

## GECOM CHAIRMAN MEETS GUYANA THIRD FORCE

09.11.2005.

Commitments to work together towards the realization of the satisfactory delivery of the upcoming elections were exchanged today at a meeting between a Team of Senior Officials of Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) and Representatives of the Guyana Third Force (GTF) at the Commission's Head Office. The GECOM team comprised Dr. Steve Surujbally, Chairman – GECOM, Mr. Gocool Boodoo, Chief Election Officer and Mr. Calvin Benn, Deputy Chief Election Officer, while the GTF was represented by Mr. Paul Hardy, Mr. Ravindra Dev and Mr. Peter Ramsaroop.

The meeting took place as a result of the GTF's written request to meet with Dr. Surujbally to discuss the status of specific aspects of the current Continuous Registration exercise and GECOM's plans pertaining to preparations for the upcoming General and Regional elections.

During the meeting, Mr. Hardy gave the assurance that the GTF was desirous of getting updates on current Continuous Registration exercise and GECOM's plans pertaining to preparations for the upcoming elections. He said that this would enable the Party to share the Commission's responsibilities pertaining to the provision of pertinent information about the elections.

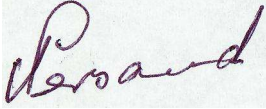
Dr. Surujbally welcomed the initiative taken by the GTF to meet with the GECOM Team and gave the assurance that the Commission remained open to working with all of the Political Parties towards the holding of free, fair and transparent elections. While providing an update on the current Continuous Registration exercise and GECOM's plans pertaining to preparations for the upcoming General and Regional elections, he gave the GTF Representatives a copy of the Commission's Elections Plan, which outlines, among others, the critical tasks (with relevant timelines) that have to be implemented accordingly for the elections to be held by the Constitutional due date. He emphasized that Dr. Kwadwo Afari-Gyan and Mr. Stephen Beale, the two Joint International Technical Assessors (JITAs) who are attached to GECOM, would be working along with the Commission's Secretariat to ensure that those critical tasks are achieved within their respective completion dates.

The GECOM Chairman provided the GTF Representatives with a copy of the Operations Manual for the Implementation of Continuous Registration, and updated them on how the current Continuous Registration exercise was proceeding. In this regard, he raised the problem of persons from hinterland/riverain communities not being in possession of Birth Certificates because their births were never registered. Dr. Surujbally requested the GTF Representatives to propose suggestions aimed at resolving this problem in a manner which could result in the registration of the births of such persons, thereby providing the legal basis for them to be registered.

On a related matter, Dr. Surujbally invited comments from the GTF Representatives on the need for all concerned to sign on to a Media Code of Conduct, and for the Political Parties contesting the upcoming General and Regional Elections to subscribe to a Code of Ethics

for Political Parties. Although the GTF's Representatives acknowledged Dr. Surujbally's remark that both Codes would be "toothless" without supporting legislation, they agreed to sign on to them.

Accepting Dr. Surujbally's offer, the Representatives of the GTF met with both Joint International Technical Assessors immediately after their meeting with the GECOM Team.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Persaud", is centered on a light gray rectangular background.

Vishnu Persaud, MCIPR  
Public Relations Officer