



A PARTNERSHIP FOR NATIONAL UNITY + ALLIANCE FOR CHANGE COALITION

MANIFESTO

ELECTIONS 2015



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MESSAGE

FROM PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

ONE NATION

The principal objective of this *Manifesto* is to lay the foundation for establishing a government of national unity and democratic renewal as our country approaches its 50th anniversary of independence in 2016 and beyond.

Representatives of A Partnership for National Unity and the Alliance for Change signed the historic *Cummingsburg Accord* which has combined the energies of six political parties in a pre-election coalition for the first time in Guyana's political history. We – the Alliance For Change; Guyana Action Party; Justice For All Party; National Front Alliance; People's National Congress Reform and Working People's Alliance – shall together lead the majority of citizens who struggle daily against disunity and against a dictatorial government and who seek a good life in this, the land of their birth.

APNU and AFC are assured that, in the campaign for the 2015 general and regional elections, the overwhelming majority of Guyanese – young and old, rich and poor, women and men in all ten administrative regions and in the diaspora – want to win. They want to improve their quality of life. They want to remove the oppressive and undemocratic People's Progressive Party Civic administration from office.

APNU and AFC have come together in this democratic coalition because the nation is at breaking point. Guyanese have been fatigued by two decades of fickle promises, fatuous platitudes and failed projects. Our young people demand jobs, not jails and drop-in centres; our women and children demand safe homes not 'safe-houses'; our fishermen and miners demand protection from pirates and bandits; our paddy farmers and businessmen demand fairness and our hinterland regions demand development not goodies, gifts and grants.

The People's Progressive Party has dragged this country to the pit of the human development index.

The record rates of arson, armed robbery, murders, suicides, road fatalities, illiteracy, unemployment, trafficking in persons and trafficking in narcotics have made our country a pariah state in this hemisphere. Happy people do not kill themselves; happy people do not kill their wives and one another. Guyana has become an unhappy country under the PPP.

The PPP, worse still, has divided our nation. It offers favours to its favourites but inflicts unbearable burdens on the masses of housewives, public servants, working people, paddy-farmers, fisher-folk and students.

The APNU+AFC Coalition is the boldest step taken in six decades to replace political hostility with unity; confrontation with cooperation; dictatorship with democracy. The Coalition has chosen hope over despair and faith over fear. This *Manifesto* promises Guyanese:

- An education system that will produce citizens of quality who will be happy to remain here at home to build our great and beautiful country; a system that will extend access to the information superhighway to support the education of our young people.
- Employment opportunities in science, technology, engineering, mining, agro-processing and the arts to provide jobs and promote economic growth.
- An empowerment policy that regularly renews local democracy by ensuring that local government elections are held – as is stipulated in our Constitution – so that our villages, towns and neighbourhoods are well-governed.
- An energy policy that utilizes our wind, water and solar resources to provide cheap, renewable electricity to Guyanese in our urban, rural, riverine and hinterland communities.
- An enterprise and economic development policy that provides a level playing field for

local entrepreneurs and investors and our huge diaspora to develop our abundant resources.

- A social policy that will harness and develop the creative energies of our people and that will support the holistic development of our athletes and young people.
- A security policy that protects our citizens and our territory, allowing Guyanese to feel safe as they go about their daily lives.

This APNU+AFC Coalition's *Manifesto* prescribes a unified approach to bring an end to the cronyism at high levels that is a drain on our financial resources and is blocking our development; to crime, that is bleeding the lives and bodies of our women and youths and scaring away investors; to corruption in the law-enforcement and regulatory agencies in the mining and forestry sectors and to constitutional abuse by the President, Cabinet and executive branch of the government.

The APNU+AFC coalition is a visionary combination of political and social forces that will ensure that a real government of national unity emerges, not a bogus civic alliance; that our multi-ethnic, multicultural society provides a place for all citizens to prosper; that our people – regardless of their gender, geographic location, class, creed or ethnic origin – enjoy a good life; that an environment which is free from the ravages of poverty and discrimination, and from the scourge of criminal violence, epidemic disease and ignorance is created and that information and communications technology is extended to all corners of our great country.

The APNU+AFC coalition is actually more than six parties. It has already become a national movement for transformation. The whole is greater than the sum of all its parts. The momentum that the coalition has generated is evidence of the people's satisfaction and their desire for change. United, we stand a better chance to fulfil our destiny. Divided, we fall victims to the tactics of the PPP which could return to office.

This *Manifesto* promises a bright future for all. We assure all Guyanese - but most especially our women, youth, children and senior citizens - that we shall work towards ensuring that we all have a good life.

David Granger
Presidential Candidate
APNU+AFC Coalition



MESSAGE

FROM PRIME MINISTERIAL CANDIDATE

On March 4, at the Media Launch of our 2015 Campaign, I stated that there is need for a new wave in our democracy, to inject life into our decaying political system by taking Guyana along the road to multi-party, multi-ethnic, national rule. But of equal importance to political union by APNU+AFC are plans and programmes for investment, growth and development of a new Guyana.

This Manifesto outlines these plans and is a composite of what our several parties and civil partners want for Guyana as a stimulant to our mismanaged economy. The aim of your new government is to create jobs, jobs and more jobs in the shortest time possible. Our young people cannot wait “five more years” for jobs for which they could be adequately trained and could get better pay and greater job satisfaction. The political reforms that our new government hopes to put in place would be meaningless without an economic turn-around. So, in some ways, this Manifesto is a new economic recovery package.

However, no plans or programmes can succeed without two ingredients. These are: the broadest participation of our people in the governance processes, and a vision that is realistic and has achievable goals.

This is why our Manifesto not only addresses the challenges in the major productive sectors, but also explores potential for a new economy by projecting our vision for economic growth, not for a single term, but to 2030 and beyond.

Our Manifesto emphasizes prudent monetary and fiscal administration, to cut out waste and extravagance and limit borrowing. We have to return to clean and lean government, strict accountability, and zero tolerance for corruption.

Whilst we need to reform the Value Added Tax (VAT), we propose to restructure the tax recovery system, not to oppress wage earners, but to catch tax dodgers.

The APNU+AFC Coalition is not lured by the glitz and dazzle of new promises. Our Coalition has put into place a real programme that would bring relief to towns and villages, the hinterland and Indigenous communities, and to maximize the role of our women and youth in social development.

The success of our plans depends on genuine partnership between state and investors, and with trade unions and workers. There must be a new day for both business and labour. Government cannot do it alone. We also need partnership with international donors to boost grants to deal with the problems of hunger, homelessness and disease.

I commend this Manifesto for your scrutiny and approval. It may not have all that you want to see, or everything that you wish to achieve. But we are making a new beginning to address the major problems. The APNU+AFC “Team Unity” offers you this plan, this vision and, together, we can make it work in our beloved Guyana. It is time!

Moses V. Nagamootoo
Prime Ministerial Candidate
APNU+AFC Coalition

APNU+AFC ACTION PROGRAMME FOR THE FIRST 100 DAYS

1. Reduction in the Berbice Bridge toll.
2. Significant salary increases for government workers, including nurses; teachers in primary, secondary and tertiary education; security personnel; and civil servants on the traditional payroll.
3. Immediately implement a phased reduction of VAT and the removal of VAT from food and other essential items.
4. Significant increase in Old Age pensions.
5. Reduction of the Presidents' Pension and other benefits will be recommended and referred to a Special Select Committee of the National Assembly for determination.
6. Establishment of passport and birth certificate licensing offices in Berbice, Essequibo and Linden.
7. Return of television station to Lindeners.
8. Waiving of duties on fuel, tools and small scale mining equipment bought by identifiable holders of small concessions.
9. Set the date for the early holding of Local Government Elections.
10. Establishment of the Public Procurement Commission.
11. Establishment of a National Cane Workers and Cane Farmers Conference.
12. Establishment of a National Rice Farmers and Rice Millers Conference.
13. Establishment of an Investigative Commission on Corruption.
14. Establishment of Task Forces: on Crime & Security and on Road Safety.
15. A National Conference of Women will be held and a bi-partisan Women's Working Group established as part of the Healing the Nation & National Unity thrust of the APNU+AFC. The Gender Policy will be collectively drafted by women from across Guyana as an output from the Conference.
16. A Code of Conduct will be established for Parliamentarians, Ministers and others holding high positions in government public office to abide by, including mechanisms for demitting office if in violation of the Code of Conduct.
17. The National Youth Council will be convened and its mandate, terms of reference and programme of action produced for endorsement at a National Youth Conference.
18. An Indigenous Peoples Rights & Resources Conference will be held and the National Toshaos Council re-assessed and depoliticised.
19. Liberalization of the Telecommunications and ICT sectors;
20. Adoption of a long-term sustainable economic development plan to realize the vast potential of this country;
21. Implementation of an amended Anti Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Act.

HEALING, RECONCILIATION AND A MODERN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

Perhaps nothing is more important to APNU+AFC than being a change agent for healing and reconciliation in our beloved Guyana. Since the beginning of our recorded history, we have known conflict and strife, most notably in the deliberate manipulation of the races by our colonial rulers to ensure that, until today, we remain distrustful, disrespectful and disdainful of each other. It is our quest to pick up the mantle of those who have gone before by working assiduously to achieve a better understanding and appreciation of each other so as to forge consensus and, ultimately, a united, peaceful and developed Guyana.

Thankfully, most Guyanese are committed to working towards a unified Guyana. APNU+AFC will make every effort to forge healing and reconciliation, thereby preventing tension and to establishing lasting peace and prosperity. To this end, APNU+AFC will take a multi-pronged approach to healing and reconciliation by addressing the following areas:

Governance

- Allowing cultural and religious leaders to advise Cabinet on policy matters.
- De-politicising and strengthening the Ethnic Relations Commission, Women and Gender Equality Commission, Indigenous Peoples Commission and Rights of the Child Commission.
- Ensuring that citizens' complaints against state officials are heard and addressed by enhancing the prominence and importance of the Office of the Ombudsman.

Education and Culture

- Including subjects in our schools' curricula that will lead to a better understanding and appreciation of our origin, cultures and religions, and encourage civic responsibility.
- Establishing research programmes at the University of Guyana to study the causes of ethnic and racial tension and conflict in our society and make recommendations on how to address these.

Social and Economic Disparities

- Instituting Community peace and reconciliation programmes for settling disputes and differences by peaceful means.
- Reforming the land and house lot distribution systems to remove bias, discrimination and fraud.
- Addressing issues of "ancestral lands" and land rights of our Indigenous Peoples.
- Ensuring as far as possible that when government contracts are awarded, a minimum of 50% of contractors and employees live in the administrative regions where the works will take place.
- Ensuring that all Guyanese have equal access to education, housing, health care and justice.



1. PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COALITION

THE APNU+AFC COALITION IS RESOLUTELY COMMITTED TO:

- Establish and entrench an **inclusionary democracy** through the appointment of a Government of National Unity which would create opportunities for the participation of citizens and their organisations in the management and decision-making processes of the state, with particular emphasis on the areas of decision-making that affect their well-being.
- Governance that is transparent and accountable while placing emphasis on national development for the benefit of all our people.
- **The implementation of a sustained programme for the healing, reconciliation and social integration of the nation.** In this context, all legal, political and economic improprieties would be dealt with within the framework of the Rule of Law, without any form of witch-hunting.
- Setting Guyana on a path where **all Guyanese regardless of ethnicity and geography can feel fully motivated to be proud of our nation** and afforded the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to the society while successfully caring for themselves and family.
- The creation of a Guyana in which **all citizens can live productive lives** free from the ravages of poverty, secure in their homes and in their communities and enjoy the benefits of political, social, economic and cultural development.

2. DIAGNOSIS

The PPP regime has plunged the country into a general crisis affecting constitutional, political, economic, social and cultural dimensions.

Unfortunately, since 2000, as the consequence of blatant violations of the Constitution; misguided, discriminatory and poorly executed economic programmes; dramatic and widening of income disparities; the breakdown of the rule of law; executive abuse and lawlessness; pervasive and now endemic corruption; the increasing influence of narco-trafficking; the rise and assertiveness of drug lords and associated criminal gangs; the introduction of political death squads; the criminalisation of the state; increasing rates of white-collar and violent crime and criminality; armed robberies; a high murder rate which have undermined public safety and security, there is growing evidence of social dysfunction such as high suicide, emigration, school drop-out and high rates of domestic violence, as well as undermining the ability to enforce contractual obligations.

The above is indicative of the enormity of the task that the almost 23 year old PPP regime has left for the incoming APNU+AFC Government.

FOUNDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Below are our fifteen interconnected Foundations for Development. It must be emphasised that these foundations are all equally important and must be implemented in an integrated way.

Foundation 1: National Unity

National unity is the essence for the coming into being of the APNU+AFC Coalition. This spirit and imperative of unity, consultation and cooperation will inform all decision-making with respect to political, economic and social development issues. The practice of One Party Rule and Winner-takes-all is now history.

Foundation 2: Transforming the Economy

APNU+AFC aspire to achieve rapid economic growth and development. This will involve a strategy for meaningful job creation, with adequate wages and remuneration, in pursuit of a dynamic and modern economy.

- Through our detailed programme for transforming the productive and emerging sectors of the economy, APNU+AFC will foster and facilitate the upgrading of skills for our people for the enhancement of industrial growth and the development of value-added services.

Foundation 3: Personal Security: Less Crime

APNU+AFC will confront serious crimes (both blue and white collar), arrest the spread of organized gangs and improve public and personal security. Guyana is a country of unsolved crimes and non-convicted criminals. We intend to change that.

- APNU+AFC will develop innovative strategies to enhance and support current police efforts to better serve the security needs of Guyana. APNU+AFC, with the help of friendly foreign agencies like the FBI, Scotland Yard and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, will provide leadership and support to the Joint Services to further develop the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime. APNU+AFC will provide resources to reduce the opportunity for criminals to corrupt the Joint Services.

Foundation 4: Equal Opportunity

APNU+AFC recognizes that each citizen, regardless of race, class, creed, social status or gender, has the right to access opportunities and make an important contribution to nation-building. Failure to ensure ethnic balance in political, economic and social

opportunities is counter-productive and a waste of our rich talents. Moreover, as a nation we must realize that all ethnic groups must be developed and jettison the zero-sum mentality of the past.

- Everyone can be made better off, given our bountiful natural resources. APNU+AFC will reform and empower the Ethnic Relations Commission to provide Ethnic Impact Statements of Cabinet Decisions and Government departments, where necessary, and such findings will be acted upon in the best interest of all Guyanese.

Foundation 5: Political Reforms

APNU+AFC recognizes that the Constitution, in its current form, does not serve the best interest of Guyana or its people. Within three months of taking up office, APNU+AFC will appoint a Commission to amend the Constitution with the full participation of the people. The new Constitution will put the necessary checks and balances in place to consolidate our ethos of liberal democracy. Freedom of speech, reduction of the power of the President and the Bill of Rights will be enshrined in the document.

- Local government elections have not been held since 1994. APNU+AFC commit to meaningful local government reforms and to holding these elections shortly after assuming office.

Foundation 6: Our Youth: Our Future

APNU+AFC's Youth Policy will focus on reducing risk factors such as crime, drug abuse, alcoholism, teen pregnancy, suicide, violence and illiteracy. Our programme will generate support and allocate resources to make recreation, the arts and sports hallmarks of excellence and will restore the bond between young people and our communities.

Foundation 7: Gender Equality; Our Women, Our Foundation

APNU+AFC recognizes that gender equality is a basic human right. APNU+AFC intend to introduce policies to promote healthy and respectful gender relations, the equitable advancement of women, leadership opportunities for young women and gender justice. We especially encourage the rebuilding of Guyana's family structure, the sharing of caring tasks between

mothers and fathers, as well as mentoring and financially supporting Guyana's children.

- Further, gender equality will enhance democracy and assist in developing peaceful communities, and eradicating poverty and violence against women. In advancing this objective, APNU+AFC will work towards ensuring quality education for all, improving maternal health and reducing child mortality. We will also strive to reduce the incidence of male delinquency and underperformance.

Foundation 8: The Hinterland: The New Frontier

Given the threat of global warming and the concomitant rise in sea levels, we must plan to establish major economic centres in the hinterland regions. These will enhance the economic well-being of our Indigenous Peoples and create centres of economic activity away from the coast. APNU+AFC envisages that in the short-term Linden, Bartica, Mahdia and Lethem will become important economic centres. All of these areas shall become Free Trade Economic Zones and APNU+AFC shall immediately commence negotiations with the State and Federal Governments of Brazil to pave the Linden to Lethem road and the Mahdia to Bartica Road, and also realize our hydropower potential. APNU+AFC will ensure that Indigenous culture, land rights and the environment are respected and protected.

Foundation 9: Diaspora Integration

With over 700,000 Guyanese living abroad, Guyana has arguably the most important pool of financial and human resources, skills and talents outside of its boundaries. The Diaspora represents a critical element in the current and future development of Guyana. While the Diaspora is seen as a source of remittances - currently about US\$400 million each year in cash and gifts - APNU+AFC will implement a series of incentives to attract this talent and their wealth in the development of Guyana.

- APNU+AFC will establish Diaspora desk offices at its Embassies and High Commissions in New York, Toronto, London and the Caribbean to solicit investments and entrepreneurial and other skills to develop Guyana with clear constitutional guarantees that investors' assets will be protected, regardless of who is in Government.

In addition, APNU+AFC will facilitate a safe and hospitable environment for investment.

Foundation 10: The Poor, the Elderly and the Mentally and Physically Challenged: Our Commitment to Care

APNU+AFC in Government will ensure that the nutritional and medical needs of the poor, elderly and mentally and physically challenged are met. Additionally, provisions shall be made for increases in social assistance and pensions for the elderly, along with the establishment of additional residential homes, increased educational opportunities and schools for those with special needs will be implemented. APNU+AFC will endeavour to enhance the well-being and security of our poor, disabled, elderly and homeless.

Foundation 11: Social Transformation: Dignity For All

APNU+AFC will ensure qualitative and systemic social transformation for Guyanese and will focus on rebuilding a skilled, motivated and highly educated population which will be the driving force of economic and transformation.

- APNU+AFC will promote the attainment of the United Nations' new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – which have succeeded the MDGs. We will design public policies so that there is universal access to health services, education, housing, and other Social Services as a means of maximizing the generation of social capital, fostering social inclusion and giving all communities access to the productive sectors.

Foundation 12: Education Upgrade

The challenge of rebuilding Guyana can only be met by a skilled and highly educated work force. APNU+AFC in government will ensure that the nutritional and transportation needs of primary and secondary students are met. Additionally, we commit to establishing adequate computer labs and information technology and training in every school. APNU+AFC will create vocational and business schools which will directly reduce the unemployment rate, especially among youth. The Coalition will also unveil a programme which considers the special needs of our

most valuable resource – our teachers – with a view to providing special concessions which will encourage them to remain in Guyana and teach our children. Tertiary educational facilities and standards will be also dramatically upgraded.

Foundation 13: Public Service Reform

Every country needs a professional and politically neutral Public Service to implement decisions and to advise the government of the day. Important economic, industrial, and foreign policies will be implemented by the Public Service. APNU+AFC will ensure an efficient Public Service to facilitate good governance. Accordingly, we recognise the need for reform of the Public Service to enhance its professionalism and remain productive in this constantly changing world.

Foundation 14: Macroeconomic Stability

APNU+AFC will institute a macro-economic policy framework that promotes external and internal balance outcomes, along with a more diversified economic structure, so as to ensure economic stability. In so doing, exchange rate movements will be minimized and the well-being of the most vulnerable sections of the population more effectively protected.

Foundation 15: Our Indigenous Peoples

The APNU+AFC Coalition is proud to join with the Indigenous Peoples, the first nations of Guyana, to promote their rights, culture and overall well-being as citizens working side by side with all others to develop our nation. To this end, APNU+AFC will promote a multifaceted agenda that gives true meaning to Article 149G of our Constitution which states: ***“Indigenous Peoples shall have the right to the protection, preservation and promulgation of their languages, cultural heritage and way of life.”***



3. GOOD GOVERNANCE

The PPP has raped the Constitution by its abuse of presidential powers and ignoring of statutory obligations, including the appointment of Commissions and oversight bodies. Constitutional, electoral and parliamentary reforms are imperative.

A regional survey of the institutions found: ***“...trust in the executive, political parties and the parliament ... declined significantly between 2012 and 2014. ... young people have more trust in political parties than older persons [and that]... confidence in judicial institutions and the police declined sharply between 2012 and 2014.” (LAPOP 2012)***

The APNU+AFC Coalition has pledged, under the Cummingsburg Accord, to pursue inclusive democracy making full use of stakeholder fora to test, plan and monitor the implementation of policies in key areas.

CONSTITUTIONAL, JUDICIAL, ELECTORAL AND PARLIAMENTARY REFORM

PRIORITY REFORMS BY THE APNU+AFC COALITION INCLUDE:

Constitutional Reform

- The APNU+AFC Coalition will immediately appoint a Constitutional Reform Commission consisting of representatives of all major Stakeholders - trades unions, the private sector, religious and faith-based organisations, women, youths, professional organizations and the University. Its mandate will be to undertake the urgent task of fashioning comprehensive reforms, for early implementation, designed to guarantee

a democratic society free from the abuse of citizens by those in high office fuelled by the exercise of arbitrary powers and behaviour by the Executive which is inconsistent with the spirit and provisions of the Constitution.

Powers of President and Prime Minister

- Re-balancing the powers and responsibilities of the Prime Minister and the President in a manner meant to reduce abuse, avoid conflicts of interest and facilitate the more efficient execution of state functions;



Separation of Powers

- Ensuring the effective Separation of Powers between the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary;
- Implementing checks and balances to protect independence of key Constitutional Office holders and prevent Executive abuse;
- Protecting the operational and financial independence of the Judiciary and Constitutional Commissions;

The Media

- Guaranteeing the independence of the Media, freedom of access to information, the liberalisation of broadcasting and the removal of barriers to access to the State Media;
- Appointing an independent Broadcast Authority;

Legal Measures

- Agreeing a protocol to break the deadlock over the appointment of a consensually agreed Chancellor and Chief Justice and bring an end to the practice of appointing governing party cronies to the Magistracy and Bench;
- Operationalising the Family Court;
- Managing the succession and training arrangements within the Judiciary to ensure that a sufficient number of persons are available to be drawn on from which to appoint Judges and Magistrates;
- Implementing measures to eliminate the backlog of cases, reduce the high incidence of persons on remand for extended periods, and ensure speedy trials;
- Implementing fast-track mechanisms for submitting Appeals to the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ);
- Appointing a permanent Law Reform Commission;

Parliament and the National Assembly

- Appointing a Parliamentary Committee dedicated to making recommendations for the continuing reform and improvement in the working of the Parliamentary system;

- Appointing an *in situ* Parliamentary Counsel and establishing a National Assembly Budget Office;
- Providing sufficient resources to permit the National Assembly to appoint technically competent and well paid research and analytical support for the work of Parliamentarians and National Assembly Committees;
- Appointing an expert Stakeholder Committee to oversee the implementation of the outstanding recommendations of the Constitutional Reform Commission.

FIGHTING CORRUPTION

Anti Money Laundering legislation

The APNU+AFC Coalition will ensure the early passage of the amended and strengthened Anti Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Bill.

Integrity Commission

The APNU+AFC Coalition will appoint an independent Integrity Commission as a matter of urgency, staffed by persons of the highest integrity.

The Coalition will appoint a group of experts to:

Undertake an in-depth review of:

- All major contracts entered into or approved by the Government of Guyana and entities such as NICIL, GFC and GGMC particularly those pertaining to the disposal of state-owned assets, including lands.

Investigate:

- The use of the **PetroCaribe**, the **Lotto** and other funds used as **slush funds**;
- The contracts for the new **Skeldon Sugar Factory**;
- The contract for the **Enmore Sugar Packaging Plant**;
- The contract for the **international airport expansion project**;
- The contract and financing arrangements for the **Marriot hotel**;
- The contract for the **Amaila Falls Hydro-power project**; and

- The contract for the **Speciality Hospital**.
- Commission forensic audits of:**
- NICIL;
 - The use of the funds which were allocated for:
 1. The 2005 Floods;
 2. The Cricket World Cup;
 3. The hosting of CARIFESTA X; and
 4. The ICC Twenty/20 Tournament.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

One of the most despicable practices of the PPP regime has been its tendency to make agreements and unilaterally refuse to implement them. Despite its solemn 2011 promise to the people of Guyana for the holding of Local Government Elections they have failed to hold them. They have reneged on the 2012 Agreement with the Region 10 Administration for the return of their TV station, restoring broadcasting rights and attending to the developmental needs of the depressed Linden community. APNU+AFC will reverse this trend.

Local Government Elections: A Priority Action

- Guyana is too large to be effectively or efficiently managed only by a central government. **Articles 71(1) and 74(1) of the Constitution provide for devolution and specifically entrust the task of managing and developing of communities to their residents and their respective local democratic organ.** However, instead of holding Local Government Elections, the PPP has imposed an autocratic system of Interim Management Committees resulting in the destruction of local democracy and local development prospects.

The APNU+AFC Coalition will:

- **Announce the date for the holding of Local Government Elections** under the Reformed Local Government System, subject to consultations with GECOM;
- **Return the Local Government Bills, which were not assented to by the President, to the National Assembly** – for approval and

Presidential Assent in preparation for the long overdue Local Government Elections;

- **Operationalise the Local Government Commission Act of 2013**, passed by the National Assembly on 7 August 2013 and assented to by the President on 6 November 2013;

IMPLEMENT COMPREHENSIVE LOCAL DEMOCRATIC REFORM

The APNU+AFC Coalition will undertake:

- A phased implementation plan for the devolution and decentralisation of significant sections of Central Government, which will include:
- Compliance with the Reformed Local Democratic System mandated by Chapter VII Articles 71-78B of the Constitution.
- Training of human resources and building institutional capabilities and capacities so as to enable a culture of good governance to flourish.
- Providing material, technical, administrative and financial resources to the Local Democratic Organs to equip and enable them to function with the autonomy envisaged by Article 75 of the Constitution;

REHABILITATE CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES

APNU+AFC commits to:

- The long overdue renewal of our cities and municipalities, particularly Georgetown, New Amsterdam, Rosehall, Corriverton, Linden, Lethem, Bartica and Parika. This task will include:
- Putting in place efficient solid and toxic waste disposal systems.
- Increasing access to reliable potable water and sanitation.
- Enforcing long neglected zoning laws and regulations.
- Repairing and dredging canals and drainage systems to reduce the current scandalous vulnerability to flooding;



Implement the Region 10-Government of Guyana 2012 Agreement

- Immediately begin to fully implement the agreement reached between the Region 10 Administration and the Government of Guyana which was hammered out after the wanton killing of three protesters by the police in July 2012;

African Ancestral Lands

- Access to African ancestral lands in Guyana and the protection of rights to such lands are very sensitive issues in Guyana. In this decade dedicated to Persons of African Descent.

APNU+AFC will:

- Establish a suitably constituted stakeholder group to make recommendations – taking into account studies and proposals already available;
- Devise a transparent and equitable plan to bring closure to the age old problems of respecting

and safeguarding ownership, rights and access to African Ancestral Lands.

HINTERLAND POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT

Hinterland development will be a top priority because the Hinterland remains a disadvantaged, depressed and vulnerable zone in spite of its rich natural resources and human capital. The Hinterland also provides opportunities and viable alternatives to the coastal zones and communities under threat from sea level rise due to global warming and climate change.

APNU+AFC will support:

- **An environmentally and economically sound development strategy** geared to benefiting the Indigenous inhabitants and other local communities.
- **The economic empowerment of Hinterland people** with requisite capital resources and capacities for agricultural development; housing

and road construction; manufacturing and services.

- **A truly integrated hinterland development plan**, devised in partnership with Indigenous Peoples, which is based on secure property and land rights and environment protection policies.
- **The development of the Indigenous Peoples and their hinterland communities** which is undertaken in such a manner and on terms that do not force those citizens to emigrate from their communities to access the most ordinary rights to employment and a healthy environment.
- **Firm policies, legalities and standards of best environmental practice** must accompany any exploitation of Non-renewable Resources within Indigenous communities and territories; equitable benefits must accrue to those communities in a manner that is transparent and fair and based on decisions and agreements which fulfil all the criteria of **free, prior and informed consent (FPIC)**.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The Indigenous peoples of Guyana (Akawaio, Arawak, Arecuna, Carib, Makushi, Patamona, Wai-Wai, Wapichan, Warau) reside mainly in the hinterland and constitute a rapidly increasing section of the population. Indigenous Peoples, similar to all other Guyanese, aspire to fulfil their true potential and to achieve excellence in any meaningful pursuit of life. Despite the many challenges and difficulties they have faced, some persons have indeed achieved distinction in their chosen field of endeavour.

- APNU+AFC recognises that all post-independence governments have made improvements in the laws and conditions of the Indigenous Peoples of our country, but there is still significant progress to be made in this regard. Since independence in 1966, international law governing the rights of Indigenous Peoples has advanced immeasurably. Guyana, as a member of the international community, in adherence to its treaty obligations under international law, has a clear moral and ethical obligation to the first peoples of Guyana: to ensure that the national legal framework meets acceptable standards for the protection of their rights.

- Since 2006, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) has made a number of recommendations. The UN Committee urged Guyana *“to recognise and protect the rights of all Indigenous communities to own, develop and control the lands which they traditionally occupy, including water and subsoil resources, and to safeguard their right to use lands not exclusively occupied by them, to which they have traditionally had access for their subsistence, in accordance with the Committee’s General Recommendation No. 23; and taking into account ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.”*
- Guyanese Indigenous Peoples have over the years, consistently advocated for their right to water and subsurface resources to be included in the land titles granted to them. The PPP administration has persisted in disregarding its treaty obligations under international law to fully protect the water and subsurface resource rights of the Indigenous Peoples. Instead, the PPP government has evinced a paternalistic view of Indigenous communities as objects on which to bestow vote-catching trinkets at election time.

APNU+AFC in government will:

- Uphold all International Treaty obligations.
- Recognise that Indigenous Peoples of Guyana, and all over the world, have maintained that the protection of their right to their lands, territories and the resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used and acquired, is not only fundamental to the realisation of their economic, social, cultural and political rights, but to their very survival. The protection of their right to lands, territories and resources cannot be overstated.
- Uphold all rights guaranteed under ILO Convention #169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, and Article 27 of “The Rights of Minorities” issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- Celebrate and preserve our Indigenous heritage and work to ensure that Indigenous citizens enjoy their full rights under our Constitution;

The Guyana Constitution is clear: ***“We, the Guyanese people, value the special place in our nation of the Indigenous Peoples and recognise their rights as***

citizens to land and security and to the promulgation of policies for their development.” APNU+AFC believes that the full protection of the rights of the Indigenous Peoples in the Constitution, and in other laws, is the bedrock of the realisation of their economic, social, cultural and political aspirations within Guyanese society.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The hinterland regions of Guyana – Barima-Waini, Cuyuni-Mazaruni, Potaro-Siparuni, Upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo, and Upper Demerara-Berbice (Regions 1, 7, 8, 9, 10) cover 76.62 per cent of the country’s landmass. The Indigenous population therein is about 113,000 persons, 15 per cent of the national population. Population density is extremely low.

APNU+AFC’s vision is for hinterland communities to be food secure. A food security policy for the hinterland will also result in savings in transportation costs for staples in some hinterland households, and broaden the resident skills base. Traditionally, the nine Indigenous Peoples met their food needs through subsistence agriculture, hunting and fishing. With the upsurge in mining and, to a lesser extent, logging contiguous to many of their communities, these traditional food sources have been severely compromised by environmental degradation and habitat loss. To compound matters, young men especially, have been leaving their villages to seek income from jobs with mining and logging companies. The result has been an increase in suffering and dislocation, especially in villages and communities distant from regional centres.

APNU+AFC in government will:

- **Work with all stakeholders for a Hinterland Policy** which includes building and sustaining vibrant region-specific agricultural and economic development.
- **Promote environmentally sensitive food production systems based on agricultural diversification,** management and efficient use of water, and the establishment of well-resourced extension services to facilitate technology adoption by farmers and farming groups.
- **Facilitate access to affordable credit** for individuals and groups.

- **Establish a Hinterland and Depressed Areas Fund,** controlled by the leaders of the Indigenous hinterland communities, to be utilized in a manner consistent with the expressed priorities, needs and aspirations of Indigenous and local communities.
- **Facilitate the acquisition of appropriate technology** and equipment for various levels of production.
- **Enhance arrangements for producers for marketing** of primary and value-added commodities.
- **Place the hinterland cattle-rearing industry on a scientific footing to take advantage of the international demand for ‘organic’ beef,** while the nascent sheep and goat rearing enterprises will be strengthened to address the animal protein dietary needs of villagers in the first instance and, as flocks are built up, to meet the significant local and CARICOM demands for sheep and goat meats.
- **Implement policies aimed at the Intermediate Savannas, Upper Demerara and Berbice Region,** long touted as the ‘next frontier for agricultural development,’ as well as the **Rupununi Savannas** of Southwest Guyana are effectively used for integrated, industrial crop and livestock production and agro-processing.
- **Focus programmes on the production of substantial portions of regional food needs,** such as grain and other concentrate feeds for the local animal production sector.

REGION 10 POLICY AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The vision of the APNU+AFC is that Linden must become the second administrative centre of Guyana to realise its strategic importance as the gateway of the South and to benefit from of its comparative geographical advantage in the face of the threat of coastal sea level rise due to global warming. Investment in and diversification of its industries are essential so as to provide sources of alternative employment in Region 10.



To enable this, a Region 10 Development Plan will be created in consultation with the people of Linden.

APNU+AFC will:

1. Create a strategic Development Plan for Region 10.
2. Rescue and modernise the bauxite industry.
3. Invite and support foreign investment from reputable and known multinationals to develop an aluminium industry in Guyana.
4. Create new jobs alongside policies to guarantee workers' rights and welfare.
5. Develop the 200,000 hectares of the intermediate savannahs for citrus, cattle, legumes, vegetables as the country's second frontier for agricultural development;
6. Develop the Tiger Falls and other hydroelectric potential in the region to facilitate regional industrial development;
7. Intensify block making capability using lateritic bauxite soil. This will be supportive of APNU+AFC's housing policy;
8. Promote furniture manufacturing and other value-added wood products;
9. Re-engage the Government of Brazil and commence the construction of the Linden to Lethem highway;
10. Transform Linden to make it the main entry point for eco-tourism expansion.
11. Establish a University of Guyana campus in Linden offering courses relevant to the developmental needs of Regions 7, 8, 9, and 10.

4. EMPLOYMENT MAXIMISATION, INEQUALITY AND POVERTY REDUCTION

THE ECONOMY, PUBLIC FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Under the PPP, growth since 2000 has, in real terms, averaged less than 2% per year. The APNU+AFC Coalition recognises that the achievement of a sustainable industrialization and development programme requires an average growth rate of at least 7%.

APNU+AFC in government will:

- **Manage the economy in such a way as to produce wider entrepreneurial and job opportunities and more equitable outcomes**, so that the bulk of generated income and wealth accrues to the populace as a whole and not only to a very small elite;
- **Award a 10% increase on the total Public Sector Wage, Salaries and Emoluments Bill and thereafter consult with their unions on the method of allocation of increases on the wage scales.** This is in keeping with our new approach to industrial relations. It is expected that this could trigger a new era and further reforms in industrial relations in the public service.
- **Re-configure and improve the national planning framework and prepare a long-term National Development Plan** with consequential Programmes, based on consultation with relevant bodies and key stakeholders. The objective would be to take sustainable advantage of the vast potential of Guyana's resource endowments;
- **Ensure management of dynamically stable economic fundamentals** (the foreign exchange rate, foreign currency reserves, low levels of inflation, rates of interest, fiscal surplus/deficit and debt management) that would allow the expansion of economic and industrial activities, and stimulate higher levels of savings and investment (domestic and foreign).
- **Appoint an appropriately composed oversight body to accelerate the promotion of Science and Technology**, including Research and Development, in order to establish a framework for innovations for development.
- Build a **diversified knowledge-intensive society**, on the talents and skills from all sectors and regions of Guyana;
- **Create a high value-added diversified productive technical and scientific environment** capable of ensuring a steady stream of transformative productive enterprises;
- **Commission an investigation of the current state of ICT development** in Guyana and identify the remaining steps necessary to make the country completely internet-ready in consonance with the objective of ensuring that Guyana becomes a Digital Nation.

TAXATION

The present tax system is highly inequitable and unjust. The PPP/C reform of the tax system came to a drastic halt after the passage of the VAT and Excise tax legislation and the windfall it provided. PPP pledges to complete the reforms have proved to be insincere. The overall tax burden in Guyana is considerable. The ratio of central government revenue to GDP is the highest in the Caribbean.

The APNU+AFC will:

- **Commission a comprehensive review of current taxation systems** and policies, including the value-added tax, to identify and recommend fiscal innovations that would not only address the adverse consequence of the current structure of taxation, including hardship effects, but would create incentives that could attract needed investment in critical sectors of the economy.
- **Implement tax relief proposals with five main features:**
 - First: emphasis on consultation;
 - » Second: **phased implementation**;
 - » Third: **equity and justice** (interpersonal, across regions and sectors);
 - » Fourth: **ease of implementation**; and
 - » Fifth: **establishment of a Tax Commission** and rejection of the narrow technocratic approaches to tax reform. At the same time, there would be stricter enforcement and more efficient administration, including broadening the net of coverage and a careful review of exemptions.
- **Reduce the Value Added Tax** within the first term as part of the Taxation Reform Programme;
- **Increase Personal Income Tax Threshold to \$100,000** in a phased approach;
- **Reduce the toll for passenger vehicles on the Berbice Harbour Bridge** eventually to \$500;
- **Rationalise the VAT and excise duties on motor vehicles and on diesel** so as to encourage the use and importation of energy efficient vehicles and equipment, promoting fuel efficiency, ensuring appropriate equipment choice and rational importation policy as regards vehicle

age, maintenance costs and the costs of related spares;

- **Review and strengthen the administration of fiscal concessions and end the concessions to privileged groups** - simply because of their association with the governing party;

Public Expenditure measures would be determined by the following related factors:

- Stimulating productivity, investment, savings and growth of the economy;
- Reduction of poverty and inequality;
- Provision of basic needs (education, health, security, jobs, a living wage, self-employment); and
- Macro-economic conditions for sustainable growth.

The impact of expenditure increases would be mitigated by the phased implementation, transparency, accountability, allocation efficiency, and compensatory downsizing in other areas, resulting in:

- » Better public procurement;
- » The early appointment of the Public Procurement Commission equipped with appropriate institutional capacity;
- » Fewer white elephants (such as the Skeldon factory);
- » Less expenditure wastage;
- » More careful prioritising;
- » Greater bang for the Tax-payer buck;
- » Strict monitoring and expenditure controls;
- » Regular reviews of the Public Sector Investment Programme;
- » Ethnic and location impact assessments; and
- » The promotion of Public Sector-Private Sector Partnerships so as to ease the infrastructure financing burden.

- **Establish a major stakeholder committee to recommend ways and means of enhancing fair economic competition in all sectors;** particularly the commercial banking and financial sectors, including policies that must be

put in place to protect consumers, in addition to preventing the unfair miniaturizing of the Guyanese private investor.

EMPLOYMENT AND GROWTH

The most effective way of alleviating poverty is rapid growth alongside the provision of jobs at a living wage and creating opportunities for self-employment (land reform, credit and financing, market research, equipment, technology and business skills). The objective is an integrated employment strategy.

The APNU+AFC objective is an integrated employment strategy which prioritises the following elements:

- **Stimulating local and foreign investment** by way of providing strategic infrastructure, targeted tax incentives and radically less burdensome administrative procedures;
- **Pursuing options for attracting foreign investment**, through the Diaspora, the Economic Partnership Agreement, the Gulf Cooperation Fund mechanism and from capital surplus economies;
- **Creating special funds for specific disadvantaged areas**, and centres of excellence devoted to building needed skills, and for training in relation to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);
- **Accelerating the infrastructure development process** by encouraging, for example, the use of public-private partnerships;
- Implementing quick-acting, results-oriented projects for job creation such as:
 - » An Environment Enhancement Programme (EEP);

- » A Capital and Infrastructural Rehabilitation Programme (CIRP), for Georgetown and other urban and rural communities

- **Designing and implementing a self-employment training component of the employment and growth strategy** to prepare persons for self-employment in modern services, including services for ICT and SMEs, software development, business processes and medical records transcription.
- **Addressing the interlocking challenges of a poor business environment with restricted access to capital and credit**, taking advantage, as appropriate, of one or more of several existing international SME finance initiatives which provide financial and technical support:
 - » the G-20 *Financial Inclusion Initiatives*
 - » the *SME Finance Challenge*
 - » *Feed the Future Initiative*
 - » the EIB's Micro-Finance Fund
 - » the EUR 100Mn Rural Impulse Fund II.
- **Paying particular attention to the development of cheap energy from our hydro-power resources** to facilitate the diversification of the economy through the domestic development of higher added-value products based on the forward integration of the exploitation of our natural mineral resources: bauxite, gold, diamonds, semi-precious stones, hard rock, kaolin, silica sands, etc.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS & LABOUR WELFARE

The PPP has deliberately undermined the right of workers to collective bargaining and, in the process, has deprived their earning of a liveable wage and contributed to persistently high levels of poverty and the enormous widening of the gap between the haves and the have nots.

The APNU+AFC Coalition will:

- **As a prelude to the restoration of Collective Bargaining throughout the Public Service, increase the salaries of all government workers, on a graduated basis, with the lowest paid receiving a 10% rise;**
- **End the fragmentation and restore the solidarity and dignity to the labour movement.** It is necessary to heal the long-festering disputes between the unions. Therefore, a special Commission would be appointed to recommend means of restoring the credibility, improving the governance and representation of the workers at the individual union and national levels.
- **Enforce the Principles and Laws Governing Collective Bargaining,** in accordance with our commitments under the International Labour Organisation;
- Restore collective bargaining for all the relevant elements of the Public Service;
- **Restore the ‘check-off’ arrangement** for the automatic deduction of union dues from the wages of Public Servants in keeping with the agreement with the TUC and the relevant unions;
- **Require that Guyanese are employed on all projects in Guyana:**
 - » Establish a committee to review the status of implementation of this intent;
 - » Review existing contracts and their implementation and determine whether our labour laws and regulations relating to the employment of Guyanese on projects undertaken in Guyana need to be revised;
- Immediately constitute the Public Service Appellate Tribunal;
- **Provide a meaningful subvention to all legally constituted and functioning trade unions** – to enable them to be better able to represent the needs of workers they represent;
- **Restore the Government subvention to the Critchlow Labour College;**
- **Embark on steps to reform and modernize the Public Service** starting with the implementation of the relevant recommendations in Reports such as ‘Public Service Modernisation’ and ‘Updating the PSC Rules’ – paying attention, in the process, to its size, costs and the position of Donor sponsored Project Units.
- Launch an intensive investigation into the entire Human Resource
- Management functions within the Public Service.
- **Establish an Independent Constitutional Salaries Review Commission** to be responsible for the periodic review of salaries, pensions and other conditions for persons appointed to Constitutional Offices, including the President, Prime Minister, judges, MPs and other special offices.



5. PRODUCTION TRANSFORMATION AND ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

The PPP has failed the agricultural community as evidenced by the destruction wrought on the sugar industry, the failure to ensure fair price sharing in the rice sector, the neglect of production of value-added foods and diversified agricultural products, and the failure to install an effective drainage and agricultural system to combat the threats of floods and drought.

The APNU+AFC Coalition will:

- **Restore agriculture to its former vibrant self** by consultation and collaboration with farmers to determine the support needs of the sector;
- Investigate, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, re-establishing an **Agricultural**

and Industrial Development Bank to meet the financing needs of the agricultural sector.

Way Forward for GuySuCo

APNU+AFC will convene a Commission of Inquiry into the operations of the Guyana Sugar Corporation and, with the support of an expert multi-disciplinary group,

review, analyze and recommend the way forward for the Guyana Sugar Industry, including options for infusing critical investments and the optimum utilisation of its valuable capital infrastructure.

- Appoint an Expert Team to investigate and remedy the problems plaguing the GuySuCo Skeldon Factory;
- Appoint a competent and representative Board of Directors to GuySuCo as part of the programme for the de-politicisation of the enterprise;

SUPPORT FOR THE RICE SECTOR

The Coalition's goal is to seek to increase farmers' share of the rice and paddy prices received from export market agreements. The majority of rice farmers have been expressing their discontent with the management and oversight of the sector and the generally depressed state of the farm economy.

The APNU+AFC Coalition will:

- Investigate the uses being made of the resources generated by the PetroCaribe financed agreement with Venezuela, especially with respect to the share accruing to farmers and use of the Intervention Fund, which is being abused and treated like a slush and racketeering fund.
- **Immediately initiate a sustainable Rice Sector support programme which would include:**
 - » Restructuring of the GRDB to include representatives of rice farmers;
 - » Holding of free and fair elections, supervised by GECOM, for the executives of the RPA;
 - » Negotiation of additional new international markets for rice from Guyana;
 - » Initiating incentives for the development of value-added products to accelerate the diversification of the industry;
 - » Improving the costs and efficiency of rice-milling;
 - » Exploring options for providing more appropriate levels of trade credit to farmers, millers and exporters;
 - » Collaborating with the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) to develop new plant varieties that are

suitable for our peculiar coastal conditions and the needs of targeted international markets;

- » Encouraging the cultivation of varieties specifically for the animal feed industry;
- » Paying special attention to increasing yields and enhancing the international competitiveness of the industry; and
- » Upgrading the technical capabilities of the rice extension services and other service providers.

DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION INFRASTRUCTURE

The APNU+AFC Coalition will:

- **Overhaul and restructure the National Drainage and Irrigation Board** and Water Users Associations and improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of water management.
- Substantially **extend and rehabilitate the network capacity of drainage and irrigation infrastructure**, guided by the countless studies and recommendations already available, in order to rectify the poor and often non-existent maintenance endured over the years.
- Attend to the needs of long-established settlement areas, such as Mocha, which are prone to **extensive flooding in face of slightest of rains**.

NATURAL RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Mineral Resources Sector

The PPP and the Geology and Mines Commission have carried out a mining policy that is riddled with corruption, the arbitrary granting of exploration and mining permits, imbalance in the treatment of small and medium scale investors and foreign investors.

The PPP and the Guyana Forestry Commission have fostered a forestry policy that masquerades as a protective sustainable resource strategy.

To date there has been little or no public disclosures or Parliamentary oversight over forests and mining concessions, land gifts, acquisitions or rentals.

Consequently, audits, reviews and public hearings will be initiated to get the full and true picture of the current situation.

The development of Guyana's abundant forest, mineral, water and marine resources –

the patrimony of Guyana – must contribute towards increasing the well-being and happiness of Guyanese citizens in a manner that is transparent and equitable.

The APNU+AFC Coalition will:

- Appoint an independent expert group, composed of credible technical experts and Guyanese stakeholders, to review past investments and identify areas for new investments in the natural resources sector.
- Urgently review and enhance the effective capacity and capabilities of the GGMC and related supporting institutions for the planning and management of the future development of the mineral resources sector.
- Give Guyanese investors primacy of place, in order to ensure that current and future generations of Guyanese are able to improve their lives.
- Pay special attention to the levels of existing Royalties and fees.
- Waive the duty on fuel for small-scale miners.
- Ensure that foreign direct investors meet criteria of adding value to our human resources, introduce new and/or advanced technology as well as significantly contribute to the nation's Treasury.
- Insist on the exploitation and development of our natural resources being based on international best practices of sound principles of economic and ecological sustainability.
- Ensure that investments that fail to meet the requirements of the laws and policies of Guyana are identified and made to comply.
- Institutionalise the conduct of Needs assessments and the compliance with appropriate environmental and social assessments for resource utilization projects.
- Prepare a 10 year development plan, in consultation with all stakeholders, for the sustainable

development of the mineral resources of Guyana, covering the entire minerals and mining sectors, including bauxite, gold, diamonds, hard rock, quarries and other mineral resources.

- Commission a high level technical team to develop plans, including, in the first instance, the commissioning of a feasibility study for mine development and the construction of an international scale alumina refinery in Linden, as part of the strategy to forward integrate the bauxite industry while transforming the economy of Region 10.
- In this regard, in recognition of the high levels of investment that would be required, the Coalition would seek to attract foreign as well as Guyanese investors and interested Caribbean Governments as partners in this venture.
- The availability of cheap hydro-electric energy would make such an initiative more attractive and enable the forward integration to be extended to the levels of aluminium smelting and fabrication.
- Encourage international petroleum companies, with a proven track record, to intensify their exploration and development efforts, so as to realize our great fossil resources potential and generate the exports and foreign exchange that will have huge economic transformation effects on Guyana.

GUYANA LANDS AND SURVEYS COMMISSION

Review and implement, as appropriate, the relevant recommendations of the UK/EU consultancy, currently working with the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission, on a Land Use Policy and related legislation.

Develop Forest-Based Industries

Publish the outlines of plans for the expansion of the forestry and forest-based industries sector, taking account of the challenges of responding to the imperatives of climate change, while focusing on the development potential of value-added manufactured products, such as furniture, veneers, and non-timber forest products for increasing and diversifying exports from this sector.

- End the unlimited export of logs.

Greening of Low Carbon Development

The APNU+AFC proposes the establishment of a national stakeholder group to devise a more rational and comprehensive approach for a viable Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) for Guyana, since it is clear that the climate threat is not faced by the hinterland only. The Coalition will move away from this misguided emphasis and pursue a nationally inclusive approach based on transparency, meaningful stakeholder involvement and consultation. Emphasis will be placed on the sustainable harvesting and wise utilisation of the forests in tandem with the establishment of strategically located national conservation parks and community conservation areas. In addition, the Coalition will work along with the international community to develop a comprehensive, equitable and sustainable international regime of compensation for the provision of climate amelioration services by countries such as Guyana.

Protect Fragile Ecosystems

APNU+AFC government will engage in urgent consultation for the development of policies for the conservation of fragile and unique ecosystems and environmental areas. A priority will be the North Rupununi Wetlands and acceding to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands to ensure safeguards for its sustainable human development.

ENERGY POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT

Renewable Energy Policies

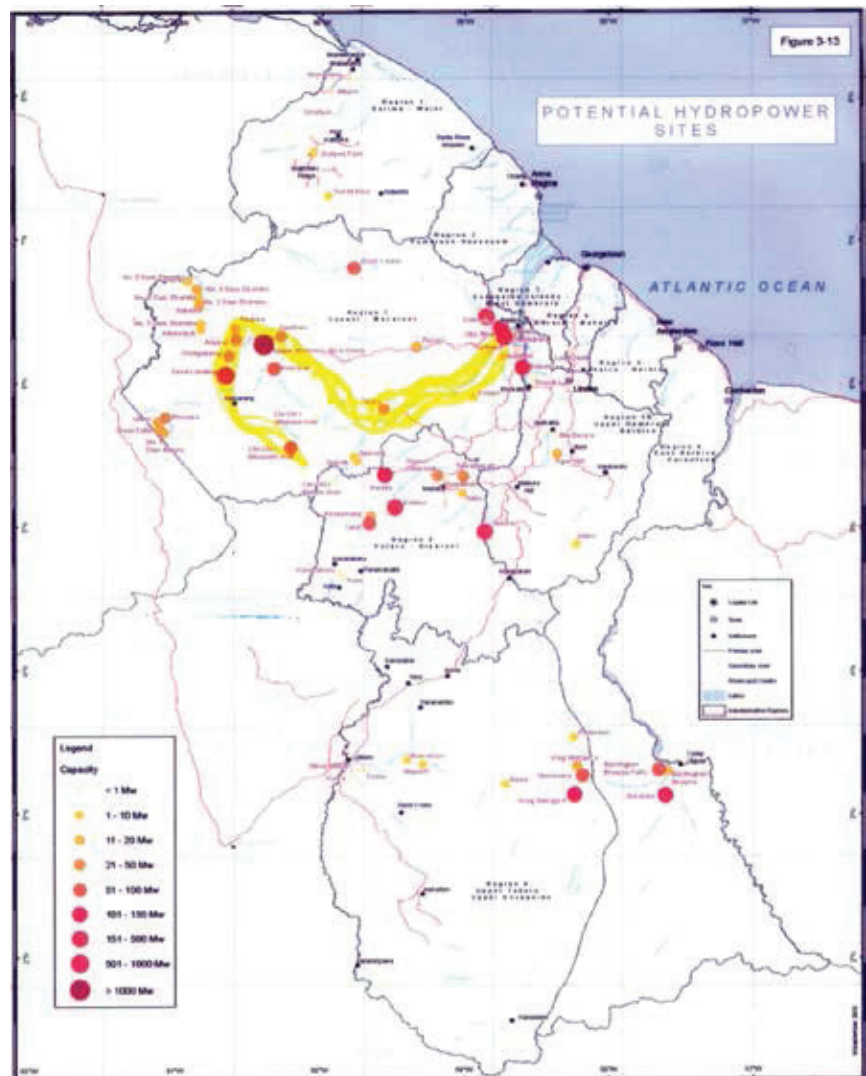
The PPP has failed to encourage greater use of solar and other new and renewable sources of energy and has erroneously chosen the Amaila Falls project, with its estimated limited generating capacity, over the Brazilian alternative that would

utilise the water resources of the upper and middle Mazaruni river basins.

The APNU+AFC Coalition will seriously consider the greater national energy and synergistic benefits of the Brazilian alternative while seeking to rescue the Amaila project as part of the wider Potaro River basin development, on the basis of greater control over the hitherto gross cost escalation and decision-making devoid of corrupt arrangements.

Development of new and Renewable Energy Resources

The Coalition will appoint an expert multidisciplinary group to review, analyze and recommend, a national approach for the development of our new and renewable sources of energy, particularly the abundant hydro-power resources.



- This would include a detailed socio economic evaluation of the options and the creation of new institutional arrangements, such as the establishment of a national Hydro-power Development Authority, necessary for the early implementation of identified projects.

PUBLIC WORKS, COMMUNICATIONS AND NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructural development is critical for Guyana's economic transformation because of the country's physical size (particularly in relation to its population), geographical positioning, terrain and topography, and its historical settlement pattern that has been predominantly coastal.

As a result of bad planning, the PPP has failed to synchronize its housing development thrust with an expansion of the urban and rural road network system, resulting in horrendous traffic jams and bottlenecks. In addition, it failed to construct the long promised Linden-Lethem all weather highway (including feeder roads to eco-tourism [waterfall] sites) and deep water harbour projects, which are necessary in any meaningful Guyana economic diversification strategy that is allied with the Brazilian Government strategy for the development of North East Brazil.

Sea defences are in a mess and the Hope Canal project is only the most recent example of such ineptitude and waste of taxpayers' money, notwithstanding the public protests and comments and criticisms by experts about the inappropriateness of the engineering.

The production potential of the Brazilian states of Roraima and Amazonas, which total 800,000 square miles, would create many jobs in Guyana if this country could provide Brazil a transportation route to the Caribbean. Goods to and from Boa Vista and Manaus and the states of Roraima and Amazonas can pass through Guyana on roads built by Guyana and Brazil to a deep water harbour. The tolls to traverse our roads and use our seaports alone can earn significant revenue. Fertiliser, imported food, drink and mechanical imports, even the outward shipping of sugar, rice and other commodities will all become increasingly more economical with the development of a deep water harbour.

There remains inadequate infrastructure to support the location and development of productive activities. Few roads have been built to serve production centres. In agricultural areas there is still a dearth of feeder roads. The number and quality of both urban and rural roads is inadequate. Indeed, no new trunk roads have been built in the last 20 years.

APNU+AFC in government will:

- **Develop and shape a new National Transport Policy:**
 - » Supported by new subsidiary legislation and regulations that are required by the agreements and commitments which Guyana has already made; and
 - » Compliant with international conventions, codes and customary practices.
- **Prioritise the construction of the Linden-Lethem highway.**
- Facilitate early completion of the IDB-supported Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America (IIRSA) – to interconnect South American economies through transportation, energy and telecommunications.
- Revitalise and restructure the Central Transport Planning Unit in the Ministry of Public Works and Communications to give greater focus and direction to a well structured and integrated approach to transport infrastructure development and management.
- Prepare a new roads and river transportation master plan.
- Support the construction of a network of subsidiary roads that will enable access to a number of waterfall sites thus stimulating our eco-tourism industry and hinterland industrial activity.
- Collaborate with municipalities on roads and bridges to ensure that they are effectively constructed and maintained.
- **Explore the option of another bridge across the Demerara River –**
- to meet growing demands and expansion in the Essequibo Islands, West Demerara and the housing and agriculture sectors.

- Pursue as a priority, negotiations with Brazil for the development of our vast hydropower potential for the export of power to Brazil's northern states and for meeting Guyana's domestic and industrial requirements.
- Work to develop arterial and secondary roads, air transportation links, hinterland airstrips and port networks so as to facilitate ease of communication, transportation and access to Guyana's natural resources and to enable better opportunities for monitoring.
- **Review and evaluate the proposals contained in the Guyana 2030 Plan for infrastructure development in Guyana.**
- Consider premium public transport systems on the coast and in rural and hinterland areas which would offer a better quality of service, with subsidies for senior citizens, school children and the differently-abled.

MARITIME AND AVIATION DEVELOPMENT

APNU+AFC will place emphasis on giving full effect to the various international instruments to which Guyana is party in the maritime and aviation fields by facilitating the drafting and implementation of the requisite subsidiary legislation and regulations. Although Guyana acceded to the Shipping Act in 1998 and a Maritime Administration Department was established, development in the maritime sector has been constrained and constricted.

The APNU+AFC Coalition will:

- **Develop the ports and shipping industry through the drafting and implementation of a Port Master Plan** as a phased approach to port infrastructure development and the effective dredging and maintenance of the ports, harbours and rivers on which local and international traffic depends.
- **Consult on the construction of a deep water harbour:** (with spinoff benefits for Guyana) that will also stimulate Guyana's trade with Brazil and serve as a gateway for our CARICOM partners.
- Upgrade maritime and aviation security, search and rescue plans and operations.

- **Increase surveillance of the territorial waters of Guyana as a deliberate strategy to decrease the growing incidents of piracy and armed robbery.**
- **Establish a functioning national maritime and aviation security committee** – with wide inter-sectoral involvement.
- **Upgrade Hinterland airstrips and key secondary roads** – to mining areas, forestry sites, Indigenous villages and other communities outside of our main settlement areas, as part of a coordinated and phased programme of upgrading the air transport network to provide a level of 'feeder services' linking airstrips, mining areas, settlement communities and social services – particularly health services.
- **Give priority to developing the Maritime Administration Department.** There is urgent need to fashion a national policy for the development of marine infrastructure linked to the establishment of the Regional Maritime Freight Network.
- **Start the phased establishments of Regional Airports within Guyana.**
- **Give priority to the restructuring and liberalisation of the telecommunications and information sectors.**

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

In this era of rapid technological change, APNU+AFC's vision is to:

- **Ensure that Guyana can source and acquire the latest technology,** assimilate it (adapting while adopting), disseminate and diffuse it throughout the society.
- **Modernize our primary, manufacturing and services industries:** by providing enhanced tax incentives for research and development and supporting the commercialisation of promising new products and services.
- **Make all of Guyana internet-ready via appropriate fibre optic cable connections** – with the main cities and towns being internet hotspots and by cooperating with established service providers.

- **Strengthen our educational and training institutions** – to provide the basic knowledge and skills required to absorb new technology.
- **Devise incentives for foreign investment enterprises** to transfer technological advances via meaningful training programmes.

DIGITAL NATION

Digital Nation is a comprehensive three year master plan which would be carefully crafted by globally respected experts in their respective fields to help prepare Guyana for that exciting transformation from a mostly commodities-driven economy to a fully-fledged and respected player in the International Digital Economy.

APNU+AFC anticipates that all of Guyana could be prepared for a world transformed by technology. It will promote a paradigm shift in lifestyle and work habits, where the power to harness and mine data will differentiate between winners and losers, the firm assumption being that your closest competitor may not necessarily be the traditional brick and mortar shop across the street but a company or entity in Asia or elsewhere.

In addition to helping Guyana to exploit new economic opportunities and enhancing the vibrancy of the global ICT sector, a nationwide broadband network (NBN) will offer effective open access to retail service providers to bring about a more competitive broadband market which will immediately result in the creation of a wide range of next generation services for all end users.

The APNU+AFC Coalition is convinced that:

- **An all-pervasive and ultra-high speed broadband network** is essential for Guyana to be ready to embrace and fully benefit from the boundless opportunities that an ICT-enabled future presents.
- **New knowledge-based sectors require major infrastructural investment** as a critical necessity. This will act as a catalyst in developing and deploying innovative interactive digital services to homes, schools and businesses.
- **Information and Communication Technologies hold great promise** for all the other sectors of

the economy. Greater use of ICT will help firms reduce their costs, enhance their productivity and increase overall efficiency, and thus make a greater contribution to economic growth.

- A comprehensive ICT policy should address the following objectives:
 - » ICT infrastructure for accessible, generally affordable, universal, and reliable ICT facilities and services.
 - » A legal and regulatory framework to create an enabling legal and regulatory environment that recognises that ICTs are now tradable and that the ICT sector (including telecommunications) must be organized along competitive lines to ensure growth and development within the sector and the economy as a whole.
 - » Development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for ICT use across all sectors.
 - » Industry use of ICT to create an enabling and conducive environment for investment and the development of a vibrant and sustainable economy.
 - » Government as an active participant and user of ICT (to simplify government transactions, improve accountability, make interaction between citizens and the Government easier and quicker, advance rights like the access to information).
 - » Security to significantly improve the effectiveness of law enforcement by utilising fixed and mobile network infrastructure.

APNU+AFC in government will also work to:

- Ensure an enabling environment for the creation of an information society.
- Employ ICT in Government operations and service delivery for efficiency and effectiveness.
- Encourage public Internet access and the use of computers and other ICT equipment within Government.
- Encourage easy, secure and efficient ICT-based access to appropriate Government information systems and services.

- Promote affordable access to computers and the Internet at the community level.
- Encourage and support the use of ICT to predict, monitor and respond to disasters and in environmental management.
- Improve the management and monitoring of licensed and unlicensed wireless frequencies.
- Permit the population to provide feedback and opinions on issues and policies through secure online polling mechanisms.
- Review the One Laptop Per Family project to maximize the returns on hard-earned tax-payer dollars since in 3 years, the majority of net-books distributed will cease to function. Options being considered include subsidizing the purchase of more capable laptops or PCs from select qualified distributors if a family prefers something with more capacity than a net-book computer.
- Equip schools with more reliable and lower-maintenance computer labs, utilizing available technologies.
- Review telecommunications legislation to level the playing field and encourage fair competition and expansion of infrastructure in the sector.
- Significantly improve the response time for emergency and other services with state-of-the-art technological solutions.
- Provide all police outposts across Guyana with access to data to aid the reporting of, and response to criminal activity, while improving law enforcement collaboration.

TOURISM

Strategic Tourism Development Plan

APNU+AFC in government will facilitate the development of a viable tourism industry. The implementation of a Strategic Tourism Development Plan with input from the private sector will form the foundation of the approach. Product development, infrastructure and marketing will be priority areas.

The APNU+AFC vision for tourism is to:

- Implement an International Marketing plan which will lay out the strategies, goals and actions to be taken to create a vibrant industry; and identify a meaningful role for the country's overseas diplomatic representatives.
- Make the Guyana Tourism Authority an autonomous body managed by a board of tourism professionals, with a qualified CEO and staff and the requisite funding.
- Implement an investment plan with tax incentives to expand the sector and to reduce red tape.
- Provide specialised vocational training opportunities within the hospitality industry and establish the Hospitality Training Institute.
- Develop Infrastructure such as the Linden-Lethem highway which will benefit the people of Guyana and the tourism industry.
- Recognise Tourism as an export industry with special rates of VAT applied to the tourism product to guarantee its competitiveness in the international market.
- Improve airline access to Guyana, especially among internationally recognised scheduled carriers.
- Place special emphasis on ecotourism, with a direct link to the Coalition's hinterland development strategy.
- Examine ways to reduce the cost of interior travel in Guyana for both overseas and local nationals.
- Ensure a safe and smooth visitor experience by aggressively implementing the national crime and security policy.
- Restore Georgetown to its former glory of being a "Garden City" and banish the "Garbage City" image.



6. SOCIAL INTEGRATION, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND YOUTH

Human and social development and the provision of basic needs have been sadly neglected by the PPP government, in favour of project expenditure on certain ill-conceived economic show pieces that hardly further the process of sustainable development.

- APNU+AFC will seek to substantially improve the quality of services and benefits provided by the State to old age pensioners, public servants, the school-age and higher learning-age population, the sick and disabled, vulnerable women and unemployed youth, and communities lacking in basic infrastructure.

HUMAN SERVICES AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The APNU+AFC Coalition will:

- **Immediately double the level of Old Age Pensions and Public Assistance** and develop a plan to incrementally increase the OAP to the level of the minimum wage;
- **Bring to an acceptable level the pensions of those Public Servants, including former teachers and Senior Police Officers**, whose pensions currently fall below the minimum wage;
- **Undertake a radical review of the current arrangements for the determination and structuring of pensions in the public and private sectors;**
- **Waive the fees payable by Old Age Pensioners for:** passport renewal; motor vehicle license; motor vehicle fitness; driver's license; road, bridge and ferry tolls; and the airport exit tax;
- **Immediately put in place measures to reduce time & costs spent for collection of Old Age Pensions.** As part of a study to improve the system and arrangements for the payment of Old Age Pensions, measures to reduce the time spent and transportation costs, particularly for pensioners living in communities remote from payment centres, will be immediately put in place.
- Institute the necessary consultations and legislative provisions for the phased raising of the retirement age of Public Servants from 55 to 65.
- Introduce a verifiable programme to ensure the automatic **payment of Public Assistance for disabled children** and link this with a viable Case Worker system, ensuring that the child benefits directly from such assistance.
- Public and private sector infrastructure must allow for the accessibility and movement of disabled persons.
- Ensure the provision of special care, financial assistance, education, training, health care services, rehabilitative services, preparation for employment and recreation **opportunities for physically or mentally disabled persons** to encourage their fullest social integration and development.

- **Establish a specialised NIS Task Force** – to make implementable recommendations to the National Assembly **for the restoration of the financial viability and sustainability of the NIS**, taking account of the various Studies, Reports and recommendation that have already been submitted. Eventually this Scheme will have to be replaced with one that is more appropriate in coverage and better resourced.
- **Undertake an expert study to replace the NIS by a comprehensive compulsory National Social Security Scheme**, including health and employment insurance as well as pensions, covering the public as well as the private sectors.

Issues Creating Alienation of Boys and Young Men

APNU+AFC will:

- Commission a study of the issues which lead to the alienation of boys and young men from our education system, including: dropping-out from schools; engaging in crime and violence; marginalization; accessing the labour market; and poverty alleviation;
- Undertake an expert study of the issues and **causes of risky behaviour among girls and boys** and determine suitable programmes for remedying this situation.

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

APNU+AFC recognises that “Women” are the custodians of the fundamental values that sustain families and are critical for success in generating social wealth and creating an environment of peace, justice, security and stability. APNU+AFC also recognises, supports and celebrates women’s leadership, participation and contributions to society and pledges to uphold and promote the full rights, dignity and well being of all women; thus creating a greater voice for women, the girl child and children in general, within the broader society.

In Guyana, several constraints limit our women’s collective capacity to transform these principles into everyday practice. These include violence against women in all its forms, including physical violation and mental and emotional abuse. Limited access to finance for the promotion of entrepreneurial activity and insufficient protection under the current legal

system further constrains the full potential of women in Guyana. APNU+AFC also recognise that the plight of other vulnerable groups including the disabled, children, orphans and senior citizens are all intrinsically intertwined with the position of women as care-givers in our society.

APNU+AFC's Platform for Women & Gender Equality will establish and commit to:

- A Gender Policy and a Gender Budgeting system will be developed and implemented through a participatory process as key transformative measures for guaranteeing and resourcing greater equality and gender justice in our society.
- A Code of Conduct for persons holding public office that will comply with the proposed Gender Policy.
- A "MENtoring" Policy which will draw on the approach of CARIMAN (Caribbean Male Advocacy Network) so as to develop appropriate programming to help to transform negative male values, practices and beliefs into positives and to build a cadre of males (both men and boys) who can serve as respectful and respected citizens, parents, leaders and positive role models throughout the society.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES

- Work closely with local, national and international bodies to increase women's entrepreneurial activities.
- Increase microcredit programmes and access to small business loans/grants.
- Establish Job Centres in each administrative region to facilitate job search and employment matching.
- Advocate the introduction of lower interest rates at financial institutions for female headed households and first time home owners.
- Promote gender-friendly banking services especially in the area of loans to women.
- Implement a Child Tax Credit programme for employers.

- Introduce tax credits for companies providing in-house daycare facilities.
- Increase government-funded childcare centres to support women, especially estranged mothers, single mothers, victims of various forms of abuse.
- Amend the Labour laws to incorporate "flexi-time," which permits women to work from home and promote increase part-time employment opportunities.

THE LAW AND WOMEN

- Operationalise immediately the Family Court to address the specific needs of women.
- The Domestic Violence Act and the Sexual Offences Act must be enforced without compromise or exception.
- Immediately implement at all Police stations a Special Victims Unit with qualified social workers to handle crimes against women.
- Implement immediately a national 24-hour Domestic Abuse Hotline and a Suicide hotline to facilitate immediate intervention.
- The Guyana Police Force (especially female police officers and the Special Victims Unit) will be mandated to institute charges against a perpetrator without the victim's consent.
- The Judiciary and magistracy will receive special training on the detection and consequences of domestic violence, on the family and the society at large, and the necessity for expedited determination of these cases.

WOMEN AND EDUCATION

- Implement immediately remedial programmes for women focusing on Literacy, Numeracy and Matriculation.
- Encourage women to enter non-traditional areas of employment including information technology, auto mechanics, electrical repairs, carpentry and to enter technical training institutes.
- Establish with assistance from national and international agencies scholarships for disadvantaged women to pursue tertiary education.



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- Strengthen the school curriculum to include increasing awareness of Women's Rights.
- Promote respect for women and positive coverage of women in the Media.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

- Establish immediately in each region Transition Houses for victims of domestic violence (including all forms of abuse, rape and incest). These support facilities will provide long term accommodation for women and their children, financial support, on location trauma counselling, job search assistance and skills training.
- Employ trained Psychologists to counsel battered and otherwise abused women. These Psychologists/Counsellors shall operate clinics, hospitals but shall also work in concert with the Special Victims Unit of the Guyana Police Force.
- Employ within the Guyana Police Force qualified Psychologists and trauma specialists.
- Empower and identify female police officers at each station to provide one-on-one support to victims of violence.
- Conduct workshops on stress management, conflict resolution and communication techniques at clinics and health centres.
- Establish at all hospitals a confidential priority ward to ensure victims of abuse receive immediate medical attention. These facilities will be staffed with professionals, confidential support services and security personnel, where necessary.
- Establish geographically strategic rehabilitation centres for drug abuse, prostitution, etc.
- Implement a Social Assistance programme that supports unemployed single mothers, abandoned women, victims of abuse, and other economically disadvantaged women, and builds self-esteem.



A COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY

APNU+AFC recognise that Gender Equality is an intrinsic basic human right and are committed to eradicating all forms of gender bias and gender-based violence. We commit to putting in place measures which will ensure that all vulnerable groups in our society, including women, children, persons with disabilities, rural and Indigenous women, youth, the elderly and the sick and pregnant and those marginalised because of sexual orientation are protected and not discriminated against.

This means that the Coalition will strive towards equality in law and moral situations, such as democratic activities and the securing of equal pay for equal work. We believe that our human resources must all enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities, rewards and protections.

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

EDUCATION ACTION PLAN

Retain and Recruit Teachers

- Immediately review and correct the existing deficiencies in the remuneration and conditions of service of teachers;
- Implement suitable arrangements for improving the educational standards for teacher recruitment;
- Provide adequate facilities and resources, in each Region for enhanced on-going teacher recruitment and training;

Reform of Curriculum

- Commission an expert supported consultative process designed to urgently correct the evident failures of the existing curricula which is driving the present system of Primary and Secondary education to facilitate the reform of the education which is needed to produce the type of citizen required for the 21st Century development of Guyana;

- Take immediate steps to improve the teaching of the sciences, mathematics and language skills at the primary and secondary school levels;

ICT for Teachers and Schools

- Ensure that all secondary schools across the nation are adequately equipped for the teaching of ICT-related subjects;
- Provide each qualified Class Teacher with a laptop to facilitate the emphasis on ICT supported education in all schools;

Rescue the University of Guyana

- UG has become a disaster area nearing collapse, into which it has been plunged by the government through relentless political interference at all levels, politicisation of the Boards and denial of adequate funds. AFC+APNU will:
 - » Initiate a consultative process involving knowledgeable persons from relevant stakeholder groups, to review, investigate and make recommendations for enhancing the quality and sustainability of University education in Guyana.

Technical and Vocational Institutes

- Implement a national programme to build well equipped and appropriately staffed, **Technical and Vocational Institute in every Region** of Guyana, giving immediate attention to the needs of Regions 1,7,8 and 9;

School & Student Support

- Provide **subsidised transportation and school meals** to enable children from needy and disadvantaged families to attend school particularly in the riverine areas of Guyana;
- Create and implement a well funded programme for identifying and providing the necessary support systems for **disabled children and gifted children**;
- Commission a study to recommend a more **appropriate configuration of school classrooms** to enhancement of the teaching and learning environments for our children;
- Undertake the reorganisation and **enhancement of sports, and recreational facilities** nationwide.

CULTURAL POLICY

APNU+AFC is committed to a cultural policy which takes into account our rich and varied heritage, and which works to employ culture, not as a means of division, but as a catalyst for mutual understanding and social cohesion.

Our culture policy will aim at an on-going public campaign that seeks to equitably promote the various threads which together form the Guyanese tapestry. Towards this end, we will enhance programmes in cultural and anthropological studies at the University of Guyana; strengthen cultural education at the secondary level; and consult with experts - from community elders/leaders to linguists to anthropologists - in forming a consensus-driven policy formulation and execution mechanism, inclusive of clear and unbiased channels for monitoring and evaluation.

APNU+AFC will establish:

An Independent Arts Foundation

- APNU+AFC believes that crucial to the development of the arts is an autonomous foundation, one that works in collaboration with, but is not controlled by, the Ministry of Culture.
- The purpose of the Foundation will be to facilitate technical and financial inputs into specific arts programmes benefiting the individual artist, or community arts programmes.
- The Foundation will examine and implement funding mechanisms including the use of Lottery Funds, events tax, private sector donation and partnership investment.

Arts Policy

- **Visual Arts** – The Coalition will review the operations of the Burrowes School of Arts (BSA) with a view to enhancing the facilities, programmes and human resources. In addition to strengthening the focus in traditional areas of the visual arts, BSA will be equipped with a graphics arts production department to service - at industry level pricing - a quota of government graphic design and layout work annually.
- **Music** - APNU+AFC will work to strengthen the music programme from the nursery to secondary levels, in addition to working with private

teachers and conservatories to enhance their programmes. Additionally, we will facilitate the development of private recording studios which will become leaders in the music industry.

- **Dance** - Dance remains the strongest of the performing arts in Guyana, driven primarily by several private entities focussing on a variety of genres, from ballroom, to Kathak, to modern dance. APNU+AFC will work with existing dance schools to enhance their capacity, where necessary, and to engage the best of these groups to act as cultural ambassadors of Guyana.
- **Literature** - APNU+AFC will ensure that emerging Guyanese writers are afforded mechanisms for the development of their technical skills; the time to write; reward for their work; an enabling environment; and avenues for publication.
- **Theatre** - APNU+ AFC commits to expanding the technical development of theatrical skills nationally, particularly in rural and other peripheral communities while upgrading and expanding participation in the secondary school drama festival.
- **Film** - APNU+AFC's strategy will be to develop two initiatives: Indigenous film production and the facilitation of foreign film production.
- **Cultural Legacy** – Guyana's diverse cultural heritage and legacies should be promoted through increased opportunities for research, learning, performances and competitions. A Cultural Legacy Festival could be introduced that would feature aspects of our heritage in a respectful and authentic way. This would be different to the Mashramani style carnival. However, greater efforts will be made to promote increased cultural diversity in our Mashramani festival, including resuscitating the dying art of masquerade.

YOUTH POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT

Recognising that unemployment and the lack of suitable and rewarding jobs is the most urgent problem facing young people today –

The APNU+AFC Coalition will:

- **Fashion policies to address these deficiencies;**

- **Appoint an inter-Ministerial Task Force to develop programmes** which provide targeted solutions for the problems confronting youths, particularly the provision of training and institutional support for access to suitable long-term employment;
- **Spare no effort to establish and nurture a vibrant diversified, skill-intensive and natural-resource based modern economy** capable of satisfying to needs, hopes and aspirations for employment and development of young men and women.
- **Develop and implement a plan for universalising a programme of Technical and Vocational training** throughout the country with the objective of giving every Guyanese child the opportunity to acquire marketable skills and qualifications.
- **Establish a National Youth Council** to review and oversee the proper functioning of all youth programmes;
- **Create a Special Youth Fund** (with a Technical Support Unit and a Mentorship Program) in collaboration with the Private Sector and other non-governmental organizations to facilitate:
 - » A smooth transition from classroom to workplace;
 - » Rewards for initiative and innovation; and
 - » The creation of Resource Centres, at the community level, where youths can access information, training, pursue recreation and obtain advice and counselling on career and employment choices.
- **Encourage meaningful community and volunteer programmes** where youths can inculcate habits of service to their communities and the country;
- **Establish technical skills training centres** in agricultural areas, in conjunction with appropriate existing entities. These technical skills training centres which focus on developing knowledge of the science of agriculture, a framework for the development of agri-businesses and the application of ICT and marketing skills.
- **Establish and appropriately equip an adequate number of special schools and**



rehabilitation centres, to cater for vulnerable youths in special circumstances.

- **Revisit the present Youth Award schemes** and other such programs to make them more focused and relevant to hinterland as well as urban and rural youth.

INVESTING IN SPORTS

APNU+AFC will commit to providing:

- **An Annual Subvention from the National Budget:** An annual subvention for each National Sports Association or Federation will be provided and to support the participation of national athletes in Caribbean Championship events.
- **Innovate and Expand School Sports:** All sport in schools must be coordinated and supported by the Ministry of Sport and the Guyana Teachers' Union. School sports should not be limited to just athletics but should be broadly extended to include a variety of sports and related disciplines.
- **Support all Sports Disciplines and participation in regional and international competitions Caribbean Championships**
 - » Each sports discipline played in Guyana and their respective national teams are, in principle, eligible for representation at the respective events at the Caribbean

Championships. Both men's and women's teams should have guaranteed funding for travel and accommodation to attend these Caribbean Championships since to represent our country at such events is the ultimate achievement in sports for an athlete.

- » Build on the successes of Rugby, Cricket, Football, Basketball, Track and Field, and other Sports Disciplines with access to direct funding and enabling Guyana's sportsmen and sportswomen to participate regularly in international competitions.

HOUSING POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT

The PPP policy of selling house lots at exorbitant prices across the country will be rescinded in favour of the development of communities. The new Government will bring an end to the current discriminatory practices widely employed in the allocation of land and the failure to view housing development as part of a planned development of settlements, including related services such as transport and traffic facilities. The Coalition Government will also work assiduously to reduce and eventually eradicate unplanned housing development particularly along the coastland.

The APNU+AFC Coalition Government will ensure that every Guyanese has access to affordable Housing.

Beyond House Lot Distribution

This is an initiative to provide modern housing accommodation (in addition to sites and services) to selected categories of the populace (low income groups, the young professionals and single persons). To this end the Coalition Government will introduce:

- » Innovative financing for housing, including the development of mortgages as financial instruments;
 - » Mortgage interest support for low and middle income groups; and
 - » Incentives for aided self help (for public sector employees, etc.)
- **House Rental Initiative.** This is an initiative to provide modern safe rental accommodation by offering incentives to the private sector, the Diaspora and existing house owners for investing and renting middle and low income housing. This initiative is intended to take advantage of the potential interest of, in particular, potential investors in housing stock.
 - **Create an oversight and regulatory, licensing and standards framework** (dealing with training and certification and quality of service, legal and other related matters) to superintend activities in the real-estate and land markets.
 - **Launch an Environmental Rehabilitation Campaign** with provision for employment of residents of depressed areas and for housing and shelter upgrading of such areas.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND NUTRITION POLICY AND SERVICES

The Health of the Nation

The PPP has failed miserably with respect to the provision of both 'hard' health infrastructure (hospitals and clinics) and 'soft' health infrastructure (disease prevention, maternity survival and quality of nursing services) and in the urban, rural and hinterland areas.

Of grave concern is Guyana's unacceptably high maternal mortality rate. According to a just completed report by the World Health Organisation (WHO) Guyana is the only CARICOM country, including Haiti, that shows "no progress" in the global classification system. The report tracks trends in global maternal mortality rates for the period 1990 to 2013: in Guyana the rate rose from 210 deaths in 1990 to 250 deaths in 2013.

It is of note that The Caribbean Commission on Health and Development which was established by CARICOM (Chaired by Dr George Alleyne and including Guyanese Drs Clive Thomas, Havelock Brewster and Compton Bourne) submitted its report in 2005 to the Cabinet of the Government of Guyana; Cabinet endorsed the report. However, since then, very little seems to have been done about acting on the recommendations, which are provided below.

APNU+AFC commits to implementing the following recommendations:

- Health should be treated as a productive asset;
- Health services, including the organized export of nurses, should be treated as a selected export;
- Health education should be taught at a restructured University of Guyana;
- There should be focus on reducing the heavy cost burdens of obesity, intentional violence and injuries, and non-communicable diseases through better education and public awareness;
- There should be improved health information, intelligence, research and surveillance systems;
- There should be attention to the establishment of preventative public health infrastructure;

APNU+AFC will invest in and strengthen:

Nursing & Health Care Providers

- **Making nursing once more an attractive and well paid profession.**
- **Attracting and retaining a wider range of health care professionals** for the public health system and regulating the private health system to ensure quality, safety and other key standards.

Public Health Systems and Services

- **Strengthening health surveillance** units and laboratory services, particularly in regions where malaria is endemic, especially since the hinterland is becoming a geographic engine of economic development.
- **Providing accessible potable water and sanitation facilities** consistent with guidance from the health care system.
- **Giving priority attention to the health of children, lactating and pregnant women and the management of nutrition-related chronic diseases** (diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, etc) which often lead to extensive absenteeism, high health costs, high morbidity and mortality.
- **Overhauling the referral services** including increasing the range and capacity of emergency services.
- **Strengthening the delivery of primary health care services** to promote greater integration of services in general, including environmental surveillance, to meet the needs of remote communities in particular.
- APNU+AFC endorses the view that there should be research to find new ways and modalities for health financing. Virtually little or no studies have been done on this topic but lots of dogmatic armchair assertions/speculations exist. What is the impact of health on the development in Guyana?
- ***The health of the nation is the wealth of the nation!*** according to the CSME rubric.

7. CRIME REDUCTION, PERSONAL, PUBLIC AND TERRITORIAL SECURITY

PUBLIC SAFETY AND CITIZEN SECURITY

Under the PPP and an incompetent Home Affairs Minister, Guyana has become the murder capital of the world (as measured by a murders/population ratio) thus inhibiting investment and fuelling migrant flight; white collar crime has also risen to alarming proportions. Recent years have witnessed the absence of adequate and appropriate oversight of the Police Force and the insertion of politicised civilians into the arrangements resulting in vigilante activities as part of policing. Public security is an imperative for the development of our country. As the Courtney Crum-Ewing case vividly demonstrates the GPF has been used as an arm of the PPP and an instrument of oppression.

The recent LAPOP 2012 report on Guyana points to the finding that:

Guyana has the lowest level of trust in the police in the region and this trust has decreased over time. Between 2012 and 2014, trust in the police in Guyana decreased by 10 points on a 0 to 100 scale from 45.8 in 2012 to 35.4 in 2014. "The drop has been most steep for those who identified as Afro-Guyanese," Dr. Zechmeister said.

No country can develop if its citizens live in constant fear of criminal attack. No family can be healthy if members are fearful and vulnerable. No entrepreneur would invest funds in an environment rife with crime and corruption. Therefore, there is urgent need for the implementation of the long ignored police reform recommendations to ensure that the police become a well paid and effective agent for serving and protecting the population, rather than an instrument of oppression, as under the PPP.

APNU+AFC will:

Develop a comprehensive Public Security plan.

It will appoint a specialised committee, to include national stake-holders and supported as appropriate by external agencies, with the objective of developing a comprehensive Public Security plan, for early implementation, which identify the main causes of violent crimes and escalating crimes in Guyana and the mechanisms for their prevention.

The committee would be asked to pay special attention to:

- **Reducing the high rate of armed robberies, murders, piracy, human trafficking and domestic violence** while improving policing and maintaining police teams and identifying ways of ensuring that police officers spend more time deterring, detecting, preventing and investigating crime.
- **Ensuring a state of readiness and the acquisition of expertise and forensic equipment**, including DNA and IT technology, to

enable an effective response to emerging crimes such as white-collar crime and money laundering and those such as rape which seem to be without a deterrent;

- **Implementing proposals for the reform and strengthening of the Police and Prison Services** in line with the recommendations such as those made in the *Report of the Disciplined Forces Commission*, especially with regard to training and recruitment, increasing salaries and conditions of service;
- **Establishing a truly independent Police Complaints Authority** with its own investigative team of trained investigators directly responsible and accountable to the Authority;
- **Reinforcing Police investigative capabilities** especially with regard to rebuilding a modern, efficient and effective criminal intelligence system and Criminal Investigation Department;
- **Providing appropriate equipment for modern policing** in terrain such as exists in Guyana, for example, aircraft, maritime craft, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and the equipment needed to fight armed banditry, piracy, terrorism and other violent crimes;
- **Eliminating 'backtracking'** and establishing an immigration system that ensures that everyone understands that immigration will be controlled and that the rules will be firmly enforced;
- **Ensuring a credible National Drug Strategy Master Plan** to suppress narco-trafficking, and arrest and punish traffickers;
- **Transferring functions not requiring police training to civilian agencies** or trained employees. These include the inspection of vehicles for road fitness certificates, processing of passport applications, typing and secretarial work, and the serving of summonses and similar or related duties in rural areas;
- **Improving recruitment standards** to attract and retain competent personnel for an ethnically diverse police force by revitalising the cadetship scheme to bring the staffing levels up to the required strength.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The PPP destroyed what was once the best Foreign Service in the Caribbean. As a result, it has failed to deal adequately with neighbouring territorial threats, with adverse effects on our economic development prospects; it has also failed to harness to our advantage production integration prospects under the CARICOM Single Economy process. APNU+AFC will make ambassadorial postings a mechanism for furthering Guyana's trade and inward investment prospects, rather than an opportunity of providing "jobs for the boys and girls".

Given the personalisation of Guyana's foreign policy and the discrimination and racial polarization of the Service, there is urgent need for the rehabilitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to make arrangements for Guyana's foreign policy to be professionally and adequately formulated and pursued.

The overarching focus of our foreign policy should be the projection and protection of Guyana's national interests, principally the security of the state and its people and the social and economic development of all its citizens.

The APNU+AFC Coalition will place emphasis on:

- **Securing Guyana's territorial integrity** and, in this regard, pay priority attention to the recent unfortunate developments in our relations with our neighbours including Venezuela and the implications for peaceful exploitation of resources falling within our established borders and internationally recognised jurisdiction.
- **Developing respectful and beneficial relations** with countries and our neighbours.
- **Conducting bilateral relations on a selective basis:** in keeping with our national interest and, in that regard, there is the urgent need to repair relations with the ABC countries.
- **Participation in multilateral agencies** such as the United Nations, OAS, UNASUR, the Commonwealth, CARICOM in recognition that such institutions play a beneficial role with regard to small states like Guyana. We shall also seek to jointly develop economic activities with these groups and their members.

- Recognising the constructive role of global civil society.
- **Maintaining relations with International Financial Institutions** (WB, IADB, IMF, etc) while seeking to effect changes in their policies to advance the interest of developing countries especially small states.
- **Re-energising the regional integration process and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy initiative.** In that regard re-establish the early role played by Guyana in the integration movement.
- **Encouraging diversification of Guyana's trade and investment** with the rest of the world so as to reduce our vulnerability to external economic shocks.
- **Promoting engagements and transactions with non-traditional trading partners,** especially the newly emerging economies, to reduce fragility and volatility and increase levels of economic resilience.
- **Developing diplomatic relations with strategically placed countries** where possible and appropriate, as part of joint CARICOM missions.
- **Striving for better coordination** in the forging of regional foreign policy positions and more effective cooperation and cohesion in the negotiation of economic agreements with Third Parties.
- **Working with the international community to strengthen the AML legislation and the FATA initiatives** with a view to protecting our sovereignty and need for the rights of our citizens and the sanctity of our tax and revenue systems to be protected.
- Reaffirming our commitment to dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

REAPING THE DEMOCRATIC DIVIDEND

Neither political parties nor individuals, in the absence of the active support of the public service and an official forensic audit, can ever hope to unravel the labyrinth of slush funds, parallel treasuries, and looted state assets exported to off-shore financial institutions. To this we have to add other democratic dividends.

This constitutes an important democratic dividend for financing the new government.

Although, as indicated at the outset of the Manifesto, the country's problems cannot be resolved "overnight", there are indications of *other* substantial democratic dividends from savings in economic activities including:

1. **Reducing capital flight.** This is currently estimated at US\$200 million annually. We expect savings to be between 10 and 20% of this total.
2. **Augmenting capital inflows.** This is currently estimated at about US\$450 million annually as a result of our improved political environment. This augmentation is projected to be 15%.
3. **Reducing incentives for the underground economy** currently estimated at 20-60% of official GDP (US\$2.7 billion or G\$ 557 billion). Projected savings from this underground/formal economy conversion benefits are 10% of this amount, or 2-6% of GDP.
4. **Reducing procurement fraud** estimated by Mr. Anand Goolsarran, the former Auditor General, to be about 28-35% of total procurement spending of G\$140 billion.
5. **Tax reforms** are expected to yield 12% on total revenues of G\$168 billion. This is equal to G\$21 billion.
6. **Growth of GDP to reach its "potential"** thereby yielding a further 3% on annual growth of GDP. GDP currently stands at US\$2.7 billion or G\$557 billion.
7. **PetroCaribe** resources currently stand at 9% of GDP and projected savings from eliminating these siphoning-off practices will be about 1% of GDP or G\$6 billion.
8. **Improved labour productivity,** due to a better industrial relations climate, is expected to yield about 1% of GDP.

26 April 2015

ANNEX

THE CUMMINGSBURG ACCORD BETWEEN A PARTNERSHIP FOR NATIONAL UNITY (APNU) AND THE ALLIANCE FOR CHANGE (AFC)

Purpose

The purpose of this Accord is to establish the framework within which the signatories undertake the arrangement of the structure and priorities of a new government which will be a government of national unity. This proposed framework is supported and presented to the Guyanese public by a broad-based, multi-ethnic Alliance comprising political parties, civil society groups, organizations and individual citizens.

In particular this Accord is intended to:

- Identify areas of priority to be addressed by a Government of National Unity;
- Specify the terms and conditions of any special pre- or post-electoral arrangement between members of the Alliance;
- Outline a programme of action to be undertaken by a Government of National Unity;
- Outline the terms of engagement between members of the Alliance;
- Specify a general structure and the composition of a Government of National Unity to be elected at the next General Elections;

Background

The principal objective of the political system of the State is to establish an inclusionary democracy by providing increasing opportunities for the participation of citizens, and their organisations in the management and decision-making processes of the State, with particular emphasis on those areas of decision-making that directly affect their well-being.

It is widely recognized that the results of the 2011 General and Regional Elections indicate that the Guyanese electorate wanted major changes in the conduct and practice of politics in Guyana and, in particular, an end to the winner-takes-all politics

that has prevented the realization of Article 13 of the Constitution of The Co-operative Republic of Guyana which is quoted above.

The current political crisis, which has effectively shut down the National Assembly for more than half a year, is an unwelcome development that highlights deficiencies in our Constitution, contradicts the spirit of Article 13 and emphasizes the need for political reform.

The political experience following those elections, however, has demonstrated the need for greater political cooperation in order to meet the expectations and aspirations of the electorate. It is widely believed that considerable social, economic and other benefits would accrue to all Guyanese under an improved system of governance that allows for better representation and greater accountability.

It is felt that efforts to definitively address the issue of political change in Guyana must involve the broadest possible cross-section of the Guyanese public and their representatives, and should be undertaken during a period of Governance that is wholesome and inclusive.

The formation of a Government of National Unity following the next General Elections will allow for a period of reformation to take place and this is to be pursued under the terms of this Accord.

We are proposing a Coalition which would harness the energies and resources of the widest possible grouping of citizens and their representatives in an effort to generate maximum popular support for a platform of political changes to be undertaken by the next government.

Accordingly, this Accord sets out the rules of engagement of the Coalition and the modalities for the pursuit and implementation of their mutually

agreed strategies, goals and objectives based on the following set of guiding principles:

1. Respect for the value and sanctity of human life and for the well-being of all peoples and communities;
2. The acceptance and promotion of dialogue, discussion and the use of constitutional, parliamentary and all lawful means to advance political, economic and social change;
3. The maintenance of high levels of courtesy and mutual respect, especially amongst public figures and the avoidance of an environment within which public expressions of disagreement are characterized as acrimonious;
4. The rejection of ethnicity as a consideration for the participation of any citizen at any level within the Coalition or within a Government of National Unity;
5. Reforms of the Local Government System, Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches of government which are necessary steps towards the establishment of an inclusionary democracy; and
6. Zero tolerance for corruption and the promotion of transparency, financial probity and accountability at all levels of Government.

Priority areas to be addressed

The Coalition will make a public commitment to the formation of a Government of National Unity to implement the following measures during its term in office:

- The introduction of a meaningful Constitutional Reform Programme geared towards improved governance and fair representation;
- The sustained improvement of crime prevention and the security environment;
- Local Government reforms and the holding of Local Government Elections;
- Creation of a long-term Economic Development Programme based on consultation and consensus;

- The establishment of the Public Procurement Commission and the passage of Anti-Money Laundering legislation;
- Comprehensive review of the current taxation policies;
- The reorganization of the Education, Health, Sports and Recreation sector for better service and outcome;
- A programme for Healing and Reconciliation;
- Review and restructure of the media and the telecommunication sector; and
- The introduction of a Youth Programme.

Programme of Action

Within the first 100 days of the formation of a Government of National Unity, the following will be done:

- Establishment of a Constitutional Reform Committee with a mandate to complete consultations, draft amendments and present same to the National Assembly for approval within nine months;
- Liberalization of the Telecommunications and ICT sectors;
- Announcement of a date for local government elections;
- Development and implementation of a sustained national crime prevention plan;
- Establishment of a Public Procurement Commission;
- Adoption of a long-term sustainable economic development plan to realize the vast potential of this country;
- Implementation of an amended Anti Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Act.

Composition

- The President will be elected under the current constitutional provisions.
- The Prime Minister will be appointed by the President in accordance with the terms of this Accord which states that “the AFC shall name the Prime Ministerial Candidate”.

- The President will appoint the Vice-President in accordance with the terms of this Accord which states that APNU shall nominate one Vice-President in the construct of a future Government and that the AFC shall nominate two Vice-Presidents in the construct of a future Government.
- PPP-C members could be invited to join the Cabinet.
- Members of the National Assembly will be selected in accordance with the terms of this Accord which states “at the end of the 2015 elections, the Coalition will allocate 12 seats to the AFC.”
- A mutually agreed independent individual shall be designated Representative of the List and shall execute his/her duties, with the support of two individuals nominated, one by each Party, and shall make decisions by consensus.
- A mutually agreed independent individual shall be identified from civil society for the position of Speaker of The National Assembly.

Dispute Resolution

In keeping with the parties’ commitment to accountability and transparency, this Coalition will be adjudicated by a three (3)-member Commission mutually agreed and appointed by the participating groups. This Commission will comprise:

Chairman - Mutually agreed independent individual

AFC - Non-member of the Executive of AFC

APNU - Non-member of the Executive of APNU.

This body will be required to hear all legitimate complaints (during campaigning and over the life of the resulting Government) from participating members and make recommendations which the membership of this Alliance pledges to accept, unless such recommendations are considered illegal. The sittings and the content of the work of the adjudication Commission are to be treated with the same level of confidentiality as that of the Cabinet and only be released with the consent of the Parties signatory to this Accord.

This Accord is a sunset agreement with a life span of a minimum of 36 months and a maximum of 60

months, or for such time within the time period previously stated as decided by the dispute resolution committee adjudicating on its life. It is accepted that these arrangements will govern the relationship of the participating parties in both the pre- and post-election periods, for the duration of the 11th Parliament.

Shared Executive Responsibilities

The President is Head of State, Head of Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and shall have responsibility for:

- Appointments of constitutional agencies and commissions with the required and agreed democratic mechanisms of consultation and appointment.
- Foreign Affairs, International Relations and non-commercial treaties.
- National Security Policy, The Defence Board, The Joint Intelligence Committee, The Guyana Defence Force, et al.

The Prime Minister shall have responsibility for:

- Domestic Affairs and Chairing the Cabinet.
- Recommending Ministerial appointments and providing the organizational structures of Ministries for the approval of the President.
- Appointing Heads of Agencies and non-constitutional commissions, subject to the required and agreed democratic mechanisms of consultation and appointment.
- Domestic security.

