

21.06.2006.

### **GECOM CONDUCTS WORKSHOP FOR DISCIPLINED FORCES**

A Workshop targeting representatives of the Disciplined Forces, and focusing on voting by the Disciplined Forces, was conducted by the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) today (21.06.2006) at the Guyana Police Force Sports Club building . The primary purpose of this Workshop was to create awareness among the Disciplined Forces about the requirements of Guyana's electoral system as this relates to voting by members of the Disciplined Forces.

During the Workshop, focus was placed on Guyana's electoral system; laws governing balloting; procedure for voting by the Disciplined Forces; appointment of an Officer for each of the Disciplined Forces; entitlement by members of the Disciplined Forces to vote; preparations for balloting; casting of ballots; and intermixing of the Disciplined Forces ballots.

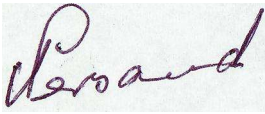
Dr. Steve Surujbally, Chairman of GECOM gave the opening remarks and declared the Workshop open. Lectures on the various subjects were done by Mr. Calvin Benn, Deputy Chief Election Officer, Mr. Keith Lowenfield, Assistant Chief Election Officer, Mr. Joseph Gilgeous and Mr. Albert Henry. The workshop was attended by Members of the Guyana Defence Force (GDF), Guyana Police Force (GPF) and Guyana Prison Service (GPS).

During his opening remarks, Dr. Surujbally assured the representatives of the Discipline Forces that the knowledge being shared with them was being given by GECOM's Secretariat staff who are "the best teachers" in the business of elections in Guyana.

Dr. Surujbally impressed upon the need for the participating ranks to convey the request to the respective Head's Discipline Forces that they should not transfer any of their ranks, close to Elections Day, from the place (station) at which they were registered, since this could lead to them not being allowed to vote. He noted that, in the past, such transfers had resulted in ranks of the Discipline Forces not getting the opportunity to exercise their franchise, and that this had led to problems.

Dr. Surujbally emphasized that the Discipline Forces represented one of the most important tiles in the mosaic of the democratic electoral process. Hence, the Discipline Forces should contribute in a professional approach, particularly on Election Day, towards the holding of the elections in a manner that would be acceptable by all stakeholders.

Observing the proceedings at the Workshop were Mr. Stephen Beale and Dr. Kwadwo Afari-Gyan, the Joint International Technical Assessors (JITAs) attached to GECOM, and Ms. Allison Sutherland, Commonwealth Long Term Observer.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'V. Persaud', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Vishnu Persaud, MCIPR  
Public Relations Officer