

GECOM 2007 ACTIVITY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Consequent upon the successful conduct of the August 28, 2006, General and Regional Elections, the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) concentrated its attention during the year 2007 primarily on preparatory works for the possible conduct of House-to-House Registration, Local Government Elections. The Commission and its Secretariat also focused on preparing for the implementation of the 2nd Cycle of Continuous Registration had it turned out that House-to-House Registration would not have been done.

Part I of this document is a representation of the various categories/levels of preparatory work that was done by GECOM and its Secretariat throughout 2007 in preparation for the conduct of the aforementioned activities.

In addition to the development of the strategic plans the Commission and its Secretariat also engaged in policy matters and administrative tasks which are pivotal to the smooth functioning of the Commission and its Secretariat. These tasks are documented in Part II of this Report.

PART I

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Being cognisant of its responsibility to administer Local Government Elections whenever so mandated, the Commission budgeted for the holding of such elections in its 2007 Capital Estimates, using the existing Local Government Electoral System. GECOM was aware, based on past experience, that it might have been required to revise the entire plan, should a new format for Local Government Elections emerge from the deliberations of the Joint Task Force for Local Government Reform (JTFLGR). If this had occurred, the Commission is confident that with adequate resources, its Secretariat would have been able to manage Local Government Elections in a similarly satisfactory manner as was the 2006 General and Regional Elections.

GECOM recognised that Local Government Elections is now long overdue, the last having been held in 1994, and that efforts were ongoing to hold Local Government Elections, possibly during 2007. In this regard, it must be categorically noted that GECOM is not a part of the JTFLGR. Nonetheless, the Secretariat had studied the six options, prepared by a Consultant on Local Governance, relating to the methodology associated with the holding of Local Government Elections under the proposed new systems. This effort had resulted in the Secretariat developing a document delineating the pros and cons for each option. This document was shared with the Political Parties in a move to help in the deliberations of the Joint Task Force of Local Government Reform.

At this stage of the deliberations of the Joint Task Force of Local Government Reform, GECOM understands that the leadership of the PPP/C and the PNCR have reached some degree of agreement on the methodology under which the Local Government Elections would be conducted. However, by the end of 2007, GECOM was not aware that definitive and binding conclusions and agreements had been reached on all aspects of the Reforms. Be that as it may, it must be emphasized that, in the end, it would be the Political Parties and not GECOM which would decide what format they would prefer for the Local Government Elections.

CONSULTATIONS WITH PARLIAMENTARY POLITICAL PARTIES ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

As part of the Commission's deliberate strategy to maintain favourable relationships with Parliamentary Political Parties in their capacity as major stakeholders in the work of GECOM, Dr. Steve Surujbally, Chairman of GECOM and the Chief Election Officer met with Mr. Donald Ramotar, General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C), Mr. Robert Corbin, Leader of the People's National Congress Reform (PNCR) and Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, Co-Leader of the Alliance For Change (AFC), and their respective teams, to solicit their thoughts on the status of preparations for Local Government Elections at the level of the Joint Task Force on Local Government Reform (JTFLGR) and the conduct of House-to-House Registration as against embarking on the 2nd Cycle of Continuous Registration.

Mr. Ramotar took the position that the nation was clamouring for the long overdue Local Government Elections to be held during 2007, and that it might not be possible for these elections and a House-to-House Registration exercise to be conducted in the same year. Nonetheless, Mr. Ramotar had assured the Chairman that he would consider the option of having a House-to-House Registration exercise including the registration of 14-year olds before the holding of Local Government Elections.

Mr. Corbin seemed to understand the need for Local Government Elections, but preferred the sanitizing the list of registrants via House-to-House visits as a prerequisite to the holding of Local Government Elections. He felt that this would form a solid basis for preparation of the List of Electors for General and Regional Elections in 2011, using the Continuous Registration process to further improve the patency of the Official List of Electors (OLE) or Final Voters List.

Mr. Corbin had noted that the PNCR had agreed to a new format for local government structure which would see local government bodies comprising 50% constituency-based elected members and 50% of the members elected through proportional representation. He had said that only the matter of disbursement of funds to the local government bodies remained unresolved at the level of the Joint Task Force for Local Government Reform. Dr. Surujbally had pointed to the need for the matter of demarcation of wards to be dealt with relative to the holding of Local Government Elections.

Consequent upon these meetings, the Commission unanimously agreed to take the position that it would be unable to commence comprehensive preparations for Local Government Elections until (i) the electoral framework was finalized, (ii) GECOM was appropriately informed about the new system, and (iii) the adequate amount of funds would be voted by Parliament to undertake the relevant activities. The Commission further agreed that the Chairman should write President Bharrat Jagdeo and Mr. Robert Corbin advising them that the Commission would be unable to prepare for Local Government Elections without the proposed new system having been finalized. It was agreed that the Chairman delineate the various areas of concern of the Commission. This was done.

HOUSE-TO-HOUSE REGISTRATION

GECOM took heed of the call from major stakeholders and the recommendations of the Local and Foreign Observer Groups for the conduct of a House-to-House Registration exercise from which a new voters list could be derived for the next Local Government Elections.

But before taking a decision on these issues, the question facing the Commission was whether to embark on preparation for the Local Government Elections before establishing a new voters list, since it had no knowledge of whether Local Government Elections would have been called/held during 2007, before any other registration exercise (e.g. Continuous Registration) could have been done. The Chairman and the Chief Election Officer had been meeting with Political Parties represented in Parliament with the objective of ascertaining which immediate undertaking of the two these Parties would prefer. Within the context of transparency, it was and continues to be imperative that GECOM be exposed to inputs from the Political Parties.

GECOM, and the Commission and the technical staff in the Secretariat, tended towards the preference of embarking on a House-to-House Registration exercise which would include the registration of eligible 14-year olds in Guyana. Once this was carried out, there would have been no great impediments to conducting Local Government Elections anytime thereafter.

Also, once the House-to-House Registration was completed, the Continuous Registration process embarked upon prior to the 2006 elections would become a routine process during the years running up to the next General and Regional Elections due in 2011 and thereafter.

The International Observers of the 2006 General and Regional Elections had documented their calls for the conduct of a full House to House Registration exercise to be undertaken prior to the holding of Local Government Elections. They held the view that the preparation of a new Voters' List from the newly established National Register of Registrants should be a prerequisite for the holding of Local Government Elections. The Opposition Parliamentary Political Parties were supportive of going in this direction and the PPP/C had not indicated any opposition to it.

Considering the collective position of all stakeholders, and its own extensive deliberations, the Commission took the unanimous decision on February 20, 2007, to conduct a House-to-House Registration exercise. Accordingly, the Commission immediately proceeded to inform the Government and the Political Parties which contested the 2006 elections of this decision

The Secretariat was instructed to prepare a comprehensive plan for the conduct a House-to-House Registration commencing with the immediate placement of advertisements for the various levels of temporary staff that were required to work during this exercise.

On June 14, 2007, the Government of Guyana, GECOM and all of the current Parliamentary Political Parties agreed to the conduct of House-to-House Registration. This agreement formally set in motion all of the preparations relevant to the commencement of the exercise.

The agreement which was signed by (GOG), PPP/C, PNCR-1G, AFC, GAP-ROAR, and the United Force (TUF) is as follows:-

That, prior to the holding of the forthcoming Local Government elections, a national 2007 House-to-House Registration, of all eligible registrants aged 14 years and over, will be undertaken by GECOM and this will constitute the country's new National Register of Registrants (NRR).

That all of the abovementioned Parties agree that a Preliminary List of Electors (PLE) will be extracted from the new NRR for the upcoming Local Government Elections, on the basis of which a Revised Voters List and a Final Voters List will be prepared for that Election.

That all of the abovementioned Parties agree that the procedure of Continuous Registration will, thereafter, be used by the Guyana Elections Commission to update the NRR, on an ongoing basis, to ensure that a Voters' List could be readily extracted for the holding of future elections.

That all of the abovementioned Parties agree that the PLE, for the scheduled 2011 General and Regional Elections, will be similarly extracted from the NRR created from the 2007 National House-to-House Registration exercise and any revision occasioned by the Continuous Registration process. After its revision, a Final Voters List will be created for the next General and Regional Elections scheduled for 2011.

All of the abovementioned Parties pledge that they will fully recognise and accept the new NRR, compiled from the 2007 National House-to-House Registration exercise, and will equally support its use for the Extraction of the PLE for the Local Government Elections scheduled for 2008 and, as updated by Continuous Registration, for the extraction of the PLE for the General and Regional Elections scheduled for 2011.

The Government of Guyana undertakes to ensure that there are no financial, administrative, legal or institutional impediments for the implementation of the above arrangements and all of the abovementioned Parties agree to fully support the Government of Guyana in the implementation of the above arrangements. All of the abovementioned Parties agree to give full support to GECOM to ensure the holding of free and fair Local Government and future General and Regional Elections.

MANUAL FOR HOUSE-TO-HOUSE REGISTRATION

Contingent on the Commission's decision to conduct House-to-House Registration was the need to prepare a Manual for Field Staff for the implementation of the exercise. The Secretariat, upon being so instructed by the Commission, immediately commenced the preparation of such a Manual in accordance with the relevant Constitutional provisions and the National Registration Act Chapter 19:08 inclusive of all associated amendments.

The main features of this Manual are as follows:-

- The constitutional and legal provisions for House-to-House Registration
- The System for House-to-House Registration.
- Criteria for Registration under House-to-House Registration.
- Source Documents for Registration.
- Establishment of Registration Offices.
- Responsibilities/Duties of all levels of Temporary Registration Staff.
- The need for and role of Scrutineers to guarantee transparency throughout the Registration exercise.
- Registration of Members of the Disciplined Services

- Processing of Registration transactions.
- Notifying the public on Registration Transactions

This Manual was the focus of extensive deliberations at the individual and collective levels of the Commission and Secretariat before it was finalized. Upon its approval, the Manual was used as one of the main instruments which were used in the provision of adequate training (via multiple and repeated training exercises and refresher sessions) of the Temporary Staff for House-to-House Registration. The Manual was also given to all of the existing Political Parties to be used to inform themselves of all aspects of the registration process.

WORK PLAN FOR HOUSE-TO-HOUSE REGISTRATION

The Secretariat, upon being so instructed by the Commission, prepared a draft Work Plan including the various tasks with relevant durations for House-to-House Registration for consideration by the Commission. This draft Work Plan, which was prepared in Microsoft Project Format, was the subject of numerous reviews by the Commission and Secretariat before it was finalized and approved. The approved Work Plan for House-to-House Registration put the commencement date for the exercise at January 7, 2008.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR HOUSE-TO-HOUSE REGISTRATION

Consequent upon the preparation of a Work Plan for House-to-House Registration, the GECOM Secretariat prepared a relevant Needs Assessment document which comprehensively delineated the human resource, financial and material/equipment requirements with associated procurement costs including that for computer software and hardware as well as the cost for the scanning and cross matching of registrants' fingerprints. The Needs Assessment, which was prepared for internal use only, was the subject of multiple reviews before being finalized by the Secretariat and approved by the Commission.

Notwithstanding the Commission's approval of the Needs Assessment Document, the International Development Partners (IDP) who were approached for funding to facilitate several key tasks included in the work Plan for House-to-House Registration, commissioned an independent Needs Assessment. This second Needs Assessment was conducted by Mr. Alain Gauthier, and overseas based consultant under the auspices of the IDP. The Gauthier Needs Assessment Report is attached hereto as **APPENDIX I**.

AMENDMENT FOR HOUSE-TO-HOUSE REGISTRATION

The Commission, with assistance from the Attorney General's Chambers, drafted the required amendments to the National Registration Act Chapter 19:08 which were necessary to facilitate the conduct of House-to-House Registration. The draft amendments were, subject to having undergone relevant perusal by GECOM and other Stakeholders, was approved by Parliament as the National Registration (Amendment) Act **No. of 2007**.

TRAINING/RECRUITMENT OF TEMPORARY STAFF FOR HOUSE-TO-HOUSE REGISTRATION

The GECOM Secretariat received thousands of applications for the temporary positions of Supervisors, Assistant Registration Officers (AROs), Clerks to the AROs, and Registration Clerk II. Consequent upon the applications having been examined, approximately 800 candidates, from each of the ten Registration Districts in Guyana who met the job requirements positions of Supervisors, ARO and Clerk to the ARO were invited to participate at a two-day Training and examination sessions. These were conducted at St. Joseph High School, Woolford Avenue, Georgetown on July 23-24, 2007.

The permanent Registration Officers (ROs) were required to check in their respective Districts to ensure that the candidates, who were invited for training, met the job requirements as stated in their applications.

At the end of this Training Session, candidates' knowledge of the various aspects of House-to-House Registration was evaluated by the Secretariat. Candidates who met the evaluation criteria were appointed to the positions of Supervisor, ARO, Clerk to the ARO depending upon their respective levels of evident knowledge about all aspects of House-to-House Registration.

Candidates shortlisted for the position of Clerk II were invited to participate at Training Sessions which were conducted in all of the ten Registration Districts across Guyana. The appointed Supervisors, AROs, Clerks to the ARO in the various Registration Districts were also required to participate at these Training Sessions as Core Trainers.

As was the case with Supervisors, AROs, Clerks to the ARO, the permanent Registration Officers (ROs) were required to check in their respective Districts to ensure that the candidates invited for training met the job requirements as stated in their applications.

Again, candidates' knowledge of the various aspects of House-to-House Registration was evaluated by the Secretariat. Candidates who met the evaluation criteria were appointed to the position Clerk II on the basis of which of the demonstration of greater aptitude associated with all aspects of House-to-House Registration. Every effort was made to ensure that Clerks II were appointed in the Registration Area in which he/she is a resident.

The Training Sessions were organized to prepare the candidates for temporary employment with GECOM for the House-to-House Registration. They aimed at imparting comprehensive knowledge about the entire House-to-House Registration process to the candidates.

The training exercises also sought to acquaint the candidates with the Application Forms associated with the various aspects of Registration, completing the Forms in an accurate manner and developing the skills/techniques required to take registrants' photographs. Special emphasis was placed on the roles and responsibilities of the field Registration Staff who would be working under the supervision of the Supervisor, ARO and Clerk to the ARO, as well as the responsibilities of the Scrutineers representing the Parliamentary Political Parties.

The candidates were exposed to possible scenarios/jeopardies, via simulation exercises, which could emerge at the field levels during the House-to-House Registration exercise, and relevant corrective strategies were developed.

The Training Sessions noted above were conducted with the objective of Commencing House-to-House Exercise on September 1, 2007. However, this start date could not be realized due to circumstances outside of GECOM's control. The Commission, in consultation with its Secretariat, realized that in view of those circumstances, House-to-House Registration could not commence until January 7, 2008.

The Commission recognized that, since temporary staff were trained In July, 2007, but could not have been occupationally engaged until January, 2008, there was the need for the conduct of Refresher Training Sessions targeting the appointed persons to bring them to an optimal state of preparedness for commencement of House-to-House Registration. In this regard, Refresher Training Sessions were conducted in all of the ten Registration Divisions during December 2007.

The duration of engagement of the temporary staff was linked to the six-month duration of the House-to-House Registration exercise.

PROCUREMENT OF MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT FOR HOUSE-TO-HOUSE REGISTRATION

The Secretariat underwent the process set out in the Procurement Act No. 8 of 2003, to procure the items listed in the Needs Assessment for the implementation of House-to-House Registration. This entailed advertising invitations to tender in the local newspapers.

A Technical Committee, comprising senior Members of the Secretariat and a Representative from the Ministry of Finance evaluated the tenders and documented its recommendations which were put before GECOM's Finance Sub-Committee before they were sent to the Central Tender Board for approval.

EFFORTS TO FACILITATE EASY/TIMELY ACCESS TO REGSITRATION SOURCE DOCUMENTS

GECOM is aware that there would be many persons who might (i) not currently be in possession of their Birth Certificates and other supporting source documents, (ii) whose births might have never been registered (particularly in hinterland areas), (iii) whose Passports might have expired and (iv) who might have been using names other than those under which their births were registered. These concerns had led the Commission to have consultations/exchanges with Ms. Priya Manickchand, Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Ms. Carolyn Rodrigues, Minister of Amerindian Affairs and Representatives of the Ministry of Home Affairs including past and present Ministers and Mrs. Greta McDonald, the Registrar General.

The Commission was assured that these Ministries and the General Register's Office are working assiduously towards registering the births of all persons who are now not registered. GECOM was further assured by the Registrar General that there are simple procedures in place

for persons to apply for Birth Certificates and to register unregistered births. GECOM was guaranteed that such applications would be speedily processed.

The Commission is quite aware that it is neither difficult nor expensive for a person who might have been using an assumed name (other than that under which his/her birth was registered) to obtain a Deed Poll to effect the desired name change.

The Commission suggested that it is incumbent on all stakeholders and primarily the interested Political Parties to help their constituents (who might, for whatever reason, find some difficulty in obtaining a Deed Poll) by convincing the relevant Justices of the Peace and Commissioners of Oaths affiliated to the respective Parties to prepare and lodge the required instruments of name change (Deed Polls) at the Deeds Registry.

All potential registrants who are faced with problems regarding the availability/accessibility of relevant source documents must understand that documentation of existence is requirement in a modern world. Apathetic attitude to the important documentation of one's existence just cannot be allowed to continue in a dynamic world. The Commission is of the view that the six months duration of the House-to-House Registration exercise provides enough time for all such persons to take the steps necessary to acquire the source documents required for their registration.

ESTABLISHING TEMPORARY REGISTRATION OFFICES

GECOM established and furnished 167 temporary Registration Offices in addition to the 23 Permanent Registration Offices across Guyana. The temporary Registration Offices, which are managed by Assistant Registration Officers, have been located at strategic points to facilitate easy coordination of the registration of eligible persons within pre-determined clusters of registration divisions/sub-divisions. These Offices, most of which are located at government premises, are referred to as "Cluster" Offices. The entire List of Registration Offices is accessible on the GECOM website at www.gecom.org.gy

QUALIFYING DATE FOR HOUSE-TO-HOUSE REGISTRATION

The Secretariat, having earmarked January 7, 2008, as the commencement date for House-to-House Registration, formulated a proposal allocating June 30, 2008, as the "qualifying date" of for the registration of persons 14 years old or over during House-to-House Registration. The overriding objective in establishing a qualifying date is to ensure that the Commission captures the most registrants whose 14th birthday is closest to the end of the Registration exercise. In determining the qualifying date for House-to-House Registration, the Secretariat considered the possibility of Local Government Elections being held in September, 2008. Accordingly, the Secretariat concluded that the Qualifying date of June 30, 2008 would allow adequate time to publish the Preliminary List of Electors (PLE) to conduct Claims and Objections in preparation for Local Government Elections in September 2008. Considering these justifications, the Commission approved January 7, 2008, as the commencement date for House-to-House Registration and June 30, 2008, to be the qualifying date by which persons 14 years could apply for Registration.

MEETINGS WITH REGISTRATION OFFICERS

The Secretariat conducted a series of meetings with the Registration Officers (ROs) as part of the preparations for House-to-House Registration. These Meetings were used to emphasize the need for efficient conduct of the exercise. Specific focus was placed on the need for accountability regarding finances/materials/equipment, proper staff management, proficiency in the coordination of field activities, accuracy in data capture, courtesy in dealing with potential registrants and strict cooperation with Scrutineers, etc.

MEETING WITH POLITICAL PARTIES' REPRESENTATIVES/SCRUTINEERS PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF HOUSE-TO-HOUSE REGISTRATION

Initially, the Chief Election Officer (CEO) invited Representatives of the existing Chief Scrutineers appointed by the various Political Parties to a meeting to discuss matters associated with the appointment of Scrutineers to monitor the House-to-House Registration exercise. Thereafter the CEO continued to meet with the Chief Scrutineers who were appointed by the respective to which they are affiliated. Mostly, the discussions at these meetings focused on the modus operandi associated with House-to-House Registration and the Role of Scrutineers throughout the process. The Commission was consistently kept abreast with the deliberations at these meetings.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

The Commission developed a strategy for embarking on a Public Awareness campaign in 2007, prior to the implementation of House-to-House Registration. This strategy involved providing relevant information via all available media, including at grass roots levels, about the exercise. Specifically, notices and infomercials delineating the criteria and necessary source documents as well as the duration and hours of registration were projected continually to the nation.

The public awareness strategy included the production and installation of suitable billboards and banners at strategic locations, the production and distribution of flyers/pamphlets, visits to schools and the publication of notices in the local newspapers. Seven infomercials were produced for publication via radio and television and 50,000 copies of a brochure titled "WHAT EVERYONE MUST KNOW ABOUT HOUSE-TO-HOUSE REGISTRATION – 7th January, 2008 – 4th July, 2008" were produced for countrywide distribution.

At a more inclusive level, the Public Relations Officer developed a comprehensive Public Relations Strategy to promoting confidence among the electorate and other stakeholders that the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) is committed to continue to carry out its mandate in a free fair and transparent manner. The Public Relations Strategy is attached hereto as

APPENDIX II.

PREPARATION FOR THE 2ND CYCLE OF CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION

In view of the inconclusive deliberations earlier in 2007, pertaining to the conduct of House-to-House Registration, the Commission instructed the Secretariat to commence preparations for the implementation of the 2nd Cycle of Continuous Registration in accordance with the relevant Work Plan which had been submitted to the Commission. This course of action had been taken simply because Commission/Secretariat was legally mandated to continue to register eligible

persons via Continuous Registration. The Work Plan for the 2nd Cycle of Continuous Registration included the registration of persons, 14 years and older, that were likely to apply for Registration during this exercise.

TEMPORARY IDENTITY DOCUMENTS

In a move to provide assistance to persons desirous of conducting various kinds of business/personal transactions, but who are constrained from so doing due to the absence of authentic personal identification, the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) re-commenced issuing Temporary Identity Documents (TID) to registered persons whose National Identification Cards have been lost or damaged.

This action was taken in view of the Commission's decision to discontinue the production and issuance of replacement National Identification Cards with respect to those reported as lost or damaged. This decision was influenced by (i) the high cost associated with production of National Identification Cards, and (ii) the fact that the Commission has decided that new national Identification Cards would be issued to everyone registered through the upcoming House-to-House Registration exercise.

NB: A TID is solely for the identification of the registrant in whose name it is issued. It provides information on the registrant's name, date of birth, National Identification Number and date of issue of the TID. It also carries the registrant's signature and recent photograph.

The TID is authenticated by the signature of Mr. Gocool Boodoo, Chief Election Officer or Mr. Calvin Benn, Deputy Chief Election Officer.

The TID carries other security features aimed at ensuring authenticity, viz: (i) the Document will be printed on special water-marked paper; and (ii) the GECOM seal will be placed on the scanned photograph in a manner that ensures that it (the photograph) is not distorted.

Upon completion of the upcoming House-to-House Registration exercise and the provision of new National Identification Cards for registrants, the validity of all TIDs will be terminated.

PART II

DATABASE OF TEMPORARY STAFF

The Commission instructed the commencement of the compilation of a **database of permanent and temporary and staff** who worked and continue to work since the preparations for the 2006 General and Regional Elections. The objective behind this move is to enable the Secretariat to determine the various levels of performance. This, as a yardstick, would allow the Secretariat to determine whether the performance of persons listed in the database, who may apply to GECOM for jobs in the future, warranted reemployment.

INVENTORY OF ASSETS

The Commission instructed the commencement of the creation of an **inventory of assets**. This represents a move towards improving accountability by having clear guidance at all time of where movable property is located. This included the allocation of identification numbers for each of the items listed in the inventory of assets and the development of a database of items, including a code system, which saw the items being given identification numbers which could be used to trace the Department/Division to which they were issued. At a more micro level, every Department of GECOM has its own inventory of assets which clearly identifies the items issued to it. The items are also documented in the Stores inventory register.

DISMANTLING OF THE SECRETARIAT BUILDING WHICH WAS DAMAGED IN OCTOBER, 2006 BY FIRE

Consequent upon the completion of the on-the-ground investigations by the Guyana Fire Service relative to the fire which destroyed the building which housed the GECOM Secretariat on September 9, 2006, the Commission ordered the dismantling of the damaged Secretariat building through an independent contractor. The usable materials accumulated from this exercise were transported to the GECOM Coldingen, East Coast Demerara location to be used in future construction work as might be necessary. Some of the reusable materials were taken to the GECOM Soesdyke location to be used there in construction of a revetment for the GECOM “boathouse”.

GECOM advertised for Expressions of Interest from building consultants to undertake and conduct consultancy services for construction of the proposed new building for the Secretariat

DISCUSSIONS ON THE JOB EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

During the year 2003, the Commission had had commissioned a Job Evaluation Exercise with the objective of developing consistent framework within which differentials in content and value of the jobs and positions within GECOM’s Secretariat could be established and maintained. This project aimed to establish the jobs and positions within a hierarchy, using a process of

comparisons against defined standards and identifying the degree to which common factors are found in different jobs. Focusing on the recommendations which emerged from this exercise, GECOM, during 2007, engaged itself in reviewing the Structure of the GECOM Secretariat with a view of improving overall efficiency in all of our operations.

The Commission commenced formal discussions on (i) the draft organogram, (ii) a memorandum dated 11.01.2006 from the HRO, with attachments depicting job descriptions, job rankings, grade structure, reporting relationships and compensations as derived from the Jones Associates Job Evaluation Exercise.

The Commission needed to decide on the proposed salary scales, the formula for bunching and a date for implementation of the respective recommended salary scales. The Commission decided to endorse the recommendations for (i) increased salaries based on employees' years of service, grade and based on the conversion formula provided by Jones Associates, and increased House, Security, Travelling and Entertainment Allowances where applicable. The proposed recommendations would cost G\$15,236,592. annually. The Chairman, thereafter, initiated the process of requesting the G\$15,236,592. required to facilitate implementation of the recommendations. He wrote a letter to Dr. Roger Luncheon, Head of the Presidential Secretariat requesting favourable consideration for increased emoluments and allowances for GECOM staff as a consequence of the Job Evaluation Exercise that was conducted by Jones Associates. Relevant appendices with details associated with the request were attached to the letter. This matter still rests with Dr. Luncheon.

PARTICIPATION IN WORLD CUP CRICKET

The Commission received a written request from the Local Organising Committee for World Cup Cricket for hand-held radios in its possession to be loaned to this Committee to be used during World Cup Cricket in Guyana. The Commission facilitated this request. The Commission also approved a request from the Local Organising Committee (LOC) for ICC World Cup Cricket that GECOM staff be granted time off to work as Volunteers for the games.

REMOVAL OF GECOM SIGNBOARDS

GECOM heeded the government's call for the removal of signboards from government reserves. This led to the removal of GECOM Signboards that were still in place in the vicinity of Sussex and Russell Streets, Congress Place – Sophia, Pattensen and the seawall bandstand.

RETENTION OF THE MEDIA MONITORING UNIT

The GECOM independent Media Monitoring Unit (MMU), which was set up in preparation for the 2006 General and Regional Elections continued to function during 2007, albeit with a reduced number of personnel.

The MMU, which is now located at the Former Prime Time Building, Church Street Cummingsburg along with the North Georgetown Registration Office, has two major roles i.e. (1) to record and conduct independent qualitative analysis of media output and produce periodic reports on findings; and (2) to support the work of the Commission's Public Relations Section. The continued operations of the MMU are made possible with financial support from the Donor Group. The Work Review of the MMU is attached herewith as **APPENDIX III**.

APPENDIX I

APPENDIX II

MANAGING IMAGE AND REPUTATION THROUGH PUBLIC RELATIONS

PREFACE

Public Relations is about image and reputation. It is the result of what you do, what you say and what other people say about you. Public Relations practice is the discipline that looks after reputation with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behaviour. It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics.

Reputation is not just about the reality of an organisation's behaviour, but involves the perception of others. Public relations play a key role in ensuring that the organisation's performance is recognized by key stakeholders and that the reputation is aligned with its performance. Accordingly, corporate reputation is the reflection of an organization over time as seen through the eyes of its stakeholders and expressed through their thoughts and words.

Organisations need to manage their reputation to ensure they retain the confidence of their key stakeholders. This is especially vital to the goods and services the organization being commonly acceptable. It is also essential to recruitment and employee retention as well as to attract social/civic partners and funders.

The primary Public Relations function is to build and manage relationships with key stakeholders. Such relationships are critical to the establishment of a positive reputation and preserving this reputation during times of crises or high activity.

Communications and relationships are intangible assets that represent a significant share of the organization's total assets. Such corporate assets include reputation, intellectual capital, employee commitment and public trust. All of these areas related to strategic Public Relations Management.

Stakeholders determine the organisation's reputation from all its activities and communications including those that are unintentional. It is important to consider the different communications that individuals receive that may be addressed to them in different stakeholder roles. The most common and reliable media sources of information for stakeholders are articles in the print media, television adverts, talking with friends/associates, colleagues and opinion leaders and interacting directly with employees of the organization.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Organisations are increasingly realising that they cannot isolate themselves from the wider environment as this relates to how it affects their ranks internally and the impact that their policies and activities have external stakeholders. Accordingly, there is increasing pressure on public organisations to operate in a transparent manner, to address all stakeholders and to be wholly accountable. Naturally, therefore, there is increasing pressure on public organisations to operate in a transparent manner and to be wholly accountable to all of their stakeholders.

All organisations have stakeholder relations. Good stakeholder relations entail creating and sustaining a planned and responsive process. Unfortunately, many organisations do not recognise this need – the result being that much of their stakeholder relations are mostly piecemeal and (otherwise) unintentional. Inadequate communication, which fails to see the importance of stakeholder relations, results in the stakeholder forming an impression of the organisation based on incomplete or inaccurate information.

It is normal for Stakeholders to become increasingly skeptical as contentious issues feature on the public agenda. Furthermore, as methods of communication, specifically from critics of the organisation, become readily available, opponents have become more eloquent. Recognizing this situation as one with enormous potential for diminishing their reputation, organisations should view stakeholder relations as their inherent responsibility to provide the framework for structuring internal and external relationships, and enabling activities to be recorded and evaluated.

Contrary to how it was seen earlier, stakeholder relation is no longer simply empty, one-sided philanthropy. It has become integral to any strategic communications campaign. By simply establishing goodwill, organisations can benefit crisis management – the better connected an organisation is to its internal and external environment, the better prepared it is to deal with problems or even face a crisis. An early investment in stakeholder relationships invariably requires less time and money than a knee-jerk reaction to a crisis situation.

Ideally, stakeholder relations should start as early as possible and should be on-going. The longer the process lasts, the greater the opportunity to form a constructive relationship between the Commission and all of its stakeholders. The effort invested in good stakeholder relations would then benefit the popularity and ultimate success of the organisation.

A careful review of the current Public Relations and communications strategy of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) reveals that, while the Commission is very proactive in terms of establishing and maintaining stakeholder relations at political, governmental and Donor levels, the current modus operandi does not provide for adequate communication with all stakeholders. Instead, except for the issuance of intermittent media releases and media conferences as might be deemed necessary, media operatives are fed information in a piecemeal and unstructured manner.

In view of the foregoing, and with regards to the constant publication of inaccurate, biased, unbalanced, uncritical and uninformed information by media operatives, and others who are antagonistic towards GECOM's efforts, it is proposed that the Commission embark on enhancing

and sustaining mutually favourable stakeholder relationships through the strategies included herein, targeting its wide cross section of internal and external stakeholders.

The Public Relations Plan For The Enhancement And Maintenance Of The Image Of The Guyana Elections Commission seeks to provide a comprehensive strategy aimed at creating awareness about the legislation, organizational structure, process, mechanism and benefits of the systems to be used for conducting National/Continuous Registration and administering the General, Regional and Local Government Elections. Integral elements of the plan include Scope, Aims and Objectives and Action Plan;

A prerequisite for the success of the Public Relations Plan For Enhancement And Maintenance Of The Image Of The Guyana Elections Commission is that the Public Relations Officer must be informed, in a timely manner, about all developments relevant to the preparation for and implementation of all major policies and activities associated with the conduct of National/Continuous Registration and administering the General, Regional and Local Government Elections.

SCOPE

- Promoting confidence among the electorate and other stakeholders that Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) is committed to carry out its mandate, all in a free fair and transparent manner, through the following:-
 - i. Conducting House-to-House Registration (2007-2008),
 - ii. Preparing for and the administering of Local Government Elections (2008),
 - iii. Implementing the 2nd Cycle of Continuous Registration (2008-2009),
 - iv. Proceeding with the continuation of the registration of eligible persons via Continuous Registration (2009-2010), and
 - v. Conduct General and Regional Elections (2011).

- Ensuring that the functional capacity of the Public Relations Unit of GECOM is fully geared to carry out its responsibilities in accordance with the policies, programmes, projects and activities of the Commission and its Secretariat as these relate to the activities listed under i-v above.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Public Relations Plan for enhancement and maintenance of the image of the Guyana Elections Commission has been developed with multiple aims and objectives, the achievement of which will generate confidence among all stakeholders that GECOM continues to operate as a result oriented organization within the parameters of freedom, fairness and transparency. The aims are as follows: -

AIMS:

1. To build and maintain the image of the Guyana Elections Commission by the following:-
 - Emphasizing the need for the ethical conduct of representatives of GECOM in the execution of their legal and moral responsibilities relevant to the conduct of National/Continuous Registration and administering General, Regional and Local Government Elections;
 - Developing and implementing a proactive system of two-way communications between GECOM and its stakeholders, as the facility through which the views and needs of all concerned could be taken into consideration to advance adaptability and change throughout the preparation and implementation stages of the systems for National/Continuous Registration and the administering of General, Regional and Local Government Elections.
2. To create and sustain a positive image for the Commission by developing and implementing deliberate strategies aimed at promoting trustworthy and mutually favourable relationships between GECOM and its publics.
3. To establish a system of two-way internal communications between the Commission/Senior Staff of the Secretariat and other levels of staff of the Secretariat in order to keep all employees current with issues relevant to the conduct of National/Continuous Registration and administering the General, Regional and Local Government Elections.
4. To contribute to the social and economic welfare of Guyanese through the administration of free, fair and transparent General, Regional and Local Government Elections, and successful implementation of the system/process for the conduct of National/Continuous Registration by providing factual information to stakeholders in an accurate and timely manner.
5. To forge rewarding communication links with all media agencies/representatives/facilities.

OBJECTIVES:

Winning stakeholder support and enhancing the image of GECOM forms the primary focus of the objectives of the Public Relations Plan for conduct of National/Continuous Registration and administering General, Regional and Local Government Elections.

The specific objectives are as follows:-

1. To inform stakeholders about GECOM's operations (policies, activities, schedules, processes, mechanisms and relevant time factors).
2. To correct misunderstandings, reply to negative criticisms and remove disaffection with stakeholders.
3. To gain favourable opinion especially in terms of contentious issues.
4. To inform employees, as influencers on their own families, friends and other relations, about GECOM's activities.
5. To update the Government and other financiers about preparations associated with the conduct of National/Continuous Registration and administering the General, Regional and Local Government Elections and to gain support for the enactment of necessary legislation as well as for their continued support throughout the various implementing stages.
6. To find out what stakeholders think about GECOM, their level of understanding of its operations and why they like or dislike the organisation.
7. To establish mutually rewarding two-way communication relationships between GECOM, all levels of Secretariat Staff and all external stakeholders.
8. To create a new and favourable culture in terms of people's attitude towards GECOM.
9. To promote electoral education via the media.
10. To encourage and promote best practice at all levels of GECOM staff regarding the execution of their individual and collective responsibilities.
11. To promote a sense of belonging and ownership among all levels of GECOM staff.
12. To promote cooperative activities with all stakeholders to support GECOM in its tasks of conducting National/Continuous Registration and administering the General, Regional and Local Government Elections, the integrity of which would withstand local and international scrutiny.

ACTION PLAN

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

MEDIA CONFERENCES/BRIEFINGS

Authority:

Press conferences/briefings shall be arranged, only with the approval of the Chairman of the Guyana Elections Commission, to provide accurate information to the public on specific policies/activities of the Commission. The Chairman's approval should usually be given after he has consulted with Commissioners on the nature of the activity. In any event, Commissioners must be apprised of the intention of GECOM to host a press conference/briefing and be entitled to participate.

Coordination:

Subject to instructions from the Chairman, the Public Relations Officer shall organise the hosting of press conferences/briefings at the appropriate time and place by indicating the issue(s) to be dealt with and inviting (in writing) all media houses to participate. The Public Relations Officer shall also ensure that adequate physical arrangements are in place for the hosting of press conferences/briefings.

Conduct:

The Chairman of the Guyana Elections Commission shall conduct press conferences/briefings. The CEO and subject Head(s) of Department(s) may accompany the Chairman at press conferences/briefings to assist with the dissemination of information and responding to queries from journalists as may be warranted.

Monitoring and Verification:

The Public Relations Officer shall monitor news reports/commentaries/opinions published as a result of press conferences/briefings hosted by the Commission to determine whether the intended message of the Commission had been conveyed without distortion.

The work of the Public Relations Officer is supported by the GECOM Media Monitoring Unit by way of the provision of offending public statements. This facilitates appropriate analysis and response as might be deemed necessary.

Corrections:

Any distortion of messages by media representatives shall be reported immediately to the Chairman, or the Chief Election Officer in the absence of the Chairman, and immediate corrective action shall be taken to assuage any damage caused by such distortion(s).

Support:

GECOM's Chief Election Officer and Heads of Departments shall, upon request, support the crafting of media releases by providing accurate information on the subject at hand in a timely manner.

MEDIA RELEASES

Authority:

The Public Relations Unit shall make media releases about the policies/activities of the Commission only upon receipt of instructions to do so by the Chairman of the Guyana Elections Commission or, in the absence of the Chairman, the Chief Elections Officer. Commissioners would be routinely apprised of the timing, content and purpose of such releases.

Consultation:

Media releases prepared by the Public Relations Officer shall be done in consultation with the subject Head(s) of Department relevant to the issue at hand.

Vetting:

The Chairman, or the Chief Election Officer in the absence of the Chairman, must vet and approve all media releases before they are issued.

Issuance/Impartiality:

The Public Relations Unit shall issue media releases to every news medium in a timely manner and with impartiality, thereby ensuring that no news medium can honestly claim to have been discriminated against.

Monitoring and Verification:

The Public Relations Officer shall monitor the publication of media releases to verify that such publication conveys the message of the Commission without distortion.

Corrections:

Any distortion of messages by media representatives shall be reported immediately to the Chairman, or the Chief Election Officer in the absence of the Chairman, and immediate corrective action shall be taken to assuage any damage caused by such distortion(s). The Public Relations Officer shall also make prompt and complete corrections of mistakes of fact or opinion contained in its media releases.

Support:

GECOM's Heads of Departments shall, upon request, support the crafting of media releases by providing accurate information on the subject at hand in an accurate and timely manner.

RESPONDING TO PUBLIC/MEDIA QUERIES

Authority to Respond:

All oral or written queries/comments from the public regarding the policies and functions of the Commission must be brought to the attention of the Chairman of the Guyana Elections Commission, or the Chief Election Officer in the absence of the Chairman, for approval to respond. Provided that such queries/comments simply require information that is already in the public domain e.g. statutory provisions of electoral relevance, no approval shall be necessary.

Responses to queries/comments received from the public shall be issued by the Public Relations Officer with the approval of the Chairman, or the Chief Election Officer in the absence of the Chairman.

Consultation:

The Public Relations Officer shall construct responses to queries/comments in consultation with the relevant Heads of Departments.

Support:

GECOM's Heads of Departments shall, upon request, support the crafting of responses to queries/comments about GECOM's policies and activities by providing accurate information on the subject at hand in a timely manner.

WEEKLY INFORMATION COLUMNS IN THREE LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

The use of column space in the Guyana Chronicle, Stabroek News and Kaieteur News to publicise a continuous flow of information about the systems and processes for National Registration and General, Regional and Local Government elections will facilitate the provision of information with a great level of permanence. Key stakeholders including future employees will be afforded the opportunity to gain insight into the nature of GECOM's work. This activity will allow GECOM to embark on a public education drive at the national level thereby providing stakeholders with a greater understanding of its complex responsibilities.

One half-page article in a daily newspaper will cost approximately G\$30,000.

RESTRUCTURING THE GECOM WEBSITE

PROPOSED NEW INFORMATION FOR GECOM'S WEBSITE

GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS

Legal Provisions for General and Regional Elections (Hard Copies)
System for General and Regional Elections (Hard Copies)
Demarcation/Boundaries of Guyana's 10 Geographical Constituencies (Electronic Copy)
Official Lists of Electors by Electoral Districts (Electronic Copy)
List of Polling Divisions/Places (Electronic Copy)
Past Elections Results (Electronic Copy)
Electoral Safeguards (Electronic Copy)
What every voter should know about General and Regional Elections (Electronic Copy)

REPORTS AND MANUALS

Elections Reports

1992 (Hard Copy)
1997(Hard Copy)
2001(Hard Copy)
2006 (Electronic Copy)

Elections Observers Reports

1992 (?)
1997 (?)
2001 (Hard Copy – possibility exists for acquiring electronic copy)
2006 (Hard Copy– possibility exists for acquiring electronic copy)

Advisory for Political Parties (2006) (Hard Copy– possibility exists for acquiring electronic copy)

Electoral Lists Requirements for Contesting General and Regional Elections (2006) (Hard Copy– possibility exists for acquiring electronic copy)

Terms of Reference for Domestic Observers (2006) (Hard Copy– possibility exists for acquiring electronic copy)

Memoranda of Understanding (GECOM/Government of Guyana/Donor community)

2006 (Electronic Copy)
2001 (Hard Copy – possibility exists for acquiring electronic copy)

Media Monitoring Unit Report – March 19 – September 30, 2006 (Electronic Copy)

Media Codes of Conduct for Elections

2001 (Electronic Copy)
2006 (Electronic Copy)

Final Reports of the Independent Refereeing Panels

2001(Hard Copy)

2006 (Hard Copy– possibility exists for acquiring electronic copy)

Official Manual for Returning Officers and other District Staff (2006) (Hard Copy– possibility exists for acquiring electronic copy)

Official Manual for Presiding Officers and other Polling Day Officials (2006) (Hard Copy– possibility exists for acquiring electronic copy)

Manual of Instructions for Disciplined Forces Balloting (2006) (Hard Copy– possibility exists for acquiring electronic copy)

Manual of Instructions for Claims and Objections (2006) (Hard Copy– possibility exists for acquiring electronic copy)

Manual for the Implementation and Conduct of Continuous Registration (Hard Copy– possibility exists for acquiring electronic copy)

Report of the Commonwealth Secretariat Assessment Mission (Keith Hathaway) (Hard Copy– possibility exists for acquiring electronic copy)

GECOM Elector’s Database Security Recommendations (Hard Copy – possibility exists for acquiring electronic copy)

GECOM Three to Five Year Development Plan (Hard Copy– possibility exists for acquiring electronic copy)

Report on a Study for a revised System for Transmission of Election Results (Hard Copy– possibility exists for acquiring electronic copy)

Major Activities Conducted During 2005 (Electronic Copy)

Major Activities Conducted During 2004 (Electronic Copy)

Major Activities Conducted During 2003 (Electronic Copy)

Report by Guyana Long Term Observer Group/EU Election Observer Mission (2001)

International IDEA Audit & Systems Review of the 2001 Electoral Process (Hard Copy– possibility exists for acquiring electronic copy)

Report on the Results of the Esther Perriera (1997) Elections Petition (Hard Copy)

Oversight C/tee on Constitutional Reform – Extracts from Sections 1-7 & 9 of the Final Report (Hard Copy)

NATIONAL REGISTRATION

Legal provisions for National Registration

Continuous Registration

Eligibility
New Registration
Correction
Change of Name
Transfer
Replacement
Verification
National Identification Card
Manual for the Implementation and Conduct of Continuous Registration
Registration Offices

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Legal Provisions for Local Government Elections
System for Local Government Elections
Municipalities (with boundaries demarcation)
Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (with boundaries demarcation)
Official Lists of Electors (by Electoral Areas)
List of Polling Divisions/Places
Past Local Government Elections
Electoral Safeguards for Local Government Elections
What every voter should know about Local Government Elections

PHOTO ALBUM



Sir Paul Reeves Presents Commonwealth Sec. Report to Dr. Steve Surujbally

RULES OF PROCEDURE (Check with Keith for electronic copies)

1. Rules of Procedure for Recruitment and Appointment of Staff.
2. Rules of Procedure for Staff Development and Training.
3. Rules of Procedure for Disciplinary Process.
4. Rules of Procedure for Promotion
5. Rules of Procedure for Finance.
6. Rules of Procedure for Utilization of Large Sums of Money at GECOM Locations
7. Rules of Procedure for Public Relations.

ARCHIVES

Media Releases (by date)
Membership of Past Commissions
2001 Media Code of Conduct

LINKS

Parliament of Guyana
Ministry of Legal Affairs
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations
Commonwealth Secretariat
CARICOM Secretariat
Organisation of American States
United States Agency for International Development
Research Triangular Institute
International Institute for Democracy and Assistance
International Foundation for Electoral Assistance
Carter Centre
Electoral Assistance Bureau

Merging of the following pages of the existing website under one name – General & Regional Elections in Guyana:-

Constitutional Reform
Elections in Guyana
Electoral Reform

MEMBERS OF GECOM

Dr. R.S. Surujbally, A.A.
Chairman

Mr. Moen McDoom, S.C.
Commissioner

Mr. Robert Williams
Commissioner

Mr. Mohamood Shaw
Commissioner

Mr. Lloyd Joseph
Commissioner

Dr. Keshav Mangal
Commissioner

Mr. Vincent Alexander
Commissioner

MAINTENANCE OF THE GECOM WEBSITE

Editorial Policy:

Information published on the website shall be informed by advice received from the Commission, Chief Election Officer and Heads of Departments in conformity with the ethics of professional journalism. The Commission, through the Chairman, shall review and make recommendations on all information published on the website.

The Editorial Committee shall comprise; the Chairman of the Guyana Elections Commission; two (2) Commissioners of the Guyana Elections Commission; the Chief Election Office; the Public Relations Officer; one (1) Communications Expert; and one (1) Legal Expert.

Content:

The textual content of the GECOM website shall be developed by the Public Relations Officer with guidance from GECOM's Heads of Departments and other individuals/agencies, as may be deemed necessary by the Commission.

The textual content shall usually be restricted to the statutory provisions for the conduct of National/Continuous Registration and General, Regional and Local Government Elections as well as the policies and activities of the Commission, as approved by the Commission, and shall be developed in compliance with the principles of responsibility, independence, accuracy and impartiality.

Authority:

All information published on the GECOM website shall be done with the approval of the Chairman.

Hosting/Technical Maintenance:

The technical updating and maintenance of the GECOM website shall be done by Devnet of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or any other competent service provider approved by the Commission. This will be done based upon instructions received from the Guyana Elections Commission through its Public Relations Officer. .

Response to Queries:

Responses to all queries relevant to the policies and activities of the Guyana Elections Commission published on the GECOM website shall be crafted by the Public Relations Officer. These responses must be forwarded to the Chairman of the Commission, or the Chief Election Officer in the absence of the Chairman. Such responses must benefit from the input of the Chairman, relevant Head(s) of Department(s) before being forwarded to the service provider for posting on the website.

Corrections:

The Public Relations Officer shall report any incorrect publication of information on the GECOM website to the Chairman, or the Chief Election Officer in the absence of the Chairman. Immediate corrective action shall be taken to assuage any damage caused by the publication of such incorrect information.

Support:

GECOM's Heads of Departments shall, upon request, support the textual development and maintenance of the website by providing accurate information on the subject at hand in a timely manner.

INFORMATION BROCHURES

Objective:

Production of two brochures for House-to-House Registration and Local Government Elections to provide simple information about these processes.

Scope:

Promoting confidence among the electorate and all other stakeholders that GECOM is committed to the execution of its mandate in a manner which would be commonly accepted as being free, fair and transparent.

Key Features of Brochure for House-to-House Registration

- 8-pages, 8 ½ X 5 ½ - full colour – gloss paper.
- Topics include:-
- Period/purpose for/of House-to-House Registration.
- Period/purpose for/of Continuous Registration
- Criteria for Registration.
- The Registration Process under House-to-House Registration
- The Registration Process under Continuous Registration
- Location of Registration Offices
- Name Change
- Transfers
- Corrections
- Replacements
- Exemption from taking photographs
- Offences
-

Key Features of Brochure for Local Government Elections

- 8-pages, 8 ½ X 5 ½ - full colour – gloss paper.
- Topics include:-
- Registration System and the various transactions
- Electoral System for Local Government Elections
- Eligibility Requirements
- Preliminary, Revised and Final Voters Lists
- Claims and Objections
- Voting Procedure
- Rights and Responsibilities of the Voter
- Election Offences
- Voting by Proxy
- Election Day activities
- Election Safeguards against multiple voting (why electors cannot cheat).

Methodology for Distribution

Distribution of the Brochures will be carried out by the Civic/Voter Education staff attached to the Registration Offices country-wide. They will be assisted by lower level staff from the District Registration Offices in distributing the Brochures at market places

etc. The number of Brochures to be distributed in the Electoral Division will be proportionate to the number of electors respectively.

In the case of elections, copies of the Brochures would be made available to contesting Political Parties. Copies would also be given to the Electoral Assistance Bureau (EAB) and other social/professional organizations like the Guyana Bar Association, Private Sector Commission, and Guyana Medical Council etc with a request for them to distribute the Brochures among their membership.

Number of Copies

It is proposed that 50,000 copies each of the brochures be produced. This will allow for a distribution ratio of one copy to every 9.6 electors.

Key Results:

- Potential Registrants and Electors will be adequately equipped to participate in the registration and election processes.
- Improved confidence in the registration and election processes by all stakeholders including the electorate and Political Parties.

Cost of Production:

Brochure for House-to-House Registration	G\$6 million
Brochure for Local Government Elections	G\$6 million

Recommendation

It is recommended that production of the Brochure for Brochure for House-to-House Registration be approved for immediate commencement in order that distribution could be implemented as proposed.

INFOMERCIALS ABOUT HOUSE-TO-HOUSE/CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION

- Period/purpose for/of House-to-House Registration.
- Period/purpose for/of Continuous Registration
- Criteria for Registration.
- The Registration Process under House-to-House Registration
- The Registration Process under Continuous Registration
- Location of Registration Offices
- Name Change
- Transfers
- Corrections
- Replacements
- Exemption from taking photographs
- Offences

INFOMERCIALS ABOUT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

- Registration System and the various relevant transactions
- Electoral System for Local Government Elections
- Eligibility Requirements
- Preliminary, Revised and Final Voters Lists
- Claims and Objections
- Voting Procedure
- Rights and Responsibilities of the Voter
- Election Offences
- Voting by Proxy
- Election Day activities
- Election Safeguards against multiple voting (why electors cannot Cheat).

INTERNAL RELATIONS

In the same way that any organization need to work closely with its external publics in an integrated communications campaign through its Public Relations function, it is equally critical that this function i.e. Public Relations encompass internal relations focusing on communicating with all levels of staff.

An organization's most important relationship is often considered to be that with its management and employees. Hence, it is essential that employees are informed about the policies and activities of the organization. Issues such as the increasing porosity of organizations underline the importance of internal communications.

Despite this apparent recognition of the importance, it is generally found that they are mostly unhappy with the way in which their Managers communicate with them. Maintaining morale and retaining quality personnel is a critical issue for organizations, hence it is essential that they provide clear, effective, believable and persuasive internal communications. In so doing, it is important for organizations to understand the needs of the different levels and categories of employees.

Credibility is the core of internal relations. Accordingly, employees appreciate it when management communicates with them early and frequently, whether the nature of such communication is good or bad, and for management to seek ideas from them. Employees generally want to know what needs to be done, understand why it is necessary and to be given a chance to use their own knowledge and skills to do it better if possible.

In view of the foregoing, it is proposed that GECOM implement a comprehensive internal communications strategy inclusive of the following:-

- The entire Commission meet with all levels and categories of the Secretariat annually.
- GECOM's Senior Management meet with all of its employees through monthly general staff meetings.
- Weekly consultative/participatory Management meetings.
- Weekly consultative/participatory Departmental meetings.
- Conduct orientation programmes as may be necessary.
- Circulation of bulletins as might become necessary.
- Facilitate upward communication of a confidential nature via a suggestion box.
- Provide information of a permanent nature to employees via a bi-monthly Newsletter.

A combination of these strategies would deliver the following outcomes:-

- Effective employee manageability and performance – people perform better when appropriately informed.
- Feedback – employees are a valuable research and information resource.
- Motivation – building morale through effective communication thereby generating a sense of pride and involvement
- Team spirit – people feel more like a team when they are involved through effective communication.

- Crisis preparation – it is imperative that management use internal communications to identify potential issues and gain support for difficult times.
- Participative staff – consultation with employees is important and more likely to succeed in a culture of involving and participative communications.
- Confidence and trust between Management and staff.
- Optimism for the future of GECOM
- Satisfying status and participation for each employee
- Work without strife
- Amicable working environment
- Candid information flowing freely within and among management and the different levels/categories of staff
- Respect is share between Management and employees
- Employees need to be heard – they are given voice via Management/employees meetings.
- Enhanced image and reputation
- Better recruitment retention
- Mutual goodwill and understanding
- Greater success for the organization

Internal communications as described above will certainly serve to change the dynamics in terms of providing accurate information to GECOM's employees as well as turning them into internal supporters.

NEWSLETTER

A GECOM Newsletter focusing on the current and forthcoming activities/issues of the Commission and its Secretariat shall be prepared and produced on a bimonthly basis by the Public Relations Officer. The content of the Newsletter shall be approved by the Chairman or the Chief Election Officer in the absence of the Chairman. The newsletter shall also focus on significant personal and official staff achievements.

GECOM's Heads of Departments shall, upon request, submit written reports on the activities of their respective departments to the Public Relations Officer for publication in the newsletter.

Circulation of the GECOM Newsletter shall focus primarily on providing information to target groups that do not possess the means of ready access to information about the policies and functions of the Guyana Elections Commission. The GECOM Newsletter shall also be made available to other individuals or groups as approved by the Commission.

STRUCTURE

- Eight pages - 8 ½" x 11"
- Full Colour
- Gloss Paper

FREQUENCY

- It is proposed that the production of the Newsletter be done Bimonthly and completed in the fourth week of the 2nd month.
- The preceding weeks would be used for the research/accumulation of information/photographs worthy of publication, editing, agreement on content, design/artwork and printing. Please see the Logical Framework for details.

COST

Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (G\$500,000.00) for One Thousand (1000) copies. Please see the Logical Framework for details.

PRODUCTION

The overall responsibility for the production of the proposed Newsletter rests with the Public Relations Officer.

TARGET AUDIENCE

1. Members of the Commission
2. All of GECOM's Staff
3. All Political Parties.
4. All civil and business organizations.

5. All Members of Parliament.
6. All Libraries
7. All Medical Clinics
8. International Funding/Support Agencies (CIDA)
9. Guyana's Overseas Diplomatic Missions
10. Foreign Diplomatic Missions in Guyana
11. All Media Houses
12. All Regional Democratic Councils
13. All Neighbourhood Democratic Councils
14. The World Wide Web

EDITORIAL CONTENT

- GECOM Pronouncements on policies/activities
- GECOM Outreach Activities
- Policy/Programme Development
- Policy/Programme Implementation
- Policy/Programme Achievements
- Promotional Policies/Activities
- Project Development/Implementation/Achievements
- Research & Development
- Important GECOM/Stakeholder Meetings/Agreements
- Exemplary Donor Assistance
- Provision of useful Legal/Technical Information
- Relevant Important International Developments
- Problem/Crisis Management Issues
- Human Resource Issues
- Registration Figures
- Relevant Human Interest Information
- Feedback Facility
- Recipe
- Joke
- Relevant Photographs

NB: 1. The above proposed list of issues is not restrictive.

2. The above proposed list of issues refers to the Commission, its Secretariat and all of the Registration Offices.

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PRODUCTION OF A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE GUYANA ELECTIONS COMMISSION

Narrative Summary	Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
<p>Goal: To provide comprehensive and relevant information to all stakeholders of the Guyana Elections Commission in an accurate and timely manner.</p>	<p>Publication of the Newsletter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File copies of the Newsletter. • The GECOM Website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Commission would appreciate the inherent value of the dissemination of information via a Newsletter.
<p>Purpose: To promote confidence among stakeholders that the Guyana Elections Commission and its Secretariat are executing their mandate in an efficient manner.</p>	<p>Improved reputation/image of the Guyana Elections Commission and its Secretariat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of decrease in the publication of negative information. • Records of positive feedback from Stakeholders. • Records of the publication of positive information by sources independent of GECOM. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Commission is cognisant that the success or failure of its operations is measured by stakeholder response. • That the Commission is aware that the favourable reputation of any organisation is premised on its ability to communicate efficiently and effectively.
<p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering confidence among all stakeholders that GECOM is executing its mandates efficiently and effectively. • Guiding employees in terms of the achievement of the Commission. • Providing accurate information in a timely manner to all stakeholders through public awareness. • Catering to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favourable stakeholder response. • Improved management/employee relationship & improved performance • Relevant information capture in the Newsletter. <p>Availability of the Newsletter on the World Wide Web. Response received</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records/reports of favourable response e.g. letters in the newspapers Personnel/production records. • File copy of the Newsletter. • The Commission's Website. • Records of responses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Commission recognise the importance of stakeholder confidence in their operations. • That the Commission place the requisite emphasis on favourable employee relationship and service delivery. • That the Commission recognise the need for the provision of adequate information to stakeholders.

<p>information needs of stakeholders and other interested parties outside of Guyana by placing the Newsletter on the Commission's Website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving a voice to stakeholders by providing a facility for feedback. • Enhancing and sustaining the reputation of the Commission. 	<p>from internal/external stakeholders.</p> <p>Improved stakeholder relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of positive acknowledgements of the services delivered by the Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Commission have personnel who could be tasked with the technical responsibility of updating their Websites with the Newsletter. • That the Commission recognise the value of interactive relationships through two-way communication. <p>That the Commission recognise that any successful organisation thrives on mutually favourable relationships with its stakeholders.</p>
<p>Inputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research/accumulation of Textual and Photographic Material • Editing/Artwork • Printing and Supply • Delivery by Surface Mail • Delivery by E-mail • Delivery by Hand • Updating Website 	<p>G\$500,000.00</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of sending by surface mail. • Reports from the Delivery Personnel • Reports from the Website Technician 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting Records • Accounting Records • Accounting Records • E-mail activity logs. • Delivery log books • The Website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Commission would be able to meet the cost of producing the Newsletter • That the Commission would approve a list of stakeholders/recipients to whom the Newsletter would be sent. • That the Commission would compile a list of key stakeholders to whom the Newsletter would be hand delivered.

Conclusion

This proposal is structured in a manner that is compliant with international best practices pertaining to the publication of information through the use of a Newsletter. The nature of the proposal, if it were to be approved and effectively implemented, would certainly ensure that all stakeholders in Guyana and abroad are kept updated about the relevant policies and activities of the Commission as well as transparency in the implementation of its policies and activities. Naturally, this would improve the Commission's reputation and enhance mutually favourable relationships with all of its stakeholders.

COMMUNICATION WITH POLITICAL PARTIES, DONOR, AGENCIES, GOVERNMENT, CIVIL/BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

No organization can operate successfully without engaging in two-way communications with other organizational stakeholders with which it is operationally interwoven. GECOM's responsibility to communicate with other stakeholders in the national interest cannot be separated from its all round operations especially since such stakeholders pay a very high level of interest in the work of the Commission even though some of them might have a low level of relevant influence. It is important that the Commission understands the concerns of such stakeholders and to communicate accurately with them to avoid misinterpretation of crucial issues. This is especially important since organizational stakeholders like the Government, Donor Agencies, Political Parties, Civic/Business Organisations and International Organisations can be important influencers internally and on other groups. Typical communications with such organizations, through dialogue could focus on the following objectives:-

- Informing the organizations about GECOM's policy matters, operational activities, production aims and achievements, employment issues and developmental plans – current and future.
- Correcting misunderstanding and replying to criticisms.
- Gaining and maintaining favourable opinion and support.
- Using the organizations as conduits of influence over other stakeholders (friends, families, media, politicians, etc).
- Seeking feedback regarding local public opinion.
- Establish cordial cooperative relationships.

A combination of these strategies would deliver the following outcomes:-

- Increased appreciation towards GECOM is assured among key publics when they are aware of the Commission's recognition of their importance.
- Improved public perception on the measure of GECOM/external organizations relationship dimensions generates trust, openness, cooperation, commitment and involvement.
- Long term relations with external organizations can become more favourable since this tends to be driven by a mutually acceptable approach rather than for the Commission carrying on with its work without involving external stakeholders.
- The levels of the satisfaction of external stakeholders are increased with greater awareness and involvement.

GECOM's frequent communication with external organizations, in particular Political Parties, during the pre and peri 2006 elections period, the peaceful manner in which the elections were conducted and post election calm are evidence of the value of external communication as described above.

HUMAN AND MATERIAL RESOURCE REQUIREMENT

The GECOM Public Relations Unit is staffed by a full-time Public Relations Officer, Mr. Vishnu Persaud, who manages the Unit under the direct supervision of the Chairman of the Commission. The Unit is outfitted with the following material resources:-

- One desk top computer
- One lap top computer
- One printer
- One scanner
- One facsimile machine with independent telephone line.
- One television set
- One video cassette recorder
- Accessibility to photocopying facilities
- One audio tape recorder
- One mini-audio tape recorder
- One direct telephone line
- One internal telephone line
- Rules of Procedure for Public Relations
- Support from Office Assisstant

Additionally, the Unit is provided with copies of all three of the daily local newspapers i.e. Kaieteur News, Stabroek News and Guyana Chronicle.

APPENDIX III

MEDIA MONITORING UNIT (GECOM)

Work Review for 2007

Brief Overview:

The current work of the Media Monitoring Unit (MMU) effectively began on 1st Oct. 2006, after the end of the August 2006 General and Regional elections. The continuation of the Unit (with a reduced staff complement) was realized through funding from the International Development Partners (specifically Canada) via the United Nations Development Programme's UNDP's management of the funds, and to date the Unit has delivered five (5) quarterly reports on local media performance to the interested stakeholders, that is, UNDP and the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM). These reports are based on the Unit's mandate to:

- Monitor the local media and report on breaches of the **2006 Media Code of Conduct (MCC)** and norms associated with international best practices in journalism.
- Assist in raising the level of professional standards in the media with regards to the reporting of political, electoral, governance and general social issues.
- Encourage equity, fairness and balance in news reporting.
- Give support to GECOM's Public Relations Department to help improve the organization's public image.

This year (2007) the MMU produced four (4) analytical reports including one for the period 1st Oct. 2006 – 30th Sept. 2007 that compared and summarized media trends over the course of one (1) year since the continuation of the Unit's tenure.

Some of the more salient or major findings that were brought out in the Unit's analyses of local media performance during 2007 were:

- TV Talk-Show hosts are abusing the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression to libel with impunity.
- Reporters in both the print and broadcast media are blatantly expressing personal opinions as factual news.
- It is a deliberate policy of some organizations in both the print and broadcast media to give only one side of an issue in their presentation of news to the public that is intended to influence public opinion in a certain way on those issues.
- Some TV newscasts and daily newspapers are guilty of being overtly favorable towards certain political parties and negatively biased to others, and
- Many media outlets exhibit a lack of strong editorial control over media content emanating from their organizations for public consumption.

The foregoing media trends were substantiated by incontrovertible evidence-based information objectively adduced using content analysis methodology and the Media Code of Conduct. Content analysis was used for the identification and measurement of types and amounts of coverage political parties received from media outlets, while the 2006 Code of Conduct was used as the standard for assessing media content for adherence to the tenets underpinning ethical conduct and professional journalism.

Achievements:

The Unit's achievements for 2007 can be gauged on the delivery of its mandate and in this regard there was measurable success. In our daily monitoring activities, whenever the Unit observed and documented breaches of the MCC, the owners/editors of the erring media houses were duly informed of these breaches via mail. This action by the Unit achieved the following results:

- Media entities were made aware of the continued existence and monitoring activities of the Unit.
- Media outlets responded to the observations and recommendations made by the unit in relation to breaches of the MCC.
- Measures were implemented by some media entities to prevent recurrences of identified infractions and to avoid any occurrence of future breaches.

During 2007, eight (8) letters were issued by the MMU to media houses who either wittingly or unwittingly published information that breached one or more clauses of the MCC. And, the Unit actively encouraged media owners/editors to exercise greater editorial control over what comes out of their organizations and goes into the broadcast and print media for public consumption.

Further, the MMU's presence and monitoring activities played a significant and influential role in the noticeably slight improvement in media behavior during the latter part of the year. This perception is reinforced by the final report for the last quarter of 2007 which showed a markedly lesser amount of media breaches compared to the amounts of documented cases during the second and third quarters, respectively.

The Unit also delivered on its mandate to provide back-up support to GECOM's Public Relations Department by providing invaluable service through the provision of tapes, newspaper articles and written transcripts of media reports likely to affect the institution's public image.

Challenges:

Some of the constraints faced by the Unit during the past year include, but were not limited to the following:

- Frequent electrical power failures.
- The use of analog technology for the collection and storage of information from the broadcast media.

The major difficulty the Unit faced in 2007 in carrying out its mandate efficiently and effectively was the frequent power failures from the national grid. **There is an urgent need for a back-up source of electricity supply** to eliminate the predictable losses of crucial TV programs, especially in the evenings. This limitation has resulted in the Unit being unable to monitor and analyze some very important newscasts and political programs that accumulatively may have had an impact on the analysis and findings in our reports.

The need for a complete change-over from our current use of analog technology to digital for taping and storage of TV programs is another area of concern to the Unit that urgently needs to be addressed in the interest of achieving and maintaining a high quality product. Our continued use of the analog system of VCRs and VHS tapes is producing a poor quality output and makes monitoring of programs a tedious task.

Summary:

Despite the difficulties that confronted the MMU during 2007, the Unit was still able to carry out its mandate in a professional and objective way. The Unit's work during the year focused mainly on contributing to the improvement in the quality of media content and raising the standard for reporting of news and general information to the public. This was achieved through the daily monitoring of local media fare to identify breaches of the MCC and deviations from the standard conventions of acceptable journalism; and making recommendations in those instances that needed corrective intervention.

In conclusion, the MMU's work in 2007 was both satisfactory and productive and highlighted the necessity for the Unit to be in place all year round to remind media practitioners of the lofty and achievable standards they ought to strive to attain and maintain in the interest of educating, informing and entertaining the public; and, for the national good.

**GUYANA
ELECTIONS
COMMISSION**

DRAFT

**Report on
Major Activities
Conducted During
2007**

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