Our Dirty Secret: Hopelessness for the Homeless

It has been more than eight months since the Hugo Chavez Centre for rehabilitation and reintegration was opened at Onverwagt on the West Cost of Berbice. The Centre which was funded by the Venezuelan Government at the costs of $402.8 million was ostensibly built to house and rehabilitate homeless persons from across the country. At its conception, the People’s Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) Administration said that when completed this in-house facility would be used to train the homeless population with life skills so that they could be reintegrated into society. Further it was said that the Onverwagt facility would be used to replicate and improve the programme at the Night Shelter at La Penitence which offers displaced persons accommodation, meals and clothing.

Over the last two decades, the army of homeless persons in Guyana has skyrocketed. In the Capital Georgetown they can be seen wandering the major thoroughfares, searching in garbage dumps for food, begging and finding shelter outside of businesses and public buildings like the Parliament Buildings. In February, it was announced by the Human Services and Social Security, Minister Jennifer Webster that 80 homeless persons were identified and evaluated by the Ministry to take up residence at the Hugo Chavez Centre. Cabinet Secretary, Dr. Roger Luncheon elaborated that the Ministry would shuttle the homeless to Onverwagt, while those currently housed at the Night Shelter in Georgetown would also be taken to the new multi-million dollar shelter. It was pointed out that the Night Shelter in the city was built to provide a similar service as the one at Onverwagt, but that the night shelter was never meant to be a permanent arrangement as the Government had long been eyeing the establishment of a more permanent facility.

On the 18th May when this publication contacted the Ministry of Human Services we were told that the Hugo Chavez Centre was not operational (there were no homeless persons there). A senior Opposition Member of Parliament who we spoke with said that over $8 million dollars has been allocated in the 2014 Budget for the Centre. Currently, the Night Shelter which was originally built to service 150 persons sees close to 200 persons daily. This, however, is just a miniscule percentage of the city’s homeless population and does not address the growing problem of homelessness in Guyana.

A recent United Nations report painted a very troubling picture of homeless children in Guyana. UNICEF estimated that 27% of children ages 5 to 14 in Guyana were working. “It is common to see children engaged in street trading. There are reports of an increase in prevalence of child labor. Though the government acknowledges the growing street children phenomenon, there is still a need to address the problem sufficiently. Recent primary school attendance statistics are not available for Guyana. Though the government has made concerted efforts to increase enrollment rates and to bring dropout children back into school, dropout rates, ...... (Continued on Back Page)
EDITORIAL

The PPP/C is not interested in the truth

The Commission of Inquiry now in session is set to miss the chance to pursue the truth about Dr. Walter Rodney's death. There has always been widespread support for the establishment of a commission of inquiry. The stated objective: "to inquire into and report on the circumstances surrounding the death in an explosion of the late Dr. Walter Rodney," that occurred on 13th June 1980 in Georgetown, is uncontroversial.

The Walter Rodney Commission of Inquiry was established on the authority of the President of the Republic on the 6th February 1981. The three commissioners were: Dr. Richard Cheltenham, Queen's Counsel, of Barbados (Chairperson); Jacqueline Samuels-Brown, Queen's Counsel, of Jamaica; and Seenath Jairam, Senior Counsel, of Trinidad and Tobago, were sworn in on the 25th February.

The Commission's first term of Reference - TOR (I): To examine the facts and circumstances surrounding the death of Dr. Walter Rodney subsequent to, the death of Dr. Walter Rodney in order to determine, as far as possible, who or what was responsible for the explosion resulting in the death of Dr. Walter Rodney, is uncontroversial.

The Inquiry's main aim should be to find out what happened and how it happened. The general view is that the purpose of the Inquiry should not be to ascertain civil or criminal liability or to determine blameworthiness of any person or agency involved in the event being inquired into. That is the task for a court of law. Objections have therefore been raised to TOR (IV). This required the Commission: "to examine and report on the actions and activities of the state, such as the Guyana Police Force, the Guyana Defence Force, the Guyana National Service, the Guyana People's Militia and those who were in command and superintendence of these departments to determine whether they were tasked with the surveillance of and the carrying out of actions and whether they did execute those tasks and carried out those actions against the Political Opposition for the period 1st January 1978 to 31st December 1980."

The Guyana Human Rights Association (GHRA) also raised objections to TOR in particular. The Association expressed the view that the proposed Terms of Reference had "greater potential for reviving, rather than healing, ethnic division in Guyana. In this respect, the clause [TOR (IV)] provides an opportunity...for generating a stream of horrific stories from that era into the work of the Commission, with rich potential for stirring up Indo-Guyanese resentment against the PNC."

TOR IV, therefore, is tendentious, malicious and incongruent with TOR (I). It is a deliberately divisive instrument which would obscure "the circumstances surrounding the death" of Dr. Walter Rodney and it is likely to constrain the Commission's pursuit of the truth.

The PPP/C Administration, in drafting the terms of reference in this peculiar manner, opened the floodgates to 'hearsay' evidence. Hearsay material would have been admissible by political propaganda, prejudice and partiality. Human memory is capable of playing tricks with the recollection of past events. It will be difficult, as has already been shown, to separate fact from fiction and 'premonition,'

Once Upon A Time there was Ashni Singh

By Malikia N. Ramsey

Guyana's National Budget 2014 has been read, debated, some sections approved by the opposition, others not. But how many of us have settled, what does it really mean for the ordinary man or woman in street? Absolutely nothing. I have spoken to several persons who said that whether the country's Budget is large or small, they NEVER benefit from it. That statement brings me to the point of Finance Minister Dr. Ashni Singh who often takes pleasure in declaring annually that the Budget presented by his Ministry is the largest budget ever - apparently this is to somehow convince Guyanese that our nation is getting richer. Is the Finance Minister saying that the army of beggars on our streets, the number of homeless women and children roaming, the startling evidence of poverty seen in so many communities across the country and the joblessness of the youth should not be considered when reporting on how rich a country we become? Or are these depressing situations and problems simply figments of our imaginations? It's either that or like so many other government ministers, Dr. Singh is living in "the land of milk and honey" that only exists in his brain.

During the period of the Budget debates, I spoke with former Minister of Finance and Planning and A Partnership for National Unity (APNU's) current Shadow Minister of Finance Minister, Mr. Carl Greenidge about this constant proclamation about "largest budget ever". The former Finance Minister explained that every Budget every year would obviously be larger than that of the previous year. He pointed to the fact that unless there were goods and services would usually increase, therefore taxes collected are greater. This he pointed out is not a foreign procedure or process to any other nation. Mr. Greenidge reminded that a Budget is a plan of what you intend to spend, while noting that it often spends less. So Dear Dr. Ashni Singh, your constant proclamation about "largest budget ever" have not only become annoying to the general public, but irrelevant.

Let's place some more emphasis on this irrelevance - when I became a journalist almost a decade ago, I had a script editor who always asked the young reporters, "so what, who cares?" He would ask how a particular headline or breaking news would benefit any random male or female with mouths to feed and bills to pay. If we could not answer or indicate in the story how it would aid the ordinary citizen, our stories would neither be printed nor carried on the evening news cast. So why should the ordinary Jane or John be impressed with Dr. Singh's annual waste of words and grand standing for political purposes?

A few weeks ago I spoke with a single mother of seven who told me how difficult life was for her. I asked about how much relief she was expecting from Budget 2014. The woman declared that whether or not the Budget decreased or increased it did not matter to her. Like so many other citizens she believes that the monies and benefits are not trickling down to the ordinary man or woman. She said it's a 'fight for self, a survival mentality. If you don't get it for yourself you'll continue to wallow and sink into the depths and dark recess of poverty'. This mother of seven told me that as long as the Government continues to treat citizens like her in a callous manner her only interest will be to put food on the table. Survival!

So why should the ordinary Jane or John be interested? The Government's National Budget 2014 has been read, debated, some sections approved by the opposition, others not. But how many of us have settled, what does it really mean for the ordinary man or woman in street? Absolutely nothing. I have spoken to several persons who said that whether the country's Budget is large or small, they NEVER benefit from it. That statement brings me to the point of Finance Minister Dr. Ashni Singh who often takes pleasure in declaring annually that the Budget presented by his Ministry is the largest budget ever - apparently this is to somehow convince Guyanese that our nation is getting richer. Is the Finance Minister saying that the army of beggars on our streets, the number of homeless women and children roaming, the startling evidence of poverty seen in so many communities across the country and the joblessness of the youth should not be considered when reporting on how rich a country we become? Or are these depressing situations and problems simply figments of our imaginations? It's either that or like so many other government ministers, Dr. Singh is living in "the land of milk and honey" that only exists in his brain.

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Soon Dr. Singh may have to begin his Budget presentations with the famous phrase, "ONCE UPON A TIME!"
GuySuCo and Sugar: Too important to ignore

"Shifting Guyana away from its reliance on sugar is not simply a theoretical exercise. There are high social costs that are incurred in the process, and unfortunately these costs cannot be borne by the people of Guyana at this time or in the near future. GuySuCo is too big to fail. These words were uttered by a Government Minister during the 2014 Budget debates and unfortunately, this is a sentiment shared by some of the world’s top economists. If GuySuCo is too big to fail, then in the words of distinguished American Economist Allan Greenspan, it is too big!"

The thought that something dangerous is considered inexcusable and that there is no alternative to a failing industry but to keep propping it up with taxpayer dollars, shows the lack of vision and intellectual laziness that is pervasive in the PPP/C. Imagine if the American settlers had thought it inconceivable to go west, or if Lewis and Clark had felt that there was no alternative to crossing the many obstacles that blocked their way to the Pacific. Closer to home imagine the Brazilian Government opting in 1975 to walk away from diversifying their sugar industry and launching a national ethanol program because it was too daring. Today Brazil is the second largest producer of ethanol fuel, and the world’s largest exporter. In 2010, Brazil produced 26.2 billion liters of ethanol, representing 87.8% of the world’s production. A key aspect of Brazil’s leadership in diversification of the sugar industry was forming a partnership with the public, private sector and the universities.

If we are to ever embrace modernity, then we have to change old attitudes to development and change. One definition of madness is: “doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.” It is a fact that a sugar industry in Guyana devoid of diversification is a dead industry. Unless we take bold initiatives and transform the industry in the near term, then like a malignant cancer it will continue to weaken the economy and eventually drag it to the point of no return. The policy of the PPP/C Administration and the politically controlled management of GuySuCo of simply throwing taxpayer dollars at the industry’s problems must end. The industry has received over $500 billion in subsidies over a period of ten years. The President has said that the industry cannot meet its cost, or pay its bills without government support, yet political pundits defend this practice solely on the basis that GuySuCo is far too important to fail; instead of proposing reasons why too big to fail is a menace to an already fragile tax base. It is time that the people of Guyana forge a new relationship with sugar, taking an example from our Brazilian neighbours. Most of the industrial processing of sugarcane in Brazil is done through a very integrated production chain, allowing sugar production, and industrial ethanol processing and electricity generation from by-products.

The scare tactics being used by the Guyana Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU) and the PPP/C to agitate sugar workers needs to be challenged. We can do better, and the workers must be educated that diversification is not a death sentence or guaranteed unemployment. The sugar industry in Guyana as currently configured cannot survive, and that is the truth. Union leaders must tell their members that Government cannot continue to support the corporation indefinitely, and that in sugar prices, Guyana is not competitive as a sugar producer, our costs are just too high. It is time for our friend, the President, to stop stoking the fires of arrogance… He (Robeson Benn) has arrogated to himself the mitrales of the party’s congress.

Sugar cane cultivation in Guyana

PPP says NO - To the reducing of Berbice Bridge toll

In a move that shocked many political commentators, the People’s Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) voted against a Motion brought by a Partnership for National Unity to reduce the Berbice River Bridge toll. The Motion, which was moved by Mr. Joseph Harmon, MP and seconded by Ms. Amna Ally, MP, in its first resolve clause said that the Berbice Bridge was built by the Government of Guyana on behalf of the people of Guyana and that it is owned and operated by the Berbice Bridge Company Inc. Mr. Harmon said that the Government through the National Industrial and Commercial Investment Ltd. (NICIL) is a preferential shareholder and a member of the Board of Directors of the company managing the bridge. APNU contended that the toll for crossing the bridge is exceedingly high and represents a significant hardship and devolution of wealth from the people of Berbice in particular. The Partnership also noted that in 2013, the PPP/C adopted the motion of the Berbice Bridge Company to reduce the toll for crossing the bridge during the period 1st to 12th August to coincide with the party’s congress.

"I will not reduce the toll. I will not reduce the toll to any person in Guyana…" Ms. Amna Ally, APNU’s Chief Whip and co-sponsor of the Motion said. "What is evident is that the bridge toll is pressuring the people of Berbice. If the Berbice River Bridge is the people’s bridge then stop pressuring them and give them a good life." Mr. Joseph Harmon in his rebuttal said that he detected a certain level of arrogance from the Government benches and more particularly the Minister of Public Works. He said, "I will not reduce the toll for a motor car reduced from $2,200.00 to $1,000.00 and the toll for a large truck reduced from $13,000.00 to $10,000.00."

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Mr. Keith Scott, MP, was born to a family which have had a long association with the political history of Guyana. It is no surprise then that he is not only well grounded in the art of politics but also understands in an intimate way what forces move and shape the course of contemporary politics in Guyana.

Influenced by these experiences, he was to become a founding member of the Working People’s Alliance (WPA) and later launched his own Party, the National Democratic Movement (NDM). This Party later merged with others to become the National Front Alliance (NFA).

Mr. Scott was formerly a Teacher for more than 10 years. He also participated in the work of a number youth groups and those associated with the cultural development of Guyana. A keen sportsman, he has played cricket for both the Malteenoes Sports Club and the Demerara Cricket Club. Mr. Scott attended the University of Guyana and later pursued studies in the area of Social Security. On his return to Guyana he joined the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) as an Inspector. He subsequently established his own Consultancy in Taxation and Labour Relations.

Mr. Scott’s experience and political skill has made him an attractive and vocal Member of Parliament. He is currently serving in the Tenth Parliament of Guyana under the portfolio of Finance and International Economic Co-operation.
On Sunday 4th May 2014, the Task Force for Guyana’s Youth (TFFGY) held its annual fund-raising tea party in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The event which included a fashion show and auction is one of the major fundraisers for the Florida based charity. Several tables where decorated with English, Moroccan, Asian and Kenyan tea sets and accessories and many of the items were auctioned at the end of the event. The models who took part in the fashion show wore costumes representing Asia, Kenya, Morocco and Great Britain. Task Force for Guyana’s Youth Inc. is a Florida non-profit corporation based in Miramar. The Task Force helps underprivileged children in Guyana and also award annual scholarships to students at the secondary and University level. Task Force for Guyana’s Youth recently celebrated its 30th anniversary. All the proceeds from the organization’s fundraisers are used to benefit needy children in Guyana.

Democracy under attack says NAR

The North American Region (NAR) of the People’s National Congress (PNC) is appalled at the revocation of the work permit of the head of the USAID Leadership and Democracy (LEAD) project in Guyana. Both the opposition parties and many noted civil stakeholders rejected the project which sought to educate Guyanese particularly women and youths among their responsibilities in a growing democratic society.

Citing an infringement of national sovereignty and opposition parties being given money, the PPP/C Government summarily terminated the permission of Mr. Glen Bradbury, to carry on the mission of the much lauded project. It must be noted that LEAD is a part of a joint agreement of 2009 between the US Government and the Guyana Government to work towards the deepening of democracy in the country. Further, the outline of the project was fully known to the PPP/C Government.

No proof has been offered to support the claims for effectively ending LEAD. Instead President Donald Ramotar in his usual unreflective and disdainful manner has said, “We don’t need LEAD in this country.” Suddenly, the people of Guyana cannot use the knowledge of tried and proven steps of citizen participation in a viable democracy.

NAR is disturbed about the continuing dictatorial habits of the minority PPP/C Administration and its incompetent head, President Ramotar. Guyanese deserve a responsive and fair system of governance. NAR will use every effort to ensure that this becomes a reality.

Guyanese should applaud the United States Ambassador in his support for LEAD and his valiant call for a free press in Guyana. The fight for democracy should not be constrained by borders or diplomatic niceties for in the end its pursuit and attainment are the business of all freedom loving people.

The very PPP/C Government dangles at the United Nations the benefits of a New Global Human Order which is the brainchild of its revered leader, Cheddi Jagan. Yet right within its own realm of governance, this party will shamelessly and doggedly deny its own people the right to live in a democratic state.

NAR is also alarmed at the bold references in an article, in the state owned and directed Guyana Chronicle newspaper of this date (May 6, 2014), which makes reference to the party not being able to trust in any upcoming elections the Guyana Police Force and observers of CARICOM countries because these are ‘kith and kin’ of the PNC.

This is a bold indictment of CARCOM which is populated by mostly black people, and a loud registration of a lack of trust in the police force which is also predominantly black. The message is clear: the PPP/C is not interested in national unity in Guyana and regional unity in the wider Caribbean. Furthermore, NAR is concerned with the continuing criticism of the United States and Britain where most Guyanese have taken up residence after emigrating from Guyana. Many of them chose these countries because of economic and political considerations.

The PPP/C’s force opposition to these countries and their Governments is rooted in the party’s dislike for freedom, democracy and justice.

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Exchange Rates as at 2014-05-20
Health Benefits of Bitter Melon (Corilla)

Antibacterial and antiviral
Bitter melon contains many biochemical compounds that have antibacterial and antiviral activity. Extracts of bitter melon have been shown to be effective against many types of bacteria including E. coli, Salmonella, as well as Helicobacter pylori, the bacteria that cause stomach ulcers. Bitter melon also has anti-viral activity against HIV, Epstein-Barr viruses, and increases resistance of animals and humans to viral infections.

Anti-cancer
Clinical studies have shown that bitter melon has anti-cancer activity. Water extracts of the whole plant inhibit growth of prostate and mammary tumors in animals, and in vitro studies showed anti-cancer activity against several melanoma, sarcoma, leukemia and liver cancer cell lines.

Diabetes (Blood sugar regulating)
Biochemical constituents in bitter melon lower blood sugar levels, increase glucose uptake by cells and improve the release and activity of insulin. The blood sugar regulating chemicals are found in the highest concentration in the fruit.

Antimalarial
Bitter melon is traditionally regarded in Asia as useful for preventing and treating malaria. Tea from its leaves is used for this purpose also in Panama and Colombia. In Guyana, bitter melons are boiled and stir-fried with garlic and onions. This popular side dish known as corilla is served to prevent malaria. Laboratory studies have confirmed that species related to bitter melon have antimalarial activity, though human studies have not yet been published.

Maintain the beauty
Bitter melon contains vitamin C, which can overcome the threat of ultraviolet rays. Vitamin C in Bitter melon very well to prevent wrinkles on the face and slow down the aging process. In addition, it can also strengthen the immune system. In every 100 grams of Bitter melon contains 120 mg of vitamin C.

Other health benefits
Bitter melon has also been shown to decrease blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels, and it detoxifies, cleanses the blood, enhances the immune system and reduces inflammation.

Caution
Bitter melon may contain alkaloids such as quinine and morinone, resins and saponic glycosides, which may be intolerable by some people. The bitterness and laxative effect may be reduced somewhat by parboiling or soaking in salt water for up to 10 minutes. Excessively high doses of bitter melon juice can cause abdominal pain and diarrhea. Small children or anyone with hypoglycemia should not take bitter melon because this herb could theoretically trigger or worsen low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). Furthermore, diabetics taking hypoglycemic drugs (such as chlorpropamide, glyburide, or phenformin) or insulin should use bitter melon only under medical supervision, as it may potentiate the effectiveness of the drugs and lead to severe hypoglycemia. Bitter Melon has also been found to have abortive properties; pregnant women should use caution to doctor before consuming it in excessive amounts.

See more at: http://letsgohealthy.blogspot.com/2013/03/bit-tner-melon-nutrition-fact-and-health.html#hash_65BitKUdh.dbspf
In preparations for upcoming Local Government elections, A Partnership for National Unity held several outreaches and public meetings over the past few weeks. APNU held outreaches in the East Berbice-Corentyne Region and the Mahaica-West Berbice Region. Teams of APNU Members of Parliament headed by Opposition Leader, Hon. Brigadier David Granger met with residents in Corriverton, Molson Creek and surrounding villages. The Partnership also held public meetings at Corriverton and Coco Cabana Square, Belladrum, West Coast Berbice.

At the public meetings and during the outreaches, APNU MP’s discussed several issues of national and regional importance such as the 2014 Budget, the need for local government elections and the People’s Progressive Party/Civic Administration’s neglect and mismanagement of several important governmental sectors like Education, Public Security and infrastructure development. APNU’s Local Government Elections Campaign Director, Mr. Winston Felix told New Nation that the Partnership will continue it outreaches to every community in the country in preparation for local government elections.

Recently there have been calls from various sections of society for an investigation into the operations of the New Opportunity Corps (NOC). One very prominent Commissioner and Social Worker, Ms. Nicole Cole has called for the institution to be closed. This publication interviewed three students of the New Opportunity Corp and the picture that was painted was that of an institution that was ill-administered: one where teenage girls are preyed on by staff (both male and female); questionable forms of ‘punishment’ meted out; and little or no emphasis on reform.

The first student we interviewed spoke of poor supervision, corporal punishment dispensed with a hose with a stick inside, slapping and punching on female students by male staff, students being stripped and placed in a concrete ‘cell’. The second spoke of verbal and physical abuse by staff, beatings with a blue hose and incarceration in ‘the cell’ after a medical examination revealed that she had sexual intercourse. Student number three recalled being coerced into having sexual relations with a male student, stripped naked and placed in ‘the cell’, female students made to sit on male teacher’s laps, beatings with pieces of wood and self-mutilations (students cutting themselves).

A Partnership for National Unity in a recent press statement has signaled that it has no confidence in the Ministry of Youth and Sports to manage the NOC. The Minister of Youth and Sports, Dr. Frank Anthony along with his Permanent Secretary, Mr. Alfred King and several staffers from the NOC addressed the media at a joint press conference at the Ministry’s headquarters. According to Dr. Anthony, he is saddened by the allegations of misconduct and/or inappropriate behaviour at the facility and the allegations that have been unfolding over the past week, with unsubstantiated information, causing the demoralization of staff of the NOC, and unnecessary unease among the juvenile internees. A senior social worker who spoke with New Nation said that from all that has been reported there were more questions than answers and advised that the Ministry of Youth and Sports recuse itself from any investigation. “You cannot ask them to investigate themselves. This will require an independent investigation that includes law-enforcement and psych-social specialist.” She said that in her opinion there was need for a top to bottom review of the entire standard operating procedures, curriculum and mission of the New Opportunity Corp, so that it can confirm to best practices of similar institutions.

PNCR Leader, Brig. David Granger meeting with residents of Corriverton on Saturday 3 May 2014.

Ms. Jennifer Wade, MP addressing a public meeting at Belladrum on Friday 2 May 2014.

NOC - More questions than answers
Obituaries

Claudette Griffith-Smith - Born 27th July 1935; Died 18th April 2014

The People's National Congress Reform received the sad news of the passing of one of its dedicated activists, Claudette Griffith-Smith who died on the 18th April 2014 in the USA after a brief illness. She was 78 years old.

Claudette has been a member of the Party from the early 1960’s and continued to be a member until her death. In her early years, she worked at the Guyana Marketing Corporation (GMC) in Lombard Street during the 1970’s. She subsequently left Guyana to spend a few years in the USA where she did nursing. On her return to Guyana, she continued her work with the Party and was the Chairperson of the Alberttown/Queenstown PNCR Group for many years. She was one of the best known activists of the Party who knew everyone in that area.

The Leader, members of the Central Executive Committee, the National Congress of Women and the entire membership of the People's National Congress Reform extend deepest condolences to her family especially her mother and sisters, as well as other relatives and friends. She will be sadly missed.

Maisie Barr-Dublin - Born 22nd September 1940; Died 15th May 2014

The Leadership of the People’s National Congress Reform is deeply saddened by the news of the death of Ms. Maisie Barr Dublin on the 15th May 2014. At the time of her death she was a member of the People’s National Congress Reform, where she was the Chairperson of the Party group in the Christianburg/Wismar district and did a masterful job of putting things together.

Maisie Barr-Dublin was one of the most dedicated and committed women who made Party work a pleasurable duty. She participated in numerous Party activities, running of a shop, helping with the execution of classes and generally promoting Party work to benefit all, especially the women in the community. She was one member whom you could call on at anytime and can be always met with a smile and readiness to do whatever was needed. Her work at the Harris’ Pharmacy also helped to bridge the gap between the community in her own special way.

In her later years, she could not continue with her activities, but remembering and emulating her faithfulness, her loyalty and her sterling efforts, will be a most fitting memorial.

The Leader, members of the Central Executive Committee, the National Congress of Women and the entire membership of the People’s National Congress Reform extend deepest condolences to her family, as well as other relatives and friends. She will be sorely missed.

May their souls rest in peace!

The People’s National Congress Reform (PNCR) and A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) greet all Guyanese at home and in the Diaspora in celebrating our 48th Anniversary of National Independence on 26th May 2014.

The majority of the Guyanese people are poor. They are aware of the damage that has been wrought on the nation under the People’s Progressive Party/Civic administration for nearly 22 years. They must now contemplate the celebration of our 50th anniversary of Independence two years from now in May 2016. They must be able to look forward to a ‘good life’ under a new Government.

The observance of our 48th Anniversary of National Independence reminds us all of the work that we have to do as a maturing nation-state. We need especially to rebuild the education system for future generations and to develop the economy in order for Guyana to progress and for its people to prosper.

We shall work towards a future that is culturally enriching, economically self-sustaining and politically inclusive. We shall never rest from working to fulfill our promise of "A Good Life for All Guyanese."

Happy 48th Anniversary of National Independence!

Legal Aid

Legal aid consists of the giving of legal advice, assistance and representation to persons who might otherwise be unable to obtain same on account of their means. The Guyana Legal Aid Clinic was established to assist those persons in need of legal aid. A non-profit organization, it is run by a Board of Directors and is situated at the Maraj Building on Charlotte and King Streets, Lanchet, Georgetown, Guyana. The clinic has three other offices: the Essequibo office located in the RDC Compound at Anna Regina, Essequibo Coast; the West Coast Berbice office located in the RDC Compound at Fort Wellington, West Coast Berbice; and the East Berbice Corentyne office located in the RDC Compound at Vryman’s Erven, New Amsterdam, Berbice.

Who may apply for legal aid? The following persons are eligible: Pensioners; the elderly; the unemployed; persons in the lower income bracket. When going to the clinic you need to have the following: Consultation fees (a minimal amount) and some money to pay to start your matter; all relevant documents in relation to the matter; identification and proof of income and expenses. All applicants are means-tested to determine whether they are eligible for legal aid and whether they can afford to make a contribution towards the legal costs of the service. Subject to sufficient resources, the clinic assists clients facing criminal charges and with most civil matters in the Court of Appeal, the High Court and most Magistrates’ courts. It does not, however, handle conveyance matters, large estates, prescriptive title applications (unless a waiver is approved by the directors), defamation actions or possession proceedings by a landlord. Legal services are provided to all clients by a team of qualified attorneys-at-law. There is also the Children’s Legal Aid Project which provides legal aid services directly to children (persons under 18) who need assistance with criminal and/or civil matters. The office is located in the upper flat of the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic and the services are free.

LEGAL CORNER

Know Your RIGHTS

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