

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 55TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION
(2006-2008) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON TUESDAY, 1ST JULY, 2008
IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (70)

Speaker (1)

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

MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT (41)

(i) **People's Progressive Party/Civic (40)**

(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 functions of Office of the President)

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

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 Co-operation (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 Foreign Affairs (Absent)

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

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

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

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*Non-elected Minister

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

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 (Absent)

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 (Absent – on leave)

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 (Absent)

*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. (Absent)

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

***Non-Elected Minister**

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

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

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

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.

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

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

Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, M.P.

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

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

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.

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

***Non-elected Member

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

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

Mr. Ernest Barnabas 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. (Absent – on leave)

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

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

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

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

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. Lilawtie Coonjah, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The sitting commenced at 2.18 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

PUBLIC BUSINESS-

(i) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTION

ITEM 1 - IMPACT OF GLOBAL FOOD PRICE INCREASES

The Assembly resumed the debate on the following motion:

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

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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)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mrs. Latchmin Budhan Punalall

The Minister of Amerindian Affairs

Mrs. Volda Lawrence

The Minister of Human Services and Social Security

Mr. Mervyn Williams

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4.22 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 5.18 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Mr. Irfaan Ally

Mr. Raphael Trotman

The Minister of Finance

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 6.53 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 7.25 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

Mr. Robert Corbin also spoke to the motion.

Thereafter the Minister of Agriculture replied.

The Minister of Agriculture moved the following amendments which were put and carried:

First Resolved Clause:

Third line - between the words "Government" and "to" insert the words "and other National Stakeholders"

Second Resolved Clause:

First line - after the word "undertakes" insert the words "to establish a Special Select Committee to discuss" and delete the words "to follow"

Third Resolved Clause:

Second line - between the words "Prices" and "on" insert the words "and the Special Select Committee"

Fourth Resolved Clause:

Third line - after the word "regionally" insert the words "and that the Multi-Stakeholder Forum should deliberate on this issue at an appropriate time".

The amended motion was then put and carried.

(iii) COMMITTEE BUSINESS

MOTIONS

ITEM 2 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

Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P., (Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee) moved the following motion:

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)

Mr. Donald Ramotar spoke to the motion.

Thereafter the motion was then put and carried.

ITEM 3 - THE FIDUCIARY OVERSIGHT PROJECT

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance moved the following motion:

WHEREAS by Resolution No. 9 dated 11th January, 2007 the National Assembly appointed a Special Select Committee to examine the recommendation at component 6 of the Guyana Fiduciary Oversight Project Final Framework and Guidelines Report Volume 2 with a view to advising the National Assembly on the steps to be undertaken by the Government to enable the Clerk to become the employing authority of the Staff of the Parliament Office;

AND WHEREAS the National Assembly stipulated that the Special Select Committee examines the present constitutional arrangement for the appointment of the Clerk and advise the National Assembly whether there is need for a change and what change that should be;

AND WHEREAS the Special Select Committee was required to present its Final Report to the National Assembly three months after its appointment;

AND WHEREAS the Special Select Committee had requested an extension of the deadline for the submission of its Final Report to 29th February, 2008;

BE IT RESOLVED:


That this National Assembly approves of a further extension of the deadline for the submission of its Report to 30th August, 2008.

(Notice Paper 240 (M72 Govt. 42) published on 2008-06-10)

The motion was put and carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9.57 p.m., on a motion by the Minister of Home Affairs, the sitting was adjourned to 2.00 p.m., on Thursday, 3rd July, 2008.


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

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam.

1st July, 2008.