

# National Assembly Debates

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2006-2007) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN**

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26TH SITTING

2.00PM

Thursday, 28 June 2007

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## **MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (71)**

### **Speaker (1)**

**The Hon. Hari N Ramkarran, SC, MP.** - *Speaker of the National Assembly*

### **Members of Government (42)**

(i) **People's Progressive Party/Civic (41)**

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

The Hon Samuel AA Hinds, MP,

- *(Region No. 10 Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice), Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications (Absent) - Performing the functions of the Office of President*

The Hon Clement J Rohee, MP.

- *Minister of Home Affairs (Absent)*

The Hon Shaik KZ Baksh, MP.

- *Minister of Education*

The Hon Dr Henry B Jeffrey, MP.

- *Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation (Absent)*

The Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy, MP.

- *(Region No. 6 – East Berbice/ Corentyne), Minister of Health*

The Hon Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, MP,

- *(Region No. 9- Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo), Minister of Amerindian Affairs*

\*The Hon Dr Ashni K. Singh, MP.

- *Minister of Finance*

\*The Hon S Rudolph Insanally, OR, CCH, MP.

- *Minister of Foreign Affairs (AOL)*

The Hon Harry Narine Nawbatt, MP.

- *Minister of Housing and Water*

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- The Hon Robert M Persaud, MP. - (Region No. 6—East Berbice/Corentyne)  
Minister of Agriculture
- The Hon Dr Jennifer RA Westford, MP. - (Region No. 7—Cuyuni-Mazaruni) Minister  
of Public Service
- The Hon Kellawan Lall, MP. - Minister of Local Government  
and Regional Development
- \*The Hon Doodnauth Singh, SC, MP. - Attorney General and Minister  
of Legal Affairs
- The Hon Dr Frank C.S. Anthony, MP. - Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport  
(AOL)
- The Hon B H Robeson. Benn, MP. - Minister of Transport and Hydraulics
- \*The Hon Manzoor Nadir, MP. - Minister of Labour
- The Hon Priya D Manickchand, MP. - (Region No. 5—Mahaica/Berbice)  
Minister of Human Services and  
Social Security
- The Hon Dr Desrey Fox, MP. - Minister in the Ministry of Education
- The Hon Bheri S Ramsaran, MD, MP. - Minister in the Ministry of Health
- The Hon Jennifer I Webster, MP. - Minister in the Ministry of Finance  
(AOL)
- The Hon Manniram Prashad, MP. - Minister of Tourism, Industry and  
Commerce
- Mr Donald R Ramotar, MP. - (Absent)
- Ms Gail Teixeira, MP.
- Mr Harripersaud Nooka, MP.
- Mrs Indranie Chandarpal, MP. - Chief Whip
- Ms Bibi S Shadick, MP. - (Region No. 3—Essequibo Islands, West  
Demerara)
- Mr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, MP.
- Mr Albert Atkinson, JP, MP. - (Region No. 8 — Potaro/  
Siparuni)
- Mr Komal Chand, CCH, JP, MP. - (Region No. 3—Essequibo Island, West  
Demerara) (Absent)
- Mr Bernard C DeSantos, SC, MP. - (Region No. 4—Demerara/Mahaica)  
(Absent)
- Mrs Shirley V Edwards, JP, MP. - (Region No. 4—Demerara/Mahaica)
- Mr Mohamed F Khan, JP, MP. - (Region No. 2—Pomeroon/Supenaam)
- Mr Odinga N Lumumba, MP. - (Absent)
- Mr Moses V Nagamootoo, JP, MP.
- Mr Mohabir A Nandiall, MP.
- Mr Neendkumar, JP, MP. - (Region No. 4—Demerara/  
Mahaica)
- \*\*\* Mr Steve P. Ninvalle, M.P. - Parliamentary Secretary
- Mr Parmanand P Persaud, JP, MP. - (Region No. 2—Pomeroon/Supenaam)
- Mrs Philomena Sahoye-Shury, CCH, JP, MP. - Parliamentary Secretary
- \*\* Mrs Pauline R. Sukhai, M.P. - Parliamentary Secretary
- Mr Dharamkumar Secraj, MP. - (Absent)

\* Non-Elected Minister

\*\*\* Non-elected Member

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Mr Norman A Whittaker, MP - (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)

**Members of the Opposition (28)**

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

Mr Robert Corbin, MP - *Leader of the Opposition*  
Mr Winston S Murray, CCH, MP  
Mrs Clarissa S Riehl, MP - *Deputy Speaker performing duties of Speaker of the National Assembly*  
Mr E Lance Carberry, MP - *Chief Whip (AOL)*  
Mrs Deborah J Backer, MP - (AOL)  
Mr Anthony Viera, MP  
Mr Basil Williams, MP  
Dr George A Norton, MP  
Mrs Volda A Lawrence, MP  
Mr Keith Scott, MP  
Ms Amna Ally, M.P.  
Mr James K McAllister, MP  
Mr Dave D Danny, MP - (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)  
Mr Aubrey C Norton, MP - (Region No. 4 – Demerara/ Mahaica)  
Mr Ernest B Elliot, MP - (Region No. 4 – Demerara/ Mahaica)  
Mrs Judith David-Blair, MP - (Region No. 7 – Cayuni/Mazaruni)  
Mr Mervyn Williams, MP - (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Island/ West Demerara)  
Ms Africo Selman, MP  
Dr John Austin, MP - (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/ Corentyne)  
Ms Jennifer Wade, M. P., - (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)  
Ms Vanessa Kissoon, MP - (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/ Upper Berbice)  
Mr Desmond Fernandes, MP - (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)

**(ii) Alliance For Change (5)**

Mr Raphael GC Trotman, MP  
Mr Khemraj Ramjattan, MP - (AOL)  
Mrs Sheila VA Holder, MP  
Ms Chantalle L Smith, MP - (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)  
Mr David Patterson, MP

**(iii) Guyana Action Party/Rise Organise and Rebuild (1)**

Mr Everall N Franklyn, MP

**OFFICERS**

Mr Sherlock E. Isaacs - *Clerk of the National Assembly*  
Mrs Lilawtie Coonjah - *Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly*

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## PRAYERS

[The Clerk reads the Prayers]

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, there are seven questions on the Order Paper. Questions Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are for oral replies.

Questions Nos. 1, 2 and 3 are for the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Question No. 7 is for a written reply and is also for the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs. *[Interruption]*

I wish Members would take off their cellular phones before I have them ceased. I have to investigate if I have the power to do that first. *[Laughter]*

Honourable Member Dr Ramsammy, I have received from the Honourable Member Rudolph Insanally requesting that the oral questions directed to him be deferred. These questions if deferred and if not answered in twelve days would lapse. So they would have to be re-tabled. Mr Norton is the questioner in these matters. Maybe it would be better if Mr Norton were to put these questions in writing. They are not subject to the same rules. Would you wish to ask for them to be deferred?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** Yes, Mr Speaker. The Honourable Minister arrived in the country late and will not be attending the sitting today. I would like to seek your indulgence and asked that the questions

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be deferred to the next sitting.

**The Speaker:** Mr Corbin, I would be grateful if ... I do not know when we will sit again. I will be grateful if you can convey to Mr Norton what I explained.

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** Yes, Your Honour, but I am concerned about the procedural aspect of it. What in fact will happen as you said the questions will lapse? Will Mr Norton have to re-submit them?

**The Speaker:** He can re-submit. It is up to Mr Norton or any Member how they want to ask the questions, but my recommendation is that they be submitted for written replies, because they do not lapse; they do not have a twelve-day limit. These are questions for oral replies.

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** Yes, but there is a particular reason why he may want an oral reply...

**The Speaker:** I presume so.

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** ... because he has a chance to ask supplementary questions.

**The Speaker:** Okay, what Mr Norton can do, he can re-table the questions. We will assist in that. He just has to phone and ask us, because we have the questions already. We will just resubmit them.

**Mr Robert HO Corbin:** I am guided Your Honour.

## **For Oral Replies**

### **1. FOREIGN SERVICE DIPLOMATIC SKILLS AND COMPETENCE**

*Thursday, 28 June 2007*

By *Mr Aubrey C Norton*

**Minister Answering:** The Minister of Foreign Affairs

Can the Honourable Minister tell this National Assembly when will his Minister put in place a mechanism to ensure that young officers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are allowed to travel and attend conferences and participate in diplomatic work with the aim of developing their own and that of the foreign service diplomatic skills and competence?

*[Deferred]*

## **2. ROTATION OF FOREIGN SERVICE STAFF**

By *Mr Aubrey C Norton*

**Minister Answering:** The Minister of Foreign Affairs

Can the Honourable Minister tell this national assembly when will a policy and an effective and efficient system of rotating staff between the Ministry of Foreign and out overseas mission be formulated and implemented?

*[Deferred]*

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**3. CO-ORDINATION OF FOREIGN POLICY ACTORS AND ACTIONS**

By *Mr Aubrey C Norton*

**Minister Answering:** The Minister of Foreign Affairs

(i) Can the Honourable Minister tell this National Assembly what action is being taken to co-ordinate the various foreign policy actors and actions in the various government agencies?

(ii) Could the Honourable Minister tell this National Assembly which Agency is responsible for the co-ordination and identifying challenges faced by the co-ordination?

*[Deferred]*

Question No. 4 is in the name of Mr David Patterson. Honourable Member, Mr Patterson, you may ask the question and it is directed to the Minister of Agriculture? I do not know how that question got through, you are not allowed to call the state of the road deplorable. Anyway proceed

**4. DEPLORABLE STATE OF FOREST ROADS AND BRIDGES IN REGION NO. 10**

By *Mr David Patterson:*

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(i) Could the Honourable Minister acknowledge that the forest roads and bridges within Region No. 10 are in a deplorable state?

**The Speaker:** Is that the only question you have?

**Mr David Patterson:** No. There are five parts.

**The Speaker:** Let us get the answer to the first one first. Is it one question in three parts?

**Mr David Patterson:** One question in five parts.

**The Speaker:** Yes, Honourable Member, proceed with the whole question.

*By Mr David Patterson:*

(ii) Could the Honourable Minister acknowledge that the above situation has been brought on by poor road alignment, sub-standard road and bridge construction and a lack of maintenance?

(iii) Could the Honourable Minister accept that the prevailing situation is a potential disaster in waiting especially to the environment through soil erosion and water/stream contamination?

(iv) What action is being taken to prevent the potential for loss of life and limb and to ensure the safety of members of the public who traverse these roads daily?

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(v) What mitigation measures are being taken to stem the current state of environmental degradation along the roads and water ways?

**The Speaker:** The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon Robert M Persaud:** Mr Speaker, in response to the questions posed, I wish to state that the questions concern forest roads and bridges in Region 10 and that it why my colleague shoved it in my end. But I wish to make it clear that the Guyana Forestry Commission neither repairs nor build roads in any forested area. These infrastructure works are done by the respective concessionaires and in the case of Region 10, which I think the Member is referring to that would fall under a private Company UNAMCO. So the answer to the first question is no, but bridges along the UNAMCO Road are in need of repairs and I am speaking here primarily of forest roads within the UNAMCO concessions, not Region 10 Roads.

In response to the second question, I am advised that this has been the cause by the lack of adequate maintenance. The Company has not been doing regular maintenance.

In answer to question (iii), my answer is no, but forest roads and bridges are constructed with the code of practice for forest operations as outline by GFC. This takes into consideration the minimising of soil erosion and contamination of water ways.

In reponse to question (iv), the Company UNAMCO has been advised on the need to repair the bridges as the safety of their employees and other road users cannot be ignored.

And in answer to question (v), the Code of Practice for forestry operations stipulates the conditions under which forest roads and bridges must be built and maintained. The GFC is monitoring these more closely to ensure compliance.

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**The Speaker:** Thank you.

Yes, Honourable Member.

**Mr David Patterson:** Mr Speaker, in the Minister's response to question (iv), I would just like to clarify -

Is it not the Government's responsibility to ensure the safety of all employees, persons of Guyana irrespective of the road is private or public and what does the Ministry intends to do about this?

**The Speaker:** The Honourable Minister

**Hon Robert M Persaud:** Mr Speaker, I am quite sure inherent in my response, it shows our concern and that is why we have advised the company and the need to repairs the bridges so as to ensure not only the safety of their employees, but all road users. It is inherent in my response.

**The Speaker:** Question No 5 is in the name of the Honourable member Mr Everall Franklin. Honourable Member You may proceed?

## **5. NATIONAL DRUG STRATEGY MASTER PLAN 2005 - 2009**

*By Mr Everall Franklin:*

- (i) What is the status of the implementation of the national drug strategy master plan 2005-2009?

Should I go on?

**The Speaker:** Is it one question?

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**Mr Everall Franklin:** It has five parts.

**The Speaker:** Proceed with the question if it is one question.

(ii) If the implementation of the plan is commenced what was the date of commencement?

(iii) What has the Government done to date to promote demand reduction?

(iv) How many civil society organisation or groups are enlisted in the promotion of anti-substance/drug abuse advocacy?

(v) What level of financial assistance has civil Society organisation/ groups received from the government to promote demand reduction?

**The Speaker:** Is anyone prepared to answer these questions?

**Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy:** The Minister is unavoidably delayed and I would like to ask on his behalf that the questions be deferred to the next sitting.

Question -

That the question be deferred to the next sitting.

**Put and agreed to.**

**Questions deferred.**

**6. SUMS ALLOCATED AND DISTRIBUTED TO SPORTS ORGANISATIONS AND EVENTS 2005 - 2007**

*By Mr Raphael Trotman:*

Can the Honourable Minister state the sums allocated and distributed to sports organisations and events (other than World Cup Cricket) for the period January 2005 to April 2007 and the criteria used to determining the quantum each organisation received?

**Written reply submitted by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Hon Dr Frank CSAnthony:**

Under the laws of Guyana Chapter 39:14 the National Sports Commission Act Section 20 states the criteria for organisational eligibility for funds and under Section 10 the criteria to support and sponsor the participation in events. The NCS would review each request based on these criteria and allocate an appropriate sum.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Sports Organisation</b>	<b>Sports Events</b>	<b>Total</b>
2005	4,426,000	1,452,740	5,878,740
2006	3,983,600	3,327,498	7,311,098

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2007                      103,000                      560,010                      633,010

## 7.      **MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

*By Mr Raphael Trotman*

**Minister Answering:** The Minister of Foreign Affairs

- (i)      Would the Honourable Minister indicate what progress has been made by the Government of Guyana and which assures this nation especially civil society that progress is being made to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) within the timeframe set by the United Nations General Assembly of 2015?
  
- (ii)     What decisions and actions have been taken to date that clearly demonstrates to this nation that Guyana is on target to achieve these goals?

**[Deferred]**

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

### **Presentation and First Reading**

*Thursday, 28 June 2007*

1. **HIGH COURT (AMENDMENT) BILL 2007- Bill No. 19/  
2007 published on 2007-06-14**

*By the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs*

2. **GUYANA FORESTRY COMMISSION BILL 2007 - Bill  
No. 20/2007**

*By the Minister of Agriculture*

## **PUBLIC BUSINESS**

### **(1) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

## **MOTIONS**

### **4. AFRICIAN SLAVE TRADE AND SLAVERY**

*WHEREAS the 25<sup>th</sup> day of March 2007 marked the  
bicentenary of the abolition of the Slave Trade Act between  
Africa and the British Empire;*

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*AND WHEREAS scholars estimate that between 50 and 100 million Africans were either killed or abducted during the existence of European slavery and the slave trade;*

*AND WHEREAS it is universally accepted that slavery and the transatlantic slave trade were the most inhumane tragedies in the history of mankind;*

*AND WHEREAS our African fore parents, first as slaves and then as free men and women built the infrastructure of modern Guyana and made unparalleled contributions in the development of Guyana;*

*BE IT RESOLVED*

*That this National Assembly unequivocally acknowledges the immense debt that all Guyanese owe to our African ancestors and recognises the outstanding contribution they have made to the development of Guyana;*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED*

*That an African Land Commission be established, similar in status to the Rights Commissions established under Article 212G of the Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana to determine the issue of ancestral land rights of African Guyanese;*

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*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED*

*That this National Assembly urges the British Government to enact measures to effect reparation to the descendants of the victims of the African Slave Trade and slavery.*

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, we have a Motion on African Slave Trade and Slavery in Mrs Backer's name.

Mr Carberry

**Mr E Lance Carberry:** Mr Speaker, in the absence of Mrs Backer, can I ask for this Motion to be deferred.

**Question put and agreed to.**

**Motion deferred.**

**(iii) COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

**MOTION**

**8. SECOND DRAFT REPORT OF THE  
PARLIAMENTARY SECTORAL COMMITTEE ON  
SOCIAL SERVICES**

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*WHEREAS in accordance with Standing Order No. 103(1) of the Standing Orders of the National Assembly every Committee was required before the end of the session in which it was appointed to make a report to the Assembly upon matters referred to it;*

*AND WHEREAS the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services, which was a Sectoral Committee of the National Assembly of the Second Session of the Eighth Parliament, was unable, owing to the dissolution of the Eighth Parliament on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2006, to report on its areas of work in the Second Draft Periodic Report of the Committee 2005-2006;*

*NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:*

*That this Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services of the National Assembly of the Ninth Parliament take into account -*

- (i) the above mentioned Report; and*
- (ii) make report of the National Assembly.*

**The Speaker:** Honourable Members, we have another motion under the name of Miss Amna Ally, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services, who will move the Motion set out in the Order Paper.

**Miss Amna Ally:** Mr Speaker, I wish to present the Second Draft Periodic Report of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services standing in my name.

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**The Speaker:** The Honourable Member Mrs Shirley Edwards

**Mrs Shirley V Edwards:** Mr Speaker, I rise to support that Motion.

**The Speaker:** Thank you Honourable Member. Are there any contributions?

**Question proposed, put and agreed to.**

**Motion carried.**

Honourable Members, that appears to be our business for today. Thank you very much for your keen attention.

Please do not get anxious and excited to leave. Before you depart, since we have some time we will conclude some other business.

I thank you for your very keen attention for the day's proceedings.

The Honourable Member Dr Ramsammy

**Dr Leslie R Ramsammy:** Mr Speaker, I would like to move that the House remains suspended until the next Sitting, July 12.

Question put and agreed to.

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much.

*Adjourned Accordingly at 14:22 H*

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