

COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION OF
THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT (2015-2018)**

**SEVENTH PERIODIC REPORT
OF THE
PARLIAMENTARY SECTORAL COMMITTEE
ON
SOCIAL SERVICES**

RESOLUTION NO.-19 OF 2003

PERIOD:

SEPTEMBER 10, 2015 – FEBRUARY 16, 2018

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

ON

MARCH 15, 2018

CONTENT

	Page #
1.0 INTRODUCTION	4 - 6
2.0 FUNCTION AND MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE.....	6
3.0 AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY	7 - 11
4.0 MEETINGS.....	11
5.0 WORK PROGRAMME	12
6.0 PRESENTATIONS/HEARINGS	12 - 19
7.0 OTHER ACTIVITIES	19 - 24
8.0 VISITS.....	24 - 25
9.0 CONSTRAINTS....	25
10.0 ADOPTION.....	26

APPENDICIES

- (i) Resolution No. 19
- (ii) Record of attendance
- (iii) Work Programme
- (iv) Resolution No. 29.

DECLARATION

The Seventh Periodic Report to the National Assembly on the status of the work of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services (PSCSS), pursuant to the requirements of paragraph 4 (iv) of Resolution 19 passed by the National Assembly on May 15, 2003.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Seventh Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Services (PSCSS) highlights the activities over the period September 10, 2015 to February 16, 2018 of the Eleventh Parliament. This report includes issues and concerns raised and discussed at meetings, the Committee's interactions with government functionaries and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's), and presentations made before the Committee. The report also makes observations and recommendations on matters which came before it.

1.2 The Committee also visited a number of institutions; hospitals, schools, dormitories, police stations as part of its mandate of oversight and scrutiny of operations and policies. The reports on these visits have been tabled in the National Assembly for adoption.

The Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services (PSCSS)

1.3 The PSCSS is one of four Parliamentary Sectoral Committees of the National Assembly that was established in 2003 by Resolution No. 19 of May 2003 of the National Assembly of the Eighth Parliament. Resolution No.19 gives effect to the Constitutional provision of article 119 B of the Constitution of Guyana. *(See Appendix I)*

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

Nomination of Committee Members

1.5 On September 4, 2015, the Committee of Selection, in accordance with Paragraph 1 of Resolution 19 of 2003, and Standing Order 86, nominated seven Members of the National Assembly to be Members of the PSCSS. The membership of the Committee consists of seven

substantive Members, four from the Government, three from the Opposition and two Alternate Members, one each from the Opposition and Government.

The Members were as follows:

From A Partnership for National Unity (APNU)/Alliance For Change (AFC) (3)

Hon. Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P.,
Minister of Governance

Hon. Valerie Garrido- Lowe, M.P.,
Minister within the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs

Hon. Dr. Karen Cummings, M.P.,
Minister within the Ministry of Public Health

Hon. Valarie Patterson, M.P., (Alternate)
Minister within the Ministry of Communities

Mr. John Adams, M.P.

The People's Progressive Party/ Civic (PPP/C) (3)

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

Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P.,

Mr. Alistair S. Charlie, M.P.,

Dr. Vishwa D.B. Mahadeo, M.P., (Alternate)

Election of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

1.6 In accordance with Standing Order 86 (3), the Committee at its first meeting held on September 10, 2015, Mr. John Adams, M.P., and Dr. Vindhya V. Persaud, M.S., M.P., were elected Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, respectively.

1.7 The above Standing Order also provides for the annual rotation of chairmanship of the Committee. In keeping with this provision, the Committee, at its 5th Meeting held on Friday, 27th January, 2017, Dr. Vindhya V. Persaud, M.S., M.P., and Mr. John Adams, M.P., were elected Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, respectively.

Change in Membership

1.8 At the 8th Meeting of the Committee of Selection held on 8th May, 2017, the Hon. Simona Charles-Broomes, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of Natural Resources, was nominated as a substantive Member to replace the Hon. Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P., Minister of Natural Resources, who resigned from the Committee.

2.0 FUNCTION AND MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

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

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

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

3.0 AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

3.1 The areas of responsibility for the Parliamentary Sectoral Committees are yet to be approved by the National Assembly. Nevertheless, the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services is tasked with oversight responsibility for the following sectors, sub-sector and activities:-

Name of Sectoral Committee	Areas of Scrutiny	Responsible Ministries
Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services	Maintenance of Public Safety and Order	Ministry of Public Security Guyana Police Force
	Public Holidays	Department of Security Services Reform
	Gambling Prevention	
	Fire Prevention	The Fire Service
	Prisons	The Prison Service The Special Constabulary
	Remand Minors	The Youth Remand Centre Sophia
	Education Nursery, Primary Secondary and Technical Education Distance Education	Ministry of Education Department of Education Carnegie School of Home Economics Government Technical Institute Essequibo Technical Institute Region #3 Technical Institute New Amsterdam Technical Institute Region #5 Technical Institute Linden Technical Institute Corriverton Technical Institute Guyana Industrial Training Centre Cyril Potter College of Education Critchlow Labour College

	<p>Youth Affairs Culture Affairs Sports</p> <p>Higher Education Regulation of Private Educational Institutions Vocational and Special Training Schools</p> <p>Adult Education</p> <p>School Feeding and Book Distribution</p> <p>Public Libraries</p> <p>Local and Overseas Examination</p> <p>National Art Gallery (Administration)</p> <p>Administration of the Amerindian Act</p> <p>Indigenous People's Affairs</p> <p>Postal and Telecommunication Services</p> <p>Human Services and Social Security Poverty Alleviation Children Services</p>	<p>Distance Education Unit Learning Channel Talking about Education Broadcast to Schools</p> <p>University of Guyana</p> <p>Institute of Distance and Continuing Education</p> <p>Materials Distribution Unit</p> <p>National Library</p> <p>Examination Division</p> <p>Castellani House</p> <p>Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs Department of Amerindian Land Demarcation</p> <p>Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs Department for Secure Amerindian Livelihood</p> <p>Ministry of Public Telecommunication Guyana Post Office Cooperation</p> <p>Ministry of Social Protection Department of Children's services</p>
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		Human Services Child Care and Protection Agency
	Adoption Matters	Adoption Board
	Women Affairs	Department of Women's Affairs Department of Women's Enterprise Women's Affairs Bureau Women of Worth
	Single Parents	
	Men's Affairs	Men's Affairs Bureau
	Legal Aid	Legal Aid Unit
	Probation and Welfare Unit	Drop in Centre School Welfare Unit Sophia Care Centre Mahaica Children's Home
	Senior Citizens Welfare Services	Senior Citizens Welfare Unit
	The Palms	Palms
	Trafficking in Person	T.I.P.S Unit
	Social Security	Social Service Unit Poor Law Commissioners Board of Guardians
	Old Age Pension and Public Assistant	Department of Pensions and Social Assistance
	National Relief	National Relief Council
	Gaming Authority	Ministry of the Presidency
	Citizenship Issues	Department of Citizenship Registration, Immigration and Naturalization

Registrar of Births and Deaths Organisation and Administration of Public Service	Registrar General's Office Department of Public Service
Public Service Personnel Management	Personnel Division
Public Service Training	Training Division
Administrative Matters other than those for which the Public Service Commission is Responsible	Ministry of Business Department of Industrial Development
Workforce Enhancement	Ministry of Business Guyana National Bureau of Standards
Consumer Protection	Department of Consumer Protection Competition and Consumer Affairs Commission
Public Health Primary Health Care	Ministry of Public Health Regional Health Authorities, Pharmacies Hospitals and Dispensaries
Disease Control	National Public Health Reference Laboratory
Food and Drugs	Analyst Department, Food and Drug Department
Health Science Education and Training Health Professionals	
Regulatory and Accreditation and Licensing Bodies	Central Board of Health
Biostatistics	Statistical Unit
Surveillance	Surveillance Unit

	Tourism	Ministry of Business
	Equalities and Ethnic Relations	Ministry of Social Cohesion
	National Insurance Scheme	National Insurance Board

4.0 MEETINGS

4.1 This Committee held fourteen (14) meetings during the period September 10, 2015 and February 16, 2018 of the First Session of the Eleventh Parliament.

Statutory Meetings

Meetings	Dates of Meetings
1 st Meeting	September 10, 2015
2 nd Meeting	January 8, 2016
3 rd Meeting	March 11, 2016
4 th Meeting	April 15, 2016
5 th Meeting	January 27, 2017
6 th Meeting	February 17, 2017
7 th Meeting	March 24, 2017
8 th Meeting	April 21, 2017
9 th Meeting	May 29, 2017
10 th Meeting	June 26, 2017
11 th Meeting	July 28, 2017
12 th Meeting	August 3, 2017
13 th Meeting	January 26, 2018
14 th Meeting	February 16, 2018

4.2 Please find attached at *Appendix II* the record of attendance of the Committee Members during the period of reporting.

5.0 WORK PROGRAMME

5.1 The Work Programme of the Committee for the period of reporting September 2015 – February 2018 is at *Appendix III*.

6.0 PRESENTATION

6.1 Presentation by Dr. Carissa Etienne Pan America Health Organisation and World Health Organisation (PAHO/WHO) representative.

6.1.1 On February 7, 2017, Dr. Carissa Etienne and a team from PAHO/WHO appeared before the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services. The team comprised the Chief of Staff, Dr. Merle Lewis, PAHO/WHO Representative, Dr. William Adu-Krow and Mr. Sebastian Oliel, Communication Officer.

6.1.2 Dr. Etienne gave an overview of the history, structure, roles and responsibilities of PAHO/WHO. She stated, inter alia that PAHO/WHO was formed in 1902, it has 78 member states and represents 51 territories. She noted that PAHO has recognised some issues that affect the health and well-being of Guyanese and strongly emphasised that those issues could not be addressed by the Ministry of Public Health alone, and suggested the need for a multi-sectoral approach. As such, meeting with the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services was seen as a step in that direction.

6.1.3 Dr. Etienne stated that seventy percent (70%) of the deaths in Guyana are related to chronic non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer, chronic respiratory conditions and hypertension. She identified the four major contributory factors as tobacco use and inhalation of tobacco fumes; excessive use of alcohol; consumption of unhealthy foods (high in salt, sugar and fat); and lack of physical activities. She informed Members that one-third deaths are also occurring in the younger population and people below sixty (60) years.

6.1.4 Dr. Etienne stated that with regards to Tobacco use (inclusive of second hand smoking) PAHO/WHO is advocating for the sensitisation on the effects of its use. Efforts such as increasing taxes on tobacco products, changing the labeling of packages to include more information on effects of tobacco use, and also the prohibition of smoking tobacco in public places are some mechanisms that could be used to sensitise citizens.

6.1.5 With regards to the excessive consumption of alcohol, Dr. Etienne stated that PAHO/WHO is advocating for increase taxes on alcoholic beverages, the prohibition of sale of alcohol to minors, the enforcing of legislation on driving under the influence of alcohol, and for more awareness/education on excessive alcoholic consumption.

6.1.6 Dr. Etienne informed the meeting that regarding unhealthy foods, such as foods high in sugar, salt and fats, in some Caribbean countries, there are certain taxes allocated to sugary beverages and some prohibit the sales on carbonated beverages in schools.

6.1.7 In discussing the issue of physical inactivity, Dr. Etienne stated that physical education is important. She noted that in most cases physical education disappears off the school's curriculum after a certain grade/level. Additionally, in some instances there is no safe space/environment available for persons who are desirous of engaging in physical activities.

6.1.8 During the presentation, Dr. Etienne also identified some other issues/areas of concern which the Committee might wish to pay attention to such as road safety, violence, adolescent health, vector control (out breaks of dengue, chikungunya, malaria), mental health and suicide, antibiotic abuse, and chemicals used in agriculture and poultry farming.

6.1.9 In closing Dr. Etienne acknowledged that, inter alia, social media and television have influenced the way of life in many countries. Nevertheless, there is need for countries to produce counter programmes at the level of the NCDs, that are less costly, to be disseminated to educate citizens on healthy lifestyles since NCD's could have a negative impact on a country's economy if not addressed. Hence, if those issues/concerns are addressed, then there would most likely be a significant reduction in reported cases of chronic non-communicable diseases. She, therefore,

encouraged Members to work together as a collective body, in collaboration with other governmental agencies, civil society and the private sector to promote public health.

6.1.10 The presentation was followed by an interactive discussion between Members of the Committee and Dr. Etienne and her team. During the discussion, in addition to the issues highlighted in the presentation, Members raised concerns of other social ills/issues affecting the society such as the harmful effects of chemicals (pesticides and fertilizers) on workers in crop production, NCD's in relation to the elderly, the importation of unhealthy foods and products, and health issues/social ills related to mining activities.

6.1.11 Inter alia, Members felt there was need for more stringent measures in the enforcement of legislation (driving under the influence of alcohol and sale of alcohol to minors), education of the populace (parents, guardians, canteen providers, fast food franchises etc.,) on healthy and alternative food options, and preventative measures (better eating habits, healthier lifestyles and the importance of physical activities).

Committee's Recommendation(s)

6.1.12 The Committee, by way of letter dated May 15, 2017 has since written to the Ministers of Public Health and Education bringing their attention to two recommendations that the Committee would like to consider. Those being:

- That schools be encouraged not to sell soft/aerated drinks or carbonated beverages;
- That the sale of healthy, wholesome and nutritious foods should be sold in canteens to encourage healthy eating habits. Healthy eating habits should also be encouraged through the means of television shows, radio air time, parent-teacher association meetings and billboards; and
- That Physical Education should be mandatory in schools.

6.1.13 The detailed Report of the presentation and discussion are included in the Records of Proceedings dated Tuesday, 7th February, 2017, and available in the Parliamentary Library.

6.2 Presentation by the Guyana Police Force (GPF) on the Sale of Alcohol to Minors.

6.2.1 On an invitation from the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services, members of the Guyana Police Force (GPF) appeared before the Committee on Monday 28th July, 2017 and made a presentation on the sale of alcohol to minors.

The delegation from the Guyana Police Force (GPF) comprised the following persons:-

- (i) Mr. Marlon Chapman - Assistant Commissioner of Police and Commander 'A' Division.
- (ii) Mr. Wendell Blanhum - Senior Superintendent and Crime Chief
- (iii) Mr. Royston Andries - Junor - Senior Superintendent and Head of the Strategic Planning Unit (SPU).

6.2.2 The Chairperson appraised the delegation on the Committee's mandate, its composition and some of the activities currently being undertaken by the Committee. She explained that the presentation would assist Members to better understand the issue of the sale of alcohol to minors, and guide Members in making recommendations in their report to the National Assembly. She then invited Members of the Committee to introduce themselves and the Assistant Commissioner of Police and team to commence their presentation.

6.2.3 Mr. Royston Andries-Junor stated that the presentation sought to bring clarity to the questions submitted by the Committee vis-à-vis the sale of alcohol to minors.

6.2.4 The questions were submitted by the Committee and the responses given during the presentation are as follows:

- **Has there been a clamp down on the illegal sale of alcohol; unlicensed shops, bars etc?** Mr. Andries-Junor informed the Committee that as it relates to the clamping down on the illegal sale of alcohol; unlicensed shops, bars etc., the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) has the mandate to enforce the laws since that agency is responsible for the issuance of licenses. However, the GPF would conduct operations/raids spontaneously on shops/bars etc., from time to time based upon information received.

- **Has there been any effort to prosecute elders sending children to purchase alcohol?** Mr. Andries-Junor noted that, although this activity is illegal, there has been no specific targeted activity to prosecute adults who send children to purchase alcohol. He explained that the GPF over time has been focusing most of its efforts on fighting ‘serious crimes’, hence, enough emphasis has not been placed on such activities and perpetrators have not been prosecuted.
- **Have there been any steps towards tightening up or curbing the sale of alcohol to minors at ad hoc or organized events?** Mr. Andries-Junior explained that recently the Officer-in-Charge of public events had been reminded to remain vigilant for such occurrences. He noted that whenever vendors were observed selling alcohol to minors and are asked to desist from such practices they would usually comply.
- **Is there any data on the sale of alcohol to minors, by region, and the police efforts, by region, with respect to enforcement?** Mr. Andries-Junior informed the Committee that there is no system in place for data collection or by extension a repository for such data collection.

6.2.5 In concluding, his presentation, Mr. Andries-Junior stated that the administration of the Guyana Police Force (GPF) notes the interest and concerns of the Members of the Committee vis-à-vis the sale of alcohol to minors and assured Members that the GPF is committed to putting systems in place to address the situation.

6.2.6 The presentation was followed by an interactive discussion between Members of the Committee and members of the Guyana Police Force (GPF). During this discussion, Members expressed disappointment, inter alia, of the non-availability of data from the GPF on the issue being discussed. They explained that the data, if collected, could have been used to compare statistics on the prevalence of the activity around the country, conduct strategic operations to curb them, and measure the progress made in curbing the activity over time.

6.2.7 Another disagreement between the two sides stemmed from a response given by a member of the GPF's team when asked about bar/shop owners adherence to the law when caught in the act of selling alcohol to minors. Members were told that vendors who were caught in the act desisted/complied when told to do so by lawmen. Members disagreed with the response given and referred to public social activities, popular bars/shops and extracurricular school activities to which lawmen could be seen in uniform during such activities. Nevertheless, there were many areas where mutual consensus was forged on the way forward.

Committee's Recommendations

6.2.8 Based on the information provided in the presentation Members made the following recommendations to assist in curbing the practice of the sale of alcohol to minors:

- shop/bar owners should be given two (2) warnings, failing which their licence should be revoked for non-compliance;
- it should be mandatory for shop/bar owners to display notices on business premises informing the public that the sale of alcohol to minors is illegal;
- the Guyana Police Force (GPF) should collaborate with the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) to establish a notice to sensitise shop owners and the general public that it is illegal/unlawful to sell alcoholic beverages to minors. The notice should be given to shop owners/businesses upon uplifting their license from the GRA and should be a prerequisite, like the licence, for them to publicly display on their premises;
- public awareness campaign/educational programmes should be conducted in schools nationwide, on billboards, radio and television programmes, print and electronic media etc, especially in Amerindian communities and communities with little or no recreational/social facility for youths, to sensitize shop owners and the general public that the sale of alcohol to minors is unlawful and once the law is not adhered to or complied with perpetrators would be penalized;

- the Guyana Police Force (GPF) should be more technologically advanced to make available general and specific data on the issue online;
- the laws, specific to the sale of alcohol to minors should be implemented and proprietors who fail to comply should be penalised, accordingly;
- monitoring activities should be undertaken/conducted by the relevant authorities especially at activities to celebrate the “last day for school” and other events such as school sports/fairs/parties, social activities at creeks and on public holiday celebrations such as “Mashramani” where the sale of/and use of alcohol by minors are more prevalent;
- that at ad hoc events/shows/public entertainment events, legislation should be amended to govern the sale of alcohol to minors; instituting regulations against the sale to minors, monitoring and in the event of sale to minors, penalties;
- the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services should collaborate with the Guyana Police Force and Guyana Revenue Authority to raise awareness regarding the law on the sale of alcohol to minors; and
- the Guyana Police Force (GPF) should conduct training sessions to familiarise officers on existing legislation and policies vis-à-vis sale of alcohol to minors.

6.2.9 In closing, Mr. Wendell Blanhum, Senior Superintendent and Crime Chief, noted that notwithstanding the GPF’s failure to provide data on the issue (sale of alcohol to minors) in 2015, 2016 and 2017, several persons were prosecuted for this offense. Additionally, during the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) exercises conducted by the GPF in interior locations the issue of underage drinking and minors access to alcohol were also addressed.

6.2.10 He explained that based on the discussion, the presenting team would be meeting with the Commissioner of Police (ag) to decide on a strategy on the way forward. Following the expression of thanks by both sides, the Chairperson informed the GPF delegation that the Committee intends to have a similar engagement with representatives of the Guyana Revenue

Authority (GRA) on the issue and thereafter review the existing legislation with a view of making recommendations for amendments, where necessary, to the National Assembly.

6.1.11 The detailed report of the presentation and discussion are recorded in the Records of Proceedings dated Monday, 28th July, 2017 and is available in the Parliamentary Library.

7.0. OTHER ACTIVITIES

7.1 Dialogue on Suicide

7.1.1 On Wednesday, 5th July, 2017, in the Parliament Chamber, the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services in collaboration with UN/PAHO.WHO held an exchange with Parliamentarians and staff of the Parliament Office on Suicide.

7.1.2 The main purpose of the dialogue was to address issues on suicide in Guyana, increase awareness of suicide among Parliamentarians and staff of the Parliament Office and to strengthen prevention and control efforts. The exchange also provided an opportunity for information sharing and brainstorming on how to reduce the suicide rate in Guyana.

7.1.3 Hon. Dr. Barton Scotland, O.R., C.C.H., M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly made introductory remarks while Ms. Mikiko Tanaka, Resident Coordinator, United Nations made opening remarks. Thereafter the following persons spoke on the issue.

- The Hon. Dr. Karen Cummings, Minister within the Ministry of Public Health and Dr. Util Thomas, Director, Mental Health Unit, Ministry of Public Health give an Overview of Suicides in Guyana, including statistics on suicide in Guyana and on the National Suicide Strategy 2015-2020.
- Dr. William Adu-Krow, PAHO/WHO representative spoke about the interventions made by the United Nations to address Suicide in Guyana.

- Dr. Vindhya Persaud, Chairperson of the Committee made remarks on activities conducted for Suicide prevention in the National Assembly and its control by the Social Services Committee. She spoke in detail on the motion on Suicide brought by her to the National Assembly to implement policies and initiatives intended to curb the rise of suicide and to amend legislation to decriminalise suicide. She emphasised the Committee's commitment to having suicide on the front burner and the desire to have the motion brought again to the National Assembly.
- Ms. Lisa Punch, a representative from the Prevention of Teenage Suicide (POTS), along with Mr. Nazim Hussian and Ms. Leslyn Holder of the Caribbean Voice, Guyana, spoke on their respective NGO's experiences in addressing suicide in Region Nos. 2 and 6.

7.1.4 The presentation was followed by a plenary session which was moderated by Ms. Patricia La Fleur, Liaison Officer, United Nations Population Fund. The session provided the opportunity for pertinent information regarding the analysis of the situation as well as the interventions made to date by the Government, the United Nations Country Team and other Non-Governmental Organizations.

7.1.5 Closing remarks were made by a representative from the Parliamentary Committee on Social Services and the United Nations, respectively, with an understanding on some of the actions and interventions that could be undertaken by the relevant authorities.

The detailed discussion on the dialogue was prepared by UN/PAHO/WHO and is available in the Parliamentary Library.

Committee's Recommendations

7.1.6 Based on the discussions that ensued during the presentation, the Committee recommended that:

- the National Assembly should review the legislation with regards to the decriminalization of suicide and the need for comprehensive mental health legislation.
- there should be accurate reporting systems that would allow for the accurate reflection of suicide statistics and programmes to train Health Care Providers and Social Workers in the next 5 years.
- effective surveillance systems should be developed to measure progress to determine and design effective interventions.
- modern laws should be developed to limit and control access to toxic substances used as a means for suicide, as well as to restart programs to safely lock away commonly used pesticides.
- the scholarship programme be accelerated to train Health Care Providers and Counsellors on Mental Health within the next five (5) years.
- a National Poison Centre be established ; database of victims and antidotes to common poisons.
- the Gatekeepers Programme be restarted/reintroduced to educate community members to recognize and intervene in cases where persons are at risk of suicide.
- there be greater advocacy and dialogue on mental care and detection of depression and suicidal motivations.

- there should be joint Parliamentary/UN outreaches to support advocacy, dialogue and anti-discrimination and other root causes of suicide and other related social issues at community levels.
- government should provide additional financial support to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to enhance their budgets and enable the environment for the Mental Health Unit and NGOs to provide psycho-social support.
- the United Nations Country Team collaborates with the National Assembly to support suicide prevention initiatives.
- there be continued dialogue between the United Nations and the National Assembly on developmental issues of common concern.

7.2 Seminar on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

7.2.1 On Wednesday, 12th April, 2017, the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services held a Sensitisation Seminar on Sexual Harassment in the workplace, in the Parliament Chamber, for Members of Parliament and staff of the Parliament Office.

7.2.2 This seminar was as a result of the Committee recognising the need for a conversation on the issue of *sexual harassment in the work place*, since it was felt that the issue was not being treated with much urgency. Additionally, Members felt that some individuals are unaware of what constitutes sexual harassment in the work environment, while there are others who do not know how it should be dealt with, or where to seek help for victim(s)/perpetrator(s), inter alia.

7.2.3 Dr. Vindhya Persaud, M.S., M.P., Chairperson of the Committee in her opening remarks welcomed those in attendance and gave an overview of Sexual Harassment in the workplace and why it was important that Parliamentarians and Staff of the Parliament Office be involved in the sensitisation seminar on the subject. Her main points were:

- that the existing section on sexual harassment enshrined in the Prevention of Discrimination Act should be amended or repealed to facilitate more progressive, comprehensive and key legislation that addresses the issue in totality. Parliamentarians need to have this on their agenda to combat the daily issues that occur in Guyana.
- that laws should be enacted, amended, for Guyana to be compliant with international best practices vis-à-vis Sexual Harassment in the Work Place.
- that workers must know their rights and the laws and the avenues available to them; policies and legislation that facilitate compliance and lawsuits.
- the inequality that exists in male vs female employers and bosses must be addressed in the reporting aspect of sexual harassment in the workplace, as this has a direct impact on the number of women vs men who are harassed. Noting that while women make up a large percentage of the workforce they are afraid to report or complain because of fear of loss of employment and lack of the legal system to deliver justice.
- that sexual harassment is more widespread than is reported. Due to ineffective social programmes and services, persons are hesitant to seek redress and even those existing resources are underutilized.

7.2.4 The first presentation was done by Dr. Paloma Mohamed, a representative from the University of Guyana on “The Overview of Sexual Harassment in the Work Place and the Sociological Perspective of Sexual Harassment in the Work Place and its Impact on the Victims”.

7.2.5 The second presentation was made by Mrs. Teshana Lake, a representative from the Director of Public Prosecutions Office on “What Laws, if any, should be enacted, amended, for Guyana to be compliant with international best practices vis-à-vis Sexual Harassment in the

Work Place and How the Judicial System Works and What Hindrances/Gaps, if any, affected the prosecution of perpetrators”. (this presentation is available in the Parliamentary Library)

7.2.6 At the end of the presentations, a discussion ensued, participants asked questions for clarification and information and proffered suggestions.

8.0 VISITS

8.1 In keeping with its work programme the Committee visited several health institutions. The observations and recommendations made by the Committee following the visits were tabled in the National Assembly as follows:

Reports Presented to the National Assembly

8.2 First Special Report of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services visit to the Amerindian Hostel, the East La Penitence Female Lock-Ups, the Sophia Children Care Centre and the Juvenile Holding Centre, on Friday, 13th June, 2014, was presented to the National Assembly on March 9, 2017 and was approved on January 19, 2018.

8.3 Second Special Report of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services visit to the Regional (NIS) and the Police Station in Mabaruma – Region One, on 11th and 12th July, 2014, was presented to the National Assembly on March 9, 2017 and was approved on January 19, 2018.

8.4 Third Special Report of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services visit to the New Amsterdam Hospital – Region No. 6, on Thursday 2nd March, 2017, was presented to the National Assembly on August 3, 2017 and is awaiting approval.

8.5 Fourth Special Report of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services visit to the Diamond Diagnostic Centre, East Bank Demerara, on Thursday 6th April, 2017, was presented to the National Assembly on August 3, 2017 and is awaiting approval.

8.6 Fifth Special Report of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services visit to the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) on Wednesday, 3rd May, 2017, was presented to the National Assembly on August 4, 2017 and is awaiting approval.

8.7 Sixth Special Report of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services visit to the Linden Hospital Complex, Region No. 10, on Tuesday, 11th April, 2017, and will be presented to the National Assembly on March 15, 2018.

8.8 Seventh Special Report of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services visit to Region No. 2, Pomeroun-Supernaam during the period 17th – 19th May, 2017, and will be presented to the National Assembly on March 15, 2018.

9.0 CONSTRAINTS

9.1 The prorogation of the Tenth Parliament in November 2014, and its subsequent dissolution, affected the completion of certain aspects of the work of the Committee. In this regard, the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services in the commencement of its work in the Eleventh Parliament tabled a motion in the National Assembly which sought approval to consider the outstanding work of the previous Committee. This Motion was passed by the National Assembly on March 10, 2016. (*see Appendix IV for a copy of the Resolution*).

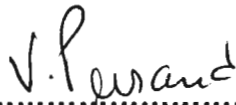
9.2 As such, at its 3rd Meeting held on Friday 11th March, 2017, the Committee adopted the First Special Report of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services visit to the Amerindian Hostel, the East La Penitence Female Lock-Ups, the Sophia Children Care Centre and the Juvenile Holding Centre.

9.3 At its 5th Meeting held on Friday 27th January, 2017, the Committee adopted the Second Special Report of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services visit to the NIS Office and the Police Station in Mabaruma – Region No. 1.

9.4 The First and Second Special Reports of the Committee were tabled in the National Assembly on March 9, 2017 and were adopted on January 19, 2018.

10.0 ADOPTION

10.1 The Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services of the Eleventh Parliament, now, therefore, accordingly hereby submits the 7th Periodic Report and Motion for consideration and adoption by the National Assembly.



.....
Chairperson
Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on
Social Services.

APPENDIX

I

EIGHT PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA

SECOND SESSION (2002-2003)

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

RESOLUTION NO. 19

WHEREAS Article 119 B of the Constitution provides:

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

RESOLVED,

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

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

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

4. The committees shall have the authority to:

- i Determine areas of government activity for scrutiny or specific examination;
- ii Request the Minister assigned responsibility for the sector to submit written or oral information, including government documents and records about any specific area of government policy and administration;
- iii Review existing legislation on government policy and administration for any of the sectors;

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

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

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

AND FURTHER RESOLVED,

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

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



S.E. ISAACS

Clerk of the National Assembly

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

APPENDIX

II

PARLIAMENTARY SECTORAL COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES

ATTENDANCE RECORD (2015-2018)

NAMES	September 10, 2015	January 8, 2016	March 11, 2016	April 15, 2016	January 27, 2017	February 17, 2017	March 24, 2017
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th
Hon. Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P.,	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.
Hon. Valerie Garrido- Lowe, M.P.,	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Ex.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.
Hon. Dr. Karen Cummings, M.P.,	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.
Mr. John Adams, M.P.,	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.
Hon. Valarie Patterson, M.P., (Alt.)	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Ex.	Ex.	Ex.	Ex.
Dr. Vindhya V. Persaud, M.S., M.P.,	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.
Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P.,	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.
Mr. Alister S. Charlie, M.P.,	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.
Dr. Vishwa D.B. Mahadeo, M.P., (Alt.)	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.
Duration of Meeting	40 mins	1hr 25 mins	41 mins	16 mins	1 hr 25 mins	1hr 46 mins	1hr 45 mins

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

NAMES	April 21, 2017	May 29, 2017	June 26, 2017	July 28, 2017	August 3, 2017	January 26, 2018	February 16, 2018
	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th
Hon. Simona Charles-Broomes, M.P.,		Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Abs.	Pr.
Hon. Valerie Garrido- Lowe, M.P.,	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.
Hon. Dr. Karen Cummings, M.P.,	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.
Mr. John Adams, M.P.,	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.
Hon. Valarie Patterson, M.P., (Alt.)	Ex.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Abs.	Ex.
Dr. Vindhya V. Persaud, M.S., M.P.,	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.
Mrs. Indranic Chandarpal, M.P.,	Ex.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.
Mr. Alister S. Charlie, M.P.,	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.
Dr. Vishwa D.B. Mahadeo, M.P., (Alt.)	Pr.	Pr.	Ex.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.	Pr.
Duration of Meeting	2hr 53mins	2hr 15mins	1hr 28mins	3hrs 1mins	1hr 14mins	2hrs 7mins	95 mins

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

Mr. John Adams, M.P., Chairperson from September 10, 2015 - January 27, 2017.

Dr. Vindhya V. Persaud, M.S., M.P., Chairperson from January 27, 2017 - February 16, 2018.

**Committees Division
Parliament Office
Public Buildings
Georgetown**

APPENDIX

III

	<p>2. Ministry of Social Protection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To examine the issue of Child Abuse: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The need for more education/information to be made available to members of the public with regard to child abuse; - The need for more education/information to be made available to children, from the nursery level on what is abuse, to recognize the signs when/if they are being abused, to know where they can go for help and support; 												
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the procedure/time taken for a victim to get help; - the load of Case Workers assigned to victims/perpetrators; - systems in place and adequate personnel to provide post traumatic services to victims; 												
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - which areas(by Regions) are the most prevalence in reported cases; 												

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the shortages, if any, of Social Workers/Case Workers to deal with cases in the specific areas; 																	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the frequency with which cases of abuse are reviewed and what procedures are in place to reintegrate children with their families or placed into foster care; - what systems are in place or could be put in place at institutions to assist undocumented children who are in the care of institutions to access the education system or receive medical attention; and 																	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - whether the existing number of homes is sufficient for the amount of children in the system and whether these homes are operating in accordance with the required regulations/specifications/standards. 																	

	3. Ministry of Education	To examine the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gangs and Violence in Schools; • Child Pornography in Schools; • Drugs and Alcohol use in Schools; • Truancy; • Coping mechanisms of Youths to deal with Stress, Depression, Peer Pressure etc.; • The issue of shortages of Counsellors or Welfare officers in the various Regions (Especially Region No. 9) 												
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APPENDIX

IV

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

RESOLUTION NO. 29

WHEREAS in accordance with Standing Order 104(1), every Committee shall before the end of the Session in which it was appointed, make a report to the Assembly upon matters referred to it;

AND WHEREAS the Social Services Committee, a Sectoral Committee of the National Assembly of the First Session of the Tenth Parliament, was unable to conclude the work that was referred to it in that Session.

RESOLVED,

That the Social Services Committee of the National Assembly of the First Session of the Eleventh Parliament adopt all outstanding work of the previous Committee.

Passed by the National Assembly on 10th March, 2016


.....
S.E. ISAACS
Clerk of the National Assembly

**CLERK OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**