

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 26TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST
SESSION (2006-2007) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON THURSDAY, 28TH JUNE, 2007
IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (71)

Speaker (1)

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

Members of the Government (42)

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. Dr. Henry B. Jeffrey, M.P., Minister of Foreign Trade and International
 Cooperation (Absent)

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

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

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

*The Hon. S. Rudolph Insanally, O.R., C.C.H., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs (Absent – on leave)

The Hon. Harry Narine Nawbatt, M.P., Minister of Housing and Water

*Non-elected Minister

2.

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

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

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

*The Hon. Doodnauth Singh, S.C., M.P., Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

The Hon. Dr. Frank C.S. Anthony, M.P., Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport (Absent – on leave)

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. Jennifer I. Webster, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Absent – on leave)

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

Mr. Donald Ramotar, M.P. (Absent)

Ms Gail Teixeira, M.P.

Mr. Harripersaud Nokta, M.P.

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

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

Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, M.P.

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

***Non-Elected Minister**

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

3.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Odinga N. Lumumba, M.P. (Absent)

Mr. Moses V. Nagamootoo, J.P., M.P.

Mr. Mohabir A. Nandlall, M.P.

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

***Mr. Steve P. Ninvalle, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary

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

Mrs. Philomena Sahoye-Shury, C.C.H., J.P., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary

***Mrs. Pauline Sukhai, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary

Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, M.P. (Absent)

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

Members of the Opposition (23)

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

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

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

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

Mr. E. Lance Carberry, M.P., Chief Whip

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Anthony Vieira, M.P.

***Non-elected Member

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Mr. Basil Williams, M.P.

Dr. George A. Norton, M.P.

Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P.

Mr. Keith Scott, M.P.

Ms Amna Ally, M.P.

Mr. James McAllister, M.P.

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

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

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

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

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

Ms Africo Selman, M.P.

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

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

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

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

(ii) Alliance For Change (5)

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

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mrs. Sheila V.A. Holder, M.P.

Ms Chantalle L. Smith, M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. David Patterson, M.P.

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

Mr. Everall N. Franklin, M.P.

OFFICERS

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

Mrs. Lilawattie Coonjah, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The sitting commenced at 2:07p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-

At the request of the Minister of Health, and with the approval of the Assembly, the answers to the following three questions to the Minister of Foreign Affairs were deferred:

For Oral Replies

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

Member Asking: Mr. Aubrey Norton, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Foreign Affairs

*Can the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly when will his Ministry 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?

(Notice Paper No. 70 (Q52 Opp52) published on 2007-01-23)

2. ROTATION OF FOREIGN SERVICE STAFF

Member Asking: Mr. Aubrey Norton, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Foreign Affairs

*Can the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly when will a policy and an effective and efficient system of rotating staff between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our overseas missions be formulated and implemented?

(Notice Paper No. 71 (Q53 Opp53) published on 2007-01-23)

3. CO-ORDINATION OF FOREIGN POLICY ACTORS AND ACTIONS

Member Asking: Mr. Aubrey Norton, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Foreign Affairs

(i) *Can the Hon. 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 Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly which agency is responsible for the co-ordination and identifying challenges faced by the co-ordination?

(Notice Paper No. 72 (Q54 Opp54) published on 2007-01-23)

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

Member Asking: Mr. David A. Patterson, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Agriculture

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

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- (ii) ***Could the Hon. 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 Hon. 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?**

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

(Notice Paper No. 121 (Q93 Opp92) published on 2007-02-28)

Answers:

"I would like to state that the Guyana Forestry Commission neither builds nor maintains roads and bridges. The responsibility for the construction and maintenance of this infrastructure is that of the respective concessionaire. In the case of Region #10, this is the responsibility of the private company UNAMCO. When the concessionaire's forestry activities come to an end, these roads and bridges then become the responsibility of the relevant State body."

- (i) **No. The bridges along the UNAMCO road are in need of repairs.**

- (ii) **I am advised that this has been caused by the lack of adequate maintenance.**

- (iii) No. Forest roads and bridges are constructed in accordance with the Code of Practice for Forest operations. This takes into consideration, minimizing any soil erosion, and contamination of waterways.
- (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.
- (v) The Code of Practice for Forestry operation stipulates the conditions under which forest roads and bridges must be built and maintained. The GFC is monitoring these more closely to ensure compliance.

At the request of the Minister of Health and with the approval of the Assembly, the answers to the following question for the Minister of Home Affairs were deferred:-

5. **NATIONAL DRUG STRATEGY MASTER PLAN 2005 – 2009**

Member Asking: Mr. Everall Franklin, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Home Affairs

- (i) *What is the status of the implementation of the national drug strategy master plan 2005 – 2009?
- (ii) *If the implementation of the plan has commenced what was the date of commencement?
- (iii) *What has the government done to date to promote demand reduction?
- (iv) *How many civil society organizations or groups are enlisted in the promotion of anti-substance/drug abuse advocacy?

- (v) *What level of financial assistance has civil society organizations/groups received from the government to promote demand reduction?

(Notice Paper No. 148 (Q 110 Opp 109) published on 2007-05-24)

For Written Replies

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

Member Asking: Mr. Raphael Trotman, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

Can the Hon. Minister state the sums allocated and distributed to sports organizations and events (other than World Cup Cricket) for the period January, 2005 to April, 2007, and the criteria used to determine the quantum each organization received?

(Notice Paper No. 149 (Q 111 Opp 110) published on 2007-05-24)

Answer:

The Laws of Guyana, Cap. 39:14, Section 20 of the National Sports Commission Act states the criteria for organizational eligibility for funds. Section 10 states the criteria to support and sponsor the participation in events. The NSC would review each request based on these criteria, and appropriate sums:

Year	Sports Organisations	Sports Events	Total
2005	4,426,000	1,452,740	5,878,740
2006	3,983,600	3,327,498	7,311,098
2007	103,000	560,010	663,010

At the request of the Minister of Health, and with the approval of the Assembly, the answers to the following question to the Minister of Foreign Affairs were deferred:

7. **MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Member Asking: Mr. Raphael Trotman, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Foreign Affairs

- (i) Would the Hon. 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?

(Notice Paper No. 150 (Q 112 Opp 111) published on 2007-05-24)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS-

Presentation and First Readings

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

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the High Court Act.

11.

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

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

A BILL intituled AN ACT to repeal and replace the Guyana Forestry Commission Act 1979, re-establish the Guyana Forestry Commission, and provide for incidental matters.

(i) **PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

ITEM 1 - AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE AND SLAVERY

At the request of Mr. E. Lance Carberry, M.P., on behalf of Mrs. Deborah Backer, M.P., the consideration of the following motion was deferred:

WHEREAS the 25th day of March, 2007 marked the bicentenary of the abolition of the Slave Trade Act between Africa and the British Empire;

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 to the development of Guyana,

12.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly unequivocally acknowledges the immense debt that all Guyanese owe to our African ancestors and recognizes 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 Co-operative Republic of Guyana, to determine the issue of ancestral land rights of African Guyanese;

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.

(Notice Paper No.141 (M32 Opp 10) published on 2007-04-17)

(ii) COMMITTEE BUSINESS**MOTION****ITEM 2 - SECOND DRAFT PERIODIC REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY
SECTORAL COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES**

Ms Anna Ally, M.P., Chairperson of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services moved the following motion:

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;

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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 2nd 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 the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services of the National Assembly of the Ninth Parliament take into account –

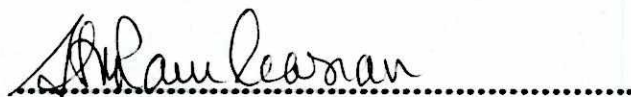
- (i) the above mentioned Report; and
- (ii) make report to the National Assembly

(Notice Paper No. 154 (M38 Opp12) published on 2007-06-11)

The motion was then put and carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 2.22 p.m., on a motion by the Minister of Health, the Assembly was adjourned to 2.00 p.m. on Thursday, 12th July, 2007.



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

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam.

28th June, 2007.