

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

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.D., M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Health

The Hon. Jennifer I. Webster, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Finance

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

*The Hon. Pauline Sukhai, M.P., Minister of Amerindian Affairs

Mr. Donald R. Ramotar, M.P.

Ms Gail Teixeira, M.P.

Mr. Harripersaud Nokta, M.P.

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

***Non-Elected Minister**

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

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

Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

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

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

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

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 – on leave)

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

Mr. Mohabir A. Nandlall, M.P. (Absent)

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

***Mr. Steve P. Ninvalle, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport (Absent – on leave)

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 in the Ministry of Housing and Water (Absent)

Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, M.P.

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

Members of the Opposition (28)

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

Mr. Robert Corbin, M.P., Leader of the Opposition (Absent)

Mr. Winston Murray, C.C.H., M.P. (Absent)

4.

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

Mr. E. Lance Carberry, M.P., Chief Whip (Absent)

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P. (Absent)

Mr. Anthony Vieira, M.P. (Absent)

Mr. Basil Williams, M.P. (Absent)

Dr. George A. Norton, M.P. (Absent)

Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P. (Absent)

Mr. Keith Scott, M.P. (Absent)

Ms Amna Ally, M.P. (Absent)

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

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

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

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

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

Ms Africo Selman, M.P. (Absent)

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

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

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

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

Mr. James K. Mc Allister, M.P. (Absent)

(ii) Alliance for Change (5)

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

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.

Mrs. Sheila Holder, M.P.

Ms Latchmin Budhan Punalall, 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. (Absent – on leave)

OFFICERS (2)

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

Mrs. Bibi Baldeo, Chief Administrative Officer

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The sitting commenced at 2.15 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

(1) **Resignation of Mr. S. Rudolph Insanally, O.R., C.C.H.**

The Speaker informed the Assembly that he had received a letter dated 28th March, 2008, from Mr. S. Rudolph Insanally, O.R., C.C.H., resigning his seat as a Member of the National Assembly with effect from 31st March, 2008.

The Speaker, on behalf of Members of the Assembly and himself, wished Mr. Insanally all success in his future endeavours.

(2) **Appointment of Ministers**

The Speaker also announced that the former Minister of Amerindian Affairs, Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, had been re-designated Minister of Foreign Affairs and that former Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, Mrs. Pauline Sukhai had been appointed Minister of Amerindian Affairs. Both of the appointments took effect from 10th April, 2008.

The Speaker, on behalf of Members of the Assembly and himself, congratulated Mrs. Pauline Sukhai on her appointment as a Minister and extended best wishes to Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett in discharging her new responsibilities.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS-

(1) **By the Speaker of the National Assembly:**

- (i) The Ethnic Relations Commission Annual Report for the year 2007.

(Circulated)

- (ii) The Ethnic Relations Commission Report on Public Consultation on the perceived needs of the African Guyanese Community from 13th – 16th November, 2007.

(Circulated)

(2) By the Minister of Finance:

The Value-Added Tax (No. 2) Order 2008 – Order No. 29 of 2008.

(Circulated)

(3) By the Minister of Labour:

(i) The Minimum Wages (Employees in Dry Goods Stores) (Amendment) Order 2008 – Order No. 12 of 2008.

(Circulated)

(ii) The Minimum Wages (Employees in Drug Stores) (Amendment) Order 2008 – Order No. 13 of 2008.

(Circulated)

(iii) The Minimum Wages (Employees in Hardware Stores) (Amendment) Order 2008 – Order No. 14 of 2008.

(Circulated)

(iv) The Minimum Wages (Employees in Groceries) (Amendment) Order 2008 – Order No. 15 of 2008.

(Circulated)

(v) The Labour (Conditions of Employment of Certain Workers) (Minimum Rate of Wages) (Amendment) Order 2008 – Order No. 16 of 2008.

(Circulated)

(vi) The Minimum Wages (Mechanical Transport Employees) (Amendment) Order 2008 – Order No. 17 of 2008.

(Circulated)

8.

(vii) **The Minimum Wages (Security Guards) (Amendment) Order 2008 – Order No. 18 of 2008.**

(Circulated)

(viii) **The Minimum Wages (Employees at Petrol Filling Stations) (Amendment) Order 2008 – Order No. 19 of 2008.**

(Circulated)

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES-

By Ms Gail Teixeira, M.P., (Chairperson of the Committee on Appointments):

The Interim Report of the Committee on Appointments.

(Circulated)

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-

For Written Replies

1. **EFFORTS TO IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SECURITY IN THE INTERIOR REGIONS**

Member Asking: Mr. Albert Atkinson, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Agriculture

Could the Minister of Agriculture state what efforts are being made to assist agricultural production and improve food security in the interior regions?

(Notice Paper No. 233(Q163 PPP/C Private Member No.5) published on 2008-03-27)

Answer:

“Hinterland agriculture development is a priority section in our national agriculture plan. Our Hinterland agriculture programme primary objectives include:

- (a) To improve food security in hinterland communities
- (b) Increase economic opportunities through agricultural enhancement

To achieve these, a number of elements make up our hinterland agriculture programme.

1. **Enhanced Extension Services**

- (i) Increase the amount and the nutritional quality of Hinterland food production to sustain the daily consumption and ensure a healthy population, which includes the demands from Eco-tourism, mining and any other commercial activity.
- (ii) Guarantee food availability to the people of the Hinterland.
- (iii) Encourage the generation of income to improve the living standards of the communities.

2. **Control of Acoushi ants, whiteflies, caterpillars and diseases by the communities**

The control of Acoushi ants is an ongoing activity. The activity was strengthened with the purchase of two (2) swing fog machines. One (1) for Region No. 1 (Mabaruma) and one (1) for Region No. 10 to be use at Rockstone communities and the communities of the Berbice and Demerara Rivers.

Training of Agricultural Field Assistants and farmers to operate and maintain the machine that already exist in all of the Hinterland Regions was done. The use of the swing fog is supported by the use of Acoushi Ants Bait, both locally produced by NARI and imported chemicals.

The control of the ants, caterpillars which are seasonal and whiteflies are implemented with the consideration to maintain the natural and organic environment with the use of cultural practices and botanicals.

3. **Improving cassava production**

There is continuous training on the improvement of the husbandry and processing practices and the introduction of other by-products to the benefit of the communities and to sustain food security and generate income. On farm trails with variety of cassava were established within communities and will be expanded to increase production and productivity.

4. **Improving vegetables, fruit, peas and beans production**

Vegetables fruits, peas and beans production is done to satisfy the requirement of the nutritional requirement of the communities which include school's hot meal programme, eco-tourism and mining operations.

The training and implementation of the drip irrigation system to promote vegetables production in the dry season was encouraged communities. Training was also conducted in solar drying techniques to encouraged communities to preserve fruits for the off season.

Partnership with business and NGO'S are been developed to ensure that vegetables seeds are readily available to the communities. While training in seed selection and storage for legumes (peas, beans and peanuts) demonstrations in budding and grafting with fruit stock were done to encourage communities to develop community nurseries to ensure fruit plant and legumes availability.

5. **Improving Poultry, other forms of livestock production and Aquaculture development**

This activity is to encourage income generation and sustained supply of animal protein to improve the health of the inhabitants of the Hinterland communities.

11.

The Ministry is encouraging increase utilization of local feed materials to reduce cost of production. We are providing training on poultry husbandry including Creole birds and on the management of other cattle, sheep, goat, pigs and aquaculture.

There is increase efficiency and effectiveness with out cross border surveillance with respect to Foot and Mouth Disease and other diseases.

The Fisheries Department extension staff has commenced in the hinterland regions. The Ministry's pig breeding programme has been extended to the hinterland region.

6. **Improving honey production**

Honey is widely used in the communities for food and medicine and is also sold to visitors and tourists. Beekeeping was adopted by local communities as a means of generating additional income for local households.

We are supporting stakeholders in Region No. 7 (Upper Mazaruni) and Region No. 9 in the continuous development of the honey industry. Training was also held for Pomeroon River communities.

7. **Improving the production of peanut and cashew nut**

The creation of jobs in both the cashew and peanut industry, e.g., increase production of peanut butter and snack foods with cashew nuts is the result of the extension services working with the farmers and the women processors especially in Regions 1 and 9. the activity also supports improve nutrition for children via peanut punch under school feeding programme and also provide assistance to farmers thereby ensuring that peanuts are available.

8. Fisheries Sector

Inland Capture Fisheries: The Ministry of Agriculture has been assisting the development and management of the inland capture fisheries, through the implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the Arapaima Management Plan, in collaboration with stakeholders such as the North Rupununi District Development Board.

Aquaculture: the Ministry of Agriculture has been assisting the development of aquaculture, through training activities and technical support. In December 2007, three training courses were implemented in Regions 7, 8 and 9. Follow-up activities are scheduled for May, 2008.

9. Increasing transfer by technology and research

The National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), the research agency of the Ministry, whose mission is to provide advice to farmers and develop technologies for the sustainable development of Agriculture in Guyana conducted trials and field work in a number of Hinterland communities.

The Institute successfully introduced a number of breeds of livestock, namely sheep and goat, into the communities of South Central Rupununi. These animals are intended to be used to improve the animal genetic resources of the area and to provide farmers and inhabitants with an alternative source of meat.

The institute provided farmers of Annai and St. Ignatius with drip irrigation systems to ensure continuous supply of water for cultivation thereby providing farmers with the opportunity to do year round cultivation of vegetables and legumes. This system has proven very beneficial to the communities.

13.

Farmers within the community of Toka benefited from training and other assistance in the area of peanut processing. This training and technical assistance that was provided have since resulted in the successful processing of peanut butter. It has also resulted in farmers increasing their land under cultivation.

10. **Expansion of Rice Cultivation**

The farmers of Moca Moca in the Rupununi Savannahs benefited from a Rice Project that was implemented in 2003. This Project provided farmers in the area with approximately one hundred and twenty (120) bags of rice seeds for cultivation.

Follow-up by the DRBD to the recipients of this project was done in the form of technical assistance which was provided to farmers to assist with their rice cultivation.

The Ministry of Agriculture continues to provide farmers and inhabitants of the Hinterland communities with much needed assistance to ensure the development of agriculture to provide foremost food security and a better standard of living.

The Government is working with the Spanish government on expanding rice cultivation in Amerindian communities. Much more is planned for these regions for this year 2008. Hinterland communities stand to benefit from the Grow More Food Campaign recently launched by the Ministry.”

2. **KOKER DOOR AT THE MONTROSE PUMPING STATION**

Member Asking: Mr. Anthony Vieira, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Agriculture

Could the Honourable Minister of Agriculture inform this National Assembly when GUYSUCO will fix the koker door at the Montrose Pumping Station, on the lower East Coast Demerara, to enable all five pumps located there to work at full capacity during all tides?

(Notice Paper No. 234 (Q164 Opp 159) published on 2008-04-07)

Answer:

Rehabilitation work on the koker door at the Guysuco Pump Station at Montrose will commence on May 8, 2008 and is expected to be completed by May 24, 2008. The work is to be undertaken collaboratively by NDIA and Guysuco.

The koker door developed problems about three years ago after the 2005 floods, but due to the porous state of the structure, no major repairs could have been undertaken. Minor repairs were undertaken and the door remained in a manageable condition. In 2007, a contract was awarded by Guysuco to replace the door with flap gates. However, the contractor was unable to mobilize to undertake the works and the contract was terminated.

The fixing of this koker door will not enable all five pumps to work at full capacity during all tides. This is so because the pumping station was designed to operate at full capacity only when the tides are below 2.90 MGD.

Guysuco and the NDIA are presently coordinating activities aimed at enhancing the present infrastructure at the Montrose pump station so as to allow for continuous operation of all five pumps at full capacity during all tides.

3. **GUYANA POWER AND LIGHT INC. (GPL)**

Member Asking: **Mr. Anthony Vieira, M.P.**

Minister Answering: **The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications**

Can the Honourable Prime Minister inform this National Assembly:

- (i) Whether the present restructuring of the Guyana Power and Light Inc. (GPL), including the severing the employment of over 200 employees, will result in better efficiency at GPL?

- (ii) Whether the restructuring of GPL will result in a corresponding decrease in the cost of electricity to consumers?
- (iii) What percentage of Line Losses is due to technical faults and what percentage is due to the theft of electricity?
- (iv) Whether the Government has plans to sell its shares in GPL to private investors?
(Notice Paper No. 235 (Q165 Opp 160) published on 2008-04-07)

Answers:

- (i) “Yes, that is our intention, our purpose and our hope. It is aimed at reducing costs. This decision has been motivated by considerations of employees’ productivity such as : employees per customer, employees per unit of energy sold and so forth. This restructuring is an attempt to move employee productivity in GPL towards what is achieved by a number of other utilities.
- (ii) It will contribute to lowering costs. However, many other items contribute to costs – including fuel prices, wage settlements, machinery and equipment costs. Our aim is to provide electricity to customers in the Guyana situation at the lowest sustainable prices and we will continue in our efforts to reduce costs wherever possible.
- (iii) Electricity (rather than line) losses are often categorized as technical and commercial. A study by the consulting group Power Planning Associates (PPA) in 2006 puts technical (line) losses at 11.6% and commercial losses at 28.8%. Both categories of losses are now much lower, with the latest audit report of PPA certifying that last 12 months average total losses (commercial and technical combined) as at December 2007 at

33.4%. Commercial losses include, theft of electricity, meters reading low for any number of reasons, problems from meter readings through to billings and receipts. Some customers may fall off the active register even though they continue to receive electricity. Whilst genuine errors can and do occur in these areas, there have been reports of scams and collusions between customers and a number of employees.

According to the law, customers have an obligation to pay for the electricity they consume. A number of considered programmes are being implemented to reduce theft and other commercial losses starting with improved metering including prepaid meters, new computer hardware and software featuring a consumer information system with many new checks, balances and internal controls.

There are technical losses inherent in the flow of electricity through the transmission and distribution system. Due to low capital availability through the last thirty years or more, economies at the time of installation and growth, much of GPL's system is overloaded. The investments planned in T&D will gradually lower technical losses. GPL's Development and Expansion Programme 2008 – 2012 sets a target for technical and commercial losses to be reduced to 6.75% and 7.9% respectively for a total loss of 14.65% by 2012.

- (iv) The Government has made public its strategy for sustaining the Guyana Power and Light Inc. which is available for download at the website www.electricity.gov.gy. The Government has no defined plans to privatize the Guyana Power and Light, Inc. through equity investment in the medium term.

The Government has always desired widespread ownership of GPL across all categories of customers. The Government has hoped and continues to hope that it would be a good learning experience for our people to be in the position of both owner and customer. Such a position will allow our people to develop a greater appreciation of the needs and desires of saving and investing on the one hand and buying and consuming on the other.

For Oral Reply

4. **THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT**

In the absence of Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P., or another Member deputed by her to ask the following question, the Speaker directed that it be removed from the Order Paper:

“Could the Honourable Minister of Human Services and Social Security inform this National Assembly:-

- (i) *Whether Regulations have been drafted to give effect to the Domestic Violence Act?
- (ii) *When these Regulations would be laid in the National Assembly?”
(Notice Paper No. 203 (Q149 Opp 146) published on 2008-02-06)

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS, INCLUDING POLICY STATEMENTS-

Global Food Prices

The Minister of Agriculture made a statement on the Global Food Prices.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS-

Presentation and First Reading

HIJACKING AND PIRACY BILL 2008 – Bill No. 4/2008 published on 2008-04-07

At the request of the Minister of Home Affairs, on behalf of the Government, and in accordance with Standing Order No. 68, the following Bill was withdrawn:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to make special provisions for punishment for the offences of armed robbery, hijacking and piracy and for matters connected therewith.

PUBLIC BUSINESS-

(i) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTIONS

**ITEM 1 - THE PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA MANUAL OF RULES AND
PROCEDURE, PRACTICES AND CONVENTIONS OF THE BUSINESS OF
THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

The Minister of Labour, on behalf of the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications, moved the following motion:

WHEREAS on the 14th December, 2007 the Parliament of Guyana Manual of Rules of Procedure, Practices and Conventions of the business of the National Assembly was laid in the National Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the said Manual contains the rules, procedure, practices and conventions used by Parliamentarians in the conduct of the business of the National Assembly,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly accepts in general the rules, procedure, practices and conventions of the said Manual;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Manual of Rules, Procedure, Practices and Conventions of the business of the National Assembly be committed to the Special Select Committee on the Manual of Rules and Procedures and Operations of Committees to make recommendations to the National Assembly on the adoption of the said rules, procedure, practices and conventions.

(Notice Paper No. 206 (M54 Govt 34) published on 2007-12-24)

The motion was put and carried.

ITEM 2 - IMPACT OF GLOBAL FOOD PRICE INCREASES

At the request of the Minister of Agriculture the following motion was deferred:

WHEREAS globally there is an increase in food prices caused mainly by four factors, namely, increase in the price of fossil fuels, effects of Climate Change, increase in production of bio-fuels, and growing demand for food in large emerging economies;

AND WHEREAS that the increase of food prices, amounting to over 80% over the past year and a half, is having a devastating effect on the supply and affordability of food for populations in both developing and developed nations;

AND WHEREAS that various multilateral and regional institutions, including the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the World Bank, the World Food Programme and CARICOM, have already called for urgent action and heightened collaboration to tackle this global crisis;

AND WHEREAS Guyana, having recognised this crisis and its impact within the CARICOM region, is working with its sister CARICOM partners to transform Guyana into a major player in the development of Food security in the region;

AND WHEREAS the Government has established an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Food Prices tasked with monitoring this emerging situation on a constant basis and to make recommendations on action that may be needed to be taken to cushion the impact on the Guyanese population, especially the poor and vulnerable,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly takes note of the impact of Global rising food prices on the cost of living in Guyana and supports the interventions taken by the Government to cushion the impact of these global price increases on our population, especially for the vulnerable groups;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly undertakes to follow the implementation of these governmental interventions that include increasing the disposable income of ordinary Guyanese; subsidizing the cost of accessing utility services, implementing the Ministry of Agriculture's GROW MORE campaign and its concomitant budgetary interventions; zero-rating of all essential food items, diesel and agricultural inputs; monitoring exports of some essential agricultural commodities to ensure adequate local supply and monitoring of prices and supply of various food commodities; and assistance to single-headed households;

AND BE IT ALSO RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly be provided with the deliberations of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Food Prices on a quarterly basis, set up by Cabinet to review the impact of rising food prices on Guyanese and make recommendations intended to cushion the impact;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly recognizes that the situation requires national action, and sustained efforts and engagement with critical sectors and groups to confront this challenge locally and regionally.

(Notice Paper 237 (M69 Govt 41) published on 2008-04-29)

ITEM 3 - ALLEGATIONS OF TORTURE MADE AGAINST THE JOINT SERVICES OF GUYANA

A written request by Mr. Aubrey Norton, M.P., and a request by Mr. Raphael Trotman, M.P., on behalf of Mr. Norton, for the following motion to be deferred did not obtain the leave of the Assembly. The Speaker therefore, in accordance with Standing Order 35(1), directed that the motion be removed from the Order Paper:

WHEREAS Guyana is a Party to the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

AND WHEREAS the Convention against Torture prohibits the use of torture in any circumstance;

AND WHEREAS there have been allegations of torture made against the Joint Services in Guyana by Messrs. Patrick Sumner, Victor Jones, David Leander, Michael Dunn, Alvin Wilson and Sharth Robertson;

AND WHEREAS the Convention makes it mandatory that State Parties to the Convention "*take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture*";

AND WHEREAS Article 12 of the Convention mandates State Parties to "*ensure that any individual who alleges he has been subjected to torture in any territory under its jurisdiction has the right to complain to and to have his case promptly and impartially examined by its competent authorities*";

AND WHEREAS it is the responsibility of a State Party to the Convention to "*ensure that education and information regarding the prohibition against torture are fully included in the training of law enforcement personnel, civil or military, medical personnel, public officials and other persons who may be involved in the custody, interrogation or treatment of any individual subjected to any form of arrest, detention or imprisonment*";

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls on the Government to honour its legal obligations under Article 12 of the Convention and establish an impartial and independent commission to examine and investigate the allegations of torture made against the Joint Services in Guyana;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls on the Government to honour its legal obligations under Article 13 of the Convention by ensuring that steps *“be taken to ensure that the complainant and witnesses are protected against all ill-treatment or intimidation as a consequence of his complaint or any evidence given”*;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls on the Government to honour its legal obligations under Article 4(2) of the Convention by enacting the necessary legislation to make torture an offence;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls on the Government to honour its legal obligations under Article 14 of the Convention by ensuring that persons found to have been tortured are compensated; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls on the Government to honour its legal obligations under Article 10 of the Convention by ensuring that public officials are made aware that all forms of torture are prohibited.

(Notice Paper No. 215 (M 59 Opp 17) published on 2008-02-01)

ITEM 4 - BRUTAL AND HORRIFIC KILLING OF ELEVEN GUYANESE CITIZENS

In the absence of Mr. Robert Corbin, M.P., or some other Member duly authorized by him to move the following motion, the Speaker, in accordance with Standing Order 35(1), directed that it be removed from the Order Paper:

WHEREAS eleven Guyanese citizens, including five children, all from the village of Lusignan, East Coast Demerara, were brutally and horrifically killed by gunmen in their homes in the wee hours of the morning of Saturday, 26th January, 2008;

AND WHEREAS these brutal and horrific killings have caused untold pain, grief, anger and despair to the surviving family members, fellow villagers and the entire Guyanese community;

AND WHEREAS these brutal and horrific killings have evoked unequivocal condemnation from all political parties, religious organizations, business organizations, civic organizations and all Guyanese living in Guyana and in the Diaspora;

AND WHEREAS CARICOM and the Diplomatic Community have also unequivocally condemned these brutal and horrific killings;

AND WHEREAS these brutal and horrific killings have forcefully reminded all Guyanese how tenuous the security situation in Guyana continues to be;

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly condemns the brutal and horrific killings of eleven of our citizens;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly extends deepest and sincerest sympathy to the families of our eleven citizens and the corporal of the Guyana Defence Force who were murdered;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls on the Government of Guyana to implement a definite plan of action to arrest the downward spiraling of our country's security.

(Notice Paper No. 231 (M66 Opp19) published on 2008-03-17)

(iii) COMMITTEE BUSINESS

MOTIONS

ITEM 5 - ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF GUYANA FOR THE YEARS 2002 AND 2003

At the request of Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P., on behalf of Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P., (Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee), the following motion was deferred:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Report of the Public Accounts Committee on its examination of the Public Accounts of Guyana for the years 2002 and 2003, respectively be adopted and refer the Report to the Government for consideration.

(Notice Paper No. 222 (M 60 Opp 18) published on 2008-02-05)

ITEM 6 - ADOPTION OF THE INTERIM REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS

Ms Gail Teixeira, M.P., (Chairperson of the Committee on Appointments) moved the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the contents of this Interim Report of the Committee on Appointments be noted, and the Report adopted.

(Notice Paper 236 (M68 PPPC/Private Member No. 6) published on 2008-04-24)

Mrs. Sheila Holder spoke to the motion.

ADJOURNMENT

At 3.05 p.m., the sitting was adjourned by the Speaker of the National Assembly to a date to be fixed.


.....

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

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam.

8th May, 2008.