

A Partnership for National Unity + Alliance for Change

Our Vision for Unity, Stability & Development

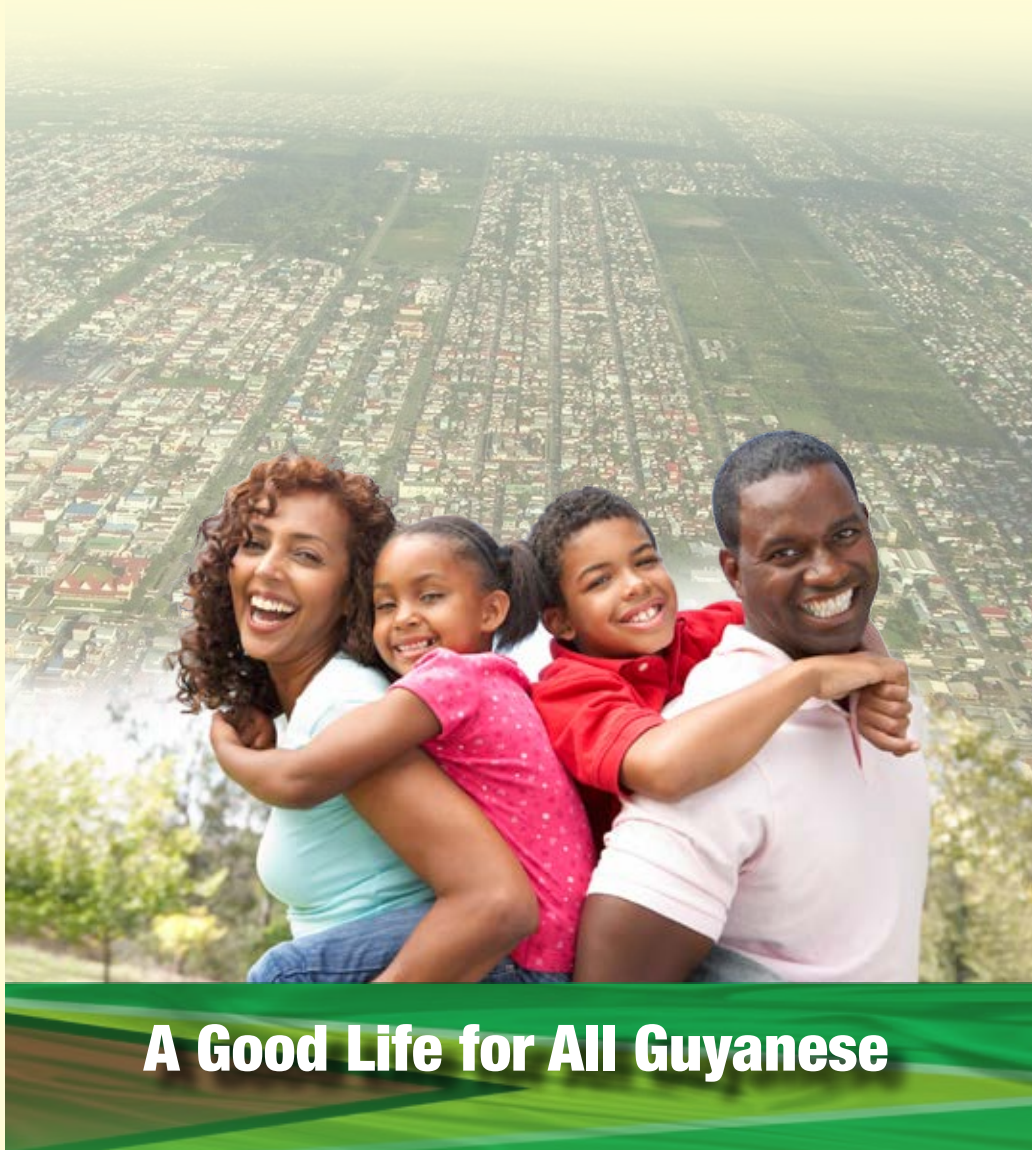


IT IS TIME





Joint Manifesto 2015



A Good Life for All Guyanese

APNU + AFC JOINT MANIFESTO 2015

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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 sectors 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.

HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

**“TO ACKNOWLEDGE, EMBRACE AND CELEBRATE
OUR ETHNIC DIVERSITY”.**



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 People 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.

Addressing 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 people.
- 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.

OUR GOALS



HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

To acknowledge, embrace and celebrate our ethnic diversity.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

To defend and increase the civil liberties of our people and regulate government's intervention in Political, economic and social issues affecting the people.

To build institutions to eliminate corruption and government waste and improve fairness in the distribution of the wealth of the nation.

To ensure that every citizen has equitable access to the resources of the state and the national decision-making processes, in keeping with Article 13 of our Constitution.

INDUSTRIALISATION AND JOBS

To create a new economy that will stimulate rapid development through Guyana's transformation from a raw material producer to a manufacturer of value added goods and services.

FAIR TAXES

To allow your paycheck to go further and businesses grow. You work hard and you must be able to take care of yourself and your family in a dignified way.

A Safe and Secure Society

To enable a safe and secure society where Guyanese can move freely, conduct business without fear and be our neighbour's keepers.

FUNCTIONAL MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIETY

To unleash the energies of all our people regardless of race, class, colour or creed for the benefit of all Guyanese.

MORAL REBUILDING

To rebuild the moral fabric of our society for the sake of future generations, recognising that a strong family unit and a common value system is the foundation of our communities.

EDUCATION FOR A BETTER FUTURE

To build the capacity of Guyanese to make educated choices for a better tomorrow.

FOUNDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT



Below are our fourteen interconnected Foundations for Development. It must be emphasised that these foundations are all equally important and must be implemented simultaneously.

Foundation 1: *An Economy driven by the Private Sector, the State and Cooperatives*

APNU+AFC aspires to achieve rapid economic growth and lead Guyana to becoming the Singapore of the Americas through the creation of more jobs, better pay through development driven by the private sector in combination with the state and cooperatives.

Through our detailed programme of transforming the productive and emerging sectors of the economy, APNU+AFC will foster and facilitate the upgrading of skills for our people, and enhance industrial growth and value added services. The vision is to produce world-class exports.

Foundation 2: *Personal Security: Less Crime*

APNU+AFC will confront serious crimes, 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 3: *Equal Opportunity*

APNU+AFC recognizes that each citizen, no matter his or her race, 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 counterproductive 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 4: *Political Reforms*

APNU+AFC recognize 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 5: *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 6: *Gender Equality; Our Women, Our Foundation*

APNU+AFC recognize that gender equality is a basic human right. APNU+AFC intend to introduce policies to 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 toward ensuring quality education for all, improving maternal health and reducing child mortality.

Foundation 7: *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 people and create centres of economic activity away from the coast. APNU+AFC envisage that in the short-term Linden, Bartica, Madhia 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 Madhia to Bartica Road, and also realize our hydropower potential. APNU+AFC will ensure that indigenous culture, land rights and the environment are protected.

Foundation 8: *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 9: *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 enable the well-being and security of our poor, disabled, elderly and homeless.

Foundation 10: *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 work force which will be the driving force of economic and social transformation.

APNU+AFC shall promote the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and 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 11: *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.

Foundation 12: *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 sector to facilitate good governance, the development of the private sector and market systems. Accordingly, we recognise the need for reform of the public service to enhance its professionalism and remain productive in this constantly changing world.

Foundation 13: *Macroeconomic Stability*

if the exchange rate devalues because of reckless government policy, all Guyanese will suffer. The poor, elderly and disabled will suffer even more. The middle class will see their savings decline overnight. The investors and entrepreneurs will take their capital abroad. As entrepreneurs curtail investments, youths will find fewer jobs. Therefore, APNU+AFC proposes a set of social and economic policies while recognising the constraints which the global and local macroeconomic environment place on us. We recognise we can better govern in an economy which is stable over time.

Foundation 14: *Our Indigenous People*

The APNU+AFC Coalition is proud to join with the Indigenous people, the first nation of Guyana, to promote their rights, culture and overall wellbeing 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.”

GOVERNANCE



APNU+AFC is committed to ending 'winner-take-all' politics and building inclusive, responsive and accountable governance. Some of our proposals for accomplishing this goal are presented herunder.

Equal opportunity, irrespective of wealth or political affiliation, will be the guiding principle underlying a strengthened judicial system.

APNU+AFC will move vigorously to stamp out the scourge of corruption. Rights to personal property will be protected where the asset has been fairly acquired.

Business activity will be facilitated by the strict observance of physical and intellectual property rights and by corporate codes of conduct. The following citizens' proposals will have our support:

Business activity will be facilitated by the strict observance of physical and intellectual propertyrights and by corporate codes of conduct. The following citizens' proposals will have our support:

1. The establishment of a Public Procurement Commission.
2. The establishment of a Budget Office and the Strengthening of the Office of the Auditor General.
3. Ministers and senior government officials will be required to declare their assets.
4. The curtailment of immunities, pension plan and other iniquities of the Executive Presidency.
5. Full respect for the rule of law and the rights of all citizens.

Our revised political system will strive to:

1. Defend and increase civil liberties against the encroachment of governments, institutions and powerful forces in society;
2. Restrict or regulate government intervention in polical, economic and moral matters affecting the citizenry;
3. Increase the scope for the religious, political and intellectual freedom of citizens;
4. Scrutinise demands made by all interest groups seeking special privileges;
5. Develop a society which rewards citizens based on merit, rather than on association, rank, privilege or status.

Strategic Planning

1. Rationalize the current number of Ministries to more effectively serve the needs of the population;
2. Each Ministry will provide a strategic plan outlining how they will implement the APNU+AFC Action Plan;
3. Each Minister will be responsible for implementing his/her respective strategic plan and will be accountable to the people therefor;
4. Ministers will submit quarterly reports to the Head of Government;
5. The Cabinet must assume collective responsibility for the success of the programmes.

Executive Presidency

Commence a National discussion for Constitutional reform and propose amendments for the rationalisation of the Executive Presidency.

The National Assembly

1. Implement the recommendations of the World Bank Fiduciary Oversight Studies and a Study by Sir Michael Davies, Senior Commonwealth Parliamentary Staff Advisor;
2. Establish fully staffed and equipped offices in the Parliament Buildings for all parliamentary parties.
3. Advocate Diasporal representation in Parliament;
4. Repeal the Recall legislation to enshrine the independence of the Parliamentarian.

The Judicial System

1. Target the Judicial System to ensure that it continues the process started to deal with the backlog of cases, timely delivery of rulings and adopts accountability measures;
2. Address the delays in confirming the appointment of Members of the Judiciary;
3. Institute financial independence;
4. Rationalise the positions of the Chief Justice and the Chancellor of the Judiciary;
5. Reform and modernise the Deeds Registry;
6. Review the system of penalties and fines currently on the Statute Books.

APNU+AFC will encourage the involvement of Guyanese to restore government of their respective neighbourhoods and villages to the sequential levels of the decision-making process: neighbourhood > village > sub-regional > municipal > regional.

APNU+AFC will ensure that this process occurs through the mandatory holding of local and municipal elections under the agreed Local Government Reform.

Public Management

1. New public servants will be trained and must pass an examination of competence;
2. Reinstate and reform the security of tenure regime in the Public Service.

Procurement

1. Implement the Public Procurement Laws;
2. Establish the Public Procurement Commission forthwith;
3. Enact legislation for the registration of professionals, including architects, engineers, contractors and quantity surveyors.

Good Governance Action Plan

1. Fix the term of Parliament for a defined period of 5 years, thus clearly setting a statutory date of the general elections;
2. Ensure transparency and accountability in government by granting access to citizens of all aspects of the government's transactions and activities;
3. Encourage equity by allowing for individual initiative regardless of race, religion or class. No person will be discriminated against;
4. Adhere to the rule of law and ensure that Guyanese live and prosper without the threat of executive lawlessness and state-sponsored violence;
5. Adhere to the doctrine of separation of powers under our Constitution;
6. Conduct a public education programme to raise citizens' awareness of their democratic rights, roles, duties and obligations in advancing democratic principles in the country;
7. Adopt outstanding parliamentary recommendations approved by the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Parliaments of Guyana to create a National Assembly that is independent, respected, deliberative and responsive to the nation's needs;
8. Dismantle Government control of the media and the regulation thereof by Broadcasting Legislation.
9. Engage the Diaspora in Special Parliamentary Committees and Diaspora Conferences;
10. Establish a Bipartisan Committee of the Future to advise and guide the policies and programmes of Parliament;
11. Establish a convention for the President to report annually to the National Assembly;
12. Encourage the accessibility of information to members of the public through the enactment of the Freedom of Information Law;
13. Formulate new campaign financing regulations and devise a legal framework for registration of political parties.

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM



In the Cummingsburg Accord, APNU and the AFC are committed to the 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. Areas which we will recommend for consideration by the Committee include:-

1. The President should be elected by a majority of electors.
2. There should be separate elections to the presidency and national assembly.
3. Executive power should be shared between the President, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet.
4. The Cabinet should comprise members of the parties which have achieved at least 15% of the vote at the national elections.
5. The supreme organs of democratic power should be the President and the National Assembly.
6. The Prime Minister shall be the person who secures the second highest votes in the presidential elections.
7. The executive powers and responsibilities of the Prime Minister should be increased to include some executive powers and responsibility over the Cabinet.
8. The members of the Cabinet are subject to the approval of, and removal by, the national assembly.
9. The immunities of the President are to be reduced.
10. The enforcement of any treaty rights conferred on the citizenry pursuant to Article 154 A should be directly enforceable by the courts under Article 153.
11. There should be provision for direct appeals from the High Court to the Caribbean Court of Justice in certain constitutional matters.
12. A permanent Constitutional Court of three judges should be established.
13. The power to prorogue Parliament should be limited to clearly defined specified circumstances of national emergency.
14. The powers of recall vested in the Leader of the List should be severely limited to specific circumstances.
15. A Civil Reparations Board should be established which will address everything from truth and reconciliation to persons who have suffered wrongs at the hands of the state, to the impact of Government policies on various communities, with power to make recommendations.
16. There should be greater oversight of the police and the defence forces by parliamentary sub-committees.
17. Revise the composition and processes of the service Commissions.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY



Almost every year since 1999, the US Department of State through its annual reports (International Narcotics Control Strategy; Human Rights Practices; Trafficking in Persons) has criticised the failure of the PPPC administration to ensure human safety and public security.

The administration also deliberately derailed its own National Drug Strategy Master Plan and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID)-funded £4.9M Security Sector Reform Action Plan. It pretended to be serious about combatting crime by establishing the Steering Committee of the National Consultation on Crime, the Border and National Security Committee and the Disciplined Forces Commission then routinely ignored their recommendations.

As a result, the lethal use of illegal firearms, gang-related assaults and narcotics trafficking pushed up the rate of serious crimes. There are now about two armed robberies on average every day and an average of about three murders per week. Other grave threats to human security – such as allegations of torture against the Guyana Defence Force, Guyana Police Force and Guyana Prison Service – are still to be investigated by an impartial commission. The PPPC has refused to investigate the massacres in Lusignan, Bartica and Lindo Creek.

The need for comprehensive security sector reform is evident.

Public security is the bedrock of a safe human society and the crime situation is both the most pressing and most depressing problem facing ordinary Guyanese today. APNU+AFC pledge to ensure protection for all citizens, communities and institutions from threats to their wellbeing.

APNU+AFC will redress the breakdown of law and order through the following:

1. Increase the salaries of all law enforcement officers by 20% in the first year;
2. Establish a Ministry of Justice and National Security (MJNS) to better coordinate all aspects of public safety, border security, and the National Security Strategy;
3. Complete the implementation of recommendations of the reports of the Disciplined Forces Commission, Symonds Group and the CARICOM Task Force on Crime and Security;
4. Grant full permission to the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to fully establish its local facility;
5. Re-engage the British and other friendly Governments for assistance in the reform the Joint Services;
6. Establish and train a Group of Forensic Auditors to target corruption and white collar crime;
7. Situate more police officers on the street by hiring civilians for desk work;
8. Facilitate a system that would allow members of the Joint Services to work in the administrative region of their choice, where practical;
9. Appoint a specialised Anti -Crime Unit (ACU) comprising GDF and GPF personnel in all Police Divisions; headed by a GDF officer on secondment, to confront violent and armed criminals;

10. Establish a unified Drug Enforcement and Control Agency (DECA) to coordinate and execute the national drug enforcement policy between the Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit (CANU), the Police Anti-Narcotics Unit (PANU), DEA, INTERPOL and other agencies;
11. Establish a specialised Law Enforcement Academy (LEA) to train officers in crime investigation, intelligence gathering and forensics;
12. Start the Police/Schools partnership programme by assigning a dedicated officer to each school with whom he/she can work on "Get to know the Police" workshops, etc;
13. Introduce legislation to legitimize and regulate Community Policing and establish Citizens Protection Units (CPUs) in keeping with global best practice;
14. Pass legislation to establish neighbourhood justice panels of village elders to adjudicate petty matters such as anti-social behaviour and family disputes, to free the court's time for more serious matters;
15. Overhaul the 911 System to make it responsive to the needs of citizens;
16. Train and empower the Police to respond more effectively to domestic violence;
17. Construct a modern prison with new, appropriate and humane facilities for women, juveniles and remand prisoners outside of the city;
18. Allow more prisoners to do community work like upkeeping the surroundings in the cemetery and provide a nominal stipend at the end of their term;
19. Mandate a term of life in prison after three convictions for violent felonies;
20. Review and consolidate all criminal law and criminal procedure-related legislation;
21. Create a special office within the Chambers of the Director of Public Prosecution for the employment of Special Prosecutors to prosecute persons accused of certain categories of offences;
22. Implement an amnesty programme for the surrender of illegal weapons, which will be backed by a "Voluntary Weapons Collection" programme. The Amnesty programme will be accompanied by a special fund to provide alternative opportunities for training, development of income generating projects, credit, etc., for youth at risk, and sports, scouting, and other cadet-like schemes for youth in schools and religious organizations;
24. Enhance the powers and independence of the Police Complaints Authority to investigate all complaints to finality;
25. Fund the University of Guyana and other institutions of learning to continuously assess the "influences to crime" in the society with recommended solutions;
26. Commence multilateral negotiations within CARICOM to support a Witness Protection Programme;
27. Establish the Police Air Unit at the Ogle International Airport.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND ROAD SAFETY



APNU+AFC in government will introduce the following measures to improve traffic management and road safety throughout Guyana:-

1. Reintroduce big buses on the long routes and build two bus terminals just outside of Georgetown – one, east, and the other, south;
2. Revamp the drivers licencing system completely (no more “buying” of licences);
3. Deploy undercover traffic police;
4. Enforce appropriate speed and weight restrictions on heavy vehicles;
5. Restrict garbage collection and heavy vehicles appropriately;
6. Promote appropriate articulated vehicles to lessen heavy traffic and damage to roads;
7. Expand road safety programmes in schools and elsewhere nationally;
8. Introduce driving classes into the school curriculum for students 16 and older;
9. Improve lane demarcation and widen existing roads to improve traffic flow;
10. Introduce the 4-way stop system as a substitute for traffic lights, where appropriate;
11. Strictly enforce the ticketing system for all minor offences (no more going to the police station);
12. Improve road signage nationally;
13. Reform the auto insurance industry to provide better compensation for damage, injury and death from accidents.

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

GENUINE EQUALITY, INCREASED SUPPORT SERVICES



APNU+AFC recognise 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.

In Guyana, several constraints limit our women’s collective capacity to transform these principles into everyday practice. These include violence and physical abuse against women, limited access to finance for the promotion of entrepreneurial activity and insufficient protection under the current legal system. APNU+AFC also recognise that the plight of other vulnerable groups including the disabled, children, orphans and senior4 citizens are all intrinsically intertwined with the position of women in our society.

APNU+AFC will support and celebrate women’s participation and contributions to society by striving to uphold and promote the dignity of all women and creating a greater voice for women and children within the broader society.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES

1. Work closely with local, national and international bodies to increase women’s entrepreneurial activities.
2. Increase microcredit programmes and access to small business loans/grants.
3. Establish Job Centres in each administrative region to facilitate job search and employment matching.
4. Advocate the introduction of lower interest rates at financial institutions for female headed households and first time home owners.
5. Promote gender-friendly banking services especially in the area of loans to women.
6. Implement a Child Tax Credit programme for employers.
7. Introduce tax credits for companies providing in-house daycare facilities.
8. Increase government-funded childcare centres to support women, especially estranged mothers, single mothers, victims of various forms of abuse.
9. 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

1. Operationalise immediately the Family Court to address the specific needs of women.
2. The Domestic Violence Act must be enforced without compromise or exception.
3. Immediately implement at all Police stations a Special Victims Unit with qualified social workers to handle crimes against women.
4. Implement immediately a national 24-hour Domestic Abuse Hotline and a Suicide hotline to facilitate immediate intervention.
5. 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.
6. 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

1. Implement immediately remedial programmes for women focusing on Literacy, Numeracy and Matriculation.
2. Encourage women to enter non-traditional areas of employment including information technology, auto mechanics, electrical repairs, carpentry and to enter technical training institutes.
3. Establish with assistance from national and international agencies scholarships for disadvantaged women to pursue tertiary education.
4. Strengthen the school curriculum to include increasing awareness of Women's Rights.
5. Promote respect for women and positive coverage of women in the Media.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

1. Establish immediately in each region Transition Houses "Safebed"[??] 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.
2. 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.
3. Employ within the Guyana Police Force qualified Psychologists and trauma specialists.
4. Empower and identify female police officers at each station to provide one-on-one support to victims of violence.
5. Conduct workshops on stress management, conflict resolution and communication techniques at clinics and health centres.
6. 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.
7. Establish geographically strategic rehabilitation centres for drug abuse, prostitution, etc.
8. 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 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.

YOUTH POLICY



The following tenets inform and summarise the APNU+AFC Youth Policy:-

1. Young people comprise at least two-thirds of Guyana's population. Our success as a nation relies on youth realizing their potential in a timely and effective manner.
2. Employment not only serves to provide the basic needs of our youth but is also a means for young men and young women to discover their unique identities and talents and guarantee their individual development.
3. Although youths graduate from various tertiary institutions every year ready to enter the job market, they remain unemployed because of slow economic growth, corruption and nepotism.
4. APNU-AFC's vision (which has guided the Youth Policy) for Guyanese young men and young women includes:
 - (i) Active and direct involvement of Youths in decision-making by ensuring all State Boards have a youth representative on them;
 - (ii) Outfit all Primary and Secondary schools with fully functional computer laboratories. These shall be equipped with computers assembled in Guyana by trained youths. Further, an APNU+AFC Government will only buy locally assembled desktop computers, giving priority to companies within the Administrative Region. This will create in excess of 2,000 new jobs in the 10 Administrative Regions;
 - (iii) Expand the vocational training of youths to feed these apprenticeship incubators to create tens of thousands of new sustainable jobs for the Youths of Guyana;
 - (iv) Facilitate internships for students from age 16 in public schools and learning institutions in all Government Ministries, Agencies and Corporations. APNU+AFC in Government will also give incentives to the Private Sector to provide internships as well;
 - (v) Free lunch for all children in primary school;
 - (vi) Free transportation for all eligible children from each primary school to the doctors; and health clinics for their bi-annual medical check-ups and vaccinations where relevant;
 - (vii) Talent identification for sports which shall be supported with a cost of living grant for 100 talented athletes per year of \$50,000 per month each;
 - (viii) Establish connections with foreign universities for sports and academic scholarships;
 - (ix) Enhance sports participation for girls to improve self-esteem, self-image and self-efficacy;
 - (x) Provide subsidies and other non-financial assistance for young people to participate in the arts and music with cost of living support for 100 talented artists and musicians per year of \$50,000 per month each;
 - (xi) Provide the necessary support and opportunities for young people to bring home medals from international sporting, musical and cultural events;
 - (xii) Improve health and nutritional awareness for young people by holding 10 Regional Youth Conferences per year in all 10 Administrative Regions to discuss all youth matters, including health and nutritional issues;
 - (xiii) Provide special scholarships for qualified youth in engineering, agro-technology, medicine, business, and information technology.

SENIOR CITIZENS



Our senior citizens are experiencing increasing levels of hardship through the cost of living, and the savings some have secured are being gutted by devaluation and low returns. An efficiently run pension scheme must provide a basic safety net to enable senior citizens to maintain a reasonable standard of living during their retirement. APNU+AFC in government will work to:

- Provide special assistance to elders through higher and inflation-adjusted pensions; improved social security benefits; lower prices for state-provided utility and health services; and decent elder care homes.
- Review the age for formal retirement from the public sector.
- Encourage retirement savings in a tax-effective manner to avoid penalizing those who choose to save for retirement.
- Implement an emergency response mechanism to address the special needs and vulnerabilities of senior citizens..
- Establish formal and informal support systems to assist families to take care of their elderly and support the construction of retirement homes.

EDUCATION



Our education system is in crisis. Our small population cannot accept the Ministry of Education's estimate of 7,200 school dropouts yearly. APNU+AFC in government will approach the transformation of education in a spirit of collaboration. APNU+AFC in government will place the highest priority on the education, life skill and other developmental needs of children with differing capacities while being fair to teachers.

Parents from our poorer households rightly complain that “free education” is not free. We will work to reduce the disadvantages so many of our children and youth face because of poverty.

Education is the key to social transformation. Therefore, APNU+AFC have several strategies aimed at boosting this vital sector. In addition, APNU+AFC intend to revisit and implement several recommendations in the National Development Strategy:-

1. Develop appropriate non-monetary benefits, free land and duty-free concessions for teachers and university professors;
2. Increase emoluments and improve working conditions for teachers;
3. Provide an improved quality of education;
4. Ensure equal access to education;
5. Link education and curriculum design to Guyana's development needs;
6. Engage teachers and other stakeholders as active participants in the development of education in Guyana;
7. Distinguish between male and female learning and devise learning strategies accordingly, with a view towards reducing the male dropout rate;
8. Establish a computer lab in every primary and secondary school;
9. Ensure that the nutritional and transportation needs of primary and secondary students are met;
10. Natural and agricultural sciences, mathematics, engineering and Information Technology will become a major focus;
11. Boost training in technical education so as to create businesses and jobs;
12. Make the University of Guyana a major regional research university;
13. The University of Guyana will actively seek Foreign students from the Caribbean, Guyanese Diaspora, Brazil, Suriname and other countries;
14. The University of Guyana will establish a regional language school with the intention of becoming the English Language learning centre for South America;
15. Seek assistance from donor countries for more education professionals to work in Guyana for several years with the option of staying permanently with appropriate incentives;
16. Utilize the talents of the Diaspora in education, training and other areas of special needs.

HEALTH & NUTRITION



Health

Around the world demographic health indicators have improved over the past 25 years. Improved technologies and communication, general improvement in economies and reduction in infectious diseases have been mainly responsible. Guyana, however, continues to struggle among CARICOM countries to rise from just above Haiti. In Belize, task-shifting has extended care to the remotest parts of that country.

Guyana does not have the accountability framework to make all our achievements sustainable. When it has not been the legitimacy to enforce regulations, it has been majoritarian arrogance in not recognizing that accountability relies on impartial and unbiased enforcement of all rules and regulations. Although billions have been spent on physical infrastructure, the Health Care system still continues to grossly underdeliver for the Guyanese people. Too much money continues to be wasted on bureaucracy and shady deals in the procurement process. APNU+AFC's first priority will be to make the system work better with the money it has. The APNU+AFC will:

1. Launch a national health care programme focusing on all community health centres across Guyana to provide preventive care for medical conditions such as diabetes, malaria, high blood pressure, heart disease and cancer screening.
2. Modernise the regional hospitals to provide vital medical services such as safe deliveries, dialysis, diabetes care, and the treatment of hypertension, heart disease, psychological disorders and substance abuse;
3. Put patients first by introducing a Patients' Bill of Rights;
4. Develop an effective pre-hospital and emergency medical service to address the urgent needs of the population;
5. Move towards having the health care delivery system conform to regional and international health care standards;
6. Revamp the education for health care professionals (doctors, nurses and technicians);
7. Provide full transparency and accountability in the procurement of pharmaceutical products;
8. Conduct regular health audits and patients feed-back and host public discussion on the findings of the health audits;
9. Focus on quality of care by reducing delays in and out of hospitals and between admission and surgery;
10. Invest in technologies that will help diagnose potential diseases and illnesses;
11. Provide doctors and nurses with incentives such as low interest home loans, special allowances and other incentives;
12. Ensure all health professionals function in an ethical and professional manner with due accountability for their practice.

Nutrition

Guyanese face a range of nutritional problems, mostly related to poverty but also to a poor understanding of the importance of good nutrition. Good nutrition is essential for the optimal physical and mental development of children and for adults to lead healthy and active lives. Young children, especially those from poor families, are most vulnerable to malnutrition. Knowledge of good nutrition is essential, but it must be supported by the family's economic ability to grow or purchase nutritious foods.

A hungry child cannot learn well at school. Many school children, especially those in poor coastal or remote Amerindian communities, arrive at school without breakfast and return to inadequate meals at home. Adults face a growing problem of nutrition-related chronic diseases, such as diabetes and hypertension. Good nutrition in pregnancy can reduce maternal mortality and low birth weight in babies.

To address these issues, and to achieve household food and nutrition security for all Guyanese, government ministries must work together to increase food production, reduce poverty, and improve access to quality health care and good nutrition for Guyanese of all ages. Good nutrition must be recognized as a key goal and outcome of national development.

APNU+AFC in government will work to:

- Ensure that all households in Guyana have year-round physical and economic access to a nutritionally adequate food supply.
- Employ trained community nutrition workers to provide practical home-based advice to poor families on good breast feeding and young child feeding practices.
- Prevent and/or treat severe malnutrition in young children by means of locally manufactured foods, under the guidance of well-trained health professionals.
- Ensure that all school children are able to benefit fully from educational opportunities by establishing appropriate school feeding programmes.
- Train health professionals to provide counselling on good nutrition in pregnancy and on the dietary management of diabetes and hypertension, based on the most up-to-date scientific knowledge.

HOUSING POLICY



APNU+AFC will initiate a campaign called “Renewing the Dream” which will expand and upgrade housing development away from the seaside and facilitate home ownership, not only house lot distribution. APNU+AFC will integrate housing development with the development of local industries that will generate local wealth and jobs. We will make sure that a certain percentage of building materials are manufactured in Guyana in an effort to establish production linkages with housing. APNU+AFC will:

1. Ensure that basic infrastructure such as electricity, drainage, roads, water and other facilities are in place as house lots are issued
2. Facilitate the process whereby Credit Union savings can be used as collateral for low interest Housing loans;
3. Support a National Volunteer Corps that will help the needy build their homes;
4. Establish new communities and towns in the Hinterland;
5. Establish a special fund to provide subsidies to mortgage companies for low interest loans to low income families;
6. Build starter homes for single parents and other vulnerable persons in society in every housing scheme being developed;
7. Build retirement villages with all the appropriate amenities (from health care to recreation) to attract retirees from the Diaspora;
8. In keeping with our national beautification drive, green spots and parks will be established in each housing area and village;
9. Industrial development and production linkages will be tied to housing with the private sector being given tax incentives to develop locally produced housing materials from local raw materials;
10. Standardise the building codes for all new buildings and provide free standardized house plans for prospective new home owners;
11. Develop a National Housing Database for strategic planning;
12. Create new commercial and industrial zones within new housing areas to enable easy access to these industries by a suitable workforce.

SPORTS AND RECREATION



Deficiencies in sports and recreation in Guyana include limited opportunities for citizens (Indigenous youths, women, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities, especially) to engage in sports; the conceptualisation of sports as mainly for competition or for the talented and not, more properly, also for recreation and health; the marked decline in the number of achievements by our sports persons at the regional and international levels; the politicisation of the public administration of sports; victimisation of sports associations; and corruption and official incompetence.

APNU+AFC will work for sports through advocating making sports broad-based ("Sports-for-all"); promoting excellence in sport ("Sports for Personal and National Pride"); and supporting sports for national income generation through, for example, sports tourism, making Guyana an attractive venue for regional and international competitions.

Under APNU+AFC's "Sports-for-all" policy, we will work to provide opportunities for citizens to learn to play indoor and outdoor sports in all regions of Guyana for recreation, entertainment and health, regardless of age, gender, disability, social or economic status, or political affiliation.

To stimulate and achieve joy and excellence in sports, APNU+AFC will support the holding of friendly competitions in and between communities, and a properly structured competition system in various sports across the country; adequately reward and recognise achievements; institutionalise training and coaching in schools and communities; establish a formal system to identify and develop talent; and increase the potential of sports as a rewarding career. APNU+AFC recognize that sports and a sports-oriented society is a means of empowerment and development which will help promote good health and national pride. Therefore APNU+AFC will specifically:

1. Establish national leagues for basketball, football, cricket and volleyball;
2. Build basketball, volleyball, cricket and football complexes;
3. Ensure that sports play an integral part in our educational system;
4. Plan and host annual Guyana Sports and Athletic Championships;
5. Establish an accredited Sports Administration Programme at the University of Guyana, where persons will obtain degrees in Sports Medicine, Sports Nutrition, Physiotherapy and Sports Administration – these courses will be made available to the rest of the Caribbean, making Guyana CARICOM's home for "Sports Learning";
6. Establish "State of the Art" sports facilities in every County - thus enabling the potentially lucrative sector of Sports Tourism;
7. Host the Carifta Games and an international IAAF-sanctioned event;
8. Construct a National Sports Administrative Centre, where every eligible National Sport Organization can have an office with shared administrative functions;
9. Encourage eligible athletes of Guyanese descent living in the Diaspora to represent Guyana at international events by providing adequate resources.
10. Rebuild and provide funding and staffing for community sports complexes.

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.

The Arts - An Independent Arts Foundation

APNU+AFC believe 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.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT



Natural resources and preserving a pristine environment are part of our nation's national patrimony and is a shared responsibility. APNU + AFC in Government, with the support of all stakeholders, will craft policies and implement programmes that address the ecological and inter-dependent relationship between the natural environment and biological diversity.

Conservation measures and management are integral to trade, as any threats to species extinction from excessive use, trade and or the negative results from anthropogenic impact on the degradation of the natural environment and ecosystems, and exhaustion of non-renewable resources would not be in the long term interest of our country and people.

APNU + AFC Government's long term vision and policies will focus on the: -

1. Conservation of Biological Diversity and Natural Resources that supports the preservation of ecosystems and natural habitats, including the protection of watersheds.
2. The sustainable use of the components of Biological Diversity and Natural Resources that adds value and reduces commodity trade.
3. The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the commercial utilization of natural resources, including genetic resources.
4. Ensuring the sustainable livelihood of our indigenous and hinterland communities.

APNU + AFC commit to building the capacity of our youth through education and training that facilitates their contribution to the protection and conservation of our nation's national patrimony from excessive use and trade, while ensuring the promotion of sustainable development.

APNU+AFC in Government will ensure a holistic approach to Conservation, Trade and the Environment under clear national policy guidelines, programmes and a rationalized legal construct and framework.

APNU+AFC will ensure that the environmental conditions in which our citizens live, work and play will contribute to their health. There will be adequate drainage, sewerage and solid waste disposal systems in all communities.

AGRICULTURE



There is an urgent need to reorganise the management of the entire agricultural sector - sugar, rice, aquaculture, livestock, coconuts and other crops - by the respected skills and competencies in appropriately designed organisational structures that project images of credibility to counterparts; and assurance of quality products and services to clients and farmers.

APNU+AFC in government will work to:

- Create a flexible, broad-based, integrated, innovative and environmentally sensitive agriculture sector to satisfy the demands of domestic, regional and international competitive markets.
- Create sustainable enterprises through the application of cost-effective management of traditional and modern technologies, in order to increase the volume and quality of diversified agricultural produce.
- Establish programmes for technical and financial support, improved land tenure arrangements and meaningfully involve our young men and young women in the sector;
- Build capacity, including the conduct of basic and applied research.
- Complement cost-effective production with enhanced processing and marketing.

Developmental priorities

With Guyana's rainfall trends indicating a change in distribution, it is important that future development be planned to take account of environmental conditions.

Intensive and urgent action must be taken to rehabilitate/expand, as necessary, current drainage and irrigation deficiencies especially in the Demerara and Potaro Rivers but including the Maraca and Abary Rivers and the Lama Conservancy management. We have no confidence in the Hope Canal which will probably not solve the problem of flooding but has the capacity to create a greater flood hazard on the east coast of Demerara in case of failure. It is also clear that the PPPC's support for farmers in all areas is particularly poor, even in the rice industry, which has now become our second biggest GDP earner.

APNU+AFC will significantly strengthen state support for proper drainage, irrigation, roads and assist in securing new export markets for commodities produced by the sector.

Access to markets will involve not only creative packaging of produce, but also imaginative marketing of Guyana as a serious 'Agriculture' player. Looking into the future, APNU+AFC will target the fertility of our hinterland to grow established, as well as new, marketable crops.

Sugar

The sugar industry continues to experience contraction in production and escalation in costs, with current labour costs set at 65% of total cost, even though the labour force has been reduced by some nine thousand employees over the past decade.

The industry is now faced with a shortage of labour, recent attendance patterns being as low as 45%. This is compounded by the most recently published admission by the CEO of GuySuCo of a substantive shortage of experience and skills in the management and supervisory levels of the corporation - contributing to underperformance of the industry.

We believe that to keep the sugar industry viable, we will have to create ways to retain whatever manual labour is left and to diversify the industry to cultivate products more suitable to our bed field layout which makes mechanical harvesting very difficult, expensive and probably impossible. In the interim, as a short-term policy, concentrating on producing more ethanol may be a better strategy for GuySuCo at this time. Specifically, APNU+AFC's action plan for the industry will:

1. De-politicize and professionalize the decision-making process at GuySuCo;
2. Invite an international Technical Mission from Brazil, India or other countries with core competence in sugar technology to analyze GuySuCo with a view to revising the Sugar Action Plan;
3. Establish a Sugar Factories Rehabilitation Programme to make them efficient and cost effective;
4. Re-engage local expertise to change the agronomical practices in the field to boost yield;
5. Mechanize the cane harvesting process which will complement workers as well as introduce many more skilled jobs;
6. Introduce a Cane Quality Assurance System that incentivizes cane farmers based on cane quality;
7. Involve the private sector in the financing and managing of the new cane lands in the Upper Corentyne area;
8. Provide funding for research, extension services and a scholarship programme at NAREI, IAST and UG to produce a core competence for the industry, along with revising the curriculum at the Port Morant Training Centre to make it more relevant to the challenges of the industry;
9. Accelerate the development of a sugar refinery;
10. Enhance the quality of life of sugar workers within their communities through better facilities, sports and social amenities.

Rice

This sector, which is ingrained in the fabric of coastal rural Guyana from the Corentyne to the Essequibo, even now in these perilous times engages over 12,000 farmers, supports an additional 10 per cent of the country's population directly and many more indirectly. It has suffered as a result of the PPPC's paradoxical and distressing attitude. Thus, apart from limited attention to drainage and irrigation works, there have been no substantial technological improvements, largely because of inadequate research and a poorly equipped rice extension service.

An upgrade of the industry is warranted. In so doing, the rice industry will directly contribute to improvement in the social condition of rural communities.

APNU+AFC, through the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB) and related agencies, will therefore, immediately embark on:

- Collaborating with the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI) and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) to develop new varieties suitable for our peculiar coastal conditions and the needs of targeted markets;
- Refining rice crop management techniques that enable improvement in yields and the quality of rice in environmentally sustainable ways;
- Provision of access and the transfer of technologies for simultaneously rearing tilapia with the rice crop, as a means of augmenting farm incomes of small rice farmers, particularly upgrading the technical capabilities of the rice extension service and related service providers;
- Providing incentives for millers to improve their mills so as to increase yields and, hence, their profitability;
- Facilitating improvement in credit facilities available to farmers, millers and exporters from financial institutions;
- Addressing the deficiencies in the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority and Water Users associations so as to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness in water management and the enhanced maintenance of related infrastructure; and

- Facilitating food manufacturers in developing value-added (convenience) foods and the incorporation of rice in a variety of food products for the local and regional markets.

Mismanagement of the rice sub-sector, ineffectual lobbying to attain priority for our rice within the CARICOM Regional Market and the politicising of the Rice Producers Associations have resulted in rice farmers literally crying from the Courentyne to Essequibo.

An overhaul of the entire system is therefore required. APNU+AFC propose the following steps for the rice sector to enable it to more fully realize its potential and achieve greater profitability:

1. Regaining the respect within CARICOM, UNASUR and other international markets that Guyana can be a reliable supplier of rice;
2. The authorities making available to farmers planting and reproductive material. GRDB, NAREI and UG will be upgraded to produce higher yielding and better disease resistant varieties and generic planting material to ensure less dependence on imported pesticides, weedicides and fertilizers;
3. Improving the farm to market dams and roads and overhauling the drainage and irrigation system;
4. Manufacturing value added products, e.g., rice cereals, rice milk and flakes for the local and international markets;
5. Support and implement the World Bank Proposal on Agricultural (Crop) Insurance;
6. Build new facilities for rice farmers to bulk sell for better prices.

Fishing Policy

The production of prawns is a cause for concern. In 2006, Guyana produced 1,665 tons of prawns. By 2009, this had declined to 710 tons. Piracy and illegal fishing are rampant.

There is also no marine biologist to advise us. Overfishing through poaching by Venezuelan and Surinamese ships is seriously depleting and destroying our fish stocks.

We believe that our sugar fields in Guyana are tailor-made for aquaculture. The farming of Tilapia is proving to be very lucrative. To destroy the sugar fields which are in fact natural 10-acre ponds, most of which can be flooded by gravity, to level them for housing, is foolhardy in the face of the fact that they are, compliments of our ancestors, natural aquaculture ponds.

The fishing industry, a major foreign exchange earner, will be given the requisite assistance to revive its productivity, with advice from appropriately qualified personnel.

APNU+AFC in government will also work to upgrade and finance a better fisheries department within the Ministry of Agriculture to ensure that our fishing grounds are not abused and that illegal fishing and piracy in Guyana's waters will be vigorously addressed.

Furthermore, APNU+AFC in government will specifically:

1. Determine the areas of high adult abundance and the level of seasonality of the seabob and other fishing resources;
2. Facilitate joint venture investments in order to promote technology transfer to local fishermen;
3. Strengthened mechanisms to establish dialogue with artisanal fishermen on sustainable management issues, emphasis will be on the role of the Fishermen's Cooperatives;
4. Establish a Fisheries Surveillance and Enforcement Coordinating Committee with suitable representatives of the Department of Fisheries, the Coast Guard, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Customs and Excise Department and the Marine Police;
5. Incentivise investments in a fish meal plant cold storage and ice making capacity to support new fish port complexes;
6. Expanded market intelligence services for the fishing industry;
7. Allocate suitable areas of land for Aquacultural activities

Non-Traditional Agriculture

Guyana has a wide variety of agricultural products which can be processed for the global market. APNU+AFC will:

1. Develop a national database of all farmers to include those involved in cash crops, livestock, aquaculture and other crops;
2. Focus on select commodities for greater support based on the demands of the global market, especially pineapples, peppers, plantains, pumpkins, poultry, organic beef, organic sheep, goats and aqua-culture;
3. Support superior extension services to farmers;
4. Support farmers' understanding of the global market;
5. Develop a programme to make Guyana self-sufficient in germplasm;
6. Make available more land for farmers to produce other crops, meat, milk and fish;
7. Ensure that produce is better stored, handled and transported to its final destination to preserve its value.

Region 6 Policy

APNU+AFC will open up lands aback of Black Bush, Canje, Brandwagt Sari and Mara for the purposes of agriculture, specifically, rice farming, livestock rearing and aquaculture. This development will include all-weather roads from the Port Mourant Public Road, Number 52 Village and Skeldon to the Canje River. This will be an APNU+AFC government-funded project which will help to transform Region 6's productivity in the agriculture sector.

For all its 22 years in government, the PPP administration has effected no significant land distribution in Berbice and indeed the entire country to the needy farmers. It is the intention of APNU+AFC to distribute in the Berbice region 200,000 acres of state lands to individuals, companies and cooperatives.

These lands are located in six areas in Berbice

1. Behind Black Bush Polder towards the Canje Creek;
2. Behind the # 43-74 Villages backlands towards the Canje Creek;
3. Skeldon to Moleson Creek to Canje Creek;
4. Moleson Creek to Orealla;
5. Mara, to include Brandwagt Sari; and
6. Sandvoort to the former Dutch sugar and cotton plantations along the Canje Creek.

The total area of these lands is about 200,000 acres. They will be allocated in various sizes depending on the needs of the applicant from 10 to 1,000 acres.

Road and Transportation Network

The Coalition government will build access roads linking the lands from the Corentyne highway to the Canje Creek and then to the Berbice River as follows:

1. Present Yakasari road at #43 Village to be extended to the Canje Creek;
2. Port Mourant Water Path to Canje Creek;
3. Connecting the Torani Canal mud dam with an all-weather road to the Berbice River;
4. An all-weather road along the Skeldon main waterway to the Canje Creek; and
5. The road from Moleson Creek to Orealla.

These main roads will have feeder road interconnections. In addition, there will be a network of main and feeder canals. Water will be available from the Canje, Berbice and Corentyne rivers for cultivation. Major population centres (townships) will be located at:

- The Ikurura Lake on the Canje Creek,
- Brandwagt Sari on the Berbice River, and at
- Plantation Magdalenenburg.

HINTERLAND DEVELOPMENT



Hinterland development will be a top priority because the Hinterland remains a disadvantaged zone and because of the threat to our coastal communities of sea level rise. APNU+AFC will support a development strategy geared to benefiting the indigenous inhabitants and other local communities.

Hinterland people will be empowered with the requisite capital resources and capacities for agricultural development; modern housing and road construction; manufacturing and services.

Indigenous peoples

The indigenous people of Guyana (Akawaio, Arawak, Arecuna, Carib, Makusi, Patamona, Wai-Wai, Wapichan, Warau) reside in the hinterland and constitute a rapidly increasing section of the population.

APNU+AFC in government will celebrate and preserve our Indigenous heritage and work to ensure that Indigenous citizens enjoy their full rights under our Constitution, 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.

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 believe 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.

APNU+AFC recognise 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; and Guyana, as a member of the international community and in adherence to its treaty obligations under international law, has more than a 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. APNU+AFC will uphold all international Treaty obligations.

The 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.

The Indigenous Peoples, similar to all other peoples, aspire to fulfil their true potential and to achieve excellence in any meaningful pursuit of life and, despite the many challenges and difficulties they have faced, some have achieved distinction in their chosen field of endeavour.

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 population therein, mostly Amerindian, 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 for more lucrative jobs in mining and forestry. The result has been an increase in suffering, 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. This will require:

1. Promoting 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.
2. Facilitating access to affordable credit for individuals and groups.
3. Facilitating the acquisition of appropriate technology and equipment for various levels of production.
4. Enhancing marketing arrangements for producers of primary and value-added commodities.
5. Placing traditional beef cattle rearing 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.
6. Policies to ensure that 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.
7. Focus will be on the production of substantial portions of regional food needs, grain and other concentrate feeds for the local animal production sector.

Infrastructural Development

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 is predominantly coastal.

APNU+AFC in government will work on developing arterial road and air transportation links and port networks with the interior. Priority will be given to constructing the Linden-Lethem highway.

An important complement will be 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.

APNU+AFC will support the construction of a network of subsidiary roads that will open up access to a number of waterfall sites, thus stimulating our eco-tourism industry and hinterland industrial activity.

APNU+AFC in government will actively pursue as a priority, negotiations with Brazil for the establishment of hydropower plants for the export of power to Brazil's northern states and for Guyana's domestic and industrial requirements.

Transport Development

APNU+AFC in government will consult on the construction of a deep water harbour located in the Demerara/Essequibo area since Demerara is still the hub of the country's import/export activity. 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.

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 the deep water harbour. The tolls to traverse our roads and use our seaports alone can earn significant revenue.

Hinterland airstrips, major and key secondary roads to mining and forestry sites, Indigenous villages and other communities outside of main settlement areas will be upgraded to facilitate ease of communication, transportation and access to Guyana's natural resources. APNU+AFC will support a more decentralised approach to road infrastructure development.

APNU+AFC in government will collaborate with municipalities to ensure that roads and bridges are effectively constructed and maintained. In the medium term, the option of another bridge across the Demerara River will be explored to meet growing demands and expansion in the Essequibo Islands, West Demerara and the housing and agriculture sectors.

APNU+AFC are open to consideration of premium public transport systems which may be priced higher but offer a better quality of service, with subsidies for senior citizens, school children and the differently-abled.

APNU+AFC in government will 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 links. Serious attention will be given to revitalising and restructuring 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. National transport policy will be shaped by well-established international conventions, codes and customary practices, and autonomous regulatory institutions.

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 implementing 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 ports and shipping industry will also be developed through the drafting and implementation of a Port Master Plan for 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. In respect of maritime and aviation security, search and rescue plans will be updated. There will be increased surveillance of the territorial waters of Guyana as a deliberate strategy to decrease the growing incidents of piracy and armed robbery. A functioning national maritime and aviation security committee will be established with wide inter-sectoral involvement.

Region 10 Policy

APNU+AFC's vision is to diversify the industries that will be the source of alternative employment to bauxite.

Therefore, APNU+AFC will create a Region 10 plan rather than a bauxite plan. It is important that the bauxite industry is saved and modernized. Since Guyana does not have the kind of financial investments to produce aluminium, we will invite and support foreign investment from reputable and known multinationals to develop an alumina plant. This will create new jobs as we ensure workers' rights and welfare. The following specific plans are proposed for Region 10:

1. Given the threat of global warming and its strategic importance as the gateway of the South, Linden must become the secondary administrative centre of Guyana;
2. Develop the 200,000 hectares of the intermediate savannahs for citrus, cattle, legumes, vegetables as the country's second frontier for agricultural development;
3. Develop the Tiger Falls hydroelectric site over a longer term. The electricity will be tied to industrial development and alumina production;
4. Intensify block making capability using lateritic bauxite soil. This will be supportive of APNU+AFC's housing policy;
5. Promote furniture manufacturing and value added wood products;
6. Re-engage the Government of Brazil and commence the construction of the Linden to Lethem highway;
7. Transform Linden to make it the main entry point for eco-tourism expansion.
8. Establish a University of Guyana campus in Linden offering courses relevant to the developmental needs of Regions 7, 8, 9, and 10.

TOURISM



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.

APNU+AFC Team Unity plans to:

1. Implement an International Marketing plan which will lay out the strategies, goals and actions to be taken to create a vibrant industry.
2. 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.
3. Implement an investment plan with tax incentives to expand the sector and to reduce red tape.
4. Provide specialised vocational training opportunities within the hospitality industry and establish the Hospitality Training Institute.
5. Develop Infrastructure such as the Linden-Lethem highway which will benefit the people of Guyana and the tourism industry.
6. Recognise Tourism as an export industry with special rates of VAT applied to the tourism product to guarantee its competitiveness in the international market.
7. Improve airline access to Guyana, especially among intentionally recognised scheduled carriers.
8. Place special emphasis on ecotourism, with a direct link to the Coalition's hinterland development strategy.
9. Examine ways to reduce the cost of interior travel in Guyana.
10. Ensure a safe and smooth visitor experience by aggressively implementing the national crime and security policy.

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, 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

APNU+AFC anticipate that all of Guyana is 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 located in Asia.

The Coalition is convinced that only via an all-pervasive and ultra-high speed broadband network will Guyana be ready to embrace and fully exploit the boundless opportunities that an ICT-enabled future presents.

Major infrastructural investment is a critical necessity to spur the development of new knowledge-based sectors. This will act as a catalyst in developing and deploying innovative interactive digital services to homes, schools and businesses.

Digital Nation is a comprehensive three year master plan 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 Digital Economy.

In addition to helping Guyana to exploit new economic opportunities and enhancing the vibrancy of the global ICT sector, the 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.

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, at minimum, six key 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 netbooks 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 netbook 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.

Guyana will be marginalised if we do not grasp quickly how to exploit the potential of ICT which is transforming every facet of life. Alternatively, we will enjoy unprecedented benefits (economic growth, improved quality of life, increased freedoms, better educational and entertainment opportunities) if we grasp ICT's potential to usher in change.

EMPLOYMENT MAXIMISATION, POVERTY REDUCTION AND INCOME DISTRIBUTION



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 recognise that the achievement of a sustainable industrialization and development programme requires the achievement of an average growth rate of at least 7%.

The Coalition will:

Management of the economy

- 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;

A National Development Plan

- 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;

Dynamically stable economic fundamentals

- Ensure the 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).

Science, technology, research and development

- 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;

ICT development

- 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 Coalition will:

- Commission a comprehensive review of the 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 which would have five main features:
 - First**, an 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 reject 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, as part of the Taxation Reform Programme;
- Implement a phased increase of the Personal Income Tax Threshold to \$100,000;
- Reduce the toll on the Berbice Harbour Bridge;
- Rationalise the VAT and excise duties on motor vehicles and on diesel with the aim of encouraging 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

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, etc.); 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.

Fair Competition

- Establish a major stakeholder committee to recommend the nature and ways 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).

Full employment would be our objective, achievable by way of a strategy with the following elements:

Stimulating investment

- 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; Fund for disadvantaged areas
- 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);

Infrastructure development

- Accelerating the infrastructure development process by encouraging, for example, the use of public-private partnerships;

Job-creation projects

- Implementing a programme of quick acting results-oriented job creation projects such as:
- An Environment Enhancement Programme (EEP);
- A Capital and Infrastructural Rehabilitation Programme (CIRP), for Georgetown and other urban and rural communities

Training Programmes

- Designing and implementing a 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.

Programmes for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)

- 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.

Added-value production from Mineral resources

- 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 AND 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 not.

The APNU+AFC Coalition will:

Increase Public Service Salaries

- Increase the salaries of all government workers by 10% across-the-board in the first instance, as a prelude to the restoration of Collective Bargaining throughout the Public Service;

End fragmentation of labour movement

- In the bid to 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;

Collective Bargaining

- 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 sector workers in keeping with the agreement with the TUC and the relevant unions;

Employment of Guyanese workers

- Require that Guyanese are employed on all projects in Guyana and 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;

Public Service Appellate Tribunal

- Immediately constitute the Public Service Appellate Tribunal;

Subvention for Trade Unions

- 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;

Reform and Modernise Public Service

- 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.

Independent Constitutional Salaries Review Commission

- 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.

Re-establishing an Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank

- Investigating, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, the utility of re-establishing an Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank to meet the financing needs of the agricultural sector.

FOREIGN RELATIONS



The overarching focus of APNU+AFC's foreign Policy will be Guyana's national interest, principally the security of the state and its people and the social and economic development of all its citizens.

APNU+AFC's Foreign Policy will be structured on three main pillars:

- Support for efforts to promote a more democratic and safe global environment.
- Strengthening relations with traditional partners and allies while exploring opportunities to establish relationships with new and emerging democracies;
- Align Guyana with the fastest growing economies of the world while protecting our nation's interests and the welfare and well-being of our people at home and abroad.

In pursuit of these objectives, APNU+AFC will seek national consensus on major policy frameworks and initiatives. Emphasis will be placed on:

- Securing Guyana's territorial integrity.
- Working with like-minded Governments to eliminate terrorism so as to ensure that citizens the world over can live in safety and enjoy the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in the UN Declaration on Human Rights and in other UN Conventions.
- Working with regional and global partners to address climate change and the general protection of the environment.
- Participating in multilateral agencies such as the United Nations, OAS, UNASUR, the Commonwealth and CARICOM in recognition that such institutions play a beneficial role with regard to the development of small states like Guyana.
- 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.
- Encouraging diversification of Guyana's trade and investment relations with the rest of the world so as to reduce its 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 a joint CARICOM mission.
- 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.

APNU+AFC in government will rebuild and strengthen where necessary, the capacity of the relevant State institutions to enable them to effectively implement policies.

MORAL REBUILDING



It has been observed that over the past many years of poor governance the moral fabric of our society has been tremendously weakened. APNU+AFC recognizes that without moral strength the benefits flowing from political stability, economic strength and democracy will be hindered.

APNU+AFC will pursue the following:-

1. The rebuilding of the moral fabric of our society for the sake of future generations recognising that a strong family unit and common value system is the foundation of our communities.
2. Working toward regaining integrity regionally and internationally.
3. Ensure that proper legislation is in place to protect the moral fabric of our society.
4. Work closely with faith-based and other organizations to promote effective parenting, stable family life and clean living.
5. Include moral education in our school's curriculum from the level of nursery to university.
6. Have Neighbourhood Democratic Councils and other Local Government organs work at the community level to raise moral awareness by identifying all forms of immorality such as prostitution, alcohol and narcotic consumption, vulgar and loud music and ensure coordination and partnership between these intuitions and the Guyana Police Force.
7. Broaden the scope of, and empower the National Integrity Commission to deal with anyone in high office who uses such office to commit acts of immorality.
8. Ensure that we reflect patience and resilience so that our programmes have a human face. Words must be matched by appropriate actions.
9. Ensure that the mental health of the citizens is stabilized.

APNU+AFC in government should not become a burden to our people, but a blessing. With the help of Almighty God we can be this great blessing. The wealth of our nation was created by the powerful hand of Almighty God and we must abide by God's wisdom and God's ways if we wish to benefit from our human and natural resources.

CONCLUSION: A COMMON CAUSE



A Partnership for National Unity with the Alliance for Change represents a movement towards the creation of a community with a common cause. It promises to establish a just society in a stable political environment with a thriving economy. Most of all, it promises to build and secure the future for our youth and our children.

A good life depends, at the personal level, on a sound education, satisfactory employment, economic opportunity, individual equality, political empowerment and social protection for the vulnerable and, at the national level, on good governance, a sustainable environment, national unity and public security.

Voters at the next elections will have endured the PPP administration for 22 years, during which our values have been eroded and our quality of life has been compromised.

There is much to be done to transform our country but, with the support of the majority of Guyanese, A Partnership for National Unity and the Alliance for Change in a unity government will succeed because of its commitment to the ideal of a good life for all Guyanese.



APNU+AFC



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/apnuafc



@apnuafc



@apnuafc



@apnuafc

Email: apnuafc@gmail.com

IT IS TIME FOR GUYANA



GRANGER + NAGAMOOTOO



APNU+AFC

IT IS TIME