

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 21ST SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND
SESSION (2002-2003) OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON THURSDAY, 23RD OCTOBER, 2003
IN THE CONVENTION CENTRE, OCEAN VIEW INTERNATIONAL HOTEL,
LILIENDAAL, GREATER GEORGETOWN

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (68)

Speaker (1)

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

Members of the Government (37)

(i) People's Progressive Party/Civic (34)

(ii) Non-elected Ministers (2)

(iii) The United Force (1)

The Hon. Samuel A.A. Hinds, M.P., Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works
and Communications

The Hon. Reepu Daman Persaud, O.R., J.P., M.P., Minister of Parliamentary Affairs

The Hon. Clement J. Rohee, M.P., Minister of Foreign Trade and International Co-operation

The Hon. Harripersaud Nokta, M.P., Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

The Hon. Gail Teixeira, M.P., Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

The Hon. Dr. Henry B. Jeffrey, M.P., Minister of Education

The Hon. Saisnarine Kowlessar, M.P., Minister of Finance

The Hon. Shaik K.Z. Baksh, M.P., Minister of Housing and Water

The Hon. J. Ronald Gajraj, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs
(Region No. 3 -Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)

The Hon. Rev. Dr. Ramnauth D.A. Bisnauth, M.P., Minister of Labour, Human Services and
Social Security

The Hon. Clinton C. Collymore, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Local Government and
Regional Development

The Hon. Satyadeow Sawh, M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Other Crops and Livestock
(Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)

- * The Hon. S. Rudolph Insanally, O.R., C.C.H., M.P., Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Foreign Affairs
- * The Hon. Doodnauth Singh, S.C., M.P., Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs
The Hon. Dr. Jennifer R.A. Westford, M.P., Minister of the Public Service
The Hon. C. Anthony Xavier, M.P., Minister of Transport and Hydraulics
The Hon. Bibi S. Shadick, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security (Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)
- ** The Hon. Manzoor Nadir, M.P., Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce
The Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues, M.P., Minister of Amerindian Affairs
The Hon. Dr. Leslie S. Ramsammy, M.P., Minister of Health
Mr. S. Feroze Mohamed, M.P., Chief Whip
Mr. Cyril C.L. Belgrave, C.C.H., J.P., M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)
Mr. Donald R. Ramotar, M.P. (Absent)
Mr. Husman Alli, J.P., M.P. (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)
Mr. Komal Chand, C.C.H., J.P., M.P.
Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P.
Mr. Bernard C. DeSantos, S.C., M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica) (Absent - on leave)
Mrs. Shirley V. Edwards, J.P., M.P.
Mr. Odinga N. Lumumba, M.P.
Mr. Heeralall Mohan, J.P., M.P. (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam)
Mr. Ramesh C. Rajkumar, M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)
Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)
Dr. Bheri S. Ramsaran, M.D., M.P. (Absent)
Mrs. Philomena Sahoye-Shury, C.C.H., J.P., M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Water
Mrs. Pauline R. Sukhai, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)
Mr. Zulfikar Mustapha, M.P.
Mr. Neendkumar, M.P.

*Non-Elected Minister

**Elected Member from The United Force

Members of the Opposition (30)**(i) People's National Congress/Reform (27)**

Mr. Robert H.O. Corbin, M.P.

Mr. Winston S. 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 (Absent - on leave)

Mr. Ivor Allen, M.P. (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam)

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P.

Mr. Deryck M.A. Bernard, M.P. (Absent)

Mr. C. Stanley Ming, M.P.

Mr. Vincent L. Alexander, M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

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

Mr. Basil Williams, M.P.

Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P.

Dr. Dalglish Joseph, M.D., M.P.

Miss Anna Ally, M.P. (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice) (Absent - on leave)

Miss Sandra M. Adams, M.P. (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/Berbice)

Mr. Jerome Khan, M.P.

Dr. George A. Norton, M.P.

Miss Myrna E.N. Peterkin, M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. James K. McAllister, M.P. (Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)

Dr. Carl Max Hanoman, M.P.

Miss Lurlene A. Nestor, M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Abdul Kadir, J.P., M.P. (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/Berbice)

Mr. Ricky Khan, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)

Mrs. Rajcoomarie Bancroft, M.P. (Region No. 8 - Potaro/Siparuni)

Mr. Nasir Ally, J.P., M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)

Miss Judith David, M.P. (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)

Miss Genevieve Allen, M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

(ii) **Guyana Action Party/Working People's Alliance (2)**

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

Mrs. Shirley J. Melville, M.P. (Region No. 9 - Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo) (Absent - on leave)

(iii) **Rise, Organise and Rebuild Party (1)**

Mr. Ravindra Dev, M.P.

OFFICERS

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 2.03 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

OATH OF A NEW MEMBER

Election of Dr. Carl Max Hanoman

The Speaker informed Members that following the death of Mr. Andy Gouveia as a Member of the National Assembly, and that following his call upon the representative of the list of candidates in which Mr. Gouveia's name was included, he was informed that the name of Dr. Carl Max Hanoman had been extracted from the said list and that Dr. Carl Max Hanoman was, on 22nd October, 2003, declared to be an elected Member of the National Assembly to fill the vacancy.

The Speaker stated that before Dr. Carl Max Hanoman could take part in the proceedings of the Assembly, he would have, as required by Article 167 of the Constitution, to make and subscribe the oath of Office.

As Dr. Carl Max Hanoman was present, the oath was administered to him by the Clerk.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

The Speaker made the following announcements:

(i) **Congratulations and Welcome to Dr. Carl Max Hanoman**

“I wish, on behalf of Members of the Assembly and myself, to congratulate Dr. Hanoman on his election to the Assembly. We extend our best wishes to him.”

(ii) **Death of Mrs. Viola Victorine Burnham, O.R.**

“Hon. Members, as you are aware, Mrs. Viola Victorine Burnham died on 10th October, 2003, in Miami, United States of America.

On 15th August, 1985, Mrs. Burnham was declared a Member of the National Assembly and remained so until 29th August, 1992 when she retired.

On 19th September, 1985, Mrs. Burnham, made and subscribed the Oath of Office as Vice-President, Social Development and Deputy Prime Minister. Mrs. Burnham who was not an elected Member of the National Assembly became, by virtue of holding the Office of Vice-President, a Member of the National Assembly.

On 1st January, 1989, Mrs. Burnham was re-designated duties and served as Vice-President, Culture and Social Development and Deputy Prime Minister up to the 7th July, 1991.

From the 8th July, 1991, Mrs. Burnham continued to serve as an Ordinary Member of the National Assembly until her retirement on the 28th August, 1992.

On behalf of the Members of the Assembly and myself, I place on record and convey our deepest condolences to the children and relatives of the late Mrs. Viola Victorine Burnham.”

(iii) Leave:

The Speaker informed the Assembly that leave had been granted to:-

Mr. Bernard DeSantos

Ms Amna Ally and

Mrs. Shirley Melville for that day's sitting

and

Mr. E. Lance Carberry, up to 31st October, 2003

(iv) Acquisition of Computers for use by Members of Parliament

The Speaker informed the Assembly that two internet ready computers with accessories and e-mail facility were recently acquired by the Parliament Office for use strictly by Members of Parliament and that the computers were installed in the Parliamentary Library.

The Speaker further stated that the matter of computer training for Members who were not familiar with computers will be raise at the next meeting of the Parliamentary Management Committee.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ETC.

(1) By the Speaker of the National Assembly:

Annual General Report of the Ombudsman for the year 2001.

(Circulated)

(2) By the Prime Minister:

- (i) Annual Report of the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission for the year 1999.
(Circulated)
- (ii) Share Purchase Agreement between the Government of Guyana and Americas and Carribean Power Limited.
(Circulated)

(3) * By the Minister of Finance:

- Customs Duties (Amendment) (No. 2) Order No. 29 of 2003.
(Circulated)

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS-**For Written Replies****No. 1 - LINMINE'S MANAGEMENT CONTRACT**

Mr. Abdul Kadir asked the Prime Minister the following questions:

1. (a) Is there a Management Contract signed with Omai and the Government of Guyana relating to the Management of the state-owned company, LINMINE?
- (b) If yes, when was the Management Contract signed and what is its effective date?
- (c) When will this contract become available for public scrutiny?
2. Could the Honourable Prime Minister undertake to make a copy of the Management Contract available to the Leader of the Opposition?
(Notice Paper No. 54 (Q30 Opp30) published on 2003-08-22)

Written Replies by the Prime Minister:

1. (a) There is a Management Contract signed among the State (represented by the Government), Cambior Inc. the parent Company of Omai Gold Mines Limited, and the Linden Mining Enterprise Limited.
 - (b) The Management Contract was signed on the 24th July, 2003 and became effective on the 1st August, 2003.
 - (c) The contract will be provided to the National Assembly on completion of the privatisation transaction.
2. Subject to the confidentiality provision of the Management Contract, a copy of the Management Contract can be provided to the Leader of the Opposition. It should be noted that the contract has been circulated to the members of the Linmine Board, which includes a nominee of the PNC/R.

No. 2 - DISMISSED EMPLOYEES OF LINMINE

Mr. Abdul Kadir asked the Prime Minister the following question:

Can the Honourable Prime Minister say what steps, if any, have been taken to offset the dislocations experienced by more than 1,200 (one thousand two hundred) dismissed employees of LINMINE?

(Notice Paper No. 55 (Q31 Opp31) published on 2003-08-22)

Written Reply by the Prime Minister:

It should be recalled firstly, that each dismissed employee received a generous severance payment and training grant totalling about GYD 1,000,000,000.00 (one billion dollars), averaging over GYD 800,000.00 (eight hundred thousand dollars) per retrenched employee. Prime Minister has been urging that this money be seen as 'sacred' money for individual and community redevelopment.

The objective of the Government is to create the framework and opportunities for the development of new and existing economic enterprises in Linden and Region 10 as a whole. This objective is formalised in the Government's Integrated Plan for Region 10, which puts into perspective and integrates the Government current and planned development activities for the Region. The European Union (EU) funded LEAP (Linden and Region Ten Economic Advancement Programme) is a major component aiming to kindle and nurture the entrepreneurial spirit in Linden and throughout Region 10. LEAP has a small allocation for physical infrastructure improvement required to remove bottlenecks to economic activities. His Excellency, President Bharrat Jagdeo has shared this Integrated Plan with the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Robert Corbin, in the course of their 'constructive engagements.'

The overall objectives of the Integration Plan are as follows:

1. To enable the bauxite industry to become internationally competitive;
2. To stimulate the expansion and diversification of the Region's economic base through:
 - (i) investment promotion;
 - (ii) development and expansion of small businesses;
 - (iii) training to become entrepreneurs;
3. To Upgrade the Region's infrastructure, specifically;
 - (i) electricity;
 - (ii) water;
 - (iii) roads;
 - (iv) river services;
 - (v) urban development;
4. To enhance the region's social and recreational services, with the following as priority areas:
 - (i) health;
 - (ii) education;
 - (iii) special interventions - SIMAP & BNTF;
 - (iv) youth services;

The Government of Guyana is also pursuing a number of projects to bring jobs to Linden. Efforts are also underway to enhance the development of timber and related businesses, agriculture and other forms of mining.

Additionally the Government of Guyana through the Privatisation Unit is engaged in an exercise which aims at building a data base on the redundant employees. This information will be used to promote the level of skills available to an investor and to attract businesses that can use these skills.

The intention is, to create opportunities for strategic businesses to take advantage of the Brazil-Lethem Road.

Jobs will be created in the short term with the Government of Guyana infrastructure projects and hopefully with the investment plan of Cambior following the privatisation of the Company. At the moment, about 350 of the 1200 ex-employees of Linmine, have been currently employed by the successor operator and they have been granted generous severance and training packages.

Early results, in restructuring Linmine are showing that the project is cash-neutral. The completion of the privatisation transaction is expected to achieve profitability and hopefully growth in employment over time.

The plan to develop a new power plant by OMAI is also important to secure the electricity supply in Linden.

Go-Invest and other agencies of the Government of Guyana will continue to seek the development of Linden via marketing the incentive regime, the skills available and what land and other opportunities may be available. The Government of Guyana has also been progressing the Intermediate Savannah Development Project, which will ultimately stimulate economic activities in the Linden Area.

No. 3 - GUYANA GEOLOGY AND MINES COMMISSION

Ms Judith David asked the Prime Minister the following question:

Can the Honourable Prime Minister say why there is no Regional Representative for Region #7 on the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC)?

(Notice Paper No. 60 (Q36 Opp36) published on 2003-08-22)

Written Reply by the Prime Minister:

The Guyana Geology and Mines Commission(GGMC), is a Government Agency that is charged with the mandate to manage the prospecting and development of Guyana's mineral and petroleum endowment all across Guyana.

The Board of the GGMC comprises of persons from various sectors/various stakeholders. There is no designated regional representative *per se* on the Board of the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission(GGMC). To be specific the Board of the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission(GGMC) is by statute made up, of up to fourteen persons and traditionally includes representatives nominated by:

- The Ministry of Amerindian Affairs;
- The Joint Services Commission;
- The Quarry Sector;
- The Guyana Gold Board (by tradition the Manager);
- The Ministry of Finance;
- The Environmental Protection Agency;
- The Guyana Public Service Union;
- The Lands and Surveys Commission;
- A Worker of the GGMC;
- The Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners' Association

No. 4 - MAINTENANCE WORK ON ITABALLI ROAD

Ms Judith David asked the Prime Minister the following question:

Can the Honourable Prime Minister say how soon maintenance work would be done on the road from Itaballi to the interior in Region #7?

(Notice Paper No. 63 (Q39 Opp39) published on 2003-08-22)

Written Reply submitted by the Prime Minister:

There are two roads developed from Itaballi. One is the route crossing the Puruini river, and meeting the Mazaruni river opposite the mouth of the Kurupung river. It follows the old UMRP road. The other is the Oko-Arimu road closer to the Cuyuni which was built by the Barama Company Limited in the area of the Timber Sales Agreement (TSA) of Guyana Sawmills Inc. (GSI), as part of a contract with GSI.

The Prime Minister understands from the Honourable Member Ms Judith David that her question refers to the Oko-Arimu road. Guyana Sawmills Inc. on the 1st October, 2003, informed the Prime Minister that:

The road is presently in good order and will be kept so.

Prime Minister will investigate further, and suspects that there may be issues relating to the quality of the road expected and the costs of maintaining the road to that level of quality.

No.5 - REGIONAL HEALTH OFFICER FOR REGION #7

Ms Judith David asked the Minister of Health the following question:

Can the Honourable Minister say when will a Regional Health Officer be assigned to Region #7?

(Notice Paper No. 64 (Q40 Opp40) published on 2003-08-22)

Written Reply submitted by the Minister of Health:

There is an acting Regional Health Officer in Region 7. Arrangements are being finalized for contracting a permanent RHO. Arrangements would be completed for the new RHO to assume duties by January 2004.

No. 6 - DOCTORS FOR BARTICA HOSPITAL

Ms Judith David asked the Minister of Health the following question:

Can the Honourable Minister say when will Doctors be assigned to the Bartica Hospital to facilitate minor surgeries?

(Notice Paper No. 65 (Q41 Opp41) published on 2003-08-22)

Written Reply submitted by the Minister of Health:

Our recruitment process for a surgeon to be assigned to the Bartica Hospital is continuing. In the meanwhile, in collaboration with the GPHC, arrangement is being made for a doctor from the surgical department of the GPHC to be assigned as a visiting doctor to provide surgical services two times per month.

No. 7 - PAYMENT OF WATER RATES IN BLUEBERRY HILL

Mr. Abdul Kadir asked the Minister of Housing and Water the following question:

Can the Honourable Minister of Housing and Water say why it is that residents who live in Blueberry Hill, Linden and have not received water in their taps for years are invoiced to pay water rates?

(Notice Paper No. 56 (Q32 Opp32) published on 2003-08-22)

Written Reply submitted by the Minister of Housing and Water:

Those residents in Blueberry Hill, Linden, who have not received a supply of water since GWI took over the Water Supply System will not be required to pay tariffs. GWI has been requested to prepare a verified list of those residents for tariff exemption and notification purposes.

No. 8 - POTABLE WATER IN BLUEBERRY HILL

Mr. Abdul Kadir asked the Minister of Housing and Water the following question:

Can the Honourable Minister of Housing and Water say when will the community of Blueberry Hill, Linden receive potable water in their taps?

(Notice Paper No. 57 (Q33 Opp33) published on 2003-08-22)

Written Reply submitted by the Minister of Housing and Water:

An estimated \$200m is being expended to rehabilitate the water supply system at Linden, including Blueberry Hill.

The works to be executed include:

- ◆ Procurement of raw water pumps at Wisroc WTP;
- ◆ Procurement of high lift pumps at Wisroc WTP;
- ◆ Replacement of under sized 200mm diameter pipe with 250mm diameter pressure main;
- ◆ Refurbishment of Wisroc elevated tank;
- ◆ Replacement of Wisroc booster pump;
- ◆ Installation of transmission main from Wisroc elevated tank to Blueberry Hill.

These works are expected to be completed early in 2004 and the affected communities at Blueberry Hill will then receive a supply of water.

In the mean time, the affected communities are receiving water through water tender service.

No. 9 - MONEY COLLECTED FOR HOUSE LOTS IN AMELIA'S WARD

Mr. Abdul Kadir asked the Minister of Housing and Water the following question:

Can the Honourable Minister of Housing and Water say what is the total amount of money collected for the house lots in Amelia's Ward and how much has been spent to date on infrastructure in that area?

(Notice Paper No. 58 (Q34 Opp34) published on 2003-08-22)

Written Reply submitted by the Minister of Housing and Water:

According to the records, the total amount of money collected for the house lots in Amelia's Ward is \$49,879,308. The sum of \$26,000,000 has been spent on construction of roads in Amelia's Ward. In addition, contracts in the sums of \$207,285,100 and \$60,578,758 respectively have been awarded for the construction of roads (including drainage) and water distribution system in Amelia's Ward.

No. 10 - STATUS OF INFRASTRUCTURE WORK AT FOUR MILE, BARTICA

Ms Judith David asked the Minister of Housing and Water the following question:

Can the Honourable Minister say what is the status of the infrastructure works to be done at Four Mile, Bartica?

(Notice Paper No. 61 (Q37 Opp37) published on 2003-08-22)

Written Reply submitted by the Minister of Housing and Water:

A contract has been awarded for the installation of water distribution system in the Four Miles Housing Development at Bartica.

Construction of roads (including drainage) is to be undertaken under the GOG-IDB Low Income Settlements Programme and it is expected that works will commence in 2004.

No. 11 - IDB FUNDED WORKS AT BARTICA

Ms Judith David asked the Minister of Housing and Water the following question:

Can the Honourable Minister say what is the status of the IDB funded works being done on the road to the western side of the Bartica Secondary School and the Housing Scheme?

(Notice Paper No. 62 (Q38 Opp38) published on 2003-08-22)

Written Reply submitted by the Minister of Housing and Water:

There is no IDB funded works for the road to the western side of the Bartica Secondary School and the Housing Scheme.

The Ministry of Housing and Water is planning to build a road in the Housing Scheme but the Cadastral Survey plan has to be amended.

A contract has been awarded for the installation of water distribution system at the Housing Scheme.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS-

5th WTO Ministerial Conference, held in Cancun, Mexico, September 10 -14, 2003

The Minister of Foreign Trade and International Co-operation made the following statement:

“Mr. Speaker, the 5th Ministerial Conference of the WTO was convened in Cancun, Mexico on September 10 -14, 2003. Guyana was represented among a Caribbean delegation which was comprised of several countries, most at ministerial level.

In preparation for the Conference the CARICOM Council for Trade and Development (COTED) had convened a Special Session on September 1 - 4, 2003 in Georgetown to strategize and

agree on a unified Caribbean approach in Cancun. Cuba and the Dominican Republic participated in that special Session of COTED. The COTED had also engaged in an exchange of views with representatives of a number of regional and international NGOs.

The Cancun Conference was appropriately organized as a mid-term stocktaking of the Doha Development Agenda (DDA). In this regard, the Chairman of the General Council, in seeking to close off the preparatory discussions in Geneva and consolidate the divergent views of the WTO members on the various negotiating issues for the purposes of the Ministerial Conference, forwarded on his own responsibility a draft text - called the Chairman's text - of the Cancun Ministerial Declaration. The draft Declaration was issued on August 24, 2003 and served as the basis of the deliberations at Cancun.

The Chairman of the Conference, in keeping with traditional practice under the GATT/WTO, organized the negotiations in the following five (5) Working Groups under the coordination of Ministerial Facilitators:

- (i) Agriculture - Facilitator/Singapore
- (ii) Development - Facilitator/Kenya
- (iii) Non-Agriculture Market Access (NAMA) - Facilitator/Hong Kong China
- (iv) Singapore Issues - Facilitator/Canada
- (v) Other Issues - Facilitator/Guyana

In Cancun the Caribbean delegation with Guyana as the lead spokesperson, met regularly for briefings and consultations as well as to refine the region's strategy in response to emerging developments during the Conference. The Caribbean Group also consulted and maintained useful alliances with other like-minded countries and groups, especially the ACP, LDCs, the African Union and the G-21 group which included the larger developing countries such as Brazil, India, China, South Africa and Indonesia, etc.

It was evident from the Geneva process that the key stumbling blocks (deal breakers) at the Cancun deliberations would be in the area of Agriculture, Trips and Public Health and the Singapore Issues, namely, Transparency in Government Procurement, Investment, Competition Policy and Trade facilitation. The slow and uneven progress in Geneva following the Doha Ministerial, underlined the difficulties that overshadowed the Conference at Cancun.

In keeping with the Doha Development Agenda (DDA), developing countries, overall, sought firm commitments from the developed countries on treatment of agriculture subsidies, preferences, Trips and Public Health and special and differential treatment. The developed countries (mainly the EU, Japan and the US) were not prepared to make commitments beyond "best endeavour" undertakings. The decision on the Trips and Public Health issue was reached on the eve of the Cancun Conference, after it was made clear by the LDCs and key developing countries that no agreement on this single issue could undermine the Cancun meeting. On the other hand, the developed countries demanded, as a trade-off strategy, firm and/or additional commitments from developing countries in such areas as the Singapore issues which, in the context of the DDA, are not part of the Single Undertaking of the agreements to be negotiated.

In seeking to respond to the fluid situation at the Conference, the Caribbean, based on the strategy agreed by the COTED, articulated its position in its own right as well as through the alliances with the ACP Group, the African Union, the LDCs and the G-21.

On September 8, 2003 the region tabled its specific proposals for amendments to the text on Agriculture in the Draft Cancun Ministerial Declaration. The Region's strategic approach on this matter was underscored by the express need for greater policy space within which the region can exercise flexibility to support national development needs. Six areas of key interest to the region were identified: special and differential treatment; preservation of preferential trade arrangements; measures to address special needs including special products, a safeguard mechanism and exceptions to tariff liberalization; formula for tariff reduction for both agricultural and non-agricultural market access; trade capacity building, especially technical assistance; and exclusion of the Singapore issues.

On September 13th, following the Chairman's presentation of a revised text (second revision) of the Draft Ministerial Declaration, most developing countries roundly condemned the revised text as one which was unbalanced.

CARICOM issued a full statement on the "revised" text, underscoring the fact that the text was "not reflective of the expectations and interests of many developing countries and the spirit of the Doha Declaration. It falls short of the balance that the Caribbean requires as a satisfactory outcome to the Ministerial conference and is not development oriented. Small economies must be given the policy space within which to support their development needs and safeguard their revenue base."

It is important to note that the Caribbean scored several first at the Cancun Conference. First, in preparation for the WTO Conference, a Caribbean Ministerial Declaration was issued prior to Cancun. Second, the region crafted and co-sponsored a statement on behalf of "small Economies", highlighting small economy issues in a way not previously done. Third, selection of a CARICOM Minister, namely Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation of Guyana, as a "Friend of the Chair". Fourth, CARICOM's participation through Guyana and Jamaica in the "Green Room" close door consultations.

Mr. Speaker, the collapse of the Cancun Ministerial Conference does not mean the suspension of the negotiations. The negotiations will continue in Geneva with a view to concluding same, hopefully by the 2005 deadline set at Doha. As such, CARICOM will need to remain engaged as fully as possible, especially in light of the other negotiations in which the region is currently involved. The region's preparation for and active participation in the Cancun deliberations demonstrated very clearly how small states can, with appropriate technical preparations and alliances, affect the outcome of the multilateral system."

**MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY AND MOVED BY A MINISTER -**

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, moved the following motion:

RESOLVED:

That Standing Order No. 46(2) and (3) be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed at its sitting on Thursday, 23rd October, 2003, with the second reading and the remaining stages of the Revenue Authority (Amendment) Bill 2003 - Bill No. 19/2003 published 2003-10-16.

(Notice Paper No.67 (M25 Govt23) published on 2003-10-16)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Robert Corbin

Mrs. Sheila Holder

Mr. Raphael Trotman

Thereafter, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs replied.

The motion was then put and carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS-

Presentation and First Reading

**REVENUE AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL 2003 - Bill No. 19/2003 published
on 2003-10-16**

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

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Revenue Authority Act 1996.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

BILL - Second Reading

ITEM 1 - REVENUE AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL 2003 - Bill No. 19/2003
published on 2003-10-16

The Minister of Finance, moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Revenue Authority Act 1996.

(Read a first time on 2003-10-23)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Winston Murray

Mrs. Sheila Holder

The Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce

Mr. Jerome Khan

Mr. Robert Corbin

Thereafter, the Minister of Finance replied.

In Committee

The Minister of Finance made the following amendments:

Arrangement of Sections Insert immediately under the words "1. Short title." the following -
"2. Amendment of section 12 of the Principal Act."

Sections 2 and 3 Re-number as sections 3 and 4, respectively.

Clauses 2 and 3 Re-number as clauses 3 and 4, respectively.

(in the Bill)

22.

The amendment was put and carried.

Clause 1 was passed as printed.

Clause 2

The Minister of Finance made the following amendments:

Insert immediately after clause 1 the following as clause 2 -

- “Amendment of section 12 of the Principal Act.
2. Section 12 of the Principal Act is hereby amended as follows-
- (a) in subsection (1) (a) by the insertion immediately before the words “the approval” of the words “subject to subsection (2)”,
 - (b) in subsection (2) by the insertion immediately after the word “general” the word “policy”.

The amendments were put and carried.

Clause 2 was passed as amended.

Clauses 3 and 4 were passed as printed.

Assembly resumed.

On a motion by the Minister of Finance the Revenue Authority (Amendment) Bill 2003 was read the third time and passed as amended.

MOTION

ITEM 2 - CONFIRMATION OF THE CUSTOMS DUTIES (AMENDMENT) (No. 2)
ORDER 2003 (No. 29)

The Minister of Finance moved the following motion:

RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly, in accordance with section 9 of the Customs Act, Chapter 82:01, confirm the Customs Duties (Amendment) Order 2003 (No. 29 of 2003), which was made on 1st September, 2003, under section 8 of the Customs Act, Chapter 82:01, and published in the Official Gazette dated 1st September, 2003.

(Notice Paper No. 68 (M26 Govt 24) published on 2003-10-16)

Mr. Winston Murray spoke to the motion.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 3.55 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 4.37 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

The Assembly resumed the debate on the motion for the Confirmation of the Customs Duties (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2003.

Mr. Robert Corbin also spoke to the motion.

At 4.40 p.m., the Members of the People's National Congress/Reform withdrew from the Chamber.

The motion was then put and carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4.44 p.m., on a motion by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, the sitting was adjourned to a date to be fixed.



HARI N. RAMKARRAN

Speaker of the National Assembly

**PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown.**

23rd October, 2003.