

# One Nation

*A Good Life for all Guyanese*



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## 1. New Era

The People's National Congress entered government as part of a coalition administration fifty years ago in December 1964 and started the transformation of colonial Guyana into modern statehood.

The PNC led Guyana to Independence 18 months later, on 26th May 1966, under the inspirational national motto – *One People, One Nation, One Destiny*. We were committed then to make that motto a reality. We remain committed to making Guyana '*One Nation*.'

The PNCR today is the heir of those who fought for national Independence. We have a duty to actualise the vision of our nation's founders by continuing their work to make Guyana '*One Nation*.' We cannot become *One Nation* if we are divided.

It was with that vision that our founder-leader Forbes Burnham started talks with the People's Progressive Party – PPP – in 1976 and resumed talks in 1984. His aim was to establish a government of national unity.

It was with that vision that our second leader Desmond Hoyte invited members of civil society into our Party resulting in our Party's name being changed to PNC Reform. His aim was to promote national unity through shared governance.

It was with that vision that our third leader Robert Corbin toiled to bring the joint opposition political parties together and to forge the PNCR-One Guyana alliance. His aim was to create a coalition that would promote national unity.

It is with that vision that, today, as the fourth leader of our Party, I am proud to continue the PNCR's tradition of leadership in advancing the *One Nation* programme and in reaffirming A Partnership for National Unity's commitment to that objective. My mission is to lead APNU into the next elections and to establish a government of national unity.

The results of the 28th November 2011 general and regional elections should have made it clear that the majority of the Guyanese people want an 'inclusionary democracy' in order to promote national unity. People, increasingly, are calling on the minority People's Progressive Party to abandon its "winner-takes-all" attitude to governance and to work with the majority to build '*One Nation*.'

## 2. The PNCR and the future of Guyana

The people want greater inclusion, not exclusion. The current 'dispensation' in the National Assembly requires consultation and cooperation between the legislative and executive branches of government instead of the current convention of confrontation favoured by the PPP. The PNCR is convinced that greater national unity will bring greater national benefits including:

- elimination of one-party domination of the government;
- enhancement of local, municipal and parliamentary democracy;
- enlargement of multi-ethnic space and the elimination of ethnic insecurity;
- expansion of economic enterprise and development; and
- enrichment of cultural life and national consciousness.

The PNCR made a contract with this nation 50 years ago. We, the executors of that contract, have a duty to transfer the injunction of 'inclusionary democracy' from the lifeless pages of the *Constitution* to a living experience in every neighbourhood, every municipality, every region and into the National Assembly.

The PNCR is an integral part of APNU. We shall together continue to fulfil our obligation to the nation both through the legislative process in the National Assembly and in the country at large. We shall continue to work with the major sections of society – including other political parties; trade unions; private sector and civil society – to realise our common quest for consensus on a broad national programme to move the country forward. We shall continue to work to harness the talents of a broader constituency, to foster the conditions for social cooperation, to deepen the democratic process and to develop the economy.

Our Party has been driven by a consistent commitment to uphold citizens' democratic rights. It has faithfully preserved the democratic processes – such as our regular congresses – designed by our founder-leader. The experiences of congress, the lessons learnt from consultations among grass-root members throughout the country and the decisions of the Central Executive Committee and the General Council continue to refine and revitalise our Party's ideology. The Party must continuously review its policies in order to enable it to respond to the demands of the changing social, political and economic environment in which we live.

The PNC is proud of its record while in government. It reconstructed the coastal road network and sea defences; constructed the Soesdyke-Linden highway, bridges on the Canje and Demerara Rivers, the international airport at Timehri, the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary agricultural development scheme, the University of Guyana, Cyril Potter College of Education, the New Amsterdam Technical Institute, Guyana Industrial Training Centre, the multilateral schools and hinterland schools for indigenous students. It embarked on rural electrification, household pure water supply and other infrastructural projects.

The PNC pioneered huge working people's housing schemes, the Amerindian lands rectification process, free education as an entitlement and equal recognition of religious observances.

The PNCR is proud of the vision of its founder-leader and its achievements in office. We have established the Forbes Burnham Research Institute to collect, preserve and publish our founder's works for the benefit of posterity. We have also established the Burnham Education Scholarship Trust – BEST – a NGO to assist children from all regions to offset expenses throughout secondary school.

The PNCR will improve information, communication and education infrastructure in hinterland and coastal areas – a weakness which continues to hinder the development of many citizens. We will continue our assault on inequality of opportunity and remove impediments to equal access to public services.

The PNCR will continue to struggle to ensure that Municipal and Neighbourhood Democratic Councils which have been damaged or dismantled by the PPP are restored. The Party will fortify grass-roots democracy by ensuring that the people are allowed to play a greater role in local government countrywide by finding solutions to rural and agrarian problems.

The PNCR will continue to be committed to ensuring equality for all and to protecting citizens' fundamental rights. The brutish treatment of youths at the hands of the Police Force must be brought to an end. Child labour must be brought to an end. Trafficking and sexual exploitation

of girls must be brought to an end. The Party has defined itself as an advocate for social justice and the “defender of fundamental rights” in Guyana.

Our Party, most of all, will remain committed to achieving national unity and to building bridges to all communities and groups which are interested in the well-being of our citizens and the progress of our country. The Party will continue to work towards promoting inclusionary democracy within A Partnership for National Unity.

### **3. Human development crisis**

Guyana is facing a human development crisis as a result of the PPPC’s chronic maladministration. Public protests have become the visible and voluble expressions of resistance against the PPPC’s mismanagement of public health, public security, public works and the public education system. Guyana, in the new millennium, has become more unsafe and more unstable than ever before, owing to the high rate of crime and the low quality of life.

The PPPC’s dismal 21-year record in office has ensured that Guyana remains an unequal and poor society in which a few people enjoy an extremely high income and most people endure an extremely small income. Four out of ten Guyanese are classified as poor; of these three out of ten are considered to be extremely poor.

The World Bank, in its 2014 *World Development Report*, rated Guyana as the second poorest country in CARICOM. The Report showed that Guyana compared unfavourably with The Bahamas, Suriname and, indeed, with all other CARICOM states except Haiti.

Guyana’s quality of life is low. Guyana, according to the UNDP *Human Development Report 2014 – Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience* – was ranked 121<sup>st</sup> out of 187 countries. That position is below war-ravaged Syria and Iraq and 62 places behind Barbados. Guyana’s crushing cost-of-living is holding our people back. The cost-of-living has increased three-fold under the PPPC regime.

Guyana is a corrupt country. The Transparency International *Corruption Perception Index 2013*, ranked us 136<sup>th</sup> out of 177 countries – 121 places behind Barbados. Growth is hampered by extensive corruption and lack of economic and employment opportunities.

Guyana is an unequal society. The PPPC administration’s attitudes and policies are harming social cohesion, undermining our sense of solidarity, impoverishing a large section of the population, alienating the hinterland regions and gradually creating ‘two nations’ instead of cementing *One Nation*.

Guyana’s population is in decline. Guyanese were shocked to learn that the nation’s population, according to preliminary results from the report on the *Guyana Population and Housing Census 2012*, had fallen. It is now reckoned to be 747,884 – a decline of 3,339 from the 751,223 recorded for 2002 when the previous census was conducted.

Census results show, among other things, a significant drop in the number of persons living in the East Berbice-Corentyne Region (No.6). This is a region which the PPPC used to consider its ‘stronghold.’ But it is also a region where human safety has been seriously affected by armed robbery, contraband smuggling, murder, suicide and piracy. The Region’s population decline was mainly influenced by ‘emigration.’

The US Embassy in Georgetown corroborated evidence of the 'emigration' trend. The Embassy reported that, during the last decade – under the Bharrat Jagdeo and Donald Ramotar presidencies – it issued 46,540 immigration visas to Guyanese. The Embassy, therefore, has been issuing an average of about 4,500 immigrant visas per year since 2004. It reported that 4,572 were issued in 2013 alone, a rate of more than one visa every two hours for this little nation. The flight of Guyanese to neighbouring countries – the Caribbean, Brazil, Venezuela and Suriname – reinforced the causal connection between crime and emigration.

The economic crisis has lowered workers' standard of living. Protests, strikes and stoppages by the country's largest trade unions – the Guyana Public Service Union and the Guyana Agricultural and General Workers Union – have demonstrated how much labour relations between the state and its workers have degenerated. Workers are dissatisfied. The ranks of unemployed young people are increasing.

Guyana's economic development has been impeded. Its international competitiveness has been impaired largely because of the lack of major investment in public infrastructure. Collapsing stelling; an aging fleet of ferries; deteriorating hinterland airstrips; broken bridges; impassable roadways and weakened kokers and sea defences have all become major obstacles to everyday commuting, communication and commerce.

#### **4. The Youth crisis**

The PNCR believes that Guyana should be a nation of youth and for youth. Nearly seven out of every ten citizens are classified as 'youths' and children.

The PNCR believes, also, that unemployment is the central issue affecting young people in Guyana. The Party warned the PPPC that this country is sitting on a 'time bomb' of youth unemployment. The government's delay in dealing with the jobs crisis and its disregard for measures to defuse it can detonate a social explosion which could have dangerous consequences.

The *National Employment Report* published by the International Labour Organisation estimated that, based on Guyana's *Household Income and Expenditure Survey* (HIES), which was last undertaken over a decade ago, about 44 per cent of the population of working age are "not economically active."

That *Report* also indicated that young people suffer most, owing to the fact that school-leavers are inexperienced and have a long wait before they find their first job. The fact is that, in addition to persons said to be 'unemployed', many who would like to work do not actively seek jobs simply because they have abandoned hope of finding suitable occupations. Others, though nominally 'employed', earn wages that condemn them to living beneath the poverty line.

The *Report* of the CARICOM Commission on Youth Development – *Eye on the Future: Invest in Youth Now for the Community Tomorrow* – noted, among other things, that the primary education dropout rate was "at a staggering height." Joblessness among young people in the Caribbean Community, at an average of 23 per cent, was higher than in many other developed and developing countries.

Guyana, if its young people are to lead successful lives, must reduce the primary and secondary school dropout rate, increase the matriculation rate and provide new economic opportunities for

school-leavers. Youths find themselves facing a grave employment crisis which has been made worse by the crisis in the public education system and the failure of the PPPC administration to promulgate and pursue a coherent and comprehensive national youth policy.

Young people are our nation's future but they face monumental challenges under the PPPC administration. The spate of suicides among adolescents, the rising number of teenage pregnancies, the large number of school dropouts, the unavailability of new job opportunities, the reports of brutality and torture by the police and the growing prison population (of which youths are said to comprise 75 per cent) are all indicators of their plight.

The PPPC has no National Youth Policy. The PNCR does. Our strategy to tackle youth poverty and unemployment offers solutions that go to the very heart of the *'One nation'* that we want to build.

Our priority for a *'One Nation'* government will be to ensure that everyone gets a sound education to prepare him or her for satisfying employment. We shall start by ensuring that no child is prevented from attending school because of parental poverty. We shall ensure that every primary school child is transported to school by boat or bus. We shall ensure that every primary school child starts the school day with a healthy breakfast at school. We shall ensure every family that keeps its children in school is given a financial grant for doing so. Protecting children is a PNCR priority. We cannot be *'One Nation'* – a nation in which everyone participates to the full – if we cannot ensure that every child has the chance to fulfil his or her potential.

The PPPC administration's 'hodgepodge' responses to the youth unemployment crisis – the President's Youth Choice Initiative; the President's Youth Award: Republic of Guyana; Youth Apprenticeship and Entrepreneurial Programme and National Training Programme for Youth Empowerment – have never had the capability to provide satisfactory employment for the thousands of young people leaving school every year.

Jobs are scarce. Young school-leavers do not have the skills to equip them for the world of work. The economy is not providing employment opportunities for them.

Young people want permanency not *'ad hoc'*. They do not want to be placed on a hinterland 'dole.' They want careers. They want technical and agricultural institutes in every region, not just the coastland. They want regional branches of agricultural credit and development banks. They want a sound, serious education which could prepare them for a productive life. They want to be citizens of *'One Nation'* not residents of a zone of backwardness and economic privation.

Young people wake up every morning to the dreary reality of joblessness, broken schools and an underfunded university. The truth, of course, is that the PPPC administration simply does not furnish the funds to confront the most serious challenges facing families. These are:

- the low quality of education at the primary and secondary levels along the coastland and in the hinterland at the University of Guyana;
- the unavailability of jobs for young school-leavers everywhere;
- the daily threats to human safety while there are 3 armed robberies every day, two murders every week and 12 fatal accidents every month; and,
- the threats of disease – chickungunya, dengue, filaria, gastro-enteritis and malaria – to public health.

These are the micro-economic fundamentals by which people live every day – having to stare at

our schools, hospitals, police stations, and the unfriendly face of an uncaring state. The people worry about the everyday issues that confront them.

## 5. Governance crisis

The results of the 2011 general and regional elections opened opportunities for real political, social and economic change. A Partnership for National Unity and the Alliance For Change together polled 175,051 votes and the People's Progressive Party Civic (PPPC), 166,235 votes. These results gave the combined opposition a majority of one seat in the National Assembly.

The PPPC, rather than pursue a consensual policy of "inclusionary democracy" and cooperation with the opposition as prescribed in the *Constitution*, adopted a posture of confrontation. That approach has failed.

Guyana is in a state of crisis. The governance crisis has been aggravated by the PPPC's reluctance to acknowledge its minority status in the National Assembly and to join the majority in the movement towards establishing a government of national unity.

The President's refusal to assent to certain bills passed by the Assembly has stuck like a bone in the throat of the Opposition. The Minister of Finance's management of the nation's finances has been a major source of political contention.

President Donald Ramotar took a great leap backwards at the 30th Congress of the People's Progressive Party on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2013 at Port Mourant. His vituperative tirade was a threat to the prospect of inclusionary democracy and a menace to the project for national unity. He had the opportunity, to abandon his party's time-worn, 'winner-takes-all' approach and adopt an inclusionary approach to governance. He lost it. He went instead on an unapologetic and uncompromising offensive against the Opposition in the National Assembly and the independent media.

President Ramotar's '*feral blast*' against the National Assembly suggests that he has not comprehended the concept of cooperation. He did not try to encourage party members to pursue a more collaborative approach with the parliamentary majority for the good of the nation.

The President characterised the National Assembly as "a wound on the body politic of our nation...that is festering and reopening every time a sensible, moral and costed development project is stalled because the Opposition wants to hold back progress or the cheap publicity or promoting agendas inimical to our people."

The PNCR is bound to respond to this slander of parliamentary democracy. The PPPC, is the party that has been struggling to diminish the authority of the National Assembly. It has challenged the Assembly's legitimate decisions in the High Court. It has failed to assent to bills passed by the majority. It has expended money that was disapproved by the Assembly. It has refused to adopt and implement the Assembly's resolutions. It has deployed the state media as a weapon to wage war against the Opposition.

Speaker of the National Assembly Raphael Trotman once had to warn the Executive of the danger of a constitutional crisis. He said: "The continued resort to the High Court to question legitimate decisions of the National Assembly points to the grave and gathering danger of a constitutional crisis which has the potential to assume proportions the likes of which the nation

has never seen and may be unable to handle.”

President Ramotar precipitated this crisis. He declared publicly, on 13th June 2012, that he had no intention of supporting any bill piloted by the Opposition. His words were: “That is not the function of the Opposition. They must respect what is their role...I am making it very clear that I will not assent to any bill that they carry unless it is with the full agreement of the executive and the full involvement of the executive.” This is not democracy at all. It is autocracy.

The PPPC has undermined local democracy for the past 20 years. This has led to the imposition of the worst form of colonial-era direct rule. It has paralysed the entire local government system. It has undermined the economic development of many municipalities and neighbourhoods.

Progress has been impeded by the deterioration of physical infrastructure which has been a visible indication of urban and rural blight. Progress has been impeded by the dysfunctional local government system. Progress has been impeded by the central government’s authoritarian attitude. Progress has been impeded by the PPPC’s inattentiveness to public needs and lack of major investment in physical infrastructure. Progress has been impeded, most of all, by the PPPC’s failure to conduct local government elections under reformed legislation and thereby allow the people themselves to take decisions that affect the development of their communities.

The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development – MLGRD – has methodically and deliberately destroyed most neighbourhood democratic councils to facilitate its total domination of the entire administrative apparatus like a sort of colonial overlord. Grabbing absolute power was easy enough. Grasping the expertise to develop human communities and encouraging economic enterprise were much more difficult. The MLGRD’s primitivism has sucked the oxygen out of the economic life of communities.

## **6. The education crisis**

The single biggest problem at the national level, which has dire implications for the future, is the broken public education system which produces an increasing number of illiterate and innumerate youths. The Ministry of Education reports that nearly 7,000 children drop out of our primary and secondary schools every year.

Youths who do not complete their elementary education satisfactorily will find it difficult to get jobs. The majority of young university graduates in Guyana, unable to find employment, are forced to remain under-or un-employed or to join the throng of thousands who emigrate every year.

The PNCR, as part of an APNU-led government of national unity, will usher in unprecedented opportunities for our youth. There will be an opportunity for young students to be educated as engineers to build bridges and roads to open our vast hinterland and to develop schemes to exploit our hydro-electrical potential. There will be an opportunity for geologists to develop our bauxite, diamond, gold, manganese and quarrying resources. There will be an opportunity for biologists, botanists, zoologists and agriculturists to expand food production. There will be an opportunity to improve communication and human learning. There will be an opportunity for manufacturers, shippers and builders to drive our economy forward at a faster rate.

These opportunities will not be fully exploited and this country cannot be developed by chance or by conjecture. They cannot be achieved by the woefully impoverished, the ignorant or the

illiterate. They cannot be achieved while so many primary school children cannot qualify to enter secondary school or when thousands of children drop out of our primary and secondary schools every year. They can be achieved only by an educated population.

Education is an entitlement. Primary education has been compulsory in Guyana for 138 years. The *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana* states: “Every citizen has the right to free education from nursery to university...”

The PPPC administration, however, presides blithely over a broken public school system that is failing the most vulnerable section of the population – our children. The chaos in the country’s primary schools continues to contribute to the high rate of delinquency and the low standards of performance. The atrocious results at the essential annual National Grade Six Assessment examinations are evidence of a diseased and disordered system. A sort of ‘education apartheid’ is emerging that is dividing our student population more deeply than ever before.

## **7. The hinterland crisis**

Parts of the country west of the Essequibo River still endure ‘frontier’ conditions. Parts of the hinterland can be lawless and dangerous places. Banditry is rampant; contraband smuggling is commonplace; disease is prevalent; poverty is pervasive and educational standards are among the lowest in the country.

The hinterland comprises over three-quarters of this country’s territory. Long unwatched land borders with Brazil, Venezuela and Suriname; vast unpatrolled open spaces; unmonitored airstrips and numberless rivers have become corridors for illegal narcotics and firearms to be carried to commit crimes on the coastland.

Some mined-out parts have degenerated into a mosquito-infested wasteland. The hinterland’s evergreen forests and pristine waterways are under threat of damage and contamination. Its farming, logging, mining and tourism resources have been exploited for over a century and continue to enrich the national treasury, but their physical infrastructure is inadequate for such vast territory. Its people, for the most part, are poor. Its small, scattered population must bear the burden of a high cost of living while being vulnerable to criminal violence, human trafficking and environmental hazard.

The PNCR supports the prudent exploitation of the hinterland’s mineral and other natural resources. We shall ensure, however, that the livelihood of the residents is sustained, that the environment is protected and a new approach to hinterland regional administration is introduced.

The PNCR, as a start, renews its call for the four hinterland regional administrative centres – Bartica, Mahdia, Mabaruma and Lethem – to be quickly upgraded to township status with their own mayors and town councils. We must stop treating the hinterland as ‘bush’ and start regarding it as part of ‘One Nation’.

## **8. Public security crisis**

The security crisis has disproportionately hurt the poor. Guyanese are pained by the surge in serious crimes last year, 2013. There were 1,038 reports of robbery under arms at the end of

November 2013, representing a seven per cent increase over the same period in 2012.

There was an increase in the number of armed robberies involving the use of firearms by 16 per cent. Other everyday crimes – including banditry in the hinterland, murder, piracy, fatalities on the roads and interpersonal violence – have escalated.

The public security crisis will not correct itself. President Ramotar’s dire warning to the Guyana Police Force, on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2014 – that the country might be facing an “avalanche of crimes” – has heightened anxiety over the state of human safety, the rate of murders and the low level of public security.

The entire nation, indeed, is alarmed at the rising rate of armed robberies and murders. There have been over 2050 murders in Guyana from January 2000 to May 2014. The annual rate continues to climb.

The United States Department of State’s Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) report on Guyana stated: *“Serious crime, including murder and armed robbery, are common, especially in the suburban areas and the interior regions. The most recent information from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime lists Guyana’s 2010 homicide rate as 18.4 per 100,000 people – the fourth highest murder rate in South America behind Venezuela, Colombia and Brazil. Guyana’s murder rate is three times higher than that of the United States.”*

Narco-trafficking is the engine that is driving this country’s high rates of execution-murders, armed robberies, money-laundering and gun-running. Violent crime is scaring foreign investors, driving away the educated élite, undermining economic growth and impeding social development.

The lucrative narco-trade has spawned criminal cartels. Drug lords have been able to deploy their fortunes to purchase political influence in order to protect their enterprises. Money-launderers and smugglers also distort the domestic economy by pricing their goods and services below market rates which undermine legitimate businesses.

Revelations in the international media of a Guyana-Italy cocaine conspiracy are ominous. Evidence that Guyanese narco-traffickers are working hand-in-hand with Italian Mafiosi linked to the Gambino and Bonanno crime families and the Italian crime Ndrangheta syndicate confirms fears that Guyana is sleepwalking, step by step, into narco-statehood.

Guyana’s counter-narcotics enforcement agencies have been strangely incapable of identifying the criminal cartels which construct illegal airstrips and coordinate the air traffic enabling the large-scale importation of illegal narcotics into the country. It is estimated that ‘execution-type killings’ – many of which are suspected to be related to narcotics-trafficking – account for about one-third of all murders.

The PPPC has failed to implement the sort of ‘root-and-branch’ reforms that are needed to strengthen border and hinterland security and to eradicate narcotics-trafficking. The PPPC administration deliberately avoids references to the high rate of armed robberies, contraband-smuggling, gun-running, money-laundering, murder, narcotics-trafficking, people-trafficking, piracy and banditry that are plaguing the country. These crimes are stifling the manufacturing sector, strangling local enterprise and scuttling the economy.

## 9. Social protection crisis

Social protection is in crisis. Too many very young and very old persons are still classified as 'extremely poor' with an expenditure level that is below what is required to purchase a minimum daily low-cost diet. Poverty is not an act of God. Poverty can be reduced and, perhaps, eventually eradicated with good governance and sensible public policies.

The PPPC no longer mentions Guyana's *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* – PRSP – even as a footnote to its policies. The PRSP was meant to be a mechanism through which Guyana could have crafted its own plan for poverty reduction and could provide a guideline for the World Bank to render assistance. The PPPC seems to have abandoned the poor and embraced the notion of two nations – one rich, one poor. Our '*One Nation*' programme must mean closing the gap and removing the gross disparities between the very rich and very poor.

The story of the National Insurance Scheme – NIS – is one of a dream that degenerated into dread. The scheme began operations in September 1969 under the PNC administration. Prime Minister Forbes Burnham had a clear vision of a welfare state which stood on three pillars – free education from the nursery to the university, affordable housing and social protection which would afford coverage "from the cradle to the grave" through the creation of a national insurance scheme.

The NIS under the PPPC faces a plethora of problems. The biggest is the failure of PPPC representatives who have dominated the NIS board for the past two decades to respond to changing socio-economic conditions. The PPPC has recklessly endangered the Scheme's long-term financial sustainability. Political intentions rather than prudential interests seem to have driven NIS's investments during the last decade. They ended up compromising the integrity of the investment portfolio.

The Scheme is in deficit. The *8th Actuarial Review* in December 2011 declared that it was approaching "crisis stage." The *Review* predicted that, unless reforms were implemented immediately, the Scheme would be exhausted in less than 10 years. Citizens deserve better social insurance.

Labour is in crisis. Strong trade unions and a united labour movement are essential for social security, a fairer society, effective governance and national development. Our '*One Nation*' programme, rather than generating social conflict, can contribute to improving productivity, strengthening democracy, reducing poverty and enhancing the quality of life of the population. There is much to lose, on the other hand, by fostering conditions for permanent confrontation and crisis in the labour movement.

The PPPC, however, seems to thrive on threats and strife. This became evident particularly during the massive eight-week public servants' strike of 1999 and the five-week teachers' strike of 2003. Both unions are affiliates of the Guyana Trades Union Congress – GTUC – which the PPPC thinks was politically opposed to it in the past and continue so to be.

The PNCR will strengthen its historic cordial relationships with civil society, religious organisations and trade unions. The Party has the responsibility to help to reinforce the bargaining power of the larger public sector unions and to restore the integrity and viability of working people's and non-governmental organisations which the PPPC administration, over the past two decades, has gravely undermined.

Our Party will continue to battle against poverty, to establish working people's economic independence and to improve their livelihood. The Party's policy will be geared to finding ways to increase wealth...not to perpetuate poverty.

Public health is in crisis. All Guyanese – whether they live on the coastland or in the hinterland, in town or village, or whether they are poor or rich – should have access to good health care. The PPPC-administered primary health care system is failing women, children and the aged. This failure has been most evident in hinterland and rural areas.

The primary health care system was meant to promote equity and social justice. Primary health care should be seen as an initiative to make health services more accessible. It should be seen as an investment in human development that avoids more expensive medical treatment at the secondary and tertiary stages.

## **10. One Nation programme**

Guyana cannot become '*One Nation*' if gross disparities persist between the hinterland and the coastland, between the educated and a mass of semi-literates and between the very rich and very poor. Dark forces of poverty, oppression and hatred threaten to pull us apart. A united nation ought to be one in which cooperation prevails over confrontation and national integration over communal disintegration.

The PPPC has become Guyana's political troglodyte. It seems unable or unwilling to change its political posture in order to respond positively to economic change and restore the sustainability of social policies. Such a change, inevitably, can come about only on the bases of reverence for public institutions and recognition of the authority and autonomy of the National Assembly. There must be respectful relations between the executive and legislative branches of government. There must be reverence for the institutions of the state.

The PPPC has demonstrated that, on its own, it is incapable of solving the country's current crises. The PPPC must understand that the way forward is to ensure human safety, encourage economic growth and nurture The PNCR's '*One Nation*' programme could be the main means of combining the talents of a wider constituency and of creating the conditions for social cooperation and economic progress. The three-fold purpose of such an approach would be for all parties to reach a broad consensus on the goals of national development, to establish a sustainable institutional architecture and to create effective policy instruments for the achievement of our common objectives.

The PNCR's '*One Nation*' programme will be the basis for major sections of society – including the government; political opposition; trade unions; private sector and civil society – to come together to seek agreement on a broad national programme to move our country forward.

The PNCR's '*One Nation*' programme shows how, once we return to government, we could introduce improvements that are relevant to people's everyday experiences and expectations. Our resilient and resourceful people and communities are eager to play their part in rebuilding our country as '*One Nation*.'

The PNCR understands that to realise our '*One Nation*' programme, we must not only introduce new policies but also embark a process of party reform. Our Party, therefore, is continually renewing itself within the Partnership as a movement to give a voice to people from every part of

the country and every part of our great diaspora.

The big question facing the PNCR's Congress is this: "...are you happy living in Guyana today?"

- Are you happy living in a backward country?
- Are you happy living in a corrupt country?
- Are you happy living in a divided country?
- Are you happy living in a narco-country?
- Are you happy living in a one-party state?

If the answer is no, come with me. Let us fight the PPP not one another. Let us keep the pressure up to push the PPP out of office. Let us elect a government of national unity and give the Guyanese people the good life that they deserve.

May God bless you. May God bless the PNCR. May God bless Guyana!

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# One Nation

## *A Good Life for all Guyanese*

The results of the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011 general and regional elections should have made it clear that the majority of the Guyanese people want an 'inclusionary democracy' in order to promote national unity. People, increasingly, are calling on the minority People's Progressive Party Civic – PPPC – to abandon its "winner-takes-all" attitude to governance and to work with the majority to build '*One Nation*.'

The People's National Congress Reform – PNCR – is convinced that greater national unity will bring greater national benefits including:

- elimination of one-party domination of the government;
- enhancement of local, municipal and parliamentary democracy;
- enlargement of multi-ethnic space and the elimination of ethnic in security;
- expansion of economic enterprise and development; and enrichment of cultural life and national consciousness.

The people want greater inclusion, not exclusion. The current 'dispensation' in the National Assembly requires consultation and cooperation between the legislative and executive branches of government instead of the current convention of confrontation favoured by the PPP.

The PNCR's '*One Nation*' programme will be the basis for major sections of society – including the government; political opposition; trade unions; private sector and civil society – to come together to seek agreement on a broad national programme to move our country forward.

Our resilient and resourceful people are eager to play their part in rebuilding our country as '*One Nation*.'

*Brigadier David Granger is Leader of the People's National Congress and A Partnership for National Unity and Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly of Guyana. He is the author of National Defence: A Brief History of the Guyana Defence Force, 1965-2005; Public Security: Criminal Violence and Policing in Guyana; The Five-Thousand Day War: The Struggle for Haiti's Independence, 1788-1804; Public Policy: The Crisis of Governance in Guyana and other books.*