

National Assembly Debates

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2006) 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

4TH SITTING

2.00PM

Thursday, 7th December 2006

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*

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 (Absent)*

*The Hon Dr Ashni K. Singh, MP.

- *Minister of Finance*

*The Hon S Rudolph Inzarally, OR, CCH, MP. -

- *Minister of Foreign Affairs (AOL)*

The Hon Harry Narine Nawbatt, MP.

- *Minister of Housing and Water*

The Hon Robert M Persaud, MP.

- *Minister of Agriculture*

The Hon Dr Jennifer RA Westford, MP.	- (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni-Mazaruni) Minister of Public Service
The Hon Keilawan 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
The Hon Brindley H.R. 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
The Hon Manniram Prashad, MP	- Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce
Mr Donald R Ramotar, MP	
Ms Gail Teixeira, MP	- (Absent)
Mr Harripersaud Nokta, 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)
Mrs Shirley V Edwards, JP, MP	- (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)
Mr Mohamed F Khan, MP	- (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam)
Mr Odinga N Lumumba, MP	
Mr Moses V Nagamootoo, MP	
Mr Mohabir A Nandlall, MP	
Mr Neendkumar, MP	
** 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.	
Mr Dharamkumar Seeraj, MP	
Mr Norman A Whittaker, MP	- (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)

* Non-Elected Minister

** Non-elected Member

Members of the Opposition (28)

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

Mr Robert Corbin, MP	- <i>Leader of the Opposition (AOL)</i>
Mr Winston S Murray, CCH, MP	
Mrs Clarissa S Riehl, MP	- <i>Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly</i>
Mr E Lance Carberry, MP	- <i>Chief Whip (AOL)</i>
Mrs Deborah J Backer, MP	
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	- <i>(Region No. 4 – Demerara/ Mahaica)</i>
Mr Aubrey C Norton, MP	- <i>(Region No. 4 – Demerara/ Mahaica) (Absent)</i>
Mr Ernest B Elliot, MP	- <i>(Region No. 4 – Demerara/ Mahaica)</i>
Mrs Judith David-Blair, MP	- <i>(Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/ Mazaruni)</i>
Mr Mervyn Williams, MP	- <i>(Region No. 3 – Essequibo Island/West Demerara)</i>
Ms Africo Selman, MP	- <i>(Absent)</i>
Dr John Austin, MP	- <i>(Region No. 6 – East Berbice/ Corentyne)</i>
Ms Jennifer Wade, M. P.,	- <i>(Region No. 5 - Mahaica/ Berbice)</i>
Ms Vanessa Kisson, MP	- <i>(Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/ Upper Berbice) (AOL)</i>
Mr Desmond Fernandes, MP	- <i>(Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)</i>

(ii) Alliance For Change (5)

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

(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*

PRAYERS

The Clerk reads **Prayers**

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Honourable Members, I apologise for the late start. This was mainly due to discussions to resolve issues for the business for today.

Appointment of Chief Whips

Honourable Members, I have been informed that Mrs Indranie Chandarpal and Mr E Lance Carberry has been appointed Government and Opposition Whips respectively with effect from 28 September 2006. Honourable Members, I am sure that you would like me on your behalf to congratulate these two Honourable Members and to offer them best wishes for their success in their work.

From what I have seen for the short period since this Parliament has called, these two Honourable Members have already established a rip-roaring relationship and I expect that things will run smoothly.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

By the *Minister of Finance*:

- (i) Audited accounts of the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance for the period 18 December 2002 to 31 December 2003.
- (ii) Audited accounts of the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance for the year ended 31 December 2004.
- (iii) Audited accounts of the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance for the year ended 31 December 2005.
- (iv) Audited accounts of the Guyana Securities Council for the period 24 September 2001 to 31 December 2002.
- (v) Audited accounts of the Guyana Securities Council for the year ended 31 December 2003.
- (vi) Audited accounts of the Guyana Securities Council for the year ended 31 December 2004.
- (vii) Financial Paper No. 3/2006 - Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totalling \$1,694,288,004 for the period 2006-04-13 to 2006-11-17.

Mr Winston S Murray: Mr Speaker, I have checked and I am not in possession of a Supplementary Order that details those things. I do not believe that it is in circulation. I have a Supplementary Order Paper that deals with VAT. Could that be pleased clarified, Sir?

The Speaker: Mr Murray, I understand it was circulated a little while ago.

Mr Winston S Murray: I am sorry.

You may proceed, Honourable Member.

By the *Minister of Finance*:

- (viii) Financial Paper No. 4/2006 - Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totalling \$4,781,247,499 for the period ending 2006-12-31.

Mr Speaker, in relation to these I beg to name Thursday, 14 December 2006 as the date for their considerations in relation to the last two items.

- (ix) Annual Report of the National Insurance Scheme for the year 2003.
- (x) Annual Report of the National Insurance Scheme for the year 2004.
- (xi) Annual Report of the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance for the year ended 31 December 2004.
- (xii) Annual Report of the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance for the year ended 31 December 2004.
- (xiii) Annual Report of the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance for the year ended 31 December 2005.
- (xiv) The Value-Added Tax Order 2006 - Order No. 23 of 2006.
- (xv) The Value-Added Tax (Transitional) Regulations 2006 - No 12 of 2006.
- (xvi) The Value-Added Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2006 - No. 13 of 2006.
- (xvii) The Excise Tax (Amendment) Regulations - No. 14 of

2006.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The Speaker: Honourable Members, there are thirteen questions on the Order Paper. Questions Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are in the name of Mrs Sheila Holder. Questions Nos. 6, 7 and 8 are in the name of Mrs Volda Lawrence. Questions Nos. 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 are in the name of Mr Raphael Trotman. All these questions are for written replies, the answers in accordance with our Standing Orders have been circulated.

1. ACTION TAKEN ON RESOLUTION NO. 16 OF 2002

Member Asking: Mrs Sheila VA Holder

Will the Honourable Minister state what action his Ministry has taken since being notified by the Clerk of the National Assembly in 2002 about Resolution No. 16 of 2002 of the Eighth Parliament with respect to the following:

That the National Assembly recognised the need for a policy to be crafted and appropriate regulations instituted in consultation with operator in the mini bus sector, consumers and other stakeholders to introduce best practices and systems for the safe, efficient and fair operation of the sector?

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Minister Answering: Hon Clement J Rohee,

Minister of Home Affairs

Answer:

Please be advised that no record of nay defined policy was located which deal with best practices to provide for the safety of mini-bus commuters

However, it must be noted that the following measures were undertaken:

- (i) Road Safety studies were done by Dr Budhu, A Guyanese Road Safety Consultant who contracted by the Government of Guyana through the Ministry of Transport and Hydraulics from IDB funding. These studies addressed, *inter alia* the minibus Accident Rate Problem and the issue of traffic signals in 2001-2003.
- (ii) Public Consultations on Road Safety were planned by the then Minister of Transport and Hydraulics in collaboration with the then Honourable Minister of Home Affairs. These public consultations commenced in September 2001.
- (iii) The issue that legislation be enacted to permit mini bus drivers having attained the age of twenty-five (25) years before being allowed to drive was raised. The current age is twenty-one (21) years, but the Police have for years observed twenty-five (25) years as the standard of issuing motor bus licences.

2. **SAFETY OF MINI BUS COMMUTERS**

Member Asking: Mrs Sheila Holder, MP

Will the Honourable Minister state specifically which policies were developed by his Ministry and the best practices introduced for the safety of mini bus commuters since 2002?

Minister Answering: Hon Clement J Rohee,

Minister of Home Affairs

Answer:

The current legislation caters for motor-bus and not mini-bus. There is urgent need for specific legislation in relation to mini-buses and their operations. Specific legislation will be speedily drafted for the Ministry of Home Affairs.

There are current laws which specify the following:

- (a) The conduct of drivers;
- (b) The conduct of conductors;
- (c) The conduct of passengers;
- (d) Seat Belt Act No. 4 of 2002

3. ACTION TAKEN ON RESOLUTION NO. 16 OF 2002

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That the National Assembly recognised the need for a policy to be crafted and appropriate regulations institute in consultation with operators in the mini bus sector, consumers and other stakeholders to introduce best practices and systems for the safe efficient and fair operation of the sector?

Minister Answering: Hon Brindley HR Benn,

Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

Answer:

Steps are being taken to craft policy and appropriate regulations. Re: LO 1554/SF-GY: Institutional Strengthening Component (New Amsterdam to Moleson Creek Road Project) **Administration and Regulations of Public Transport** (Procurement of Consultant in Progress).

Please see background Information:

Re: GUYANA TRANSPORT SECTOR STUDY

The Guyana Transport Sector Study funded by the European Union was undertaken by GOPA Consultants Inc, (Germany) in association with E & A Consultants Inc. (Guyana) during 2005.

The overall objective of the study: - is to ensure that future decisions concerning the Transport Sector In Guyana are based on a comprehensive analysis of the sector. The study was undertaken in three (3) phases:

- Phase I - Assessment of Information Gathering
- Phase II - The definition of a Sectoral Strategy
- Phase III - Formulation of an Implementation Strategy.

The Transport Sector Study was managed by a steering Committee – the mechanism for orientation provision of feedback and approval of reports. Workshops were held for consultation and feedback from Stakeholders at each phase of the study.

The Consultant submitted the Final Report in January 2006 in four (4) volumes:

- Volume I - Executive Summary
- Volume II - Main Report
- Volume III - Administrative Appendices
- Volume IV - Technical Appendices

A website www.guyanatrtransportstudy.com was created and maintained by the Consultants. The entire study is being published on GINA website www.gina.gy. The National Transport Sector Study has been approved by the government of Guyana and will form the basis for Guyana's Transport Sector Strategy. The Government of Guyana advises, however, that some aspects of the study will require further analysis which will be addressed in due course.

The Final Report outlined the Draft Transport Sector Policy and a Ten (10) year Investment and Maintenance Implementation Programme in three (3) scenarios;

Unconstrained Budget EUR380M

Moderately Constrained Budget EUR 252.4M

Heavily Constrained Budget EUR 158.7M

There is also a Technical Assistance Programme which includes among others:

Administration and Regulating of Public Transportation

Evaluation and Development of Transport Policies

Inter-Institutional and Inter-Disciplinary Co-ordination and Training

Development of computerised Inter-Modal Transportation System, Planning and Data Management

Planning of Conceptual Urban Transport Plans for main cities

IDB supported the Transport Sector Study funded by the European Union and is supporting investment which flow from it. The above Technical Assistance Programme is funded by IDB (LO-155/SF-GY;

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Institutional Strengthening Component)

Member Asking: Mrs Sheila VA Holder MP

Will the Honourable Minister state specifically which policies were developed by his Ministry and the best practices introduced for the safety of mini bus commuters since 2002?

Minister Answering: Hon Clement J Rohee,

Minister of Home Affairs

Answer:

Steps are currently being taken to craft policy. Re LO - 1554/SF-GY: Institutional Strengthening Component (New Amsterdam to Moleson Creek Road Project) Administration and regulating of Public Transport (Procurement of Consultant in Progress).

**5. IMPROVING SAFETY, EFFICIENCIES AND FAIRNESS
IN HOW MINI BUSES OPERATE**

Member Asking: Mrs Sheila VA Holder MP

Will the Honourable Minister state whether his Ministry has held any consultation exercises with operators of the mini bus sector, commuters and other stakeholders with a view of improving safety, efficiencies and fairness in how mini buses

operate?

Minister Answering: Hon Brindley HR Benn,
Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

Answer:

Some amount of consultation was done by consultants who conducted the Guyana Transport Sector Study 2005. The Administration and Regulating of Public Transport Study will deal with those issues.

6. HOMELESS FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS

Member Asking: Mrs Volda A Lawrence MP

Could the Honourable Minister state what programmes are in place to take care of the many homeless families and individuals who now live on the streets of our Capital City?

Minister Answering: Hon Priya D Manickchand.

Minister of Human Services and Social Security

Answer:

The Government of Guyana recognises the need to address the issue of homeless persons. The Night Shelter is located at East La Penitence and formally catered for persons who needed a shelter at nights. On 2 October 2006, in recognition of the fact that the need for shelter had evolved from being a need for shelter at night, the Night Shelter became a Shelter, where persons are entitled to live there. In addition to shelter the persons utilizing the services of the Shelter are provided with meals, medical care and counselling.

Studies have shown that persons become homeless for a variety of reasons. In view of this, there is presently a multi-sectoral plan being studied to address the needs of the homeless not only in the Capital City, but throughout Guyana.

**7. CITIZENS WITH MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES
(UN SOUND MIND)**

Member Asking: Mrs Volda A Lawrence MP

Could the Honourable Minister of Health state what programmes are in place to care for those citizens with multiple personalities (unsound mind) who roam the streets of our capital city, frequently endangering lives and damaging property?

Minister Answering: Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy,

Answer:

In answering this question, I do not seek to enter in any debate on the definition of who is a person with multiple personalities, now referred to as Dissociative Identity Disorder, since this seems to be a highly disputed term now within the cadre of experts in mental health.

The term *persons of unsound mind* appears in the Mental Health Ordinance 1930, which requires urgent revision. The Ministry of Health is working to complete the draft for a new Mental Health Bill, which will replace the Mental Health Ordinance of 1930. The question is being answered in the context of the next paragraph.

Homeless persons are not necessarily *persons of unsound mind*. Some of the homeless persons are unfortunately persons with various levels of mental health problems.

The Government of Guyana, through a multi-sector programme being led by the Ministry of Health and including the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Services, Ministry of Home Affairs, GPHC, the National Psychiatric Hospital, the Municipalities and the Police Force, are working to reduce the number of persons living as homeless, with no place to go. The Ministries of Local Government, Legal Affairs and Tourism are also part of the effort. The University of Guyana will also be involved.

Taking care of persons with various levels of mental health problems living on the streets is being done as part of the overall

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programme to reduce homelessness.

The following activities (with the lead Ministry) are at various stages of implementation.

- Formation of a Multisector Team to establish data base for homeless persons - Ministry of Human Services and Social Security
- Formation of a Multisector Team to recruit persons into the rehabilitation programme - Ministry of Health
- Medical and mental health assessment of each of the recruited persons and treatment (short and long term), when and if necessary - Ministry of Health/GPHC
- Psycho-Social Assessments and the possible re-linking of homeless persons with their families - Ministry of Health and Ministry of Human Services and Social Security
- Short-term housing - Ministry of Health and Ministry of Human Services and Social Security
- Long term housing - Ministry of Human Services and Social Security
- Other support (job placement etc) - Ministry of Labour

Dealing with the homeless with mental health problems is one component of a new mental health programme which has been crafted to conform to the UN Human Rights Declaration and in keeping with present day mental health norms.

The plan has been drafted after extensive consultation and expected to be presented for Cabinet approval before the end of January 2007.

Medical treatment would be provided by the GPHC and other hospitals in the country. Psychiatric care (short and long-term) would be provided

at GPHC and the National Psychiatric Hospital.

Short term and long terms housing would be provided through the Shelter being operated by the Ministry of Human Services and through additional mechanisms that the Government is pursuing.

Social Workers from the Ministry of Health and Human Services would be working with the homeless to re-establish family links.

While some of the homeless persons have been involved in violent engagement with the public and some destruction of property can be associated with the homeless, it is unfair to conclude that these unfortunate persons are *frequently endangering lives and damaging property*.

**8. ANESTHESIOLOGISTS FOR THE GEORGETOWN
PUBLIC HOSPITAL CORPORATION**

Member Asking: Mrs Volda A Lawrence MP

Could the Honourable Minister of Health say what steps are being taken to ensure the Theatre of the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation has its full complement of Anaesthesiologists?

Minister Answering: Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy,

Minister of Health

Answer:

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As with other specialist areas, we presently recruit staffing from various sources. The staffing recruited for the Anaesthesiology Department at the GPHC is as follows:

- Consultant anaesthesiologist – Head of Department
- Registrar-level Anaesthesiologist
- Government Medical Officers
- Nurse Anaesthetist

Recruitment is being done through the local medical pool and through the Cuban and Chinese Medical collaboration.

Presently, the staff includes:

- Dr A Harvey (Guyanese) - Consultant (Head of Department)
- Two Consultants from the Chinese Medical Brigade
- One Consultant from the Cuban Medical Brigade
- Dr R Acosta (Cuban/Guyanese) - Registrar
- Dr Y Martin (Guyanese) - Registrar

The following Government Medical Officers have been assigned to the Department:

- Dr Narine
- Dr Armstrong
- Dr R Abdulla

There are also several nurse anaesthetists (Guyanese and Cuban) that have been assigned to the Department.

In order to guarantee better availability of trained personnel for the Anaesthesiology Departments at GPHC and other medical institutions in Guyana, we have plans to introduce two new training programmes, starting in 2007, in collaboration with UG and a number of international medical institutions. These programmes are:

- Diploma in Anaesthesiology (Three-year Programme from which the graduates would become eligible for consultant level appointments)
- Nurse technician in Anaesthesiology (Nurse could be appointed as Nurse Anaesthetist).

9. SHOOTING INCIDENT WHICH CLAIMED THE LIFE OF PARASRAM PERSAUD

Member Asking: Mr Raphael GC Trotman MP

- (i) Can the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs say whether the Government of Guyana is satisfied with the response of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela surrounding the shooting incident on Friday, 6 October 2006 in the Cuyuni River, which claimed the life of Parasram Persaud?
- (ii) Can the Honourable Minister say what initiatives of Government of Guyana are pursuing to ensure the family of Parasram Persaud receives compensation for the death?
- (iii) What action is the Government of Guyana pursuing with

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respect to this incident?

Minister Answering: Hon Clement J Rohee,

Minister of Home Affairs

Answers:

Immediately after the incident the Government of Guyana requested an official report from the Government of Venezuela on the circumstances surrounding the tragic death of Mr Parasram Persaud. The Government of Guyana is still awaiting the report. Reminders have been sent urging an early response. It is hoped that the investigation which is reportedly being conducted by the Ministry of Defence will be concluded shortly and made available to the Government of Guyana.

Meanwhile, the Guyana Police and the Guyana Defence Force have completed their own investigations into the incident. Once the official report of the Government of Venezuela is received, a determination will be made as to the course of action to be followed. A case for compensation may be opened to the family of the victim

10. POLICY REGARDING THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF GUYANESE CITIZENS

Member Asking: Mr Raphael GC Trotman MP

Could the Honourable Minister state what is the Government of Guyana's policy regarding the protection of the rights of Guyanese citizens living in sister CARICOM States?

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Minister Answering: Hon Clement J Rohee,

Minister of Home Affairs

Answer:

The Government of Guyana is committed to a policy of protecting fully the welfare of the citizens wherever they may reside. On receiving reports of the infringement of the rights of Guyanese citizens living in a sister CARICOM country, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs pursues the matter through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in that Member State in an effort to ensure that the just entitlements of these citizens are safeguarded.

In the cases where the Government of Guyana is represented by Honorary Consuls, in these territories for example in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, St Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, these officials often act on behalf of the Government of Guyana in an effort to resolve any problems that may be encountered

**11. COMPLAINTS OF UNFAIR AND/OR UNLAWFUL
TREATMENT RECEIVED FROM GUYANESE LIVING
IN CARICOM STATES**

Member Asking: Mr Raphael GC Trotman MP

Could the Honourable Minister state for the period 1 January 2005 to 30 October 2006, how many complaints of unfair and/or unlawful treatment have been received from Guyanese living in CARICOM states by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and what has been the response and action taken in each case?

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Minister Answering: Hon S Rudolph Insanally,

Minister of Foreign Affairs,

Answer:

Guyana has received twelve (12) formal complaints of unfair and/or unlawful treatment from Guyanese living in CARICOM States.

In each case, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guyana immediately approached the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the respective countries requesting that their Immigration Department provide Guyana with reasons for the denial of entry of our Guyanese nationals.

Exchanges have been taken place between the Immigration Department of Guyana and those of other CARICOM countries with a view to establishing more cooperative arrangements to deal with the problem.

At the highest level of CARICOM, Guyana continues to protect the ill-treatment of our travelling population.

It may also be added that very few complaints are received by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Most of the reports are hearsay and carried in the media. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs can only act in cases where detailed information is provided.

**12. REPORT ON LOST WEAPONS OF THE GUYANA
DEFENCE FORCE (GDF)**

Member Asking: Mr Raphael GC Trotman MP

Could the Honourable Prime Minister state:

- (i) In the Government in receipt of a report on the weapons which the GDF claimed it lost in February 2006 and if yes, is the Government satisfied with the report?
- (ii) Will the Government commission an independent inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the missing weapons and to receive sound recommendations as to how such an occurrence can be prevented in the future?

Minister Answering: Hon Samuel A.A. Hinds,

Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications

Answers:

(i) The GDF established a Board of Inquiry, the report from which was submitted to the Defence Board. The Defence Board is examining that report in conjunction with the pertinent and significant revelations emanating from a number of publicly known events in which a number of guns were recovered.

(ii) The Government is not yet at a point to make a determination whether an independent inquiry should be commissioned.

The Government would always welcome sound recommendations about how such an occurrence can be prevented in the future.

13. SHOOTING INCIDENT IN THE CUYUNI REIVER ON

FRIDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2006

Member Asking: Mr Raphael GC Trotman MP

Could the Honourable Prime Minister state:

Following the shooting incident in the Cuyuni River on Friday, 6 October 2006, have measure been put in place to strengthen border security in general and that with our neighbour Venezuela in particular?

Minister Answering: Hon Samuel AA Hinds MP,

Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works
and Communications

Answer:

Yes! Measures have been put in place within resources available to strengthen border security. In the diplomatic arena we have transmitted our deep concern and dismay to the Venezuelan authorities. We are expecting to receive a report from them and we would be looking for arrangements which should mitigate against such an incident recurring.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Presentation and First Readings

1. CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2006 - Bill No. 25/2006

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Hon Dr Ashni K Singh: Mr Speaker, I beg to inform the House that there is a printer's error in the Index of this Bill as circulated with respect to the numbering of the pages, in particular Page 616 should have read Page 619 and consequently all of the page numbers following in the Index should be corrected accordingly. Thus the final page should read 784 instead of 781 - increased by three.

**2. LOCAL AUTHORITIES (ELECTIONS) AMENDMENT)
BILL 2006 - Bill No. 24/2006**

By the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

PUBLIC BUSINESS

(i) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTION

**1. NOMINATION OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE
OF SELECTION**

Te Speaker: Honourable Members, the Assembly will now as required by Standing Order No. 81 (1) (2) nominate Members to comprise the Committee of Selection. I invite nominations accordingly.

Hon Clement J Rohee: Mr Speaker, with your leave I wish to nominate

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the following Honourable Members to serve on the Committee of Selection of this Assembly:

From the People's Progressive Party/Civic (5)

Hon Samuel AA Hinds MP,

Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications;

Hon Dr Henry B Jeffrey MP,

Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation

Mr Donald R Ramotar; M.P,

Ms Gail Teixeira; MP and

Mrs Indranie Chandarpal, MP *Chief Whip*

The Speaker: How many names are those, Honourable Member?

Hon Clement J Rohee: These are five names, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: There should be six names, Honourable Member.

Hon Clement J Rohee: Mr Speaker, we will name the other one at a subsequent sitting. Is that permitted?

The Speaker: That is permitted.

Hon Clement J Rohee: Thank you.

The Speaker: Are there any other nominations?

Mr Winston S Murray: I wish to nominate the following persons as representative of **People's National Congress Reform-One Guyana (3)** to the Committee of Selection -

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Mrs Clarissa Riehl;

Mr Lance Carberry, *Chief Whip* and

Ms Africo Selman.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr Murray.

Mrs Sheila VA Holder: I beg to nominate Mr Khemraj Ramjattan to sit on the Committee of Selection for the **Alliance For Change (1)**.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Honourable Members, these names have to be seconded. We can either have three separate seconders or one seconder for all the names.

Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy: Mr Speaker, I would like to second the nominations that were made for all the members' name.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member. Are there any other nominations? *[Pause]* There being no other nominations, I declare the Members duly nominated to serve on the Committee of Selection.

(iii) **PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

MOTIONS

1. THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

WHEREAS over 150 members of Guyanese civil society of various walks of life and from fields endeavour have put forward a National Development Strategy that details a series of bold economic initiatives and exciting programmes geared towards the transformation and diversification of the economy;

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AND WHEREAS among the stated objectives of the National Development Strategy are attainment of the highest possible rates of economic growth, the alleviation of poverty, the equitable geographic distribution of economic activities and benefits and the diversification of economy;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Guyana agreed with the Civil Society to table that National Development Strategy document in the National Assembly for its examination and adoption;

AND WHEREAS the National Assembly of the Eighth Parliament unanimously passed a Resolution on 15th December, 2005 for an update of the National Development Strategy at the earliest practicable date;

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly accepts the National Development Strategy and the measures and policies therein as an overarching strategy for pursuing the economic and social transformation of Guyana;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly directs that the National Development Strategy be placed before a Special Select Parliamentary Committee to commence consultations immediately with the private sector, wider civil society and other stakeholders

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to establish a Representative Cross Sectional Group, supported by a suitably resourced secretariat with access to research expertise, to update the National Development Strategy at the earliest practicable date;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly directs that the Representative Cross Sectional Group reports periodically to the Special Select Parliamentary Committee and that the finally updated National Development Strategy be submitted to the Special Select Parliamentary Committee to make recommendations to the National Assembly for the consideration and adoption of the said updated National Development Strategy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That subsequent to the adoption of the updated National Development Strategy this National Assembly authorises its Sectoral Committee on Economic Services to monitor the policies and the implementation of the National Development Strategy by the Executive.

The Speaker: Honourable Members, we are now in a position to move on to Private Members' Business and the first item on the Order Paper is the Motion relating to the National Development Strategy moved by the Honourable Member Mr Winston Murray.

Mr Winston S Murray: Mr Speaker, I rise to move ... *[Interruption]*

The Speaker: May I ask if we are proceeding with this Motion? As far as you are aware, where are we?

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Mr Winston S Murray: Sir, I have information that I would like to put before the House and to proffer a suggestion.

The Speaker: Because I noticed that we have an unusually large attendance honouring our National Assembly today. I have a suspicion they are here for something else, not your motion. So if we are going to proceed on a long debate with your motion, I would like to bring that matter up before so that the members of the public who may wish to leave or stay as they so desire. Let me hear you Mr Murray.

Mr Winston S Murray: Mr Speaker, just before the commencement of Parliament I received from the Honourable Prime Minister based on a discussion he had with me earlier in the morning, some amendments to the Motion as proposed in my name. Sir it is the view of the People's National Congress Reform-One Guyana that we should seriously examine the possibility of having a consensus motion on this matter, but because of the time at which the amendments were received by me, there has not been sufficient time for me to consult with the members of the PNCR-1G and thereafter to discuss with my colleagues who have proposed these amendments the possibility of reaching a consensus.

In the circumstances, I wish to propose a deferral for one week for the consideration of this Motion if this House would be so minded to allow for those things to take place and hopefully on resumption within the next week, we may be able to have before this House a consensus Motion. That is what I would propose with respect to this, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member

The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs

Hon Clement J Rohee: Mr Speaker, it is with the same spirit of seeking consensus that I rise to make a few comments.

We are also supportive for the need for a consensual motion in the Honourable House on a matter of this nature; there is absolutely no doubt about that. The fact that we sought to make some amendments to the

Motion, I think it was precisely aimed in that direction. We are, however, seeking to encourage the Honourable Member with your support for this Honourable House to be suspended for about fifteen in contrast to the week that has been requested with a view to seeking to find some pathway towards a resolution of the issue which the Honourable Member has raised. We believe that with your leave we can sit with the Honourable Member in whose name the Motion has been placed before this Honourable House to try to find a solution and within fifteen minutes we will be back to report to the House and to your good self what the situation is before we support the one week's suspension. Thank you.

The Speaker: Very well, if that is agreeable with Mr Murray, we will take that course, but before suspending the House, I would like to bring up for consideration now the second private members' motion. I understand a certain course is going to be taken in relation to this Motion.

[Discussion Suspended]

2. THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

WHEREAS in 1991 Guyana signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;

AND WHEREAS Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child";

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AND WHEREAS the Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child has consistently proposed the abolition of corporal punishment when the reporting process under the convention has revealed the continued existence of school corporal punishment;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Guyana's report to the Committee of the Convention of the Rights of the Child of 29 July 2002 states "Enhanced legislation is an integral element in this country's efforts to give tangible effect to the provisions of the Constitution Reform Commission.";

AND WHEREAS the Government of Guyana's report to the Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 29 July 2002 further states "The Constitutional Reform Commission acknowledged that the provisions of the Convention of the Rights of the Child should inform constitutional provisions to protect children's rights. The Oversight Select Committee of the Revised Guyana Constitution subsequently accepted the above recommendations and in 2001 these rights were accorded that status of fundamental and human rights in the amended Constitution.";

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly declares the continued use of corporal punishment in schools in Guyana a violation of Article 19 of the United States Convention on the Rights of the Child;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly declares the continued use of corporal punishment in schools in Guyana a violation of the

Constitution;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED;

That this National Assembly recommends the abolition of corporal punishment under the new Education Act.

The Speaker: The Honourable Member Ms Chantalle Smith

Ms Chantalle I Smith: Mr Speaker, I rise to ask your indulgence in light of the vigorous debates that has arisen from the Motion on the Abolition of School Corporal Punishment in my name and in light also of recommendations by civil society organisations and individuals with whom we have consulted. Also in keeping with the AFC's objective of encouraging greater dialogue and consensus on this and other issues and given indications by the two major parties and other political parties on their willingness to further study and discuss this issue with a view to arriving at a consensus position, I wish to ask that the Motion in my name be deferred for a period not exceeding six months from today.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Honourable Member Mr Rohee, is that acceptable or do you wish me to formally put it?

Hon Clement J Rohee: Mr Speaker, I think given the seriousness of the issue and the interest which it has generated in the public domain, I, having consulted with my colleagues, it seems as though this is a reasonable suggestion to put before the Honourable House.

The Speaker: The Honourable Member Mr Murray, I think the sense of the House is that this Motion be deferred.

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Mr Winston S Murray: Yes Sir, we concur.

The Speaker: Thank you. The Motion is so *deferred*.

Honourable Members, we will suspend for fifteen minutes.

14:46H - SUSPENSION OF SITTING

15:07H - RESUMPTION OF SITTING

Assembly resumed discussion on the Motion - The National Development Strategy

The Honourable Member Mr Murray

Mr Winston S Murray: Mr Speaker, I am pleased to report to you, Sir, that with the cooperation of colleagues on the other side of the House, we have reached agreement for a deferral for a week to try to reach consensus and I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues on the other side. Thank you, Sir.

The Speaker: The Honourable Member Mr Rohee

Hon Clement J Rohee: Mr Speaker, as we approached the yuletide season, [*Laughter*] I think it is time (some people do not like to use the word *spirit*) but we should start the spirit of goodwill and I think this is the spirit in which we approach this search for a resolution to problems. I would wish to state that on behalf of this side of the House that we do agree that we should postpone for a week and I believe that there is language that within this timeframe, we could settle it in order to come back at our next sitting to engage in a very fruitful and productive debate. Thank you, Sir.

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Motion Deferred

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Members. That means that we adjourn until 14 December 2006 at 14:00h.

Adjourned Accordingly at 15:09h