

COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

**THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION
OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA (2006 – 2011)**

**SECOND PERIODIC REPORT
OF THE
PARLIAMENTARY SECTORAL COMMITTEE
ON
FOREIGN RELATIONS**

RESOLUTION NO.19 OF 2003

PERIOD:

DECEMBER 21, 2006 - APRIL 5, 2011

**PRESENTED TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMITTEE**

ON

2ND JUNE, 2011

DECLARATION

This is the Second Periodic Report to the National Assembly on the status of the work of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations, pursuant to the requirement of paragraph 4 (ix) of Resolution 19 passed by the National Assembly on 15th May, 2003.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This second report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Relations (PSCFR) highlights its activities over the period 21st December, 2006 to 5th April, 2011 of the First Session of the Ninth Parliament. This report includes issues and concerns raised and discussed at meetings, as well as the Committee's interactions with Members of the Executive and other government functionaries.

1.1 BACKGROUND:

The Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations (PSCFR)

The PSCFR, one of four Parliamentary Sectoral Committees of the National Assembly, was established in 2003 by Resolution No. 19 of May 2003 of the National Assembly of the Eighth Parliament. Resolution No.19 gives effect to the Constitutional provision of Article 119B of the Constitution of Guyana. (Appendix I).

Standing Order 86 specifically provides for the establishment of this Committee and the other Sectoral Committees. These Committees have "responsibility for the scrutiny of all areas of Government policy and administration" as provided for in Standing Order 86.

1.2. Nomination of Committee Members

The Committee of Selection in accordance with Paragraph 1 of Resolution 19 of 2003, and Standing Order 86 nominated seven persons to be Members of the PSCFR on 14th December 2006.

1.3 Membership

During the period 21st December, 2006 to 5th April, 2011 of the First Session of the Ninth Parliament, the Membership of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations consisted of seven (7) Members of which, four (4) are from the Government and three (3) from the combined Opposition in the National Assembly. In addition, there are two (2) Alternate Members, one (1) each from the government and the combined Opposition in keeping with the Standing Orders.

At its first Meeting held on 21st December 2006 the Committee elected Mr. Aubrey Norton and Mr. Bernard De Santos as Chairman and Vice Chairman, respectively.

The following is the list of Members nominated by the Committee of Selection on 14th December 2006.

Members from the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) (4)

Mr. Bernard DeSantos, S.C., M.P	Member
Mr. Donald Ramotar, M.P	Member
Mrs. Pauline Sukhai, M.P	Member
Mr. Mohabir A. Nandlall, M.P.	Member
Mr. Moses Nagamootoo, M.P	Alternate Member

Members from the People's National Congress/Reform-1 Guyana (PNCR-1G) (2)

Mr. Aubrey C. Norton, M.P	Member
Dr. George A. Norton, M.P	Member
Mrs. Clarissa Riehl, M.P. Deputy Speaker	Alternate Member

Members from the Alliance For Change (AFC) (1)

Mr. Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P	Member
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Change in Membership

On 12th July 2007, the Committee of Selection at its 5th Meeting, on a proposal by Ms Gail Teixeira, M.P. and seconded by the Hon. Samuel A. A. Hinds, M.P., nominated Mr. Moses Nagamootoo, M.P. and Mrs. Pauline R. Sukhai, M.P. as substantive and Alternate Members, respectively.

On 10th April, 2008, Mrs. Pauline Sukhai, M.P. was appointed Minister of Amerindian Affairs. This caused the Committee of Selection on the 3rd December, 2008 to appoint Mr. Moses Nagamootoo, M.P., as a substantive Member and Mr. Norman A. Whittaker, M.P. as the Alternate Member for the Government side of the Committee.

On 9th April, 2009, Mrs. Clarissa Riehl, M.P., the then Alternate Member, became a substantive Member, and Dr. George A. Norton, M.P. became the Alternate Member for the Opposition side of the Committee.

On 12th January, 2010, Mr. Bernard DeSantos, S.C., M.P. Chairman of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations resigned. As a result, the Committee of Selection on 19th November, 2009, nominated Ms. Bibi S. Shadick, M.P. as a substantive Member. Ms. Shadick was elected as Vice-Chairperson of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations on the 12th January, 2010.

On 24th March, 2010, Mr. Moses Nagamootoo, M.P. resigned from the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations, and on the 8th April, 2010, the Committee of Selection nominated Mr. Odinga N. Lumumba, M.P. as a substantive Member of the Committee.

On 21st October, 2010, Mr. Mohabir A. Nandalall, M.P., resigned from the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations. The Committee of Selection subsequently nominated Mr. Norman Whittaker, M.P. as a substantive Member and Mr. Mohamed F. Khan, M.P. as Alternate Member of the Committee.

ATTENDANCE

The attendance record for Members is attached at Appendix II.

2.0 MANDATE

2.1 The mandate of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations is outlined, generally, in paragraph 3 of Resolution 19 and refers specifically to the responsibilities of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the President (Appendix III).

2.2 In order to discharge this mandate, the Committee has been empowered to scrutinize all areas of government activities as prescribed in the Revised Standing Orders No. 86. Its mandate also includes summoning Ministers and other Government officials to appear before the Committee and to give evidence whenever required. The Committee is also obligated to act on requests made by Parliament to address any urgent issue.

2.3. Meetings

This Committee held twenty two (22) meetings during the period 21st December, 2006 and 5th April, 2011. The Committee Members agreed to meet twice a month at 3.30 p.m. on Thursdays for at least an hour. At the 11th Meeting of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations held on

The Hon. Minister was accompanied by the following advisers:

- Mrs. Elizabeth Harper - Director General
- Ms. Gillian Rowe -Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
- Mrs. Hairowti Lall - Principal Assistant Secretary, (PAS) (F)

After the introduction of the team the Hon. Minister presentation addressed the following:

- Background and purpose/objectives of the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- The challenges facing the management of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and
- Weaknesses in the system and shortage of staff.

The Minister informed that the Ministry was *not* semi-autonomous, and as such it was subjected to the rules and regulations of the Public Service. He also stated that it was part of the Public Service and therefore was part of the Public Service Modernization process.

The Minister further stated that the fore runner to the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Strategic Plan an Advisory Study that was undertaken with the assistance of the United Nation Department of Economic and Social Affairs team which advised on the orientation to the strategy.

The reorganization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs thereafter had assistance from the CARICAD team and other distinguished experts who conducted a review of all findings. Thereafter the 2005 Strategic Plan was finalised.

The Minister stated that the various reviews and reform activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs facilitated an analysis of the workings of the Ministry and resulted in ideas of how the Ministry could improve its mission.

He further stated that there were benchmarks set and the diplomatic suite was tailored to its limited budget. However, there were ways devised to make operations as manageable and effective as possible.

The Minister mentioned that some of the recommendations of the Strategic Plan were not accepted by the Government and as such the Minister was proceeding to implement those aspects that were accepted by the Government and were in consonance with the Public Service Reform process.

Despite some of these challenges mentioned and the shortage of the required skill personnel, the policies of the Ministry are shaped by the use of technical assistance from international agencies such as within the Commonwealth and other persons (Guyanese eminently qualified and of reputable background) from around the world who willingly make their service available to the Committee.

These persons aid heavily in the work of the Ministry as it deals with the multiple demands of the Ministry. The Minister also noted that there was the overlapping of responsibilities between the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation and that outsourcing could not be avoided.

Details of the presentation are recorded in the verbatim records of proceedings.

(2) Presentation planned with Prof. Clive Thomas

Prof. Clive Thomas was expected to deliver a presentation on the “Economic Partnership Agreement”. This decision was taken after the Committee agreed that there would be no great harm in listening to the views of the Professor before the Hon. Henry Jeffrey’s presentation.

However, this presentation never occurred due to a lack of a quorum.

(3) Presentation by Hon. Henry Jeffrey, Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation

On Thursday 22nd May 2008 the Hon. Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation at the request of the Committee appeared before it to discuss “The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)”.

This presentation was done at a Joint Committee Meeting of the Foreign Relations and the Economic Services Committees held in the Chamber of the National Assembly. .

The Hon. Minister made a power point presentation to the Committee with the following staff members as advisers:

Mr. Tameshwar Merai	-	Systems Administrator
Mr. Neville Totaram	-	NACEN Co-ordinator
Mr. Sherwyn Naughton	-	Foreign Trade Office
Ms Kathy Humphrey	-	Confidential Secretary to the Minister

The Hon. Minister stated how pleased he was to have the opportunity to engage Members of the two Committees as there were several relevant issues to be discussed. The Minister stated that on the 16th December 2007, the European Union and CARIFORUM established an Economic Partnership Agreement.

He stated that his presentation would create an environment for discourse, as he had the experts there to assist with the questions on the presentation.

The presentation dealt with such areas as the background to the Cotonou Agreement. It examined the trade between the Europeans and the ACP countries, and noted the need for development to be an integral part of the Agreement.

The Hon. Minister did not want to look at the totality as CARIFORUM was part of the EU trade and in terms of market share there was not even one percent of import of it or export.

He spoke of the expectations of the Lomé Agreement and Globalisation to the extent that the formulae the developed countries have to deal with the WTO, the small and vulnerable economies did not have, but there was recognition within the context of flexibility within reciprocity.

Other areas are: (i) The EPA and the New World;
(ii) CARIFORUM- EC Negotiations; and
(iii) Government Procurement

Details of the presentation are recorded in the verbatim records of this date.

(4) Presentation by Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues- Birkett, Minister of Foreign Affairs

On Thursday 1st June, 2010 the Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Minister of Foreign Affairs, appeared before the Committee, to discuss: “The Issues of Latin American Affairs in general, with specific emphasis on our border policy and to update the Committee on the Ministry’s Strategic Plan”.

The Hon. Minister made a power point presentation before the Committee with the following staff members as advisers:

Ms. Barbara Haley	- Director of Multilateral and Global Affairs
Ms. Candida Daniels	- Director, Department of America’s
Mr. Keith George	- Director, Frontiers Department
Mr. Vernon Robinson	- Foreign Service Officers III

The Minister in her presentation addressed the following issues:

- The Border Issues with Venezuela and Suriname;
- Overview of Developments in Latin America;
- The creation of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR); the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CALC); and the Bolivian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA)
- The Bodies of UNASUR and Sector Bodies.;
- The Recent Development with UNASUR;
- The Analysis/ Benefits of the UNASUR.

In conclusion, the Minister detailed the Ministry’s Strategic Plan; input of staff from the headquarters and the missions. The objectives of the plan with relations to human resources, promotion, training and development, posting and pay were also detailed.

Details of the presentation are recorded in the verbatim records of this date.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The Committee experienced deferral of three presentations:

- (i) owing to the sitting of the National Assembly on the said date of the presentation;
- (ii) due to several Members requesting to be excused on the day of the presentation; and
- (iii) the Minister being out of the country at the scheduled meeting date.

CONSTRAINTS

- (1.) With the resignation of the Chairman, Mr. Bernard DeSantos, M.P. the presentation of the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs was delayed.
- (2.) Owing to the poor attendance of Members of the Committee there were a number of rescheduled meetings.
- (3.) The other presentation by Professor Clive Thomas was not conducted as a result of the Chairman being unavailable.

APPENDIX I
RESOLUTION 19

EIGHT PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA

SECOND SESSION (2002-2003)

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

RESOLUTION NO. 19

WHEREAS Article 119 B of the Constitution provides:

There shall be parliamentary sectoral committees established by the National Assembly with responsibility for the scrutiny of all areas of Government policy and administration including (I) natural resources (ii) economic services (iii) foreign relations and (iv) social services

RESOLVED,

1. The Sectoral Committees shall consist of seven (7) members, four (4) representing the Government and three (3) representing the Opposition. The Government and Opposition are entitled to elect one alternate member each for each Sectoral Committee.

2. The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of each sectoral committee shall be elected from opposite sides of the National Assembly and would alternate annually with two (2) Sectoral Committees each to be chaired by the Government and Opposition respectively.

3. The committees shall, in the discharge of their scrutinising role, examine all policies and administration, for each sector, to determine whether the execution of government policy is in consonance with the principles of good governance and in the best interest of all the people of Guyana.

4. The committees shall have the authority to:

Determine areas of government activity for scrutiny or specific examination;

ii Request the Minister assigned responsibility for the sector to submit written or oral information, including government documents and records about any specific area of government policy and administration;

iii Review existing legislation on government policy and administration for any of the sectors;

- iv **Summon persons to give evidence, scrutinise government documents, papers and records;**
- v **Visit any government activity or project in Guyana as agreed and arranged by the Committee;**
- vi **In the discharge of their mandate, utilise the services of experts, specialists and other sources of advice as they determine;**
- vii **Establish a timeable for the conduct of their work;**
- viii **Make recommendations to the National Assembly on legislation or any other action to be taken on matters falling within their purview;**
- ix **Submit periodic reports to the National Assembly on their work; and**

Invite comments, from the Minister assigned responsibility for the sector on their recommendations or reports.

5. **The National Assembly, notwithstanding the current work programme of any sectoral committee, may request the committee to give prompt attention to a particular aspect of the policy or administration of the government for a sector**

6. The provisions of Standing Order No. 70A shall apply to the Sectoral Committees

AND FURTHER RESOLVED,

7. The Gazetted ministerial responsibilities shall be allocated to each Sectoral Committee in the manner set out in Schedule 1.

(Passed by the National Assembly on 15th May, 2003)



S. E. ISAACS

Clerk of the National Assembly

**S E. ISAACS
CLERK OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

APPENDIX II
ATTENDANCE SHEET

FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

ATTENDANCE RECORD

2006 – 2011

NAMES	Dec.	March		June		July		Aug.	Jan.	March	May	Nov.	April	May	June	Jan.		April	June			April
	21 st	9 th	20 th	15 th	29 th	5 th	19 th	3 rd	24 th	28 th	22 nd	13 th	28 th	12 th	9 th	12 th	26 th	20 th	1 st	15 th	29 th	5 th
Mr. Aubrey C. Norton, M.P.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Abs.	Ex.	Pr.	Abs.
Mr. Bernard DeSantos, S.C., M.P.	Pr.	Pr.	Abs.	Ex.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	---	---	---	---
Mr. Donald Ramotar, M.P.	Pr.	Abs.	Abs.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Abs.	Ex.	Abs.	Ex.	Pr.	Abs.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Abs.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.
Mr. Moses Nagamootoo, M.P.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Abs.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Abs.	Ex.	Abs.	Ex.	Pr.	---	---	---	---
Mrs. Pauline Sukhai, M.P.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Abs.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Mr. Mohabir A. Nandlall, M.P.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Ex.	Abs.	Abs.	Pr.	Abs.	Pr.	Abs.	Pr.	Pr.
Mrs. Clarissa Richl, M.P.	Pr.	Pr.	Abs.	Ex.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Abs.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.
Dr. George A. Norton, M.P.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Abs.	Pr.	Ex.	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	Abs.	Pr.
Mr. Raphael G.C. Frotman, M.P.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Ex.	Ex.	Abs.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Abs.	Abs.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Abs.	Ex.	Pr.	Abs.
Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.	Pr.	Pr.	Abs.	Abs.	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Mr. Norman A. Whittaker, M.P.	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	Pr.	Ex.	Ex.	Pr.	Ex.	Ex.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.
Mr. Odinga Lumumba, M.P.	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	Abs.	Abs.	Pr.	Pr.

APPENDIX III
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE
COMMITTEE

Sectoral Committees' Areas of Scrutiny

Name of Sectoral Committee	Areas of Scrutiny	Responsible Ministries
Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Natural Resources	Bauxite Industry Geological Surveys Geology & Mines	Public Works & Communication
	Acquisition & Beneficial occupation of non- beneficial occupied Lands in Georgetown, New Amsterdam, other Towns Water Resources	Housing & Water
	Acquisition/Transferral/ Occupation of Lands not Beneficially occupied in Georgetown, New Amsterdam & other Towns Hydrometeorology	Agriculture
	Forestry	Fisheries, Other Crops & Livestock
	Natural Resources/ Environment Forestry & Forest Policy National Parks Wild Life Land Use Thermal & Hydro Power	The President
	Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Economic Services	Public Works Communications NFMU GPO Corporation Public Utilities
Regional Development District Administration Municipalities Local Authorities		Local Government & Regional Development
Housing, CHP Town & Country Planning Water Supply		Housing & Water

Name of Sectoral Committee	Areas of Scrutiny	Responsible Ministries
Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Economic Services	Agriculture Drainage & Irrigation Rice, Sugar	Agriculture
	Fisheries Division Livestock Division New Guyana Marketing Corporation	Fisheries, Other Crops & Livestock
	Licensing of Buses, hire cars/goods vehicles	Home Affairs
	Roads: Planning, Design, Maintenance, Construction Works & Construction Government Buildings Mechanical Equipment Electrical Inspection Civil Aviation Transport Planning Services Material testing Shipping & Harbour Services River & Sea Defence Maritime Transport	Transport & Hydraulics
	Internal Trade/Commerce Manufacturing & Industrial Development Craft Production Provision of Public Utilities Services Consumer Protection Public Corporations Economic Planning Development Planning	Tourism, Industry & Commerce
	Go-Invest	The President
	Monetary Policy Fiscal Policy Budget Taxation: Tax incentive Govt. Accounting & Finance Control Banking/credit offshore Banking Statistics valuation ERP Government Lotteries	Finance

Name of Sectoral Committee	Areas of Scrutiny	Responsible Ministries	
Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services	School Feeding Book Distribution	Home Affairs	
	Maintenance, Public Safety & Order		
	Public Holidays, Road Traffic		
	Immigration		
	Gambling prevention		
	Fire Protection, Prisons		
	Marriage licences		
	Registration of Births/ Deaths, Marriages		
	Children Services		Labour, Human Services & Social Security
	Adoption Services		
Probation/Welfare			
Operating an Advice			
Bureau for Women with financial, personal & legal problems			
Supervision of Government Social Impact			
Amelioration Programme			
Welfare for Senior Citizens			
Social Security			
National Relief			
NIS	Public Service		
Co-op Society/Friendly			
Society			
Industrial Relations			
Occupational Health & Safety			
Statistical Services			
Recruitment & Placement			
Administrative Organisation	Amerindian Affairs		
Public Service Personnel			
Public Sector Training			
Management Services			
Public Service Reform	Amerindian Affairs		
Non PSC administrative Matters			
Amerindian Affairs	Amerindian Affairs		

Name of Sectoral Committee	Areas of Scrutiny	Responsible Ministries
Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services	General legal assistance to President All legal matters except where law assigns to another authority Deeds Registry State Solicitor Public Trustee & Official Receiver's Dept.	Attorney General & Legal Affairs
	Consumer Affairs	Tourism, Industry & Commerce
	National Art Collection	The President
	Health Services: primary health care, public hospitals, clinics, etc Rehabilitation services, Blood bank, Pharmacy and Poison Boards, etc.	Health