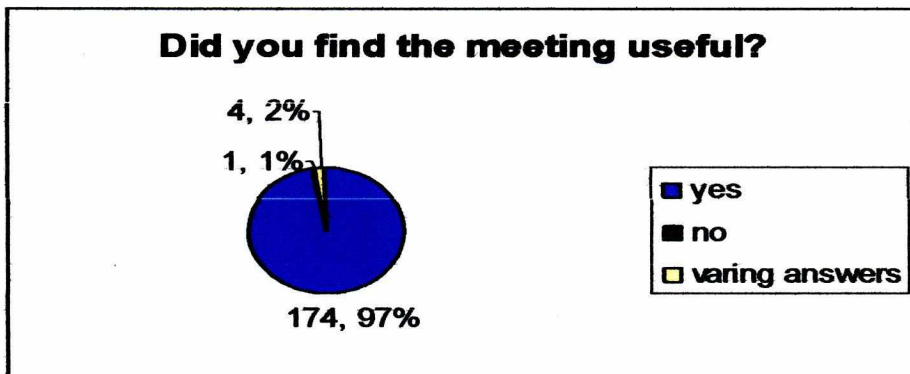
(2) *Did the meeting allow sufficient time for sharing of views?*

In relation to the first question

174 said yes

1 said no

4 gave varying answers – 'to a point' 'in some aspect' 'only when used in an enabling way' 'issues outside of youths'



In relation to the

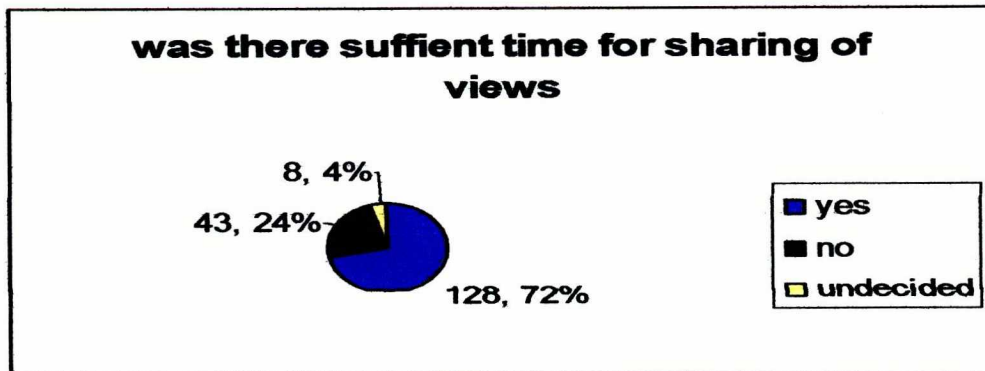
next question: *Did the meeting allow for sufficient time for sharing of views?*

128 said yes

43 said no

8 were undecided

Words like 'partially' 'almost' 'came late' were used by those undecided.



• **Suggestions for improvement** –

(5) *What would you suggest be done to improve the next meeting?*

Suggestions included:

- Longer preparation time
- Field ideas for dialogue in advance
- Go to other Regions
- More guided discussions
- Give framework for discussions
- Invite the Police
- Advertise the meetings
- Wider participation should be encouraged
- Circulate agenda before meeting
- Change venue

• **ERC's Public Education** -

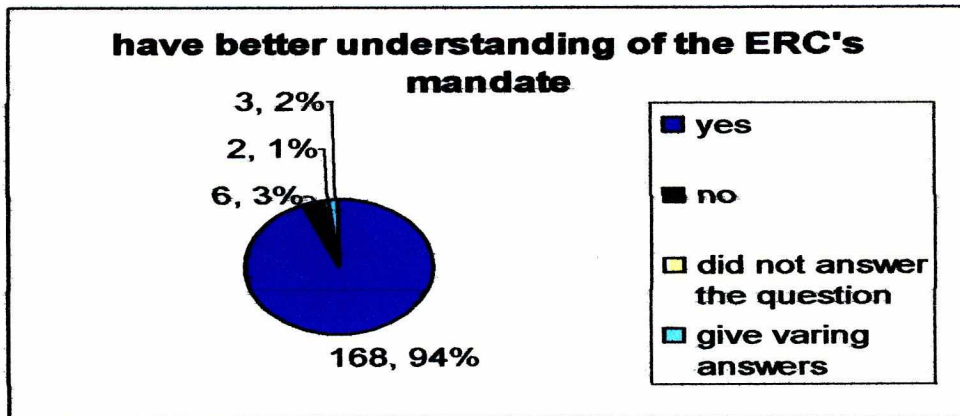
(6) *Do you now have a better understanding of the mandate of the ERC*

168 said yes

6 said no

2 did not answer this question

3 gave varying answers – 'vaguely' 'partially' 'a little'



ANALYSIS

Preparation

Data collected suggests the need to improve the preparation aspect of meetings. However, it must be noted that very often although the notice to attend meetings are sent out days in advance, it is not dealt with promptly by the recipient.

It is advisable that –

- The envelopes with notices be marked 'URGENT' in future.
- Calls should also be made to ensure the notices are received.
- Follow-up calls are usually made to confirm participation. However, these should be made at least three days before the meeting.

Conduct

Information gathered from the respondents suggest that the meetings were well conducted. 75% said they were given sufficient time to share their views and 97% said they found it useful.

Improvement

Some of the suggestions put forward by respondents seem fair and should be incorporated in the planning and implementations stages of future meetings.

Public education

The meetings were very helpful in educating persons about the mandate of the ERC. 94% responded that they now have a better understanding of the ERC.

PART 4

FEEDBACK ON ERC SKIT

The skit "Guyana Boat" was shown at the meetings and participants were asked to write their comments on the Questionnaire.

Few participants did so.

The feedback from those who did, suggests that the skit could be useful in spreading the message of the ERC.

These are the suggestions shared:

- The same boat used at the beginning should be used at the end. To change it would suggest that we are trying to change Guyana.
- Good message.
- Remove the words 'coolie' and 'black man'. Use instead 'you kind of people' or 'you'll'
- Commendable initiative. Hats off to the group.
- The advertisement should be publicized.
- It is good for a start.
- Good, but needs to slow down so that the words can be clearly heard.
- Good for Guyana.
- The voices are not clear. The scenes are confusing. The message does not come across clearly. All the races not seen. Need to use a female. Should be 30 or 45 seconds not 60.
- Use a national symbol in the background.
- Loved the ad.
- Short but good.
- Good but all six races should have been included.
- Excellent ad.
- Perfect example of how politicians behave.
- Good thing to have on television.

CONSTITUENCY MEETINGS - PARTICIPATION

CONSTITUENCY	DATE /06	VENUE	# OF PARTICIPANTS
Women	January 23 rd	Umana Yana	62
Youth	January 27 th	Umana Yana	28
Private Sector	February 2 nd	Umana Yana	17
Labour Movement	February 6 th	Umana Yana	15
Christians Reg. # 6	January 30 th	GTU Hall – New Amsterdam	16
Hindus Reg # 6	January 30 th	GTU Hall – New Amsterdam	2
Muslims Reg. # 6	January 30 th	GTU Hall – New Amsterdam	3
Christians Reg. # 5	January 31 st	Regional Boardroom – Fort Wellington	5
Hindus Reg. #5	January 31 st	Regional Boardroom – Fort Wellington	6
Muslims Reg #5	January 31 st	Regional Boardroom – Fort Wellington	Nil
Christians Reg. # 3 – 4 and Bartica	February 2 nd	Umana Yana	67
Hindus Reg # 3 – 4 and Bartica	February 2 nd	Savannah Suite – Le Meridien, Pegasus	29
Muslims Reg # 3 – 4 and Bartica	February 2 nd	Essequibo Room – Le Meridien, Pegasus	24
Christians Reg # 2	February 1 st	Regional Boardroom – Anna Regina	17
Hindus Reg # 2	February 1 st	Regional Boardroom – Anna Regina	4
Muslims Reg # 2	February 1 st	Regional Boardroom – Anna Regina	4
Christians – Linden	February 7 th	Barrows Lounge	19
		TOTAL	325



**66 Peter Rose and Anira Streets, Queenstown
Georgetown, GUYANA
Tel: 231-6265, 231-6479, 231-6281, 231-6473, Tel/Fax: 231-6246
Email:ceo@ethnicrelations.org.gy**

Questionnaire

Did you find the meeting useful?

.....

Did the meeting allow sufficient time for sharing of views?

.....

Were you given adequate notice to prepare for the meeting?

.....

Would you like to see the discussion continue?

.....

What would you suggest be done to improve the next meeting?

.....

Do you now have a better understanding of the mandate of the ERC?

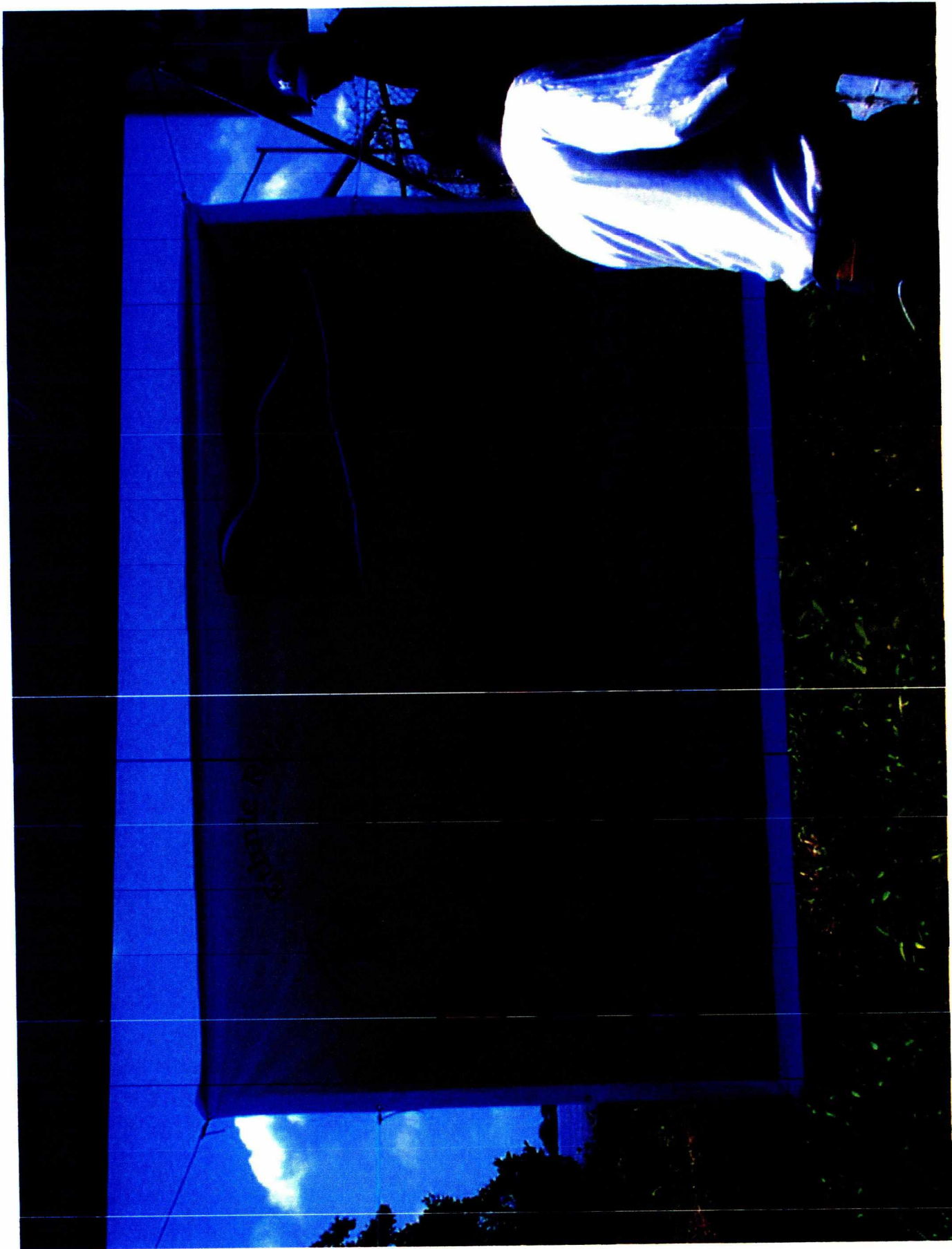
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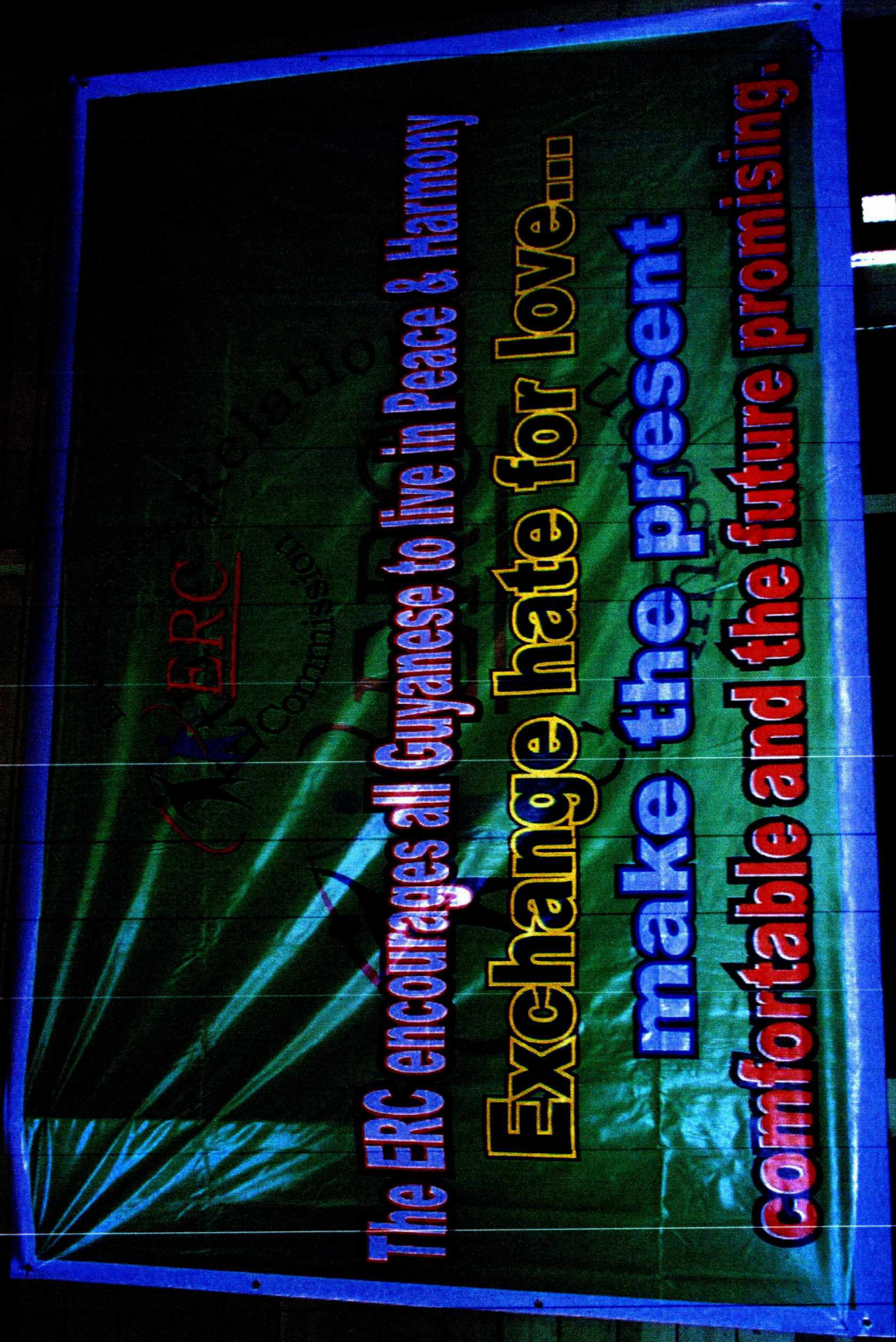
ANNEX B

The EPC encourages all Guyanese to live in Peace & Harmony

make the present







The ERC encourages all Guyanese to live in Peace & Harmony

Exchange hate for love...

make the present

comfortable and the future promising.

ANNEX C

Soundings from the Women's Conversation National Cultural Centre August 8, 2006

The women who participated in the Women's Conversation on August 8, 2006 at the National Cultural Centre recognize that women are the bedrock of society and must take an active part in the development of the country.

Personal Power

We realize the need for a better understanding of the factors which shape us as women and which currently affect our functioning in society. We recognize that our point of view is absent from major discussions at the national level. We are aware that issues such as domestic violence and child protection are considered women's concerns, when, in fact, they are everyone's concerns. We know that we are often unsupportive of each other as women. We are involved in the reproduction of the anti-woman culture. We acknowledge that we need to take responsibility for equipping ourselves to play a leading role to bring about change and development.

- We shall pursue education for development as individuals as well as a collective of women.
- We shall engage in ongoing dialogue and form or strengthen networks of women and women's organizations in and across communities to support women's development.
- We shall work to improve life within our families, including the nature of communication between and among women, men and children.
- We are prepared to work alongside men to increase understanding of the complementary roles of women and men.
- We shall hold women in leadership positions of women's groups accountable with respect to our goals and their responsibilities.

Violence

Women recognize that violence occurs in the home, in institutions and in the society at large. We know that violence takes many forms, with women and children being the most vulnerable. We acknowledge that women are ourselves perpetrators, particularly with respect to child abuse. We realize that the institutions that are responsible for addressing the safety and security of women and people in general are not working effectively.

- We want the Domestic Violence Act revised for greater effectiveness, particularly as it applies to the hinterland.
- We want the institutions such as the Magistracy, the Guyana Police Force and schools to improve the system to deal sensitively with reports and cases of violence in all its forms, and to provide ongoing training for their members.
- We want increased police patrols which are fully equipped and staffed in communities.

- We want a well-equipped and staffed Family Court established expeditiously.
- We want increased services for victims of violence in the communities, such as counselling, hotlines and safe places.
- We want the increasing psychological stress leading to suicidal behaviour of young people acknowledged and support services provided.
- We want a Sexual Offenders Register to be established and made public
- We want a new Sexual Offences Act enacted as a matter of urgency.
- We want an agency to address child protection comprehensively.

Race and Ethnicity

Women consider silence as a sign of condoning racial disharmony. We realize that we come to new situations with prejudices which are informed by often selective anecdotes, experience and biases of others. We acknowledge that we have a pivotal role to play in promoting racial harmony in Guyana. We are aware that racial tensions escalate at the time of elections.

- We call on women to break the silence surrounding racial conflict by speaking out.
- We call on women to see ourselves as having a critical role in instilling racial tolerance, respect for diversity and patriotism in children.
- We call for the organization of a forum where people can speak openly about race, their pain, hurt, emotions and history in order to move forward.

Decision-Making

Women are neglected despite their significant role in carrying the political campaigns. Women are voting on the basis of race and not on issues affecting women. Women and their concerns have been ignored by the major political parties. Women in Parliament and other leadership positions have failed to address issues of concern to women, despite the support given many to accede to those positions. Women have been shown blatant disrespect by elected leaders who practice nepotism, poor judgment and self-interest. Recent events show a complete lack of accountability by the government to the public, women and children. Personal and moral behaviour of ministers and senior officers are found wanting.

- We want each political party to state how it will address the concerns prioritised by women.
- We want the political parties to justify and account for their track record while in Parliament.
- We want the political parties to state what they understand to be the issues prioritized by women, indicate what they will do to address them and when.
- We want women and men in Parliament to understand that women have the power to put them there and take them out.
- We want each woman on the list of candidates to provide a platform on issues of interest to women on which they could be held accountable.

- We want a Code of Conduct for ministers of government which will be monitored by a network of women and women's organisations.

Education and Training

Women recognize the need for us to receive relevant education and training to improve our chance of self-sufficiency.

- We want education and training opportunities to be provided for women in the hinterland.
- We want information on skills training to be widely available to women.
- We want an information bank available to women; this should include material on legal affairs and women's rights. The WAB should disseminate information on training to communities and organisations.
- We want day care centres to afford women the space to participate in education and training activities.
- We want more adult education courses in all the regions.
- We want the provision of educational TV and taped programmes for women in all regions; with taped programmes, women can meet in groups in their own time.

Poverty

Women have a desire to be gainfully employed. Many lack the qualification and skills needed for the limited opportunities which are available. Many employed women find that their wages and salaries are insufficient for sustaining their livelihoods. Women have primary responsibility for managing our households, often including members with disabilities, the elderly and children.

- We want an increase in wages and salaries, including the provision of at least minimum wage for domestic workers.
- We want adequate social assistance for persons with disabilities and the elderly.
- We want a reduction in taxes to enable a decent take home package.
- We want the land distribution system to be equitable and transparent.
- We want financial and social support for vulnerable single mothers and caregivers.
- We want at least affordable, but preferably free, daycare centres established to enable women's participation in the labour force.

Health

Women are largely responsible for caring for others in our network, often ignoring our own health status until a crisis occurs. We encounter a pervasive health culture which is hostile to sharing information with patients. Women in the hinterland are particularly vulnerable due to the inequitable distribution of health services and personnel.

- We want basic medication and services at all health centres.
- We want access to cancer diagnosis and care provided expeditiously, with specific measures implemented for women in the hinterland.

ANNEX D

Statement of the MSF National Religious Leaders Conversation

09/08/06

Initial Presentations & Discussion

The community of religious leaders in Guyana met today at the National Cultural Centre under the auspices of the Ethnic Relations Commission to explore ways in which the religious community could support the views of the people as expressed through the Multi-Stakeholder Forum (MSF) process. A total of 153 leaders, representing the Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Baha'i, Rastafarian and African religions, discussed the issues and are agreed as follows:

The people of Guyana raised, in the MSF process, their concerns surrounding developmental issues and the social issues that impede development. The religious leaders have confirmed the validity of these concerns.

Of particular concern to the leaders were the issues of ethnic strife, violence, immorality, injustice and inequality. It was felt that the presence of these ills in Guyana despite the many religious institutions was an indication of a crisis of faith that has affected the entire nation including the religious institutions.

The religious leaders therefore concluded that the current national situation required them to draw closer to God in word and deed, so as to bring about profound spiritual transformation. This transformation it was posited, is a prerequisite for an honest and upright society upon which to build the foundation of sustained national development.

The leaders agreed that there is more than enough commonality among the diverse religious groups to facilitate a national cooperative effort. This effort would seek to encourage individual communities to adhere inwardly and outwardly to their respective teachings in a manner that would make a positive impact on the concerns that were brought out through the MSF.

Recommendations After Discussions

In particular, the leaders felt that the religious community should be more involved in the following critical issues:

Spiritual/Moral Education: the religious community should be engaged at the level of the home, and the community (including schools) spiritual education as opposed to only religious education. This education should have a pointed focus on change.

Social Cohesion: the religious community should be engaged in programs and activities that foster greater religious tolerance. Leaders should be outspoken against all forms of immorality and social injustice including injustice that may appear within religious institutions themselves.

Law and Order: the religious community should be outspoken in favour of legislative change that encourages greater social and political stability. Religious leaders should also be outspoken on developmental issues that could lead to economic prosperity. They should organize themselves to do these things.

GROUP DELIBERATIONS BY RELIGIOUS LEADERS

- ❖ A call for better moral conduct and enhancement of values.
- ❖ A need for genuine religious leadership.
- ❖ A condemning of immoral activities, no public vulgarity particularly on television and in newspapers advertisements.
- ❖ A need for moral and spiritual education in schools and among adults.
- ❖ A need to show love to all, regardless of their circumstances.
- ❖ A facilitating of inter-religious meetings and prayers, so we can learn more about each other.
- ❖ A call for moral emphasis to start in the home.
- ❖ A need to proactive in community development.
- ❖ A realization that violence is not an acceptable way of resolving conflict.

ANNEX E

ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED AT THE YOUTH CONVERSATION

Unemployment

- There needs to be more institutions for skills training for school dropouts.
- A job register should be available with a list of skills need so unemployed youth can go after training in skills which are in demand.
- There should be career counsellors at secondary schools.
- National Service should be re-introduced.
- Retired persons should not be re-employed, and there needs to be more job opportunities in the regions.
- Stability on the local scene is necessary if foreign investment is to be encouraged.

Education and skills training

- There is a need to start education and discipline at home.
- There must be role models in our communities.
- Young people need help with counseling, scholarships, conflict resolutions in schools and the availability of libraries.
- Teachers must be offered more attractive remuneration packages if they are to stop seeking greener pastures overseas.

Substance Abuse

- This is a result of a breakdown in moral values and peer pressure.
- Personal problems, no parental guidance and lack of education could also lead to substance abuse.
- Substance abuse leads to broken families, unemployment, crime, STD's and dropping out of schools.
- Special television programmes and a counseling rehabilitation centre would be of tremendous help to those affected.

Health

- Health problems among young people include HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies, malnutrition, inadequate health facilities and their affordability.
- Already in place are health centres, feeding programmes, sex education in schools and HIV programmes. What needs to be put in place are more specific messages from religious bodies and community groups, and more counselors.

Culture and Recreation

- Problems here include employment for artists, encouragement and financial support, exposure, training for singers, library of music and sports and art, and donations from businesses to promote artistic expressions.
- There is also the need for artists to raise their standards and level of performance.

Youth in Leadership

- This is inhibited by insufficient education, little personal development, lack of incentives and recognition, insufficient exposure, fear of criticism and poor role models. It can be encouraged by love of community and country, wanting to create change, good communication skills and a vision of purpose.
- A national youth platform, reinforcement of civic responsibilities among young people, a youth forum to discuss ideas and solutions, and sharp debating skills to promote conflict transformation are also needed.

Crime and Violence

- Contributing factors to crime are illiteracy, poverty, unjust laws, and insufficient education and opportunities.
- Factors to help reduce crime include:
 - Introducing more skills training in schools.
 - More outreach programmes by social organizations.
 - Reducing police harassment.
 - Implementing an effective witness protection programme.
 - Put in place stiffer penalties for corrupt policemen.

Exploitation

This group looked at exploitation of children, and recommended the following to discourage this:

- Media involvement in cases of exploitation.
- Disciplining children.
- Heavy penalties for those found guilty of this.
- Adequate supervision of children.

At the end of the session, the forum agreed that their findings be circulated widely in the media, that political leaders be approached by a committee selected from participants to let them know what the young people want and what is expected of them.

ANNEX F

Report on Culture Fest 2006

The Ethnic Relations Commission hosted "Culture Fest 2006" on August 11 and 12 at the National Exhibition Site, Sophia. This was the first time that the ERC was engaged in an activity of this kind.

BACKGROUND

In March 2006 the Commission agreed that there should be an activity where Guyanese from all walks of life can participate and highlight their various cultures and religions. The idea stemmed from the observation that cultural activities usually showcase the culture and art-form of one ethnic group and seldom do persons from the other groups participate.

It was proposed that the ERC activity would bring together Guyana's cultures and religions into a single space where all groups would feel welcomed and share in an opportunity to teach others of their way of life.

PLANNING/ORGANISING

Given the lack of experience in planning and organizing for such an activity, the Commission invited a number of Ministries, religious organizations, non-governmental organisations and agencies to be part of a Planning Committee.

The first meeting of the Planning Committee was convened on March 16, 2006. At that meeting a number of sub-committees were identified:

A – Physical Arrangements Sub Committee

This Sub-Committee was responsible for all physical arrangements for Culture Fest 2006. Securing approval to use the venue – lighting – decorating – stage construction – stalls construction – clean up before and after – sound systems – back drop for the stage.

Members: Mr. David Lui Hing – Chinese Association
 Mr. Lennox King – Pan African Movement (Guyana Branch)
 Ras Ashkar – Guyana Rastafari Council
 Mr. Lorri Alexander – National Emancipation Trust
 Ms. Donna Shortt-Gill – Ministry of Tourism, Industry & Culture
 Mr. Shazad Ali – Indian Arrival Committee

Co-Chairperson of the Planning Committee Mr. Uditram wrote the National Park Commission seeking approval to use the National Park on the proposed date. He also obtained copies of a site-plan of the National Park which were forwarded to all members of the Physical Arrangements Sub-Committee.

B – Programme Sub-Committee

This Sub-Committee was responsible for the entire programme on the stage – dance – music – modeling

Members: Mr. Leonard Herprashad – Muslim Youth League
Mr. Lorri Alexander – National Emancipation Trust
Mr. Akini Olamina – Ile Ifa Temple
Representative from the Indian Arrival Committee

C – Mobilisation & Public Relations Sub-Committee

This Sub-Committee was responsible for the dissemination of all information to the public on the activity.

Members: Mr. Shazad Ali – Indian Arrival Committee
Ras Ashkar – Guyana Rastafari Council
Representative from the Muslim Youth League
Ethnic Relations Commission

D – Security Sub-Committee

This Sub-Committee was responsible for all security arrangements – parking – traffic control –

Members: Representative from Guyana Police Force
Representative from Ethnic Relations Commission
Representative from USAID

The meeting agreed that the persons identified to the various Sub-Committees can name an alternate to attend meetings when the substantive member is unavailable.

It was also noted that other organizations were invited to the first meeting but were unable to attend. These organizations were again invited to be part of the Planning Committee and their representatives were asked to sit on Sub-Committees.

Mr. Bhupal Uditram, Head of Public Education & Awareness Unit and Ms. Beverley Alert, Public Relations Officer were the co-chairpersons of the Planning Committee.

VENUE

A number of possible venues were identified: National Park, National Exhibition Complex-Sophia and Main Street.

The National Park was identified as a more suitable venue and the Physical Arrangements Sub-Committee conducted a site inspection.

After consideration of the scope of the activity the Physical Arrangements Sub-Committee asked that the venue be changed to the National Exhibition Complex Sophia.

The areas proposed to be utilised were the tarmac for the stage show and the grounds surrounding the tarmac where booths for exhibitors would be erected.

It was subsequently agreed that instead of constructing booths, a more feasible option would be to use the main auditorium for the exhibition and tents would be provided around the entertainment area for groups offering foods and beverages. Close-by lawns would be used for games and children entertainment.

WITHDRAWAL

Five African culture-based groups signaled by way of letter their intention to withdraw from Culture Fest.

Continuous discussions saw the return and participation of the Rastafarians. A number of other African oriented groups also took part in the event.

DATE FOR THE EVENT

The date for the Day of Festivities has been set for Saturday, May 27th, 2006. It was to coincide with the National Conversation on May 28th which would have culminated the Multi-Stakeholder Forum. Representatives from the ten Administrative Regions were expected to be in Georgetown for the National Conversation and would have participated in Culture Fest 2006.

However, due to delays in holding the National Conversation, Culture Fest was pushed back to June 10 and 11 and subsequently August 11 and 12, 2006

PUBLICITY

Immediately following the decision to stage the event, the Commission started to advertise Culture Fest 2006. This was done by way of media conference and media releases.

A 30-second advertisement was prepared and aired during all television newscasts and on radio.

Private television programme producers and television talk-show hosts were engaged at a meeting with the ERC to discuss their involvement in promoting Culture Fest 2006.

Following this engagement, there was a flurry of advertising, especially on 98.1 FM radio.

The activity was also widely publicized in the three daily newspapers.

The media bought in to the activity and within the two weeks just before Culture Fest there were reports on television newscasts highlighting the activity.

SECURITY

Given the close proximity to the date announced for Regional and General Elections, special security arrangements were put in place for the activity.

The Guyana Police Force which was engaged in planning and organizing the activity and whose representative took the lead role in the Security Sub-Committee ensured a safe environment for the two days.

A significant police presence was there on both days.

In addition, a private security firm was engaged to lend support to the Police Force and the security officers at the National Exhibition Centre also added their strength.

FORMAL OPENING CEREMONY

The Head of State was invited and agreed to deliver the opening address. The diplomatic community, members of the past National Assembly, former ministers of government, members of civil society, law enforcement agencies, religious organizations and the general public were invited to the Opening.

The ceremony, in addition to the Opening address by the Head of State, included a number of cultural items representative of Guyana's cultures. An overview and background to Culture Fest 2006 was given by the Chairman of the Commission.

EXHIBITION

There were forty eight booths in the main auditorium exhibiting cultural and religious artifacts: Timehri Maha Kali Temple, The Chinese Association, The Science and Spirituality Religious Group, The Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organisation, The Central Islamic Trust, The Bahai Faith Movement, The Inter Religious Organisation and others. There were also exhibits from the local exhibitors such as Museum of African Heritage, Help and Shelter, Red Cross Society, National Aids Programme Secretariat, Georgetown Prison Service, the Culture Ambassador, Exquisite Craft, Farley's Art and Craft, Anancy's sculpture and craft, the Awaraks Linden Foundation, Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, the

Rural Women Society among others. There were also booths displaying foods of all ethnic Groups which include the Rastafarians.

Banks DIH and DDL provided non-alcoholic beverages. Space was also set aside for the viewing of films with themes pointing to discrimination. Mr. Vishnu Ramoutar guided a discussion after the viewing.

The total number of booths at Culture Fest 2006 was 62.

ENTERTAINMENT

In the evening entertainment was provided by Fire Clan Band, New Melody Makers Band, Apex Education, Charmin Blackman of the Signal Band, Indian Cultural Centre, Institute of Business Education, recorded music by Stereo Sonic, First Born, X- Treme Band , Second Coming Gospel Band, Brutal Tracks Band, Signal Band X-Factor Dance Troupe, National School of Dance, Sitare Dance Troupe, Camille's Institute of Business and Science Studies Dance troupe, Chinese Embassy, Flame of the Heart Dance Troupe. There were also fashion displays of designs by Lynette Mangar and Michelle Cole.

SPECIAL PROGRAMME

On August 12 the differently abled, senior citizens and orphans were given the opportunity to participate in Culture Fest 2006. The children and senior citizens were picked up from their homes and transported to the Exhibition Centre where they were involved in face painting, games and watching films.

The ERC provided transportation to and from the homes.

GAMES

The competitions such as cricket, football, dominoes were not held because of the unavailability of the persons responsible for these games. However, the Staff of the ERC gave the youths the gears to play among themselves.

BUDGET

The actual expenditure for Culture Fest 2006 fell below what was estimated.

The total expenditure for the activity was \$3,286,658.

Amount spent by ERC	\$529,310
Amount spent by USAID	\$2,757,375

Attached 1 – Estimated Budget

CONCLUSION

This Activity was accident free and could be deemed a success.

People were very satisfied with the work of the ERC and it is hoped that the activity will be an annual one and would be taken country-wide.

This event attracted between 5,000 – 7,000 persons. Turn out was negatively affected by the robberies of commercial banks in New Amsterdam the day before. Persons who were scheduled to participate withdrew following the robberies.

Submitted
September 14, 2006

ANNEX G

ETHNIC RELATIONS COMMISSION

REPORT – ELECTORAL MONITORING

JULY 28 – August 27 2006

General

The Ethnic Relations Commission in accordance with its mandate established an electoral monitoring unit with effect from July 28 to August 28, 2006. The general aims and objectives of this unit were to monitor all public meetings and rallies held by political parties in the ten Administrative Regions of Guyana. Further monitoring included the media (print, radio and television). In respect to its constitutional mandate, the functions of the Ethnic Relations is embodied under Article 212A and Article (212B) that provided for the foundation upon which the electoral monitoring process prior to the 2006 National and Regional Elections evolved.

Article 212 D of the Constitution of Guyana states the functions of the Ethnic Relations Commission which are to-:

- (c) Discourage and prohibit persons, institutions, political parties and associations from indulging in, advocating or promoting discrimination or discriminatory practices on the grounds of ethnicity.*
- (d) Foster a sense of security among all ethnic groups, by encouraging and promoting the understanding, acceptance and tolerance of diversity in all aspects of national life and promoting full participation by all ethnic groups in the social, economic cultural and political life of people.*
- (j) Investigate complaints of racial discrimination and make recommendations on the measures to be taken if such complaints are valid, and where there is justification therefore refer matters to the Human Rights Commission or other relevant authorities for further action to be taken.*
- (p) Investigate on its own accord or on request from the National Assembly or any other body, any issues affecting ethnic relations.*
- (v) Train and enlist the aid of such persons and acquire such facilities as the Commission deems necessary to accomplish its functions.*
- (w) Make recommendations on penalties, including the prevention of any political party or any person participating in elections for a specified period, to be imposed for any breach of provisions of the Constitution or any law dealing with ethnicity.*

Racial Hostility and Representation of the People Act

The Ethnic Relations Commission was further empowered to exercise its mandate through the provisions set out in the Racial Hostility (Amendment) Act 2002 Chapter 23:01 and Representation of the People (Amendment) Act 2001. The main goal of ERC's monitoring exercise was to identify occurrences of discriminatory speech, language or behavior that could have incited ethnic and racial animosity.

Timely action in response to any such incitement, discriminatory or derogatory remarks made in respect of any political party representatives formed the focus of ERC's immediate investigation and demands for justice. Such information garnered through electoral monitoring provided the basis upon which a deterring platform of repetition was attained thereby promoting and encouraging an electoral environment free of violence, intimidation and fear.

Monitoring Preparation

The Ethnic Relations Commission prepared and circulated for use by monitors a 'Monitoring Form for Political Rallies and Meetings'. This monitoring tool was designed exclusively to be completed by monitors at all political meetings and rallies. Expected to be captured and recorded were excerpts of speeches made by political party representatives, and the general environment of any particular meeting. As a measuring tool, the questionnaire/form covered several areas including:-

1. Ethnic composition of crowd
2. Police representation
3. List of speakers
4. Mood of the crowd
5. Brief summary of speech
6. Monitor's summary, additional comments and observations

Importantly, and more so for accuracy, monitors were required to pay special attention to the section that requested further information on the content of speeches made by party representatives. Such questions included -:

During his /her speech -:

1. Did the speaker specifically attack an individual or individuals based on their ethnicity?
2. Did the speaker promote specific cases of targeting that person via intimidation, threats or assault?
3. Did the speaker try to legitimize criminal acts and rationalize any resulting anarchy?
4. Did he/she say that one race was superior to another?
5. Did he categorize a political party as a race based party?
6. Did he/she use deliberate derogatory ethnic words to refer to a political opponent?
7. Did the speaker insinuate that certain persons of one ethnic background were not permitted to occupy certain jobs/positions in public service?
8. Did the speaker promote segregation based on ethnic division of the people?
9. Did the speaker convey a negative image of an ethnic group of voters, candidates and political leaders?
10. In your opinion, was the speech a particular attack on a particular ethnic group?
11. Was there any attempt to disrupt the political rally or meeting by any ethnic group?
12. Was there any assault on persons of one ethnic group after the rally ended?

13. Was there any destruction of public or private property of one ethnic group by the supporters of the party after the crowd dispersed?

A total of thirty (30) monitors were mobilized from the ten (10) Administrative Regions and trained. Under the theme 'Electoral Monitoring – What we should know', the training programme sought to inform and familiarize monitors with the necessary documentation in relation to principles, expectations, legislation, information and general overview of the Electoral Monitoring process.

Monitoring Activities

During the period 28 July to August 27, 2006 a total of four hundred and seventy-three (473) meetings and rallies were monitored by ERC monitors as follows:

PNCR-G1	-	204
PPP/C	-	179
AFC	-	68
TUF	-	9
GAP/ROAR	-	7
GNC	-	2
JFAP	-	<u>4</u>
Total	-	<u>473</u>

All of the major rallies held by the political parties were monitored by ERC monitors; these included those held by the PPP/C in the following areas:

Bath Settlement	-	Region 5
Albion	-	Region 6
Good Hope	-	Region 4
Stewartville	-	Region 3
Linden	-	Region 10
Anna Regina	-	Region 8

Rallies for the PNCR-1G were monitored at:

The Square of the Revolution	-	Region 4
Independence Park	-	Region 4
Cultural Centre Tarmac	-	Region 4
Golden Grove	-	Region 4
Linden	-	Region 10
Bartica	-	Region 7
New Amsterdam	-	Region 6

The AFC rallies were monitored at:

Independence Park	-	Region 4
Linden	-	Region 10
Leonora	-	Region 3
Anna Regina	-	Region 2

Schedules of political meetings and rallies were received from the PPP/C and PNCR-1G for the month long period of August 2006, while the other political parties facilitated the process by verbally informing the Monitoring Unit of their meetings. The PNCR-1G scheduled a total of approximately four hundred and seventy five (475) meetings, while the PPP/C scheduled meetings amounted to approximately two hundred and thirty (250). Through ERC's Electoral Monitoring process, political meetings monitored in the Administrative Regions were as follows:

REGION 1

PNCR-1G - Two (2) meetings
GAP/ROAR - One (1) meeting

Four cancellations for PNCR-1G were noted.

REGION 2

Five (5) meetings as well as whistle stop meetings from Supenaam to Charity were held by PNCR-1G. PPP/C held eleven (11) meetings, while the AFC held twenty-two (22) meetings. GAP/ROAR also had two (2) meetings in this Region.

REGION 3

Twenty- nine (29) meetings and three (3) cancellations were recorded for the PPP/C, while twenty-one (21) meetings and twelve cancellations (12) were recorded for the PNCR-IG. Seven (7) meetings for the AFC were monitored, while four (4), and two (2) cancellations for GAP/ROAR were recorded.

REGION 4

Sixty-four (64) meetings were monitored, while thirteen (13) cancellations were noted for the PPP/C.

Ninety-five (95) meetings were monitored and twenty-six (26) cancellations noted for the PNCR-1G.

Twenty-two (22) AFC meetings were monitored, while five (5) cancellations were noted.

REGION 5

Eighteen (18) meetings for PNCR-1G were monitored, while three (3) cancellations were noted.

Four (4) meetings for PPP/C, two (2) for JFAP and one (1) for AFC were also monitored.

REGION 6

Forty four (44) meetings were monitored for the PPP/C and six (6) cancellations noted, while twenty (20) meetings for the PNCR-1G were monitored and two (2) cancellations noted.

REGION 7

Fifteen (15) meetings for PNCR-1G and two (2) occasions during which party representatives were engaged in a 'meet the people tour' were monitored. Two (2) cancellations by that political party (PNCR-1G) were also noted.

Two (2) meetings and one (1) occasion during which party representatives met with people in the community were noted for the PPP/C

One (1) meeting for the AFC was monitored.

REGION 8

Three (3) meetings of the PNCR-1G and three (3) meetings of the PPP/C were monitored.

REGION 9

Meetings were not monitored due to limitations of transport and inaccessible telephone communication.

REGION 10

Twenty-four (24) meetings for PNCR-1G and twenty-two (22) meetings for PPP/C were monitored in this Region.

One (1) meeting for GAP/ROAR as well as one (1) for the AFC was monitored.

Two (2) cancellations for the PPP/C and a series of PNCR-1G whistle stop meetings scheduled for August 27, 2006 were cancelled.

Response by The Police and Party Representatives

Monitors initially reported some amount of hesitation on the part of Police Officers and representatives of some political parties which eventually subsided with the ERC public relation programmes which helped to further enhance the information process and the ability of monitors and co-coordinating staff to conduct them in an enabled and professional manner. Police Officers in most of the areas have been reported to be extremely co-operative in forwarding the list and location of meetings and rallies for the various political parties on a daily basis. There were however, instances when scheduled meetings were not held.

Issues Addressed by Political Parties

Party representatives at all of the meetings and rallies sought to galvanize support for their respective parties from persons attending the meetings. Such persons were enlightened of the particular party's plans for the development of Guyana, once they were elected into office. Generally the presentations by speakers focused on youth and women empowerment, effective governance, the expansion in investment, improvement in the Educational, Housing, Agricultural and Human Services sectors as well as Health modernization and general infrastructure. Principles of maintaining a stable macro economy and most importantly equity across the nation were also promoted.

Order, calm and a general non-disrupted environment was maintained for a large percentage of the meetings and rallies as reported by monitors. Notwithstanding there were occurrences of some instances whereby some statements or utterances deemed as inflammatory and intended to create disruption were made by speakers. Also in some instances, some persons in the crowd resorted to 'heckling' in an effort to use influential strategies to either disrupt the meeting or intimidate persons attending the meetings.

The composition of the crowd at some meetings ranged from as little as ten (10) or fifteen (15) persons to as many as twenty five thousand persons (25,000) at major rallies. As reported and noteworthy of mention, was that most PNCR-1G rallies and meetings attracted a predominantly African crowd, while PPP/C attracted a predominantly East Indian crowd. The AFC meetings attracted a crowd comprising predominantly mixed ethnic groups.

Incidents

Incidents reported during the Electoral Monitoring period were noted at some locations. Some of such reports included the following:-

1. In Region 2, at a meeting held at Devonshire Castle by the PPP/C on August 12 it was reported that the speaker accused the PNCR of "*discriminating against persons with Hindu names*". "*Ravi Dev gat the buck people leading him*" and "*no more ram ram sita ram*".
2. In Region 3, at a meeting held at Wales by the PPP/C, it was reported that that persons in the crowd were expressing ... '*we can't allow black people to get into power because coolie people gon dead....them black man gon kill we ...*'.

3. Speakers were interrupted at an AFC meeting at Queenstown bus shed on August 13, when truckloads of predominantly Indo-Guyanese were traversing the area and shouting in loud voices.
4. Similarly, at a PPP/C meeting held in West Ruimveldt on August 15, PNCR supporters disrupted a meeting while gyrating, using, indecent language and shouting in support of their leader.
5. Agitation by the crowd was evident, when a PNCR meeting held at William and Alexander Streets Kitty was disrupted by blaring loud speakers from a traversing vehicle announcing PPP/C meetings.
6. At another meeting held by PNCR in Kitty on August 15, it was reported said that "*there was discrimination under the PPP/C government.... just compare the villages of Buxton and Enmore*" and that "*Mr. Ramjattan is racist*".
7. At least two monitors at a Region 5 meeting reported that some amount of hostility was leveled at them by PNCR representatives.
8. Disruption occurred at a PPP/C meeting held on August 21, at the Tannery location in Sophia, where shouts of... '*AFC will win..*' were made by obvious disruptive elements while the continuous and deliberate revving of a motorcycle interrupted the speech. At another interval during the same meeting, it was reported that stones were thrown at the house in front of which the meeting was kept. There was some retaliation presumably of further stone throwing at a nearby fence. Most incidents were reportedly brought under control by the Police.

Reports Addressed by the Commission

During the period, the Commission addressed two reports of remarks made by political party activists that seemed not to be in keeping with the promotion of racial harmony and unity.

It was reported that Mr. Parmanand Persaud, a PPP/C candidate allegedly made remarks that were not in keeping with promoting peace, racial harmony and good relations at a meeting on 12th August, 2006 at Devonshire Castle, Essequibo.

It was also alleged that Mr. Mervyn Williams, a PNCR-1G candidate, at a meeting on Vreed-en-Hoop Public Road, made remarks to the gathering that were not supportive of fostering cohesiveness and racial relations in Guyana.

Members of the Commission met with the two candidates on separate occasions and they both expressed the willingness to observe the policies of the ERC and to work within the confines of the law.

Media Monitoring

An experienced media specialist was contracted to monitor television programmes, talk shows and letters in the newspapers. He was also tasked with collaborating with GECOM Media Monitoring Unit and the ACB for the compilation of his report. Despite several reminders, the report is yet to be submitted.

Conclusion

'Respecting the rights of people irrespective of color class or creed'; 'Encouraging and creating respect for religious, cultural and other forms of diversity in a plural society; Promoting the elimination of all forms of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity.' Such sentiments embodying a concept of *'safety and security'* for all citizens formed the backdrop of the ERC's electoral monitoring reporting process. Such an attempt, the first of its kind mandated by the ERC was indeed commendable. Prone to initial hitches, from which lessons were surely learnt, the monitoring process proceeded with a firm focus, which was to make sure that as many meetings and rallies of all the contesting political parties would be monitored over the pre-elections period and complaints and incidents addressed. Also achieved was that citizens made it their duty to inform ERC about instances where racist or discriminatory remarks were made at political meetings. Such denouncement was even taken a step further when they personally brought complaints to the attention of the particular political parties.

Citizens it would seem now feel the need to be involved in the ongoing efforts by the ERC to denounce racial tension, ethnic disharmony and discrimination that could lead to violence and disruption. Guyana being a country that covers vast territory is a land of six races of varying ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, it was imperative for the Ethnic Relations Commission to adequately cover as many areas as possible in order to monitor meetings while at the same time rise to the ensuing challenges. Such challenges undertaken of course can only form the basis for improvement in future endeavors

Elections

Communications Strategy

GOAL

To foster a sense of security for people of all ethnicity before, during and after the 2006 Regional and General Elections

OBJECTIVE

To ensure an elections environment that is free from fear and intimidation and where persons can go about their daily activities in the regular manner and where the sense of peace and calm prevails through the period before, during and after the 2006 Elections.

BACKGROUND

Elections of the past have been characterized by acts of violence and intimidation.

Burning of buildings, tyres and digging of roads in the past have left citizens with a sense of fear and apprehension.

These negative activities coupled with street protests and other criminal acts have created in the minds of many Guyanese the sense that Elections period is not a safe time for conducting business or even being on the streets.

Generally, persons fear that the Elections period, especially the immediate post-elections period, is one clouded by violence.

With support of the British High Commission, the ERC in association with the EAB and the IRO implemented a communications strategy aimed at ensuring a non-violent elections period, through messages calling for peace and non-violence.

IMPLEMENTATION

With the assistance of Ms. Colleen Harris MVO of the Commission for Racial Equality of England, the Strategy was designed. It called for a number of prominent citizens, well known personalities and political parties to appeal to their audiences for peace and non-violence. The Strategy was implemented in a number of simultaneous phases.

PHASE I (Engagement with Political Parties)

The ten (10) political parties contesting the 2006 elections were invited to issue a message calling for non-violence and for the elections to be conducted in an environment that is free from fear and intimidation.

These messages were broadcast repeatedly on August 27th, the day before the elections, and appeared in the three (3) dailies of the same date.

Messages were issued by The United Force (TUF) and Alliance for Change (AFC).

A message was issued by the People's Progressive Party but after close scrutiny of its content, it was decided that the message was political in nature and it was not in the best interest of the Commission to be seen as supporting such message.

The other parties did not issue messages.

PHASE II (Engagement with television talk-show hosts and private programme producers)

Recognising the influence of Television Talk-Show Hosts have on public perceptions and behaviour, the Commission held a meeting with a group of seventeen Talk-Show Hosts and private programme producers on August 19th, to discuss their involvement in promoting a peaceful and non-violent elections environment.

At that meeting, Talk-Show Hosts and private programme producers suggested that all call-in programmes for the period immediately following the Polls, should not entertain telephone calls. They recognised that in the

absence of a delay broadcast system, callers can make statements that could fuel tension in society.

The suggestion to not allow telephone calls on live programmes was accepted across the board and those present asked the ERC to work with Talk-Show Hosts who were not at the meeting to get their support.

The Talk-Show Hosts and private programme producers also agreed to use their programme time to call for peace before, during and after the elections and for persons not to encourage, promote or engage in any act or actions which could be seen as intimidation or designed to cause fear, against any individual or group.

This group also agreed to air messages to be prepared by the ERC calling for peace and non-violence. They agree to accept a contribution of \$5,000 to assist in getting these messages over.

PHASE III (Engagement with owners/managers of media houses)

The media exerts considerable influence on society and can shape the way people behave and think. Probably no other group has such influence on society and as such the media is an integral part to a strategy designed to influence persons behaviour.

Recognising this, the Commission invited all managers, owners and editors to a meeting to discuss the media's role in promoting peace and non-violence before, during and after the elections

At the meeting, participants were updated on the various phases of the Communications Strategy. The support of the media houses in ensuring the success of the Strategy was discussed.

The media was asked to match all advertising placed under the Strategy and to work in their own way to promote peace.

Television Station owners and editors agreed to provide 'responsible programme content' during the elections period.

PHASE IV (Engagement with civil society)

It was recognized that some members of society impart considerable influence over the general public. It was therefore agreed that with the assistance of the EAB, a number of such persons would be approached to issue messages calling for peace, tolerance and respect. These messages were recorded and broadcast on radio and television.

PHASE V (Engagement with influential youth)

Disc Jockeys, Beauty Queens, young Gospel artistes and other performers carry their own audiences and these individuals influence the behaviour of a significant section of society.

With this in mind, the ERC engaged this group to have them voice messages appealing for the promotion of peace before, during and after elections.

They prepared their messages, using their unique styles which appeal to their audiences.

The messages were broadcast on radio and television.

PHASE VI (Engagement with Religious TV Programme Producers)

Guyana Today has a number of private television hosts and producers of religious programmes. These Hosts/Producers have their own audiences and can be quite influential.

They were invited to a meeting at the Commission where the discussion centered on ensuring elections environment that is free from fear and intimidation and where there is an end to the violence of the past.

The Hosts/Producers agreed to use their broadcast time to call for peace before, during and after the elections and for an end to violence.

Hosts/Producers from New Amsterdam agreed to and produced a live television discussion on August 24th where representatives from the major denominations Christians, Hindus and Muslims called for peace, unity and non-violence.

PHRASE VII (Peace CD)

Most Guyanese use public transportation, mostly mini-buses and cabs. It was thought that an ideal medium by which to reach these commuters with the message of peace and unity would be by way of music on compact discs.

A music CD was prepared. These discs contained songs promoting peace and unity. It was compiled by popular Disc Jockeys who added their calls for peace and an end to violence. 425 copies were distributed to mini-bus and cabs.

PHRASE VIII(Banners)

Fifty (50) banners on vinyl and cloth, with peace messages were prepared and erected at strategic locations across the country.

Some of the messages read:

Our diversity is our strength- Not our weakness
Let us all work towards a better Guyana

Stop the violence & hatred.
Work for a better Guyana today & tomorrow

There are no winners in violence, only destruction
Let's keep the peace

To realize non- violence is a victory for Guyana
Give peace a chance.

Peace is a journey
Let us take the first step for Guyana today

Our diversity is our strength
Let us promote non-violence and build Guyana

Locations for the placement of banners were chosen on the flow of traffic that passes that area, public gatherings at that area or where members of the public frequently traverse.

ASSESSMENT

While no scientific study was done, the reality of a violence-free election speaks volumes for the impact the Communications Strategy would have had.

A longer mobilization period could have lent to more persons being involved in issuing messages.

The Strategy also came at a time when political parties were tightly scheduled in their campaigning, thus limiting their involvement.

It could be opined, that a sustained strategy could, in the long term, eliminate the need for such targeted campaigning.

Wednesday, September 13, 2006

COMPLAINTS MATRIX - 2006

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME OF COMPLAINANT	ADDRESS	DATE OF REPORT	COMPLAINT AGAINST- AGENCY/INDIVIDUAL	ACTION TAKEN
1.	Tryson Fredericks	Lot P Adam's Road Soesdyke East Bank Demerara	January 9 , 2006	Complained that he was racially discriminated against. He was denied a job at Roraima Airways by a person of East Indian descent.	Meetings were held with the officials of the Cheddi Jagan International Airport and Roraima Airways. It was discovered that when workers at CJIA are not engaged and Roraima Airways need staff those from CJIA are sent. Complainant was not sent because of his previous conduct. File Closed.
2.	Godfrey Alexander	27 Farm Road Essequibo Coast	January 12, 2006	Complained that his 12 year old son was sexually abused by the teachers of Parika Primary School during the period 1994 - 2000.	The complainant was informed that the matter does not fall within ambit of the ERC. File closed.
3.	Faye Allicock	17 Miles Rockstone Upper Essequibo	January 24, 2006	Complained that Lynette Benn of 17 Miles Rockstone failed to pay Amerindian workers.	Complainant informed Commission that she had taken complaint to Ministry of Labour for attention. File closed.

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME OF COMPLAINANT	ADDRESS	DATE OF REPORT	COMPLAINT AGAINST- AGENCY/INDIVIDUAL	ACTION TAKEN
4.	Sherlock Sue Hang	Main Street New Amsterdam	January 27, 2006	Complained that himself and four men; one mixed, one East Indians, two Africans went to Tain, Corentyne. They were badly beaten by the residents who alleged they came to rob them.	Enquiries were conducted and statements taken; the Police in Berbice were informed. The Chairman and Commissioners of ERC visited the area and held public meeting with all parties involved. File closed.
5.	Jessie Singh-Damian	51 Garnett Street, Newtown, Kitty	January 27, 2006	Complained that she requested a visa from Ministry of Home Affairs for her husband to visit Guyana from Nigeria to see his child. She had been denied this and was claiming racial discrimination because she's an East Indian and he's an African.	Complainant informed ERC that she was going to Nigeria so she requested no further action. File closed.
6.	Alvin Johnson, Alexis Jeanty, Trevor Vancooten, Lavern Henry, J Lucky and Sharon Holder	Saraswat Primary School Meten-Meer-Zorg West Coast Demerara	February 8, 2006	Because of an earlier incident, they requested a transfer from Saraswat Primary School. This was refused, they believe on racial grounds.	Commission met with PTA and RDC. Regional Education Officer resolved to make recommendations to the Ministry of Education. File closed.

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME OF COMPLAINANT	ADDRESS	DATE OF REPORT	COMPLAINT AGAINST- AGENCY/INDIVIDUAL	ACTION TAKEN
7.	Samuel Singh	228 Smyth Field New Amsterdam Berbice	February 8, 2006	Complained that a lorry rolled over his father-in-law who died.	The complaint does not fall within the ambit of the ERC. Matter was referred to the Police Department. Complainant so informed. File closed.
8.	Lorna Rose	Lot 52 Britton Street Plaisance East Coast Demerara	February 16, 2006	Complained that she was being hindered from paying rates and taxes in respect of parcel (C) a plot of land at 45 A Britton Street, Plaisance, East Coast Demerara. She had paid \$5,000.00 to have the land surveyed and had lodged a plan.	On the intervention of ERC Ms. Rose received her \$5000.00 and her plan for parcel 'C'. File closed.
9.	Obed Gibson	10 West Ruimveldt Front Road Georgetown	February 16, 2006	Complained against Guyoil for wrongful dismissal. He was found sleeping on duty at the Providence location.	Dispute Resolution Officer met with Officials of Guyoil. The matter does not fall within the ambit of the ERC. File closed.
10.	Jacqueline Ross	Betsy Ground, Canjje	March 20, 2006	Complained that her husband does not support her children and she needs advice.	Matter does not fall within the ambit of the ERC. Complainant so informed. File closed.

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME OF COMPLAINANT	ADDRESS	DATE OF REPORT	COMPLAINT AGAINST- AGENCY/INDIVIDUAL	ACTION TAKEN
11.	Hamilton Green	Mayor & City Council, Regent Road Georgetown	March 23, 2006	Complained that the Government of India was inviting applications from eligible persons of Indian origin and non resident Indians to study in higher and technical institutions in India in academic year 2006 - 2007.	Chairman, Commissioner and Dispute Resolution Officer held discussion with the High Commissioner of India. Commission found that there was no intention to discriminate against other races. File closed.
12.	Solomon Burke	Lot 22 Farm Mahaicony East Coast Demerara	March 25, 2006	Complained he inherited 2½ acres of land from his parents on the East Coast Railway Embankment at Mahaicony. MMA repossessed the land and it is now being occupied by some East Indian men.	Matter does not fall within the ambit of the ERC. File closed
13.	Satyanand Bhopaul	Betsy Ground East Canjie Berbice	March 26, 2006	Complainant believes that he is being discriminated against because G.P.L did not supply electricity to his home.	Complainant was invited to furnish full particulars of discrimination. No reply received. File closed.
14.	Edward Shepherd	624 Fort Land Ordnance	March 28, 2006	Complainant applied to Ministry of Housing for title to land he occupies and believes Ministry's sloth is discriminatory.	Complainant was invited to furnish full particulars of discrimination. No reply received. File closed.

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME OF COMPLAINANT	ADDRESS	DATE OF REPORT	COMPLAINT AGAINST- AGENCY/INDIVIDUAL	ACTION TAKEN
15.	Cleveland Welch	Lot 89 Parka Street Providence East Bank Demerara	April 3, 2006	Complainant feels he was wrongfully dismissed and discriminated against by the Guyana Oil Company.	Complainant was invited to furnish full particulars of discrimination. No reply received. File closed.
16.	Hermon Garnett	Lot 52 Queenstown Corriverton	April 26, 2006	Complainant alleged racial discrimination. Mr. Raj owner of a cycle repair shop refused to repair his cycle and used racial slurs.	Complainant was invited to furnish full particulars of discrimination. No reply received. File closed.
17.	Oswald Caleb	Port Kaituma North West District	May 15, 2006	Complained that he applied for 2 acres of farm land in the area. Land was surveyed but the land was given to an Amerindian family.	Complainant informed that the matter does not fall within the ambit of the ERC. File closed.
18.	Andrew Henry	Fitzbury Port Kaituma North West District	22 nd May, 2006	Complained that a Police Outpost is needed in the area as a shop is selling alcohol to Amerindians. Disorderly behaviour is prevalent. Health personnel are also needed in the area.	Complainant informed that the matter does not fall within the ambit of the ERC. Letter sent to Ministry of Health. File closed.
19.	Bakja Health Movement	31-34 Truimph Village East Coast Demerara	June 7, 2006	Complained of racial discrimination in granting him Duty-Free Concession for the importation of	Commission held meetings with all parties; Bakja Health Movement informed that

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME OF COMPLAINANT	ADDRESS	DATE OF REPORT	COMPLAINT AGAINST- AGENCY/INDIVIDUAL	ACTION TAKEN
				goods to be used by the Health Movement. The Head of G.R.A and Finance Minister were cited as the persons who were discriminating against him.	it has to comply with the law as amended. File closed.
20.	Ravindra Kuldeep	18 Betsy Ground Berbice	June 13, 2006	He feels that because he works at Guysuco Estate he is racially discriminated against .	Complainant was invited to furnish full particulars of discrimination. No reply received. File closed.
21.	Elton Dutchin	Soesyke East Bank Demerara	July 15, 2006	Complained that a taxi driver named Rajbar uses racial slurs regularly, then goes to those in authority and then apologises.	Chairman and Commissioners met with officials of Airport Authority and taxi drivers. Rajbar apologised and matter was closed.
22.	Sookram Persaud	27 Logwood Enmore East Coast Demerara	July 27, 2006	Complained against COPS Security Service alleging he was racially discriminated against.	Complainant was invited to furnish full particulars of discrimination. No reply received. File closed.
23.	Zenudeen Jameer	159 Brittiania West Coast Berbice	August 12, 2006	Complained that despite requests his High Court matter is not being heard	The complainant was informed that the matter does not fall within the ambit of the ERC. File closed.

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME OF COMPLAINANT	ADDRESS	DATE OF REPORT	COMPLAINT AGAINST- AGENCY/INDIVIDUAL	ACTION TAKEN
24.	Mark Smith	Bushy Park East Bank Essequibo	September 5, 2006	Complained that the Chairman of Hydronie, Good Hope Farm NDC is discriminating against him in denying him permission to hold dances on the beach; is discriminating against the African community in not supplying street lights and repairing roads in their areas.	Investigation was carried out and the Chairman and Commissioners met with the complainant and the Neighbourhood Democratic Council. Complaints were found to be without merit and complainant was so informed. File closed.
25.	Savitre Persaud	Lot 329 Section A South Sophia Georgetown	September 15, 2006	Complained that she paid \$20,000.00 to build a septic tank but when she applied for the tank she was racially discriminated against.	Ministry of Housing was informed and the Ministry built septic tank on the same day. File closed
26.	Edward Standford	131 Alexander Street Rampor Scheme Corriverton	September 27, 2006	Complained that since 2005 he applied for a telephone but this has been denied him.	G.T & T informed ERC a phone already exists at his residence in his daughter's name. It is their policy to allow one phone per home. File closed.
27.	Clive Robinson	Vigilance Squatting Area East Coast Demerara	October 2, 2006	Complained that there is racial discrimination in the Vigilance, Bladen Hall and Strathspey Community.	Chairman ERC met with residents of Vigilance Bladen Hall and Strathspey community.

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME OF COMPLAINANT	ADDRESS	DATE OF REPORT	COMPLAINT AGAINST- AGENCY/INDIVIDUAL	ACTION TAKEN
				The Africans are suffering because the drainage is bad and social facilities are being neglected.	The Regional Chairman undertook to remedy complaints. File closed.
28.	P. Phipps	42 Kentwood Hill Reading England, U.K	October 11, 2006	Complained that he is an Englishman and is denied the right to a relationship with a Guyanese girl who is his sweetheart.	The complainant was informed that the matter does not fall within ambit of the ERC. File Closed.
29.	Sullivan Williams	17 Mile, Rockstone	November 22, 2006	Complained that the teacher's quarters needs furnishing, potable water, solar lighting plant and the area needs trained teachers.	Complainant was informed that the matter does not fall within the ambit of the ERC. A copy of the complaint sent to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education. File closed.
30.	Residents, Anna Regina	Essequibo	November, 2006	Medina Muslim Academy. Residents complained to the ERC that the school was kept open on religious days of other faiths. That the school's vehicle transport only Muslim children.	The commission met with the Directors of the School and they have agreed to review their position as it relates to observances on national holidays and other religious days.

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME OF COMPLAINANT	ADDRESS	DATE OF REPORT	COMPLAINT AGAINST- AGENCY/INDIVIDUAL	ACTION TAKEN
31.	Jewel Richards	611 Miles, Mahdia	December 6 ,2006	Complained that she was employed as a typist in the R.E.O's office, but has not been confirmed in the position.	Complainant was informed that complaint does not fall within the ambit of the ERC. A copy of the complaint was sent to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government. File closed.
32.	Aaron Grant- Stuart	Grant Sand Road, Soesdyke East Bank Demerara	December 15, 2006	Complained that Mr. Samaroo, Manager of the Maintenance Department of Cheddi Jagan International Airport was using indecent language to his employees.	Complainant was informed that complaint does not fall within the ambit of the ERC. A copy of complaint was sent to the Airport authority for attention. File Closed.
33.	Peter Livingston	Onderneeming Housing Scheme	December 25, 2006	Complained that G.P.L is discriminating in the supply of Electrical power to the scheme by supplying power to the area inhabited by East Indians and not doing so to the area inhabited by Africans.	Chairman ERC visited area and met with residents who promised to form a delegation to meet with officials of GPL. File closed.
34.	Omari Watson	Melanie Damishana East Coast Demerara	December 26, 2006	Complained that he was pursuing a course at Guyana School of Agriculture. He was in	The Principal of the Guyana School of Agriculture informed the ERC that because of

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				his 2 nd Year and was not permitted to complete the programme. He feels that he was being discriminated against.	Mr. Watson's performance and general conduct, he was withdrawn from the programme. File closed.

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