

REMARKS BY H.E. MR. SYDNEY ALLICOCK
VICE PRESIDENT & MINISTER OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS
REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

Mr. Chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen greetings once again from the Government and People of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana.

Guyana is pleased to report that much has been achieved in the context of the implementation of UNDRIP and the Outcome Document of the World Conference on Indigenous People.

His Excellency David Granger, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, with the full endorsement of the National 'Toshaos' Council, outlined a ten-point plan of action for the development of Guyana's hinterland, where our Indigenous Peoples account for approximately ninety per cent of the total population.

The following are the ten principal developmental programmes aimed at realising improvements in the lives of hinterland residents in general and Indigenous Peoples in particular:

1. **Hinterland Education Support Programme:** Our priority is to ensure that every child receives a sound education to prepare him or her for satisfying employment. The programme will ensure that no child is prevented from attending school because of parental poverty. *"Every Child in School"* is our objective.
2. **Hinterland Poverty Reduction Programme:** Hinterland poverty can be reduced and, perhaps, eventually eradicated, with good governance and sensible public policies. We are establishing policies geared to ensuring economic independence, foster entrepreneurship and to improve livelihoods.
3. **Hinterland Infrastructure Extension Programme:** Bridging the gap in the standards of living between residents of the coastland and the hinterland is the key objective of this programme. Physical infrastructure improvement is a priority in this regard. This programme will see improved communication through better aerodromes, bridges, roads, stellings, ferries and other forms of air, land and riverine transportation.
4. **Hinterland Energy Development Programme:** Energy security in the hinterland will see responsible exploitation of sources of sustainable and renewable energy. We will aim at developing solar farms, wind farms and micro-hydro power plants which can provide power not only for homes but for entire communities — community centres, health centres, offices, shops, schools and sports halls.
5. **Hinterland Employment and Youth Service:** Our Indigenous youth population does not want to be placed on a hinterland 'dole.' They want careers. We will ensure that our young people are equipped with skills so as to be able to earn an income by accelerating the training of the people of our communities and the generation of new jobs.

6. **Hinterland Happy Household Programme:** We are encouraging continued investment in economic projects that would yield sustained benefits and long-term, job-creation for indigenous communities. There is also a focus on agriculture, agro-processing, small-enterprise development and other economic ventures that will boost community development. We are strengthening law-enforcement within indigenous communities aimed at bringing an end to exploitation of indigenous peoples, particularly the crime of trafficking in persons (TIP).
7. **Hinterland and Indigenous Peoples Land Commission:** Land is life. Government is aware that there are claims and controversies. We are establishing a Commission to examine issues in relation to land titling and land demarcation.
8. **Hinterland Language, Cultural and Sports Commission:** Government intends to preserve indigenous languages and culture, to develop sports and to improve access to information technology. This service will provide the opportunities and resources to enable the cultures of our people to flourish and for citizens in other parts of the country to appreciate the rich cultures and customs of the indigenous people.
9. **Hinterland Tourism Development Service:** Government intends to establish eco-tourism on a sound economic footing.
10. **Hinterland Public Services Provision Scheme:** Public services are being extended to all corners of our country with a view to promoting vibrant and thriving communities.

Mr. Chairman, Indigenous Peoples' rights remain of high importance to the Government of Guyana. Article 149G of Guyana's Constitution guarantees the rights of Indigenous Peoples while Articles 212S and 212T establish the Indigenous Peoples' Commission and Articles 212A thru 212F establish the Ethnic Relations Commission. Albeit Government recognises the need to further strengthen the enabling legislation to give full effect to the constitutional provisions.

I am therefore pleased to reiterate our Country's commitment to promoting the rights and well-being of indigenous peoples both nationally and globally and, our readiness to work with other partners and this Permanent Forum in that regard.

I thank you

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