

COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION OF  
THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT (2015-2016)**

THIRD PERIODIC REPORT

**OF THE**

PARLIAMENTARY SECTORAL COMMITTEE

ON

FOREIGN RELATIONS

(TENTH PARLIAMENT)

**RESOLUTION NO. 19 OF 2003**

PERIOD:

**MARCH 7, 2012 – NOVEMBER 11, 2014**

**PRESENTED TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON  
4<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2016**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This Third Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Relations (PSCFR) highlights its activities over the period March 7, 2012 to November 11, 2014 of the Tenth 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. The report also makes observations and recommendations on matters which came before it.

### **1.1 The Parliamentary Sectoral Committee On Foreign Relations (PSCFR)**

The PSCFR is one of four Parliamentary Sectoral Committees of the National Assembly that 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 119 B of the Constitution of Guyana. (*See Appendix I*)

Standing Order 86 specifically provides for the establishment of this Committee and all of the 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 nine persons to be Members of the PSCFR on March 7, 2012.

### **1.3 Membership**

During the period March 7, 2012 to December 16, 2012 of the First Session of the Tenth Parliament, the Membership of the Committee was as follows:

#### **From the People`s Progressive Party/ Civic (PPP/C) (5)**

Ms. Bibi S. Shadick, M.P.

Mr. Odinga Lumumba, M.P.

Dr. Vishwa D.B. Mahadeo, M.P.

Dr. Vindhya V. Persaud, M.S., M.P.

Mr. Neendkumar, J.P., M.P. (Alternate)

#### **From A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) (3)**

Mrs. Deborah Backer, M.P.

Mr. Ronald Bulkan, M.P.

Mr. Renis Morian, M.P. (Alternate)

#### **From the Alliance For Change (AFC) (1)**

Mrs. Catherine Hughes, M.P.

#### **1.3.1 Changes in Membership**

On the 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2012 the **Second Report of the Standing Orders Committee** was presented and adopted.

The National Assembly amended Standing Order No. 86 (2) on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2013 by Resolution of the Standing Orders Committee and provided for seven substantive Members: three (3) Members from the Government side and four (4) from the combined opposition.

In addition, there are two (2) alternate Members, one (1) each from the Government and the combined Opposition in keeping with the Standing Orders.

The membership of the Committee was therefore amended, accordingly.

### **Members Nominated on January 25, 2013**

#### **Members of the Peoples Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) (4)**

Bibi Safora Shadick, M.P.

Mr. Odinga Lumumba, M.P.

Mr. Faizal M. Jaffarally, M.P.

Mr. Neendkumar, J.P., M.P. (Alternate)

#### **Members of A Partnership For Unity (APNU) (4)**

Mrs. Debra Backer, M.P., Deputy Speaker

Mr. Winston Felix, D.S.M., M.P.

Mr. Ronald Bulkan, M.P.

Mr. Renis Morian, M.P. (Alternate)

#### **Member of the Alliance For Change(1)**

Mrs. Catherine Hughes, M.P.

### **1.3.2 Further changes in Membership**

At the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee of Selection held on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2014, Dr. Vishwa D.B., Mahadeo, M.P., was nominated as a substantive Member to replace Mr. Odinga Lumumba, M.P., who had resigned from the Committee.

At the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee of Selection held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2014, Ms. Africo Selmon, M.P., was nominated as a substantive Member to replace Ms. Deborah Backer, M.P., who had resigned as a Member of the National Assembly.

#### **1.4 Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson**

In accordance with Standing Order 86 (3), at its second meeting held on February 7, 2013 Mrs. Deborah Backer, M.P., Deputy Speaker and Bibi S. Shadick, M.P., were elected Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, respectively, by Members of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations.

The above Standing Order also provides for the annual rotation of chairmanship of the Committee. In keeping with this provision, at its 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2014, Ms. Bibi S. Shadick, M.P., and Ms. Africo Selmon, M.P., were elected Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, respectively by Members of the Committee.

#### **2.0 FUNCTION AND MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE**

The functions of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations are in keeping with the mandate derived from Paragraph 3 of Resolution No. 19 of 2003, which states that:

“The Committees shall, in the discharge of their scrutinizing 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”.

In order to discharge this mandate the Committee is empowered to scrutinize all areas of government activities as prescribed in the Appendices of the revised Standing Orders of the Eighth Parliament. Its mandate also includes summoning the Executive and other Government officials to appear before the Committee and provide evidence whenever required. The Committee is also obligated to act on requests made by Parliament to address any urgent issue.

### 3.0 AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Committee is tasked with oversight responsibility for the following sectors, sub-sector and activities:-

Name of Sectoral Committee	Areas of Scrutiny	Responsible Ministries
Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations	Foreign Trade International Organisations Conference for Trade & Development Joint Commissions CARICOM Technical Cooperation/Developing Countries Foreign Aid  Diplomatic Relations Multilateral Relations The United Nations The Commonwealth	Foreign Trade         Foreign Affairs

	OAS Organisation of Islamic Conferences CARICOM The Rio Group Foreign Affairs  Cabinet Matters Defence/Territorial Integrity National Security Civil Defence Public Information	The President
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#### 4.0 MEETINGS

This Committee held nine (9) meetings during the period March 7, 2013 and November, 2014 of the Session of the Tenth Parliament.

##### Statutory Meetings

Meetings	Dates of Meetings
1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting	March 16, 2012
2 <sup>nd</sup> Meeting	February 7, 2013
3 <sup>rd</sup> Meeting	March 19, 2013
4 <sup>th</sup> Meeting	May 28, 2013
5 <sup>th</sup> Meeting	June 26, 2013
6 <sup>th</sup> Meeting	August 6, 2013
7 <sup>th</sup> Meeting	October 25, 2013
8 <sup>th</sup> Meeting	May 20, 2014
9 <sup>th</sup> Meeting	June 17, 2014

Please find attached at **Appendix II** the record of attendance of the Committee Members during the First Session of the Tenth Parliament.

## **5.0 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Work Programme of the Committee for the reporting period March 2012 – November 2014 is at **Appendix III**.

## **6.0 PRESENTATIONS/ HEARINGS**

The Committee invited the following Officials and Ministries to make presentations for the purpose of enlightening its Members on specific aspects of the operation of their Agencies and Ministries.

The following Ministry/Agency was invited:

### **THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

#### **(i) Presentation by the Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs and Team**

The Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs was invited to make a presentation on “*The movement of Guyanese in the Caribbean Region; the restructuring of CARICOM -the implementation of the five year plan report; and diplomatic relations/staffing within the various embassies.*”

The Minister, along with the following persons, appeared before the Committee at the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on June 26, 2013:-

- Ambassador Elizabeth Harper, Director General;
- Ms. Gillian Rowe, Chief Administrative Officer;
- Ms. Charlene Phoenix, Head of CARICOM & Bilateral Unit;

- Mr. John Chester-Inniss, Foreign Service Officer II;
- Ms. Rovina Deodat, Foreign Service Officer II; and
- Mr. Aneal Giddings, Systems Development Officer.

The following were some points articulated in the presentation:

**A. The movement of Guyanese within the Caribbean Community:**

- (i) The free movement of skills/labour entails the right of a CARICOM national to seek work and/or engage in gainful employment in all CARICOM member states with the exception of the Bahamas, Montserrat and Haiti, without the need of a work permit;
- (ii) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was responsible for issuing Caricom Single Market Economy (CSME) certificates to persons seeking employment in other CARICOM territories, such as, registered nurses, trained teachers, musicians, university graduates, among others;
- (iii) Persons who were self-employed did not require a free movement of skills certificate but must obtain a certificate of registration as a CARICOM service provider;
- (iv) A total of 3,877 CSME certificates were issued between the years 2007 and 2012;
- (v) In some CARICOM member states, Guyanese holders of CSME certificates were required to re-apply for a certificate in that territory; and
- (vi) Frequent complaints reported to the Ministry included:
  - The mistreatment of Guyanese at some airports; and
  - The lengthy periods to obtain work permits;

**B. Diplomatic Relations – Staffing at Embassies:**

- (i) There were currently twelve (12) embassies and five (5) consulates;

- (ii) Each Mission was headed by an Ambassador, High Commissioner or Consul General; and
- (iii) There were a total number of 149 employees of which 29 were diplomatic staff at the embassies and consulates. A breakdown of the staffing at each embassy and consulate was listed in the presentation.

**C. The restructuring of CARICOM – the implementation of the five year plan report**

- (i) In July, 2010, Heads of Government commissioned a review of the CARICOM Secretariat. The final report was received by the Heads in March, 2012, at their meeting in Suriname;
- (ii) Some constraints highlighted in the proposal were geographic dispersion of the Member States, poor implementation of decisions by Member States and the inability of the Secretariat to provide direction and leadership;
- (iii) The recruitment of a Change Facilitator/Group to provide the necessary support for the change process was identified in the Report as one of the ways to move the process forward; and
- (iv) The Department for International Development (DFID) had funded £333,000 pounds for the recruitment of the Change Facilitator/Group.

The following were some of the issues/concerns raised by the Committee:

- (i) How was the Government of Guyana addressing the issue of Guyanese being mistreated by authorities at some CARICOM states' airports?
- (ii) Were there any report(s) of Guyanese teachers with CSME certificates being refused jobs as teachers in Trinidad?
- (iii) Whether the various embassies and consulates had the full complement of staff needed and whether there were any positions to be filled?

- (iv) What percentage of the Guyanese staff at the various embassies and consulates, with the exception of the Diplomatic staff, was the Government of Guyana responsible to provide accommodation for in the respective countries?
- (v) Was the Change Facilitator/Group identified?
- (vi) Could a copy of the CARICOM's Reform Process – Five Year Strategic Plan be forwarded to Committee?

The following responses were provided:

- (i) With regard to treatment of Guyanese nationals, the Ministry had been addressing some of the issues through bilateral discussions and had been receiving positive results;
- (ii) The Ministry was aware that persons seeking employment in the Bahamas, Montserrat and Haiti would have to obtain a work permit in those countries before they were employed; however, there were no reports of Guyanese teachers, who were holders of CSME certificates, being refused teaching jobs in Trinidad;
- (iii) An Accountant was recently sent to Brazil and the Ministry has plans to send additional staff to Delhi and Kuwait;
- (iv) Five (5) staff, in addition to the diplomatic staff, was provided with accommodation by the Government of Guyana in the various CARICOM member states; and
- (v) The Change Facilitator/Group was identified and a copy of the five year strategic plan would be forwarded to the Committee.

### **Recommendations by the Committee**

- (i) The issue of in-transit passengers having to declare money should be dealt with forcefully; and
- (ii) Since the sum of money that is declared in Trinidad and Tobago deviated from the standard sum (US10,000), the matter should be treated as a legal matter and the Guyana Government should make efforts to get an interpretation from the Caribbean Court of Justice.

**(2) Presentation by the CARICOM Change Facilitation Team**

At its 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on August 6, 2013 the Committee interacted with the Change Facilitation Team which comprised:

- (i) Ambassador Elizabeth Harper, Director General;
- (ii) Ms. Jennifer Cudjoe-Brathwaite, Change Facilitation Team;
- (iii) Ms. Gwendoline Williams, Change Facilitation Team;
- (iv) Ms. Maria Mason-Roberts, Change Facilitation Team;
- (v) Ms. Malvie Talbot, Foreign Service Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- (vi) Mr. John Chester-Inniss, Foreign Service Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- (vii) Mr. Aneal Giddings, Systems Development Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- (viii) Mr. Joseph Williams, Caricom Secretariat;
- (ix) Mr. Melbour Philip, Caricom Secretariat;
- (x) Ms. Schenelle Leonce, Caricom Secretariat; and
- (xi) Mr. Joseph Williams, Caricom Secretariat.

The presentation was led by Ms. Maria Mason-Roberts and the Team presented on the following:

**Overview on the status of Strategic Plan for CARICOM**

Ms. Mason-Roberts informed the Committee that the focus of the consultations was to develop a Strategic Plan that serves as a component of change/reform in CARICOM which would target and address a narrow range of specified outcomes. The Consultations sought to provide ideas and views from the populace of CARICOM for implementation in the Strategic Plan. In view of this, it was agreed that there was need to focus on:

- The beneficiaries of the Plan i.e. the whole or subsets of CARICOM population;
- Prioritise to meet the needs of these beneficiaries;
- Rate of implementation; and

- Measurement and management of results in order to communicate to stakeholders the progress being made.

The policies/ programmes under focus were:

- Agriculture, in particular food and nutrition security;
- Crime and security;
- Energy security;
- Intra- regional transport;
- Environment and climate change;
- Economic growth and development;
- Youth
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT); and
- Services.

The Committee was informed that the ultimate goal of the Strategic Plan was to enhance Economic and Social Growth and Development of CARICOM Member States.

### **Time Frame**

The Committee was informed that consultations would culminate in a Strategic Plan to be presented for consideration at the Heads of Government Meeting in February, 2014.

### **Process**

Members were informed that, in addition to oral consultations, consideration was being given also to written submissions from stakeholders, a telesurvey would be done and interaction with Regional institutions, in order to gather views from a wide range of stakeholders.

At the end of the Team's presentation, the Members expressed concerns in relation to a wide range of issues, these include:

### **Intra-Regional Transport**

- high cost associated with travelling from one Caribbean State to another;
- barriers under intra-regional transport:
  - Inhumane treatment of Guyanese and other Caribbean Nationals at various Regional ports-of-entries as opposed to the treatment given to Non-Caribbean Nationals; and
  - The inconsistency in the declaration limit of US currency from State to State which sometimes lead to confiscation of funds from CARICOM citizens.

### **CARICOM Secretariat**

- the cost associated with travelling and per diem for CARICOM staff to attend meetings.

### **Recommendation by the Committee**

- that a key area for consideration in the next five years should be free movement of people, without the hassle and discomfort. As such, a CARICOM Identification, in lieu of a passport, that allows for free movement within Member States.
- that decisions made by Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police (ACCP) be a part of the consideration of the consultations in the area of Crime and Security.

- that CARICOM could harness ideas from the Caribbean population, especially the very young, through advertisements and interaction in the digital media.

## **7.0 OTHER ACTIVITIES**

### **7.1 Courtesy Call by the Ambassador of the Argentine Republic to Guyana**

At its 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on May 28, 2013, Members of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations received a courtesy call by the Ambassador of the Argentine Republic to Guyana.

The discussion focused on, *inter alia*, areas for co-operation between the two countries including agriculture, technology, sports.

### **7.2 Meeting with the Surinamese Delegation**

On October 25, 2013, Members of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations met with a visiting Delegation from the Surinamese Parliament which included the following persons:

- (i) Hon. Dr. Jennifer Geerlings-Simons - Speaker
- (ii) Mr. Melvin Bouva
- (ii) Mr. Carl Breeveld
- (iii) Ms. Jenny Warsodikromo
- (iv) Mr. Lekhram Soerdjan
- (v) Mr. Frederik Finisie
- (vi) Mr. Soetimin Marsidih
- (vii) Mr. Patrick Kensenhuis
- (viii) Mr. Refano Wongsoredjo

Discussions were focused on issues that were considered to be common to both countries; illegal entry, piracy, drug trafficking, human trafficking, etc.

## **8.0 VISITS**

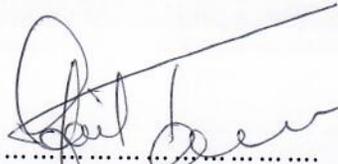
The Committee visited the Protocol Division and the Re-migrant section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on October 29, 2014. The report on that visit is attached at *Appendix IV*.

## 9.0 CONSTRAINTS

Due to unforeseen circumstances the Committee was unable to successfully complete the implementation of its work programme and adopt its report.

## 10.0 ADOPTION

The Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations of the Eleventh Parliament, now, therefore, accordingly hereby submits the Report and Motion for consideration and adoption by the National Assembly.



.....  
*Gail Teixeira, M.P.,  
Chairperson  
Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on  
Foreign Relations.*

# **APPENDIX I**

**EIGHTH 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:

- i 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 timetable 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
  - x 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 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2003)**

  
.....  
**S.E. ISAACS**  
Clerk of the National Assembly  
**S E ISAACS**  
**CLERK OF THE**  
**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

# **APPENDIX II**

**APPENDIX II**

**PARLIAMENTARY SECTORAL COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS**

**ATTENDANCE RECORD (2012-2014)**

NAME	March 2012	February 2013	March 2013	May 2013	June 2013	August 2013	October 2013	May 2014	June 2014
	16 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>	28 <sup>th</sup>	26 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	25 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>
Mrs. Deborah Backer, M.P., Deputy Speaker	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	-	-
Bibi Safora Shadick, M.P.	Abs.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.
*Ms. Africo Selman, M.P.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Pr.	Pr.
Mr. Odinga Lumumba, M.P.	Abs.	Pr.	Abs.	Pr.	Abs.	-	-	-	-
Mr. Faizal M. Jaffarally, M.P.	-	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.
*Dr. Vishwa B. Mahadeo, M.P.	Abs.	-	-	-	-	Ex.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.
Mr. Neendkumar, J.P., M.P., (Alternate)	Abs.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Ex.	Abs.	Ex.
Mr. Winston Felix, D.S.M., M.P.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.
Mr. Ronald Bulkan, M.P.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Ex.	Ex.	Pr.
Mr. Renis Morian, M.P., (Alternate)	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.
Mrs. Catherine Hughes, M.P.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.

**Pr.** - **Present**  
**Abs.** - **Absent**  
**Ex.** - **Excused**

**\*Dr. Vishwa B. D. Mahadeo, M.P. replaced Mr. Odinga Lumumba, M.P.**

**\*Ms. Africo Selman, M.P. replaced Mrs. Deborah Backer, M.P., Deputy Speaker.**

*Committees Division  
Parliament Office  
Public Buildings  
Georgetown*

*21<sup>st</sup> April, 2016.*

# **APPENDIX III**

**APPENDIX III**

**Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations  
Areas of scrutiny and proposed time frame**

Responsibility	Areas of Scrutiny	Activities	2013 -2015								
			2014			2015				Remarks	
			Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April		
Scrutiny of all areas of Government Policy and administration in relation to "Foreign Relations"  Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Diplomatic Relations	<p>Engaging the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Re-migrant Scheme.</p> <p><i>Visit to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>the Re-migrant Section</i></li> <li>- <i>Protocol Division</i></li> </ul> <p>1. Delegation to visit overseas missions to examine issues of staffing accommodation/ location of missions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Visit to overseas missions in Brazil, Venezuela and Suriname Missions</i></li> </ul> <p>2. Examine the provision of services in demand at overseas missions:</p>		29 <sup>th</sup>							Completed

Responsibility	Areas of Scrutiny	Activities	2013 -2015							
			2014			2015				Remarks
			Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	
	Multilateral Relations	<p>issuing of passports, notarising of documents, <i>inter alia</i>.</p> <p>3. Examine procedures for the monitoring and accounting of funds gained from the provision of services at overseas missions.</p> <p>4. Representation for the return of Georgetown-based visa services for Canada, United Kingdom and Europe. (Engaging Consular Officers based in Guyana to explain the current situation with a view to improving same.)</p> <p>5. Visit to the Parliament of Trinidad with regard to new approaches and development regarding the use of ICT in the Parliament.</p> <p>6. Petrocaribe- ACP/ EU relations from Guyana`s perspective.</p>		√						

Responsibility	Areas of Scrutiny	Activities	2013 -2015							
			2014			2015				Remarks
			Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	
		7. CELAC- Development in Latin American and Caribbean nations.				√				
		8. CARIBCAN Free Trade Agreement/EPA Agreement				√				
		9. Development plan with regard to expanding interests-establishment of new overseas mission which can support development in Guyana		√						
	The United Nations	10. Request report from Officers who represented Guyana on the UN Good Office negotiation.		√						
	CARICOM	11. Examination of Guyana`s obligation under the CSME					√	√		
	UNASUR ACTO The Rio-Group Organisation of American States The Commonwealth Affairs Organisation of Islamic Conference Non-Aligned Movement									

Responsibility	Areas of Scrutiny	Activities	2013 -2015							
			2014			2015				Remarks
			Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	
The President	External Trade  Cabinet Matters Defence/Territorial Integrity of Guyana National Security Civil Defence Government Information Services	12. Visit to Guyana/Brazil Border  13. Visit to Guyana/Suriname Border  14. Visit to CBJ International Airport  15. Visit to Kato – Guyana/Venezuela Border			2 <sup>nd</sup>					

*Committees Division,  
Parliament Office,  
Public Buildings,  
Brickdam,  
Georgetown.  
October, 2014*

# **APPENDIX IV**

## Appendix IV

### REPORT OF THE DELEGATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SECTORAL COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS (PSCFR) VISIT TO THE RE-MIGRANT SECTION AND PROTOCOL DIVISION OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS ON WEDNESDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2014

#### **Introduction**

On Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2014, a delegation of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations visited the Re-migrant Section and Protocol Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

#### **The Visiting delegation of the Committee comprised:**

Ms. Bibi Safora Shadick, M.P. (P.P.P/C.)	-	Chairperson
Ms. Africo Selman, M.P. (A.P.N.U.)	-	Vice Chairperson
Mr. Renis Morian, M.P. (A.P.N.U.)	-	Alternate Member
Mrs. Cathy Hughes, (A.F.C)	-	Member

#### **Members of Staff**

Ms. Sueanna Reynolds	-	Clerk of Committees
Ms. Carla Harry	-	Assistant Clerk of Committee
Ms. Abiola Bazil	-	Research and Analytical Assistant
Oneika Walton	-	Public Relations Officer

The **purpose** of the visit was:

1. *The Re-migrant Section* : to discuss issues relating to, but not limited to, remigration; and
2. *The Protocol Division*: to enquire and examine the operations of the existing system in the Protocol Division

## **THE VISIT**

The delegation was received by Mrs. Elisabeth Harper, Director General, Ms Trishala Persaud, Senior Legal Officer and Ms. Michelle Phillips, Remigration Officer at the Re-migration Section.

After reciprocal introductions, the Chairperson of the Committee's delegation, Ms. Bibi Shadick, explained the establishment and mandate of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations and the specific purpose of the delegation's visit.

She also stated that the Committee was not there to criticize the performance of the staff but to evaluate the services offered.

### **Synopsis by the Director General on the Operations of the Re-migrant Section**

The Director General enlightened the Committee about the Re-migrant Section which was established in 1993 for those persons who were desirous of returning to Guyana. The Re-migration Scheme of the Government of Guyana is administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in conjunction with the Guyana Revenue Authority. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for determining and granting remigration status while the Guyana Revenue Authority administers the tax exemptions.

Two staff members were attached to the section, namely, Ms Michelle Phillips, Re-migration Officer and Ms Sherry James, Secretary. Persons who were seeking guidelines for the processing/process of re-migrant status would have to lodge their application with the Secretary.

Thereafter, the Re-migration Officer would conduct interviews with those persons. To process re-migration status usually takes seven working days. The applicant would have had to be residing in Guyana within three months, from the date of the application, in order to be qualified for the re-migrant scheme.

In 2014, at the time of the Committee's visit, there were two hundred and forty nine (249) applicants.

Application forms and policy guidelines on the Re-migration Scheme were available on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website <http://www.minfor.gov.gy/> for persons who were desirous of applying.

### **The Protocol Department and Consular Affairs**

The delegation was received by Ms Beverley Mc Donald, Foreign Service Officer III who was acting as the Chief-of-Protocol.

The Chairperson of the Foreign Relations Committee, Ms Bibi Shaddick outlined the purpose of the visit to the department which was to enquire and examine the operations of the existing system in the Protocol Department.

### **Synopsis by the Director General on the Protocol and Consular Department**

The Director General introduced the following staff members of the Protocol and Consular Department:

- Ms. Esther Griffith - Chief - of - Protocol (on travel duties)
- Ms. Beverley McDonald - Foreign Service Officer III
- Ms. Aisha Semple - Foreign Service Officer II
- Ms. Grace Sarius - Foreign Service Officer II
- Mr. Michael Graham - Protocol Officer
- Mr. Samuel Robertson - Protocol Officer (on travel duties)
- Mr. Selvon Butters - Protocol Officer (on duties)

- Mr. Andrew Williams - Protocol Officer (on travel duties)
- Ms. Roslyn Johnson - Confidential Secretary to the Chief-of-Protocol
- Ms. Natasha Jack - Registry Clerk
- Ms. Crystal James - Clerk
- Mr. Dexter Blue - Office Assistant
- Mr. Royden Daniels - Driver

The Committee was informed that the department consist of the Protocol and the Consular Affairs. The Protocol Department practice safe protocol which entails arranging conferences, visits, meetings, programmes and activities to be attended by delegations, assisting the delegations on arrivals, and escorting them to their functions. It arranges accreditation for representatives, who had been accredited to the state both locally and overseas, and Guyana's High Commissioners and Ambassadors who would be accredited.

### **Consular Department**

The Consular Department deals with issues of welfare. For instance, persons could seek assistance from this department in locating their families and friends who might be missing or dead. This department also deals with political cases such as wrongful deportation from Caribbean islands. The Caribbean Unit tracks and makes the relevant case for those persons who might have been wrongfully deported. The department could also make cases which could be further justified through the intervention of the Minister and the Director General.

The Consular Department processes overseas passport applications from all of Guyana's missions which are then delivered to the Immigration Department. Approximately, two (2) thousand passports are processed on a monthly basis. The volume would however increase when the five year period has concluded.

The verification of authentic documents which include birth, marriage certificates, death certificates and transcripts, were other tasks done by the Department. The Department also assists with the request for visas on arrival in Guyana to those persons required to have one but are unable to have one due to lack of a Guyana Mission within their route..

Requests from the Diplomatic Corps are also attended to by this Department. Some of these requests include matters such as assistance with custom duties, licences and registration for vehicles, drivers' licences, extension of stay for diplomats, passes for the VIP Lounges, meetings and departures. Clearance for such matters must be done through the Ministry before going to the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA).

Additionally, the Consular Department purchases gifts and keeps a register for those persons arranging the farewell functions for the Diplomatic Corp.

Questions asked by the Committee and the responses provided are as follows:

**Committee:** Whether deportees were entitled to re-migrant status? For instance, where that person was involved in domestic problems or fights with a spouse and had been deported from the country.

**Director General Response:** According to the advice given by the Office of the President, deportees were not entitled to re-migrant status.

**Committee:** Whether an applicant who was a citizen of another country could apply for re-migrant status?

**Director General Response:** No, an applicant was required to show evidence of Guyanese citizenship.

**Committee:** Who would be eligible under the re-migrant scheme?

**Director General Response:** Persons eligible under the re-migrant scheme are:

- (a) A Guyanese who is eighteen (18) years of age and above, has been residing legally overseas for a minimum of (5) consecutive years and was now returning of Guyana;
- (b) A Guyanese Student/Graduate who has attended/is attending a training institution and residing overseas for a minimum of four years and was now returning of Guyana.

**Committee:** What is the time-frame for the processing of the Re-migrant status?

**Director General Response:** The process for re-migrant status takes approximately seven working days.

**Committee:** Do re-migrants have to show evidence of residence?

**Senior Legal Office's Response:** No. The Guyana Revenue Authority would collaborate with the Immigration Department to determine whether the re-migrant was actually living in Guyana. Based on the outcome, the Guyana Revenue Authority would forward a copy to the Ministry Foreign Affairs who would then decide whether or not to revoke the status.

**Committee:** What was the process in relation to tax exemptions?

**Senior Legal Officer's Response:** Tax exemptions are dealt with by the Guyana Revenue Authority. In the event that a person's status was revoked that person would have to pay the necessary taxes.

**Committee:** Could a person who had re-migrated over eight years ago and wasn't aware of the re-migrant scheme now apply for re-migrant status?

**Senior Legal Officer's Response:** The time frame for application was three (3) months after entry into Guyana. The Minister would, occasionally, use her discretion for persons who genuinely might not have been aware of the scheme.

**Committee:** What category of persons could apply for a visa on arrival?

**Director General Response:** Diplomats and persons on Official business arriving from countries where Guyana does not have a diplomatic mission or consular office could apply for a visa on arrival.

**Committee:** What was the procedure for obtaining a Visa on Arrival?

**Director General Response:** The process for visa on arrival is done by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would facilitate the process. As soon as that person arrives in Guyana, a visa would be issued.

**Committee:** Is there a language barrier between the staff and diplomats or visiting delegations?

**Director General Response:** Most of the Diplomats speak English and those who could not would be accompanied by their own interpreters. Currently, some staff members are being trained in Spanish, French and Portuguese.

**Committee:** Do the staff perform translation for the public in the case of birth, marriage and death certificates?

**Director General Response:** No, persons are advised to contact the Language Institute for translation. Previously the Ministry would have assisted but the task was time consuming. The Ministry would however provide assistance if the case was a critical or an urgent one.

**Committee:** What are some of the countries that require a person to have a visa before entering Guyana?

**Director General Response:** Some of the countries include Columbia, Chile, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Uruguay, China, India and most of the countries in Africa and the Middle East. Guyanese on the other hand would buy a tourist card on arrival.

Partial visa arrangement was in place for a person with a diplomatic passport.

**Senior Legal Officer's Response:** In the laws of Guyana every country required a visa unless there is agreement between Guyana and the countries listed. There is a list on the Ministry's website showing the countries who have to obtain a visa to enter Guyana and those which Guyanese would require a visa to visit.

**Committee:** Is there a dress code for visitors to the Ministry?

**Director General Response:** The guard usually check with the administration for approval for persons to enter the Ministry. Based on the person's attire the officers would see them in the lobby.

## **Director General Suggestions to the Committee**

The Director General made the following suggestions:

1. There was need for laws and regulations to be in place to avoid loop holes in the Remigrant System.
2. Heightened Public awareness programme of the Re-Migrant Scheme including at most popular airports.
3. There was need to abolish visa on arrival and introduce tourist cards which could be bought on arrival.

## **Suggestions by the Committee**

The Committee suggested the following:

1. Systems should be in place to detect persons who may want to cheat the system.
2. Persons who have been granted the re-migrant status should live consecutively in Guyana for three years, failing to do so those person would be required to reimburse all the necessary tax exemptions received from the Guyana Revenue Authority.
3. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should improve public awareness of the Re-migrant Scheme via the media, arrival section at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport and at other missions.