

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 81ST SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST
SESSION (2020-2024) OF THE TWELFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 10.00 A.M.
ON THURSDAY, 9TH MAY, 2024,
IN THE DOME OF THE ARTHUR CHUNG CONFERENCE CENTRE,
LILIENDAAL, GREATER GEORGETOWN

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (71)

Speaker (1)

*Hon. Manzoor Nadir, M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly

MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT (38)

Peoples Progressive Party Civic (38)

Prime Minister (1)

Hon. Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark A. Phillips, M.S.S., M.P., Prime Minister

Vice-President (1)

Hon. Bharrat Jagdeo, M.P., Vice-President

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (1)

Hon. Mohabir A. Nandlall, S.C., M.P., Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

Senior Ministers (17)

Hon. Gail Teixeira, M.P. (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni), Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip

Hon. Hugh H. Todd, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica), Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation

*Hon. Dr. Ashni K. Singh, M.P., Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance and the Public Service

Hon. Bishop Juan A. Edghill, M.S., J.P., M.P., Minister of Public Works

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***Non-Elected Member**

2.

Hon. Dr. Frank C. S. Anthony, M.P., Minister of Health

Hon. Priya D. Manickchand, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara),
Minister of Education

*Hon. Brindley H.R. Benn, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs

Hon. Zulfikar Mustapha, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne), Minister of
Agriculture

Hon. Pauline R.A. Campbell-Sukhai, M.P., Minister of Amerindian Affairs

Hon. Joseph L.F. Hamilton, M.P., Minister of Labour

Hon. Vickram O. Bharrat, M.P., Minister of Natural Resources (Virtual-Participation)

*Hon. Oneidge Walrond, M.P., Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce

Hon. Collin D. Croal, M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini), Minister of Housing and Water

Hon. Vindhya V. H. Persaud, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica), Minister of
Human Services and Social Security

Hon. Charles S. Ramson, M.P., Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

Hon. Sonia S. Parag, M.P., Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

Junior Ministers (4)

Hon. Susan M. Rodrigues, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica), Minister within the
Ministry of Housing and Water

Hon. Deodat Indar, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of Public Works

Hon. Anand Persaud, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of Local Government and Regional
Development

Hon. Warren K.E. McCoy, M.P., Minister within the Office of the Prime Minister

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***Non-Elected Member**

3.

Other Members (14)

Hon. Dharamkumar Seeraj, M.P.

Hon. Alister S. Charlie, M.P. (Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)

Hon. Dr. Vishwa D.B. Mahadeo, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)

Hon. Sanjeev J. Datadin, M.P.

Hon. Seepaul Narine, M.P.

Hon. Yvonne Pearson-Fredericks, M.P.

Hon. Dr. Bheri S. Ramsaran, M.P.

Hon. Dr. Jennifer R.A. Westford, M.P.

Hon. Faizal M. Jaffarally, M.P. (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)

Hon. Dr. Tandika S. Smith, M.P. (Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)

Hon. Lee G.H. Williams, M.P.

*Hon. Sarah Browne, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
(Absent – on leave)

*Hon. Vikash Ramkissoon, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture
(Absent- on leave)

Hon. Bhagmattie Veerasammy, M.P. (Virtual-Participation)

Hon. Nandranie Coonjah, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam)

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION (32)

(i) A Partnership For National Unity + Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) (31)

Hon. Aubrey Norton M.P., Leader of the Opposition (Virtual-Participation)

Hon. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.

Hon. Roysdale A. Forde, S.C., M.P. (Virtual-Participation)

Hon. Shurwayne F.K. Holder, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam)

Hon. Catherine A. Hughes, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica) (Virtual-Participation)

Hon. Geeta Chandan-Edmond, M.P. (Virtual-Participation)

Hon. Sherod A. Duncan, M.P.

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***Non-Elected Member**

4.

Hon. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P. (Virtual-Participation)
Hon. Dawn Hastings-Williams, M.P. (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni)
Hon. Christopher A. Jones, M.P., Opposition Chief Whip
Hon. Vinceroy H. Jordan, M.P. (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)
Hon. Amanza O.R. Walton-Desir, M.P.
Hon. Coretta A. McDonald, A.A., M.P. (Virtual-Participation)
Hon. Deonarine Ramsaroop, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)
Hon. Vincent P. Henry, M.P.
Hon. Dr. Karen Cummings, M.P. (Virtual-Participation)
Hon. Tabitha J. Sarabo-Halley, M.P.
Hon. Natasha Singh-Lewis, M.P. (Virtual-Participation)
Hon. Annette N. Ferguson, M.P.
Hon. Juretha V. Fernandes, M.P.
Hon. David A. Patterson, M.P.
Hon. Ronald Cox, M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)
Hon. Jermaine A. Figueira, M.P. (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice)
Hon. Ganesh A. Mahipaul, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)
Hon. Haimraj B. Rajkumar, M.P.
Hon. Nima N. Flue-Bess, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)
Hon. Dineshwar N. Jaiprashad, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)
Hon. Maureen A. Philadelphia, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)
Hon. Beverley Alert, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)
Hon. Richard E. Sinclair, M.P. (Region No. 8 –Potaro/Siparuni)
Hon. Devin L. Sears, M.P. (Region No. 10 – Upper-Demerara/Upper-Berbice)

**A New and United Guyana, Liberty and Justice Party and The New Movement (ANUG,
LJP & TNM) (1)**

Hon. Dr. Asha Kisoorn, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

5.

Officers (2)

Mr. Sherlock E. Isaacs, A.A., Clerk of the National Assembly

Ms. Hermina Gilgeours, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The Sitting commenced at 10.31 a.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk led in Prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER-

The Speaker made the following announcements:

CONDOLENCES

The Speaker expressed condolences to Hon. Geeta Chandan-Edmond on the passing of one of her close relatives.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS-

(1) By the Speaker of the National Assembly (Chairman of the Committee of Selection):

Minutes of Proceedings of the 13th Meeting of the Committee of Selection held on Wednesday, 24th January, 2024.

(Circulated)

(2) By the Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance and the Public Service:

(i) Annual Reports of the Guyana Oil Company Limited for the years 2021 and 2022.

(Circulated)

6.

- (ii) Government Notice No. 2/2024, regarding Notification Receipts of all petroleum revenues paid into the Natural Resource Fund during the period 1st January, 2024 to 28th March, 2024.

(Circulated)

- (iii) Loan Contract No. 5828/OC-GY dated December 8, 2023 between the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for an amount of US\$30,000,000 to finance the execution of a policy-based reform programme to support Human Services in Guyana.

(Circulated)

- (iv) Financing Agreement Credit No. 7473-GY signed on December 15, 2023 between the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the International Development Association (IDA) for an amount equivalent to SDR26,700,000 to support the Enhancing Policies for Human Capital Accumulation Development Policy Financing Program.

(Circulated)

- (v) Term Loan Facility Agreement dated December 22, 2023, between the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of International Development, acting through the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (Global Affairs Canada), and done through the Sovereign Loans Programme for an amount of CAD 120,000,000.00 to support the budget of Guyana, including supporting Guyana's social protection priorities in combating human trafficking, gender-based violence, women's economic empowerment and enhancement of the safety net for vulnerable populations.

(Circulated)

7.

(vi) Supplemental Agreement dated December 29, 2023 between the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the Bank of China Ltd. to amend and restate certain terms and conditions of the Original Facility Agreement dated December 30, 2022, for an amount equivalent to Euros 160,852,464.00, to partially finance the New Demerara River Bridge (NDRB) Project.

(Circulated)

(vii) The Swedish Export Credit Agency (EKN)-Covered Facility Agreement dated January 12, 2024, between the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, represented by the Ministry of Finance, as the Borrower, and the UniCredit Bank Austria AG, as the Original Lender, and the UniCredit Bank Austria AG, as the Agent and Arranger, for an amount of EUR 135,000,000. The purpose is to finance the design and build of, and the delivery of medical equipment to, a New Hospital Campus in New Amsterdam, Guyana.

(Circulated)

(3) On behalf of the Minister of Education, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip presented the following:

The National Schools (Board of Governors) (Amendment) Order 2024 – No. 16 of 2024.

(Circulated)

(4) By the Minister of Housing and Water:

Audited Financial Statements of the Central Housing and Planning Authority for the year ended 31st December, 2021.

(Circulated)

8.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES-

- (1) By Mr. Jermaine Figueira, M.P. (Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee):
Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Public Accounts of Guyana for the years 2017 and 2018.

(Circulated)

- (2) By the Minister of Human Services and Social Security (Chairperson of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services):

Second Special Report of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services on the Visit to the Hugo Chavez Centre for Rehabilitation and Reintegration in Region Five and the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute in Region Four on Wednesday, 6th December, 2023.

(Circulated)

ORAL QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE-

The Speaker informed the Assembly that he had received an oral question without notice from the Hon. Amanza Walton-Desir, M.P., and that it did not qualify under Standing Order 18(b). He therefore disallowed the question.

9.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-**For Written Replies****1. NAMES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD DEMOCRATIC COUNCILS THAT DID NOT RECEIVE SUBVENTIONS FROM THE GOVERNMENT****Member Asking:** Mrs. Tabitha Sarabo-Halley, M.P.**Minister Answering:** The Minister within the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

Can the Hon. Minister inform this House of the names of Neighbourhood Democratic Councils that were not given a subvention (in the form of cash transfer) from the Ministry of Local Government, for the years 2020, 2021 , 2022, and up to June 2023?

(Notice Paper No. 315 (Q240 Opp.240) published on 2023-10-30)

ANSWER

NO.	Name of NDC	2023
1	Moruka/Providence	0 (Subvention request is currently being processed)
2	No. 52/63	0 (Subvention request is currently being processed)
3	No. 64/74	0 (Subvention request is currently being processed)

2. MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION THAT ACCOMPANIED HIS EXCELLENCY, DR. MOHAMED IRFAAN ALI ON OVERSEAS TRIPS**Member Asking:** Ms. Annette Ferguson, M.P.**Minister Answering:** The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip

Can the Hon. Minister provide a detailed list to the National Assembly, of the persons who accompanied the President on overseas trips, from August 2, 2020 to May 17, 2023?

(Notice Paper No. 322 (Q247 Opp.247) published on 2023-10-30)

10.

ANSWER

“Following the response given to **Notice Paper 281 (Q211 OPP211)**, the delegations that accompanied His Excellency the President on the overseas trips listed in the table provided in that reply for the period August 2, 2020 to May 17, 2023, comprised of various Cabinet Members, the President’s ADC, media personnel, and senior government technical officers. On occasions when there were representatives of non-government bodies, the government did not pay for their travel overseas”.

3. MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION WHICH ACCOMPANIED HON. BHARRAT JAGDEO. M.P., VICE-PRESIDENT, ON OVERSEAS TRIPS

Member Asking: Ms. Annette Ferguson, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip

Can the Hon. Minister provide a detailed list to the National Assembly, of the persons who accompanied Hon. Bharrat Jagdeo, M.P., Vice-President, on overseas trips, from August 2, 2020, to May 17, 2023?

(Notice Paper No. 323 (Q248 Opp.248) published on 2023-10-30)

ANSWER

“Following the response given to **Notice Paper 282 (Q212 OPP212)**, the delegations that accompanied Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo, M.P., on the overseas trips listed in the table provided in that reply for the period August 2, 2020 to May 17, 2023, comprised of his security detail and government technical officers”.

11.

For Oral Replies

4. *FULL DIMENSION OF THE PLOT OF LAND FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE OFFICE COMPLEX IN THE HOUSTON AREA FOR THE MANDELA/ECCLES INTERLINKED ROAD

Hon. Annette Ferguson, M.P., asked the Minister of Public Works the following question:

"During the consideration of Budget 2023 under the Ministry of Public Works, program - "Policy Development and Administration, Project code 214800 — Government Buildings a contract for the sum of \$15,874,143,300, was awarded to Caribbean Green Building Incorporated for the construction of an office complex in the Houston area on the Mandela/Eccles interlinked road."

*Can the Honourable Minister inform the National Assembly the full dimension of the plot of land in the Houston area where the complex is to be constructed?

(Notice Paper No. 298 (Q223 Opp.223) published on 2023-10-30)

Thereafter, the Minister of Public Works replied.

Hon. Annette Ferguson, M.P., asked supplementary questions.

Thereafter, the Minister of Public Works replied.

Hon. David Patterson, M.P., asked supplementary questions.

Thereafter, the Minister of Public Works replied.

12.

5. *PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL ALLOCATED SPENT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE OFFICE COMPLEX IN THE HOUSTON AREA, MANDELA/ECCLES INTERLINKED ROAD

Hon. Annette Ferguson, M.P., asked the Minister of Public Works the following question:

"During the consideration of Budget 2023 under the Ministry of Public Works, program – "Policy Development and Administration, Project code 214800 — Government Buildings a contract was awarded the sum of \$15,874,143,300, to Caribbean Green Building Incorporated for the construction of an office complex in the Houston area on the Mandela/Eccles interlinked road."

*Could the Honourable Minister inform the National Assembly what percentage of the total sum allocated for the construction of the Office Complex has been spent as of June 16, 2023?

(Notice Paper No. 299 (Q224 Opp.224) published on 2023-10-30)

Thereafter, the Minister of Public Works replied.

Hon. Annette Ferguson, M.P., asked a supplementary question.

Thereafter, the Minister of Public Works replied.

6. *PERCENTAGE OF THE WORK COMPLETED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE OFFICE COMPLEX IN THE HOUSTON AREA, MANDELA/ECCLES INTERLINKED ROAD

Hon. Annette Ferguson, M.P., asked the Minister of Public Works the following question:

"During the consideration of Budget 2023 under the Ministry of Public Works, program – "Policy Development and Administration, Project code 214800 — Government Buildings – the sum of a contract for \$15,874,143,300, was awarded to Caribbean Green Building Incorporated

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for the construction of an office complex in the Houston area on the Mandela/Eccles interlinked road."

*Could the Honourable Minister inform the National Assembly what percentage of work has been completed as of June 16, 2023?

(Notice Paper No. 300 (Q225 Opp.225) published on 2023-10-30)

Thereafter, the Minister of Public Works replied.

7. *SKILLS AUDIT OF VENEZUELAN MIGRANTS

Hon. Mrs. Tabitha Sarabo-Halley, M.P., asked the Minister of Labour the following question:

*Can the Hon. Minister indicate whether the Ministry of Labour has conducted a skills audit of Venezuelan migrants at any time between 2020 and June 16, 2023?

(Notice Paper No. 309 (Q234 Opp.234) published on 2023-10-30)

Thereafter, the Minister of Labour replied.

8. *CODIFICATION OF THE LABOUR REGULATIONS AND LEGISLATION

Hon. Mrs. Tabitha Sarabo-Halley, M.P., asked the Minister of Labour the following question:

*Can the Hon. Minister inform the House whether the Ministry of Labour has commenced the codification of the labour regulations and legislation under one code for reference?

(Notice Paper No. 310 (Q235 Opp.235) published on 2023-10-30)

Thereafter, the Minister of Labour replied.

14.

**(1) MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY AND MOVED BY A MINISTER-
SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS NOS. 54(1)(a) and (2)**

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance moved the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That Standing Orders Nos. 54(1)(a) and (2) be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed at its Sitting on Thursday, 9th May, 2024, with the second reading and the remaining stages of the ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies Bill 2024 – Bill No. 4 of 2024 published on 2024-04-29.

(Notice Paper No. 329 (M78 Govt 41) published on 2024-04-29)

Thereafter, motion was put and carried.

(2) MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY AND MOVED BY A MINISTER-

In accordance with Standing Order No. 28(2), the Speaker's consent was given for the following motion to be placed on the Order Paper:

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS NOS. 54(1)(a) and (2)

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance moved the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That Standing Orders Nos. 54(1)(a) and (2) be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed at its Sitting on Thursday, 9th May, 2024, with the second reading and the remaining stages of the Constitution Reform Commission (Amendment) Bill 2024 – Bill No. 8 of 2024 published on 2024-05-08.

(Notice Paper No. 330 (M79 Govt 42) published on 2024-05-08)

Thereafter, the motion was put and carried.

15.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS-

Presentation and First Readings

1. **ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP WEST INDIES BILL 2024 – Bill No. 4/2024**

The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill, which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to make provision for the efficient and effective staging of ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2024 and for related purposes.

2. **DEFENCE (AMENDMENT) BILL 2024 – Bill No. 5/2024**

On behalf of the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill, which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Defence Act.

3. **FUGITIVE OFFENDERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2024 – Bill No. 6/2024**

On behalf of the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill, which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Fugitive Offenders Act.

4. **CRIMINAL LAW PROCEDURE (PAPER COMMITTALS) BILL 2024 – Bill No. 7/2024**

On behalf of the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill, which was read the first time:

16.

A BILL intituled AN ACT to provide for the abolition of preliminary inquiries; to provide for the procedure in respect of paper committal proceedings in criminal matters; and for matters connected thereto.

5. **CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL 2024 – Bill No. 8/2024**

On behalf of the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill, which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Constitution Reform Commission Act 2022.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

(i) **PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

MOTIONS

ITEM 1 - LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL 2023 – Bill No. 10 of 2023

Mr. Ganesh Mahipaul, M.P., moved the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly, in accordance with Standing Order No. 52(1), grants leave for the introduction and first reading of the Local Government Commission (Amendment) Bill 2023 – Bill No. 10 of 2023 -

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Local Government Commission Act.

(Notice Paper No. 260 (M64 Opp. 11) published on 2023-05-18)

17.

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs spoke to the motion.

Thereafter, Hon. Ganesh Mahipaul, M.P., replied.

The motion was **put** and **negatived** on the following Division:

FOR

Mr. Sears
Mr. Sinclair
Ms. Alert
Ms. Philadelphia
Mr. Jaiprashad
Mrs. Flue-Bess
Mr. Rajkumar
Mr. Mahipaul
Mr. Figueira
Mr. Cox
Mr. Patterson
Ms. Fernandes
Ms. Ferguson
Mrs. Singh-Lewis
Mrs. Sarabo-Halley
Dr. Cummings
Mr. Henry
Mr. Ramsaroop
Ms. Mc. Donald
Mrs. Walton-Desir

AGAINST

Dr. Kissoon
Ms. Coonjah
Ms. Veersammy
Mr. Williams
Dr. Smith
Mr. Jaffarally
Dr. Westford
Dr. Ramsaran
Mrs. Pearson-Fredericks
Mr. Narine
Mr. Datadin
Dr. Mahadeo
Mr. Charlie
Mr. Seeraj
Mr. McCoy
Mr. A. Persaud
Ms. Rodrigues
Ms. Parag
Mr. Ramson
Dr. V. Persaud

Mr. Jordan

Mr. Croal

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18.

Mr. Jones

Mr. Bharrat

Mrs. Hastings-Williams

Mr. Hamilton

Mrs. Lawrence

Ms. Sukhai

Mr. Duncan

Mr. Mustapha

Mrs. Chandon-Edmond

Ms. Manickchand

Mrs. Hughes

Dr. Anthony

Mr. Holder

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Ramjattan

Mr. Todd

Mr. Norton

Mr. Teixeira

Mr. Nandlall

Mr. Jadgeo

Mr. Phillips

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SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 12.39 p.m., the Sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 2.13 p.m., the Sitting was resumed.

ITEM 2 - RESCISSION OF RESOLUTION NO. 35 OF 2022 – AMENDMENT OF STANDING ORDER NO. 82 (PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE)

Mr. Ganesh Mahipaul, M.P., moved the following motion:

WHEREAS the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) was established in British Guiana in

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1957 by Standing Order 70 (2) and is now provided for by Standing Order 82 of the National Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) derives its mandate from Article 223(5-8) of the Constitution of Guyana (2003) and Standing Order (82) of the National Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) exercises supervisory oversight of the functioning of the Audit Office in accordance with the Rules, Policies, and Procedures Manual, the Audit Act, and any other Law;

AND WHEREAS the duty of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is to examine the accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by the Assembly to meet Public Expenditure and such other accounts laid before the Assembly as the Assembly may refer to the Committee together with the Auditor General's Report thereon;

AND WHEREAS the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) examines the economy and the efficiency of the administration of these public expenditures by: a) All central and local government bodies and entities; b) All bodies and entities in which the state has a controlling interest; and c) All projects funded by way of taxes, loans or grants by any foreign state or organization;

AND WHEREAS the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) exercises powers in keeping with the Legislative Bodies Evidence Act, Chapter 1:08, allowing, for the summoning of witnesses to give evidence and or provide documents to the Committee;

AND WHEREAS Resolution No. 35 of the National Assembly of Guyana passed on Wednesday, 13th April, 2022, amended Standing Order 82 by inserting immediately after paragraph (3), the following paragraph - "(4) A quorum shall be five (5) members, two (2) representing the Government, two (2) representing the Opposition and the Chairperson;

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20.

AND WHEREAS before Resolution No. 35, a quorum for the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) was in keeping with Standing Order 95 (6) which states, "Unless the Assembly otherwise direct, three (3) Members shall be the quorum. In ascertaining whether there is a quorum present, the Member in the Chair shall not be excluded.";

AND WHEREAS since the existence of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), its work has always gone unhindered up until Resolution No. 35 of the National Assembly of Guyana;

AND WHEREAS the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is yet to complete the examination of the Auditor General Reports for the years 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021;

AND WHEREAS the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is yet to submit reports to the National Assembly for the financial years 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021;

AND WHEREAS since Resolution No. 35, eleven (11) meetings of the Public Accounts Committee have been canceled due to the lack of a quorum;

AND WHEREAS on all eleven (11) occasions it was due to no member of the Government side showing up for the Public Accounts Committee.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly rescinds Resolution No.35 which was passed by the National Assembly on Wednesday, 13th April, 2022.

(Notice Paper No. 261 (M65 Opp. 12) published on 2023-06-08)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Hon. Mohabir Nandlall, S.C, M.P., Attorney General & Minister of Legal Affairs

Hon. Jermaine Figueira, M.P.

Hon. Sanjeev Datadin, M.P.

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21.

Hon. Juretha Fernandes, M.P.

Hon. Bishop Juan Edghill, M.S., J.P., M.P., Minister of Public Works

Hon. David Patterson, M.P.

Hon. Gail Teixeira, M.P., Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and
Government Chief Whip

Thereafter, Hon. Ganesh Mahipaul, M.P., replied.

In accordance with Standing Order No. 39(2), the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs concluded the debate on the motion.

The motion was then **put** and **negatived** on the following Division:

FOR

Mr. Sears

Mr. Sinclair

Ms. Alert

Ms. Philadelphia

Mr. Jaiprashad

Mrs. Flue-Bess

Mr. Rajkumar

Mr. Mahipaul

Mr. Figueira

Mr. Cox

Mr. Patterson

AGAINST

Dr. Kissoon

Ms. Coonjah

Ms. Veersammy

Mr. Williams

Dr. Smith

Mr. Jaffarally

Dr. Westford

Dr. Ramsaran

Mrs. Pearson-Fredericks

Mr. Narine

Mr. Datadin

Ms. Fernandes
Ms. Ferguson
Mrs. Singh-Lewis

Dr. Mahadeo
Mr. Charlie
Mr. Seeraj

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Mrs. Sarabo-Halley
Dr. Cummings
Mr. Henry
Mr. Ramsaroop
Ms. Mc. Donald
Mrs. Walton-Desir
Mr. Jordan
Mr. Jones
Mrs. Hastings-Williams
Mrs. Lawrence
Mr. Duncan
Mrs. Hughes
Mr. Holder
Mr. Forde
Mr. Ramjattan
Mr. Norton

Mr. McCoy
Mr. A. Persaud
Mr. Indar
Ms. Rodrigues
Ms. Parag
Mr. Ramson
Dr. V. Persaud
Mr. Croal
Mr. Bharrat
Mr. Hamilton
Ms. Sukhai
Mr. Mustapha
Ms. Manickchand
Dr. Anthony
Bishop Edghill
Mr. Todd
Ms. Teixeira
Mr. Nandlall
Mr. Phillips

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 6.47 p.m., the Sitting was suspended for refreshments.

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23.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 8.09 p.m., the Sitting was resumed.

ITEM 3 - ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL SELECT COMMITTEE TO ADDRESS

THE SCOURGE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN GUYANA

In accordance with Standing Order No. 26(f), the Speaker disallowed the following motion:

WHEREAS Domestic Violence continues to ravage our society.

AND WHEREAS Domestic Violence has become prevalent in our Society where in many cases, women become the fatal victim;

AND WHEREAS the Domestic Violence Act, Chapter 11:09, was passed in 1996 for, “the protection in cases involving domestic violence by the granting of a protection order, to provide the police with powers to arrest where a domestic violence offence occurs and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.”;

AND WHEREAS in August 2013, the A Partnership For National Unity (APNU) tabled a motion to address the scourge of “Interpersonal Violence” and sought for a Special Select Committee of the National Assembly to examine the situation and make recommendations to the

National Assembly for implementation;

AND WHEREAS it was reported by the United Nations Women Caribbean in its Report in November, 2019, that, “Guyana has a relatively high incidence of domestic violence with roughly one out of every two women between ages 15 and 60 have been abused by their husbands, spouses or partners at some stage in their lives.”.

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24.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly appoints a Special Select Committee of the National Assembly headed by the Minister responsible for the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security, to review the present situation, approaches of perpetrators, and the factors leading to these vicious acts of Domestic Violence and make recommendations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That on completion of the work of the Special Select Committee, a detailed report be submitted to the National Assembly for the implementation of the recommendations to be adopted by the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security.

(Notice Paper No. 262 (M66 Opp. 13) published on 2023-06-08)

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 10(1)

At 8.15 p.m., the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip, moved that Standing Order No. 10(1) be suspended to enable the Assembly to continue and conclude its business for the day.

ITEM 4 - ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL SELECT COMMITTEE TO REVIEW CHARGES FOR HOUSE LOTS FOR GUYANESE

Ms. Annette Ferguson, M.P., moved the following motion:

WHEREAS Article 26 of the Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana states that, “every citizen has the right to proper housing accommodation”;

AND WHEREAS the size of Guyana is 83,0000 square miles with a population of over 750,000 persons, of which an average of five persons make up a family size;

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25.

AND WHEREAS, the Central Housing and Planning Authority was established in 1948, with its core principle to provide housing for working-class people;

AND WHEREAS, lands for housing purposes are acquired from several state agencies, paid by the Central Housing and Planning Authority;

AND WHEREAS, prices are determined by the Government Valuation Department in many cases after surveys are conducted for housing areas;

AND WHEREAS, many Guyanese who are allocated house lots find it challenging to commence construction because of financial constraints. Additionally, in most instances, the persons are unable to provide 20% of the required loan amount requested by the banks as a qualifying factor to qualify for a loan;

AND WHEREAS, since Guyana is an oil-producing nation with a production of over 200,000 barrels per day, it is evident that housing can become easily accessible for Guyanese who are earning salaries below \$200,000.00.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly approves of a Special Select Committee headed by the Minister of Housing and Water to examine this grave issue of unaffordability by engaging civil society, financiers, and other Stakeholders to submit proposals and make recommendations that may be adopted by the Government to assist Guyanese.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Special Select Committee, on completion of its work, submits to the National Assembly a detailed report with its recommendations and asks that the House approves of the Ministry of Housing and Water to incorporate them into its Policy.

(Notice Paper No. 263 (M67 Opp. 14) published on 2023-06-08)

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26.

Hon. Collin Croal, M.P., Minister of Housing & Water spoke to the motion.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 9.43 p.m., the Speaker of the National Assembly suspended the Sitting to 10.00 a.m. on Friday, 10th May, 2024.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 10.30 a.m., the Sitting was resumed.

BIRTHDAY SALUTATIONS

The Speaker extended post-birthday greetings to the Hon. Anand Persaud, M.P., Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, and the Hon. Geeta Chandan-Edmond, M.P. He also extended birthday greetings to Hon. Vickram Bharrat, M.P., Minister of Natural Resources.

The Assembly resumed the debate on the motion.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Hon. Jermaine Figueria, M.P.

Hon. Susan Rodrigues, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of Housing & Water

Hon. Shurwayne Holder, M.P.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 12.06 p.m. the Sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 1.54 p.m., the Sitting was resumed.

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27.

The Assembly resumed the debate on the motion.

Hon. Shurwayne Holder continued and concluded his speech.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Hon. Vincent Henry, M.P.

Hon. Dr. Ashni Singh, M.P., Senior Minister in the Office of the President with
Responsibility for Finance and the Public Service

Thereafter, Hon. Annette Ferguson, M.P., replied.

In accordance with Standing Order No. 39(2), the Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance and the Public Service concluded the debate on the motion.

The motion was then **put** and **negatived**.

GOVERNMENT'S BUSINESS

BILLS – Second Readings

ITEM 5 - ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP WEST INDIES BILL 2024 – Bill No. 4/2024
published on 2024-04-29

The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to make provision for the efficient and effective staging of ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2024 and for related purposes.

(Read a first time on 2024-05-09)

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28.

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Hon. Nima Flue-Bess, M.P.

Hon. Brindley Benn, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs

Presiding by Dr. Asha Kisoona, M.P.

At 5.28 p.m., while the Hon. Brindley Benn, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs, was speaking to the motion, the Speaker withdrew from the Chamber and Dr. Asha Kisoona, M.P., took the Chair.

Hon. Brindley Benn, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs continued and concluded his speech.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 5.58 p.m., the Sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 7.18 p.m., the Sitting was resumed.

The Assembly resumed the debate on the Bill.

The Following Members also spoke to the motion:

Hon. Jermaine Figueira, M.P.

Hon. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.

Hon. Mohabir Nandlall, S.C, M.P., Attorney General & Minister of Legal Affairs

Thereafter, the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports replied.

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29.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 10(1)

At 8.15 p.m., the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip, moved that Standing Order No. 10(1) be suspended to enable the Assembly to continue and conclude its business for the day.

The Bill was then read a second time.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

In Committee

Clauses 1-51 were passed as printed.

Schedules I and II were passed as printed.

Assembly resumed.

On a motion by the Minister of Culture, Youth & Sports, the ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies Bill 2024 was read a third time and passed as printed.

ITEM 6 - CIVIL AVIATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 2024 – Bill No. 3/2024 published on 2024-02-02

The Minister of Public Works moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Civil Aviation Act 2018.

(Read a first time on 2024-02-02)

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30.

Presiding by Hon. Dr. Asha Kissoon, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

At 8.30 p.m. the Speaker withdrew from the Chamber and Hon. Dr. Asha Kissoon, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly took the Chair.

Hon. Bishop Juan Edghill, M.P., continued and concluded his speech.

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Hon. Annette Ferguson, M.P.

Hon. Sanjeev Datadin, M.P.

Hon. Amanza Walton-Desir, M.P.

Hon. Deodat Indar, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of Public Works

Return of the Speaker

At 9.37 p.m., the Speaker returned to the Chamber.

Hon. Deodat Indar, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of Public Works continued and concluded his speech.

Hon. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P. also spoke to the motion.

Thereafter, the Minister of Public Works replied.

The Bill was then read a second time.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

In Committee

Clauses 1-16 were passed as printed.

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31.

Assembly resumed.

On a motion by the Minister of Public Works, the Civil Aviation (Amendment) Bill 2024 was read a third time and passed as printed.

ITEM 7 - CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL
2024 – Bill No. 8/2024 published on 2024-05-08

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Constitution Reform Commission Act 2022.

(Read a first time on 2024-05-09)

Hon. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P., spoke to the motion.

Thereafter, the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs replied.

The Bill was then read a second time.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

In Committee

Clauses 1-3 were passed as printed.

Assembly resumed.

On a motion by the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, the Constitutional Reform Commission (Amendment) Bill 2024 was read a third time and passed as printed.

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32.

MOTHERS DAY GREETINGS

The Speaker extended pre-Mother's Day greetings to all mothers. The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip joined the Speaker in extending greetings.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10.05 p.m., on a motion by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip, the Assembly was adjourned to 10.00 a.m., on Friday, 17th May, 2024.



HON. MANZOOR NADIR, M.P.,
Speaker of the National Assembly

**PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.**

10th May, 2024.