GUYANA: REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MONTEVIDEO CONSENSUS ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT 2013-2018

2013-2018
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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BIT - Board of Industrial Training
CARICOM - Caribbean Community
CDC - Caribbean Development Bank
CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CERD - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CHPA - Central Housing and Planning Authority
CRC - Convention on the Rights of Child
CVQ - Caribbean Vocational Qualification
FSW - Female Sex Workers
GBV - Gender Based Violence
GDP - Gross Domestic Product
GPHC - Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation
GRPA - Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association
GSDS - Green State Development Strategy
GWI - Guyana Water Incorporated
HEYS - Hinterland Employment and Youth Service
HFLE - Health and Family Life Education
ICCPR - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICSER - International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights
IDB - Inter-American Development Bank
IEC - Information, Education, Communication
IPPF - International Planned Parenthood Federation
LGBTI - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Intersex
NEET - Youth Not in Education, Employment or Training
NGO(s) - Non-governmental Organization(s)
NOC - New Opportunity Corps
NTC - National Toshaos Council
NYEAP - National Youth Empowerment Action Plan
OAS - Organization of American States
OB/GYN - Obstetrics and Gynaecology
PAYEU - Presidential Advisor on Youth Empowerment Unit
PMTCT - Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
PRSP - Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme
SCCP - Secondary Competency Certificate Programme
SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals
SLED - Sustainable Livelihoods and Entrepreneurial Development
SRH - Sexual Reproductive Health
SSRP - Secondary Reform Project
TASC - Tool to Assess Statistical Capacity
UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF - United Nations Children’s Fund
UNCT - United Nations Country Team
UNASUR - Union of South American Nations
YEST - Youth Entrepreneurial Skills Training
YIPoG - Youth Innovation Project of Guyana
YWCA - Young Women Christian Association
VSP - Volunteerism Support Platform
**Introduction**

Guyana has made significant progress in implementing the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and this national review and appraisal report prepared by Guyana is in response to Resolution 65/234 adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 22 December 2010, in which it decided to extend the Cairo Programme of Action and the key actions for its further implementation beyond 2014 and called for an operational review of its implementation in order to respond to the important new challenges that are relevant to population and development and to strengthen the integration of population and development issues in global development processes through the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development.

The report provides a review and appraisal for the period 2013-2018 of the progress in the implementation of the critical areas such as gender equality and the empowerment of women in all spheres of life, promotion of the rights of children, the indigenous people, people of African descendants, migrants, and equitable access to health, education and social services which are national priorities. It identifies achievements, challenges and opportunities for integrating these critical areas within the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. The report is submitted in the context of the first session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Montevideo in August 2013 and is in accordance with the guidelines adopted by the Presiding Officers at their Third (3rd) meeting, held at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago in October 2016.

**Part 1**

A national coordination mechanism (NCM) that acts as a permanent liaison with the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean was established in 2017 with the Ministry of Social Protection as the lead agency. This National Steering Committee comprised several government agencies and facilitated the coordination and compilation of the report.

The review of Guyana’s progress in the implementation of the Consensus was one that was participatory and involved related sector ministries with support from UNFPA. In fostering inclusiveness, this review process also engaged civil society, non-governmental organizations and other key stakeholders on the compilation of the report. The dialogue was fruitful and productive and the views of participants are also included in this report.

Guyana wishes to note that responding to the indicators for the regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development was challenging as the state party could not respond to numerous indicators because disaggregated data was unavailable for some of the priority measures and the context in which the data was required to be presented.

**Part 11**

*Background*

Geographically situated within South America and is geo-politically considered “the English-speaking door-way” to South America. Guyana shares contiguous borders with its neighbours, Venezuela (to the west), Suriname (to the east); Brazil lies to the south and is officially connected by a road network. Guyana is a member of the regional integration movement the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).
The population of Guyana is 746,955 living in 215,000 square kilometers (approximately 83,000 square miles). There are 3.5 persons per square kilometer on average. The country is divided into 10 Administrative Regions. The coastland is a low, flat, narrow, alluvial belt, about 15 to 70km long where 89.1% of the population lives. The average population density in the five coastal regions is 9.6 persons per square kilometers. However, in Administrative Region 4, population density is highest with 140.1 persons per square mile. In contrast in the four (4) hinterland regions which represent two-thirds (2/3) of Guyana’s land mass where there is less than one (1) person per square kilometer. These four hinterland regions are generally regarded as the hinterland and riverain areas where approximately 50,000 indigenous peoples, many of whom own communal land titles, reside in organized communities.¹

According to the latest Census (2012) the total male population comprised 371,805 and 375,150 females, accordingly accounting for 49.8 percent and 50.2 percent respectively with the overall sex ratio of 99.1 males to very 100 females. Between 2002 and 2012, the population of both sexes did not grow but had a marginal net reduction of 4,229 males and 39 females respectively.

The population below 40 years (aged 0-39 years) was about 76.5 percent (574,779 people) of the total population in 2002, but by the 2012 Census, their total share of the entire population had dropped to 70.9 percent (529,457 people). This decline was on the overall 7.9 percent during the intercensal period. Young children under 10 years, whose births occurred during 2003 to 2012, suffered the greater portion of the decline. This 10-19 years age group was higher than the similar age group in 2002 Census by a total of 18,144 persons.

The total population for persons over the age of 40 years increased from 23.5 percent (176,445) in 2002 to 29.1 percent (217,498) in 2012 Census.

The average national life expectancy increased from 61 years in 1992 to 70 years in 2013 with women living longer than men.

Guyana comprises of six main heterogeneous ethnic groups apart from the ‘Mixed Heritage’ which derived from a combination of any of the primary groups, a consequence of intermarriage between the groups over time. Five of these distinct groups are a direct result of historical immigration policy based on the country's colonial past. The population, therefore, comprises groups of persons with nationality backgrounds from Europe (Whites and Portuguese), Africa, China, and India, with the Amerindians as the indigenous population. These groups of diverse backgrounds have been fused together by a common language, that is, English.

The East Indians are the largest ethnic group, and presently comprise 39.8 percent (297,493), down from 43.4 percent at the 2002 Census. They are followed by persons of African Heritage (29.2 percent), down from 30.2 percent. The third in rank are those of Mixed Heritage (19.9 percent) up from 16.7 percent in 2002 Census. This group continued to be a significantly growing group over the past three decades, a similarity of trend noted for the Amerindian group at present comprising 10.5 percent of the population. The smallest groups are the Whites (0.06 percent or 415 persons), the Chinese (0.18 percent or 1377 persons), and the Portuguese (0.26 percent or 1910 persons) respectively in that ascending ranking order.

Guyana is a multi-party constitutional democracy with a unicameral National Assembly elected by proportional representation every five years. Guyana’s constitutional framework is based on a hybrid

¹ Guyana Population and Housing Census 2012, Bureau of Statistics May 2016
Republican-Westminster system and therefore is distinct from its English-speaking Caribbean and Latin American neighbours.

The Parliament is headed by the President and includes the Speaker of the National Assembly. The President is not a Member of Parliament and is an executive President. The National Assembly comprises of 65 elected members; 25 seats through geographic representation and 40 national top up the geographic seats are allocated according to population size in each of the 10 Administrative Regions and the allocation of the 40 seats is based on a mathematical formula that ensures proportionality.

**Economy**

In 2016, Guyana graduated to an upper middle-income country, which is indicative of our economic developments and progress in recent years. However, this graduation creates an array of new challenges for the country, foremost of which is the loss of highly concessional financing from development partners and greater risks associated with new sources of financing. As a policy measure, Guyana has sought to widen the range of multilateral partners from which the country can access concessional or near-concessional resources.

In 2013, the economy recorded its eighth consecutive year of positive growth, with real GDP expanding by 2.5 percent; and by the end of 2013, real gross domestic product (GDP) was recorded at 6.3 percent. However, between 2015 and 2016 Guyana achieved moderate growth, despite a challenging international economic environment, and disappointing performances in some key sectors. The real economy grew by 3.3 percent, slightly below the medium term growth rate but ahead of the 3.1 percent achieved in 2015. While in 2017 the economy grew by 2.9 percent on account of weak performance in the mining sector and the decline in production of the sugar sector.²

The labour force participation rate for all persons aged 15 and above is 56 percent, roughly equal to the corresponding 2012 value (55.7 percent). In the third quarter of 2017, the unemployment rate for persons aged 15 and above was 12 percent, with the situation for women being substantially worse than that of men (15.3 percent versus 9.9 percent).³

**Legal Framework**

The legal framework related to the priority measures of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development are enshrined within the Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. The Constitution guarantees a wide range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It addresses ethnic and racial insecurities and prohibits discrimination. The constitutional and legislative provisions in place that relate to non-discrimination are Article 149 (1) of the Constitution which establishes that: (a) no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect; and (b) no person shall

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be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person acting by virtue of any written law or in the performance of the functions of any public office or any public authority.

Equality and nondiscrimination are basic tenets of the human rights corpus; in Article 149 (2) and Article 149 (D) provide for equality of persons before the law; Article 149 (E) for equality status and 149 (F) for the equality of women. Article 149 F in addition provides that “all forms of discrimination against women on the basis of gender and sex are illegal”. However, more importantly, Article 149 F ensures women’s equal rights and status with men in political, economic, cultural and social life. Other legal frameworks include:

- **The Racial Hostility Act 1973 and amendment by Act No. 9 of 2002.** Chapter 23:01, makes provision for preventing any conduct tending to excite hostility or ill-will against persons by reason of their race and prohibits incitement to racial hatred as a criminal offence.

- **The Prevention of Discrimination Act 1997 (No. 26 of 1997)** which seeks to eliminate any form of discrimination in employment and training on the basis of race, sex, sexual preference, religion, colour, ethnic origin, indigenous population, national extraction, social origin, economic status, political opinion, disability, family responsibilities, pregnancy, marital status or age except for purposes of retirement and restrictions on work and employment of minors.

- **The Equal Rights Act No. 19 of 1990** explicitly provides for the concept of ‘equal pay for work of equal value’ by removing gender distinction in the work place.

- **Age of Consent Act of 2006** amended the Marriage Act and the Criminal Offences Act to increase the age of sexual consent to 16 years for females.

- **Marriage Amendment Act 2006** brought the legal age for marriage to 16 years with parental consent.

- **Sexual Offences Act of 2010** provides legal remedies to protect victims of various sexual offences, including rape, sexual assault, incest, sexual indecency, grooming and voyeurism. The Act is gender neutral.

- **The Persons with Disabilities Act of 2010** requires the promotion and protection of the rights of people with disabilities. The Act is guided by principles established in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and sets out certain steps that the Government must take to make sure that the rights of persons with disabilities are respected, protected and fulfilled. It aims to prevent persons with disabilities from being discriminated against, on the basis of disability, and, sets out offences and penalties.

- **The Domestic Violence Act, No. 18 of 1996**, seeks to provide relief to women and children in domestic conflict such as protection orders, tenancy orders and occupation orders. It also made provisions for user-friendly service delivery.

- **Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act – Act 2 of 2005** prohibits trafficking and makes it a criminal offence, it provides a basis for a multi-sectoral approach to combating trafficking in persons and the establishment of the Ministerial Task Force on TIPs.
- **The Amerindian Act, 2006** provides generally for the recognition and protection of the collective rights of Amerindian Villages and Communities, the granting of land to Amerindian Villages and Communities, the promotion of good governance within Amerindian Villages and Communities.

Guyana has ratified several international human rights conventions, that are relevant to the priority measures, these include - the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (ICSER), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)*, the Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC).


Victims of alleged violations of these rights can seek redress in the courts for breaches of human rights under the constitution or any of the international treaties Guyana has acceded to in accordance with Article 154(A) (1) of the Constitution, which stipulates that every person, as contemplated by the respective international treaties to which Guyana has acceded, is entitled to the human rights enshrined in those international treaties. The Executive, Legislature, Judiciary and all organs and agencies of the Government shall pay due regard to international law, conventions, covenants and charters bearing on human rights.

**Part III

Summary of Implementation of Chapters of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development**

A. **Full Integration of Population Dynamics into Sustainable Development with Equality and Respect for Human Rights**

Priority measures taken to:

• Strengthen the capacity of statistical systems and of the various entities responsible for official measurements and administrative records with a view to incorporating gender and human rights into the preparation, publication and dissemination of their indicators.

The Government of Guyana is cognizant of the role data has in a decision making process when planning for the development of a society and its people. The urgent need for high quality, reliable and timely data for informed decision making has led the Guyana National Bureau of Statistics to undertake a three (3) year (March 2016 – March 2019) project aimed at enhancing statistical capacities. The focus
of the project is to improve the capturing, production and dissemination of statistical data across the National Statistical System with the Bureau of Statistics being the focal point.

The project has two (2) components, component 1 focuses on the institutional assessment of the national statistical system which comprises the Bureau and all other government ministries and agencies that are responsible for administrative data. This assessment was done utilizing a Tool to Assess Statistical Capacity (TASC) to determine strengths and weaknesses of the National Statistical System. The findings of the TASC will undergo an in-depth analysis to further identify the linkages within the system and how this can be further developed to produce optimum results. Simultaneously identifying the gaps, which hampers the system from functioning as expected. This process also takes into account shortages in both the human and technological capacities that the system suffers. The expected outcome of this assessment is the development of a medium term National Strategy for the Development of Statistics.

Component 2 will address the issue of lack of capacity as highlighted by Component 1 as it is anticipated to result in training for personnel in the relevant areas of the statistical system as well as South to South cooperation between CARICOM member states and further afield. It is envisioned that at the end of the project data capturing, production and dissemination will be in keeping with that of international standards as data will be available in a timely manner and for a wide cross section of topical areas.

The challenges of data availability, quality and timeliness remain a major hurdle in programme targeting and policy formulation. Key among the data gaps is employment statistics which is crucial to the formulation of policy, design and evaluation of programme effectiveness, given the need to generate job opportunities that result in sustainable work and a decision to undertake a labour market survey in 2016 has resulted in the completion of the Labour Force Survey sample in 2017. The survey included approximately 4,000 households every quarter, resulting in a total of about 15,000 individuals out of which about 11,000 are 15 years old or above. This sample is based on a stratified two-stage probability design and is representative of four geographic domains: a) the entire national territory b) the coast urban areas c) the coastal rural areas d) the hinterland.

Being able to access information on such areas as unemployment rates and level of youth unemployment that is region specific will aid Government to be more targeted in its programmes and projects and enable greater success in achieving intended results. In addition, data and systems to support strong monitoring and evaluation frameworks continue to be a priority as programmes are implemented across the public sector.

Guyana has never had an established unit within Government tasked with the measurement and analysis of the changing levels of poverty. However, for institutional permanency the Government recently established a Poverty Unit at the Bureau of Statistics in 2017 with the first major activity targeted being the mount of a new Living Conditions Survey in October, 2018.

• Priority measures taken to strengthen the institutions with responsibility for population and development comprehensively.

There are several agencies with direct and indirect responsibility for the sectors that oversee and manage various issues and factors that impinge on the population and national life, among these being: - the

These Ministries/entities continue to directly benefit from measures and training intended to enhance the national statistical system by generating sector-specific administrative data that will improve the management of these specific sectors, particularly population development and related issues.

In attempting to address demands and pressures for improving the lives of citizens, government continues to embark on a collaborative exercise with the International Programme for Development Evaluation Training to train employees in central government and public sector in the area of monitoring and evaluation. At the end of the workshop participants would have acquired the knowledge and skills to track progress and demonstrate the impact of development projects, programmes and policies overtime.

- **Priority measures taken to integrate population dynamics into sustainable development planning, sectoral policies and public policies and programmes in general, at the national and subnational levels.**

Currently there is no dedicated planning unit or agency to continuously address the issues of population dynamics and their integration into national planning and sectoral policies. The Ministry of Finance attempts to address this void, in conjunction with the managers of other sectors. Government’s awareness of the priority to address these needs and the urgency to implement programmes are presented in Government’s policy response, commitment and investments in programmes that address key population related issues as National Security, Education for Development, Health for the nation, youth and the future, families and children, the elderly and persons with disabilities, hinterland development and the preservation of indigenous culture highlighted in budgetary allocations. *(See Indicator A7 for % of Government budget allocated to health, education and social protection sectors.)*

All budget agencies – Ministries, Departments and regions are mandated to internalize the SDGs into their medium—term budget proposals and prioritisation and timelines for implementation of actions to achieve the SDGs. In 2018, emphasis will be placed on ensuring that the SDGs are aligned to Guyana’s National Development Strategy and the Green State Development Strategy which is currently in draft form.

In an effort to incorporate Population Dynamics into the SDG’s, Government, in cooperation with the United Nations Environmental Programme and in close cooperation with the UN Country Team (UNCT), undertook a consultative process in 2016 with the aim to formulate a Green State Development Strategy (GSDS) to guide Guyana's economic and social development.

This strategy will lay the foundation for inclusive green economic growth, provide a roadmap for achieving sustainable development targets, and outline a long term vision for a prosperous and equitable future. The GSDS will integrate relevant commitments adopted under Guyana’s international agreements. In particular, the strategy will be aligned with the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, reflecting the objectives of the country and well-being of all Guyanese.

Seven ‘central themes’ have been identified with considerable potential to contribute to the transition to a Green State: (i) Green and Inclusive Structural Transformation: Diversifying the economic base, accessing new markets and creating decent jobs for all (ii) Sustainable Management of Natural

A secretariat has been established to consult on the individual themes and consultations are currently ongoing. The Montevideo Consensus is being incorporated into the GSDS to ensure consistency in all forms.

*Table 1 shows 5 of the central themes that are aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*

**Sustainable Management of Natural Resources** (Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of forests, biodiversity, land quality, and fresh water resources. Protection, restoration and sustainable use of coastal and marine resources)

**Energy- Transition Towards Renewable Energy** (Achieving a transition to 100% renewable energy in the power sector. Achieving affordable, reliable and clean energy services for all. Ensuring security and quality of energy for business growth increasing energy efficiency)

**Infrastructure and Spatial Development** (Coastal Resilience and sustainable infrastructure. Inclusive and green urban settlements)

**Human Development and Well Being** (Ensure healthy and socially secured people. Access to good quality of education, human development and green skills)

**Governance and Institutional Foundations** (Transparency, Good Governance and rule of law. Knowledge management, Information and Communications)

*Source: Framework for Green State Development Strategy*
Guyana’s developmental agenda was previously guided by the Low Carbon Development Strategy (2010), the Poverty Reduction Strategy 111 (2011-2015) and the National Competitiveness Strategy, supported by a plethora of sectoral policies and programmes. The 2011-2015 Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme (PRSP) rested on the following pillars; (i) broad-based, low-carbon led job creation economic growth; (ii) stronger governance institutional, and regulatory structures; (iii) accelerated investment in human capital, and primary health care; (iv) accelerated investment in physical infrastructure in support of growth strategy; and (v) special intervention programmes to address regional and demographic pockets of poverty.

Guyana’s current development policies targets the poor and vulnerable sections of the population and aims to provide equal access to and delivery of goods and services, support greater integration and social cohesion, improve the quality of life and realization of human rights. Through continuous investments in Education, Health, Water, Housing, Human Services and Social Security and Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs which now assume 30% of the 2017 annual budget. As Guyana continues to make strides in its poverty reduction goals more emphasis is currently being placed on developing a green economy and sustainable development. Thus, the Green State Development Strategy will act as a guide to reinforce public policies for poverty reduction in the future.

B. Rights, Needs, Responsibilities and Requirements of Girls, Boys, Adolescents and Youth

Measures taken to: take advantage of the demographic dividend to provide social investment in adolescents and youth.

Guyana is committed to working towards establishing a nation in which young people are united, educated, trained, safe, happy, healthy and integrally involved in the decision-making processes, while enjoying equality of opportunity, equal access to the resources of the country and are politically, economically and socially empowered. Youth represents more than half of the population, (58%) is below the age of 35 years.

Youth in the national development process is critical to the long term survival of Guyana. A recent study by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) has put youth unemployment in Guyana in the region of 40 percent, a staggering percentage when it is considered that 60-65 percent of the population is aged 40 years and below. The main challenges affecting youth remain high unemployment at every level, teenage pregnancy, single parent homes among others.

According to Guyana’s labour force sample survey 2017, the youth unemployment rate (aged 15 to 24) is almost twice that of adults (21.6 percent), with young women facing severe hardship as 28 percent of them are unemployed.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth unemployment rate %</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2017 Third Quarter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Guyana National Bureau of Statistics labour force survey recorded the proportion of youth not in education, employment, or training (NEETs, SDG Indicator 8.6.1) at 35.2 percent, and is higher for young women (63 percent of the total number of NEETs) and young urban dwellers (76.4 percent of the total NEETs).

Table 3 shows the proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment, SDG (8.6.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion of Youth (aged 15-24yrs not in education, employment, or training SDG(8.6.1))</th>
<th>2017 Third Quarter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% over total youth population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>26.6 As % of total NEET youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>44.3 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>31.5 76.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35.2 23.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unemployed Youth (1000 persons)</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>% of total unemployed youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>10,176</td>
<td>7,873</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>6,635</td>
<td>8,588</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>4,555</td>
<td>11,228</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>12,311</td>
<td>5,233</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16,866</td>
<td>16,462</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In light of the challenges government continues to aggressively pursue programmes to create avenues for income generation and sustainable livelihoods to target youth unemployment.

These include: (i) the Youth Entrepreneurial Skills Training (YEST) programme; (ii) the Sustainable Livelihoods and Entrepreneurial Development (SLED) initiative in 2017 which has been allocated GUY$100 million in 2017; (iii) the Hinterland Employment and Youth Service (HEYS) which has been allocated GUY$991 million in 2017; the Youth Innovation Project of Guyana (YIPoG) and (iv) the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) platform for certified training for out-of-school youth. All of these programmes are designed to ensure that youth attain the relevant skill-set that is required for the job market, either to become employable or be their own bosses. Taken together, in 2018, Government will be investing over GUY$1.7 billion on youth programmes.

The Youth Innovation Project, seeks to engender creative thinking amongst youth, and provides grant resources up to G$2 million to finance innovative solutions. In and out of school youth, between the ages of 16-35, are benefitting from the programme. The project, which operates under the theme, “Aspire, Inspire to Reach,” was designed to decrease unemployment among youth; engage youth in the development of a green state; and foster creative thinking for problem solving through Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture, Anthropology, Archaeology, Architecture, Arts, Mathematics and Spirituality. In this regard, Government has invited youth to submit proposals for financing, which
will promote civic education, political awareness, entrepreneurship, business development and the rule of law; empower women and youth; and combat social ills, including corruption.

Under the Sustainable Livelihood and Entrepreneurial Development (SLED) programme, grants have been awarded to youth Cooperative and Friendly societies, to equip them to engage in sustainable, economic ventures. In 2017, societies from six administrative Regions benefitted from interventions such as salted fish processing, block making, lemon grass planting and harvesting, cash crop farming, chicken and pig rearing, food preservation, catering and hospitality. In 2017 over 253 households, totaling 1,170 persons were beneficiaries, and the sum of G$150 million has been budgeted to continue this venture in 2018.4

In 2016, the Government continued its work under the Hinterland Employment and Youth Service project, which was launched as part of its Plan of Action for Hinterland Development. The programme, designed to engage the youth population and improve their entrepreneurial skills, trained 1,976 youth, consisting of 579 males and 1,397 females, in areas such as joinery, masonry, auto mechanics, electrical engineering, craft, and information technology. By the end of 2017, training for the first cohort of students was complete and they received grants upon submission of viable business proposals, and a second cohort of over 1,000 youth throughout the hinterland regions were engaged. These graduates are intended to use their newly acquired skills to develop sustainable business ventures to benefit themselves and their communities.

The Board of Industrial Training (BIT) has trained youths in the areas of engineering and building—masonry and carpentry, information and communication technology, forestry, home economics and health services. From 2013 to 2016 over 12,000 youths benefitted from training and emphasis was placed on intensifying the delivery of relevant occupational, technical and vocational skills training with the objective of addressing entry-level occupational skills demand for current and emerging industries/services in both the public and private sector. Vulnerable groups were targeted such as school dropouts, youths from depressed communities (particularly including hinterland regions), single parents and the differently-abled. The board has provided training to 131 disabled persons and targeted 200 in 2017. Interventions such as this seeks to positively impact on increased employment generation, entrepreneurship and empowerment of youths.

In 2015, the Presidential Advisor on Youth Empowerment Unit (PAYEU) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) finalised the National Youth Policy of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and it was passed in the National Assembly in 2016.

While the youth policy is comprehensive in nature, it recognises the need to prioritise and therefore, it identifies nine (9) priority areas, viz: Identity, empowerment, education, skills development, employment, entrepreneurship, safety, health and wellbeing, political participation and representation.

The PAYEU has commenced work with regards to the priority areas of the National Youth Policy. Specifically, those that speak to: empowerment, education, skill development, employment and entrepreneurship. The policy is centered on a framework of five (5) strategic areas: improve the social, emotional and cultural skills of young people; produce productive and enterprising youth

4 Ministry of Finance 2018
workforce; develop quality education and market oriented skills; encourage leadership, participation and representation; promote good health, security and safety.  

Over the past five years, the Youth Department through its Youth Officers, the YEST, Volunteerism Support Platform (VSP) and PYARG programs has primarily worked with youth under areas of education, employment, health, national Identity, leadership & civic engagement, family/parenthood.

The objective of programs under education is to have an increasing number of Guyanese youth benefiting from non-academic skills and competencies inter alia practical / life, emotional and social skills that improve / enhance preparation for adulthood and employment success.

Similarly, the employment programmes are designed to equip youths with the necessary knowledge and skills to actively participate in the economy resulting in the reduction of the rate of unemployment among the youth population.

Priority actions taken to reduce the high and unequal levels of adolescent pregnancy, forced marriage and abuse and sexual violence against adolescents-

One of Government’s primary objectives is to reduce the high and unequal levels of adolescent pregnancy and equip our youths with the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes to become well-adjusted adults.

According to a recent UNICEF report 20 percent of our adolescents are pregnant before the age of 18, which means one woman out of five teens is pregnant or will become pregnant.

According to the State of the World Population report 2013, Guyana’s teen pregnancy rate of 97 per every 1000 teenagers is the second highest in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a 40% occurrence being recorded in rural areas compared to 10% in urban areas. These high rate of pregnancy is of great concern and is a challenge towards the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus.

Therefore, the Ministry of Health in 2017 launched its Health’s Adolescent and Men-Friendly Health Programme in several hinterland regions. These areas will now have access to Community Parenting Support Groups, Adolescent Antenatal Clinic Days, Adolescent Health and Wellness Days and a Men’s Health Clinic.  

These clinics are safe haven for girls between the ages of 15-24, in that it will aid in their receiving not only helpful information, but the necessary resources they need to protect themselves.

The process to formulate a National Adolescent Health Strategy which will focus on mental health, sexual and reproductive health, oral health, and substance abuse treatment and prevention services has commenced and is expected to be completed in 2018.

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5 Guyana’s National Youth Policy 2016  
6 Ministry of Public Health
It is Government’s intention to have Guyanese youth engaged in positive / safe health practices that increases safe peer group interaction and decreases unsafe or negative peer interactions.

Health Fairs have been established to promote, HIV/ STI prevention awareness, health and wellness sessions, awareness on communicable and non-communicable diseases, peer educators training, drug use/abuse campaign and awareness sessions, suicide prevention and blood drive campaign and awareness sessions.

Guyana recognizes the fact that contemporary youths are confronted with a multiplicity of options and increasing social pressures, which requires sound social, cognitive, and emotional/coping skills. The education system is ideally situated to support other social sectors in equipping students with the skills required to make healthy and productive lifestyle choices. Thus, the introduction of the Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) into the national Primary and Secondary schools’ curriculum was done to ensure that this objective is attained. HFLE encapsulates the required body of knowledge in a comprehensive life-skill educational programme that can be integrated across the curriculum. This is the media through which teachers can impact and reinforce the positive behaviours that our young people are expected to adopt and display. Beyond that, through increased awareness, students are given a safe and open environment in which they can address a wide range of issues affecting young people. Perennial issues such as (ii) poverty, (ii) neglect, (iii) various forms of abuse, (iv) sex, (v) violence, (vi) health and well-being, (vii) suicide, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS/STDs and a range of potentially “high risk” behaviours and taboo” subjects, are examined in a well-structured holistic programme.

The Ministry of Education has a school health Unit, which coordinates and implements the Health and Family Life Education, at Primary and Secondary Levels, and HIV-AIDs programme in schools for students and teachers. These programmes are complemented by regional welfare programmes that deals with intercultural and gender sensitive issues.

The Ministry of Education is currently implementing the School Health and Nutrition and HIV Prevention Policy which aims to promote and facilitate implementation of Health and Nutrition Programming and HIV Prevention throughout the education sector in Guyana.

This policy applies to all students, teachers, non-teaching staff, managers, employers, and other providers of education and training in all public and private, formal and non-formal educational institutions and in all parts of the education sector of Guyana.

The Ministry of Education School Welfare Unit, implements the reintegration of teenage mothers programmes in schools. A comprehensive reintegration policy for pregnant and parenting adolescent girls was recently completed and is expected to be implemented in 2018. This policy will have support measures that will enable teenage mother to continue their secondary education in schools.

The MOE is currently participating in the Global Out of School Children’s Survey, among the objectives of this programme is to learn and develop policies and programme that will mitigate students dropping out of a given cycle.

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7 Ministry of Education Health and Family Life Education September 2013
In July of 2016 the Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association (GRPA) and the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) joined with their partners – the Ministry of Education, Republic Bank and the Rotary Club of Georgetown to launch their ‘Still I Rise: Reintegration of Teen Mothers in Education’ project, that give 50 young women an opportunity to make their lives better.

This project sought to empower, educate and support teen mothers, vulnerable teenage adolescent girls and their families. The beneficiaries were supported with the basic items to re-enter the school system, education sessions focusing on sexuality education, personal development, psychosocial support to beneficiaries and families advocacy actions for the introduction and implementation of the reintegration strategy under the Ministry of Education. The first phase of the project was from July to December 2016 and the second, January to June 2017. Each phase accommodated 25 girls.

The 2014-2018 National Education Sector Plan is currently being implemented and covers all levels of education except university education it also consists of the detailed action plans of each unit or department that must implement actions in order to meet the targets of the strategy. This plan continues the focus on improving the quality of education that was outlined in previous plans, but it places much more emphasis on accountability by continuously monitoring results throughout the plan period.

The plan focused on improving literacy rates, early childhood development, teacher training, enrolment in single sciences, technical vocational educational programmes, and more structured partnerships with private sector providers and parents.

Progress within the education sector has been significant and evident. Guyana has made progress towards achieving universal primary education. In addition, Guyana has met its target of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, and strives towards parity at the tertiary level. According to the 2015 Global Gender Gap Report Guyana is ranked 1 out of a total of 145 countries in Educational Attainment. This is a major achievement for a small developing country. This has been achieved through massive investment in the education sector. The table 4 shows government investment in education sector within the last five years. There has been an increase of budgetary allocations to the education sector overtime.

**Table 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Sector</th>
<th>Percent of Total Budget</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G$28,486,312,814</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G32.2 Billion</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$31,793,837,000</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$38,604,313,725</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$43.1 Billion</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$41.9 Billion</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Government is currently working to increase the pool of trained teachers, which currently stands at 77 percent, (compared to 70% in 2015) in order to ensure that each child is afforded the best possible education.

Efforts have been intensified to transform our systems of education delivery via technology. To date, 610 teachers have received basic IT training, while 162 have been trained in the use of software to facilitate those who learn at different paces. Additionally, 56 teachers are being trained in website building and online teaching. These and other initiatives are expected to continue, in 2018. Other
programmes, such as the Digital Classroom Programme, are slated to commence, also. This particular programme is set to benefit about 3,540 students and 170 teachers.

In 2018, priority will be given to creating e-material for improved learning in classrooms. In 2018, much emphasis will be placed on early childhood education literacy programmes. Thus, the roll out of 200 early childhood resource kits, and the continued roll out of the “READ PLAY LOVE” mass media campaign will continue. In addition, an Inquiry Science Education approach, is being piloted in 10 primary schools while 250 mathematics kits, to facilitate better learning outcomes, have been distributed to secondary schools.

The School Feeding Programme has been expanded to provide wider access to a larger cohort of students. The community-based hot meal programme has expanded from 110 schools to 172 schools. The programme now includes schools in the riverain communities, in addition to the hinterland regions.

In March 2018 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Government of Guyana and the Organisation of American States (OAS) for the OAS to invest in approximately US$83M into the development of technical and vocational programmes in Guyana. The funding will target technical and vocational skills development, both at the secondary and post-secondary level to promote equality, inclusive and equitable education in Guyana to achieve SDG goal 4.

In an effort to reduce the high levels of child abuse a series of initiatives continue to be implemented through the Child Care Protection Agency such as the launching of the national multimedia child abuse awareness campaign where daily ads and information sessions are illustrated on the television stations, the print and non-print media to promote the campaign. The programme is also designed to strengthen vulnerable families by building their capacity to undertake the role of parenting; this benefited 342 families in 6 of the 10 administrative regions. There has been a consecutive increase in reports over the last four years. However, the increase does not necessarily result in an increase in the instances of abuse, but represents the success of the agency’s multi-media campaign and continuous efforts to have more suspected cases of abuse reported. In addition, there is continuous capacity building of child protection workers.

In 2018 government held a forum with religious organizations and local groups at the grassroots level to develop support services for families to prevent child abuse and to promote the wellbeing of children. The objective was to encourage communities to take responsibility for the safety and protection of children.

To reduce forced marriage, an imperative milestone within our legislative framework was ushered in with the passing of the Age of Consent Act 2006 and the Marriage Amendment Act 2006 which resulted in the age of consent being risen from 10 years old to 16 years. Also the the Criminal Law Offences Act No. 16 (2005) was approved in November 2005, amending the age of sexual consent to 16 years and concomitantly the Marriage Act was also amended to reflect the change in the age of consent. Children below the age of 16 cannot get married and those at the age of 16 or 17 can get married with the consent of their parents or with the leave from the Chief Justice. No child can be forced into marriage and if any such marriage is celebrated, then it is deemed as null and void.

- **Measures taken to reduce the high levels of violence experienced by boys, girls, adolescents and young people.**

To reduce the high levels of violence experienced by boys, girls, adolescents and young people. The first component of the Citizens Security Strengthening Programme (CSSP) was launched in 2016. The objective of this component is to address risk factors to crime and violence at the community, family
and individual levels. It involves promoting effective community-based crime prevention. Indicative interventions under this component that is relevant to youth includes:

(i) Capacity-building for community-level governance and community-based organizations so that they can develop local solutions for crime and violence, increase citizen engagement. (ii) Creation, formalization and strengthening of Community Action Committees to support community-led initiatives to prevent crime and violence. (iii) Provision of training for community members to address risks associated with interpersonal violence and norms that promote acceptance of violence. Training programmes that cover parenting, gender norms, counselling and conflict resolution. (iv) Public awareness and behaviour change campaigns to prevent inter-personal violence. (v) A local diagnostic survey of crime phenomena, their characteristics, factors leading to them, the form they take and their extent. (vi) Activities for creating economic inclusion for at-risk youth (ages 15-30), including: vocational, job-readiness, job seeking and job placement, entrepreneurship, and mentoring training. (vii) Rapid Impact Projects such as the rehabilitation of multi-purpose centres, sports infrastructure, and lighting, inter alia. These are envisioned as safe and inclusive spaces for youths and the wider community to interact.

The Citizen Security Strengthening Programme is designed to tackle the problem of crime and violence by working to reduce risk factors and drivers of crime and violence and promoting and strengthening protective factors. The Citizen Security Security Programme, which is funded through a US$15 million loan from the Inter-American Development Bank, aims to reducing crime and violence in Guyana, through a comprehensive approach that combines preventive strategies with institutional strengthening activities.

Some 20 communities in five of the ten administrative regions have been identified for the ‘Community Crime and Violence Prevention’ project – component one of the programme and 300 youth will be trained, in 2018, in the areas of entrepreneurship, conflict resolution, violence prevention, and parenting, as part of the citizen security initiative.  

In an attempt to address the increasing rate of psycho-social problems in schools, teachers will be trained with the requisite competencies and techniques to lend support to school welfare officers. Also, separate rooms will be made available at schools to render counselling sessions for both parents and students.

The Juvenile Justice Bill is expected to be laid and passed in the National Assembly in 2018. The Bill addresses diversionary options - diverting the juvenile away from formal Court procedures to informal procedures and includes restorative measures to deal with a juvenile alleged to have committed an offence and access to legal aid for children and youth.

In 2018 Government will be piloting a legal aid programme, which will work on the defense of minor, non-violent offenders, who are on pre-trial detention. By the end of 2018, the programme will commence work on the over 500 cases, on assessing the sustainability of this pilot legal aid programme.

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8 Ministry of Public Security
- **Priority actions taken to promote the participation of youth in all spheres and at all levels.**

Government continues to ensure that our youth are incorporated into policy, legislative and programming decision making, through several mechanisms including Youth Parliament, President’s Youth Award Republic of Guyana (PYARG) and through the drafting of a national youth policy, which articulates young people’s perspectives on politics and good governance in Guyana.

Adolescents and young played a pivotal role in the creation of the National Youth Policy. They were involved, and contributed significantly towards providing the relevant information for its creation and finalisation. Between 2013 to 2014, more than three thousand (3,000) youth were engaged through regional consultations, and in 2014, through a National Youth Forum. In 2015, fifty-two (52) youth organisations across Guyana participated in a survey and key stakeholder interviews to support the collection of data on issues affecting youth, identify entry points for youth development, and elaborate on existing youth development opportunities. The data gathered was analysed and published in the *Situational Analysis of Youth in Guyana 2015* and led to the development of a draft policy. This draft policy was shared and discussed with youth and other key stakeholders at a two (2) day Working Session held on July 3rd - 4th, 2015. The feedback gathered at that forum was incorporated in the finalized policy.

The policy has as a priority, youth leadership, participation and representation. The objective of this priority is to ensure that young people are respected and become active participants and representatives in decision-making at the village, neighbourhood, regional, national and international policy levels. The formal mechanisms to ensure that adolescents and youths participate in the decision making process at all levels will be covered in the National Youth Empowerment Action Plan (NYEAP). To promote participation and representation, the PAYEU assisted in the formation of over fifty (50) youth organisations and has also provided leadership training to their members. This is aimed at equipping the youths with the skills and knowledge required for them to participate in the national process and be able to better represent their interest.

The youths that were part of the last ten (10) leadership training programme were given the opportunity to express their views/perspectives at the various working sessions including the mock parliament. Some of the popular topics discussed were: youth unemployment; lack of youth representation in the Guyana Parliament; concerns about the parking meters, suicide, teenage pregnancy, drugs and drug abuse. The Youths were able to air their concerns about these issues and recommend policy change. These recommendations were noted by PAYEU and were placed in reports for follow up action.

For the first time, in 2016 youth representatives from all ten (10) regions were invited to participate in shaping a national budget. They were able to provide information to policy makers on many of the issues that are of concern to youth.

As part of its work programme PAYEU intends to meet with both attached and unattached youths from the ten (10) Administrative Region of Guyana. This will be done in an effort to provide youths with an opportunity to express their concerns and speak on issues that are of interest to them and their community.
Government in collaboration with development partners, has commenced arrangements for the construction of a Centre for the creative arts, which will allow youth an avenue to express themselves through music, dance, drama and the visual arts. This centre will also provide a platform for young people to pursue and develop their artistic careers. Investments in excess of G$520 million are also being made in sporting facilities and programmes, providing youth access to amenities and structured approaches to nurture their athletic abilities.

The Presidential Advisor on Youth Empowerment Unit (PAYEU) since 2016 continues offering the following training programmes: Financial Literacy and Small Business Training Programme; Food/Agro Processing Training Programme; Heavy Duty Equipment Training Programme; Leadership Training Programme; Literacy, Numeracy and Work Ready Pilot Project; Music Training Programme (Pilot Project); Youth Empowerment Project for Youth and Student Writers Training Programme and the Youth Night School Programme (Pilot Project). In addition, the Unit intends to continue the construction works started in 2016-2017 three youth training centres.

These rehabilitative works are being done to make these centres more youth friendly and conducive to accommodate educational programmes and to extend its capacity to accommodate more live-in training programmes that will be utilised to offer non-traditional training programmes that are relevant to the current market needs, such as; heavy duty and oil and gas training.

The approach to expand, rehabilitate and create new live-in training centres is aimed at helping those in poverty who cannot afford to travel and sustain themselves while attending technical and vocational training institutions not to drop out. A review was recently completed of the current live-in institutions. This was done in an effort to upgrade the facilities to provide better service to the youth and adolescents.

The PAYEU has taken an unorthodox approach for these construction works. Instead of hiring a contractor, they hired a foreman, skilled men and apprentices from communities where the projects are sited. This approach is worthy to be imitated since it provides the youth who are apprentices the opportunity to gain employment while acquiring the needed experience/exposure in their particular field of study; hence, reconciling studies and work activities.

Apart from training and construction, the unit formed new youth organisations, meet with existing youth organisation members, assisted youth organisations with sport gears and equipment, and collaborated with other Governmental bodies and potential youth empowerment stakeholders for the overall motivation and empowerment of the country’s youth.

The New Opportunity Corps (NOC) – an institution for juvenile offenders, will implement programmes in 2018 to help adolescents, even those who are repeat offenders, to turn their lives around. These rehabilitation programs will aid in in behaviour change and help the offenders to develop goals for themselves that they can pursue when they are released. The New Opportunity Corps will provide a two-year program that will equip juveniles with the knowledge and skills to become functional citizens when they are reintegrated into society. Apart from the technical vocational skills, juveniles will be given an opportunity to enhance their literacy and numeracy skills.
Juveniles will be expose to the Secondary Competency Certificate Programme (SCCP) which caters extensively for technical vocational education of adolescent. The Reading, Mathematics, English Language and Information Technology curriculums set by the Ministry of Education through the Secondary Reform Project (SSRP) will be used as the guide for instructors to follow when delivering the content of the course.

Upon completion of the course each juvenile will be awarded a certificate which can be used after they are reintegrated into society. This certificate allows them entrance into any Governmental Learning Institution in an effort to continue the learning process and further enhance the skills acquired at the NOC. This certificate will also assist juveniles in securing a job based on the skills acquired at the NOC.

Kuru Kuru Training Centre provides a ten-month training programme which targets youths between the ages of 16 and 25, many of whom were unable to complete school. Youth across the ten administrative regions of Guyana are targeted for the programme. The center provides them with a wide range of skills development and a vast amount of practical work before entering the field of work. Kuru Kuru Training Centre is currently moving towards competency based training, where youth will be able to receive LEVEL 1 CVQ certification.

PAYEU executed the following training programmes for the period 2016-2017: Food/Agro Processing Training; Financial Literacy and Small Business Training; Heavy Duty Equipment Training; Music Training; Youth Night School; Literacy and Numeracy Training and Youth Leadership Training. A total of nine hundred and twenty-three (923) youths were trained under the various programmes. This measure is in keeping with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) four (4), targets 4.4 and 4.6.

This measure sought to develop the knowledge and skills of youth and adolescents, so they will be better able to advocate for their interest in all spheres and at all levels.

The Leadership Training Programme in particular, taught the adolescents and youth how to critically analyze concepts, how to formulate and pass motions, how to engage in public speaking inter alia. It equipped them with the requisite skills to advocate for issues that are of concern to themselves, their communities and fellow peers. The participants were both attached and unattached youths from the ten (10) Administrative Regions of Guyana. The attached youths were predominantly drawn from organisations that were resuscitated or created by PAYEU. The unit encourages the formation of youth organisations so youths can participate in the national process and represent their interest.

Information from Office of Presidential Advisor on Youth Empowerment.
C. Ageing, Social Protection and Socioeconomic Challenges

Measures taken to eliminate social, legal, institutional and physical barriers that prevent or limit substantive equality for older persons with respect to other population groups; allow older persons to make their own decisions and live independent lives, as much as possible facilitate contact and communication between persons of different ages as well as encourage ties and mutual learning.

Government has recognized the importance of providing a good quality of life for senior citizens and the need for a more comprehensive approach to regulate and continually enhance the standards of the elderly throughout Guyana.

The National Commission for the Elderly was constituted and commenced discharging its mandate in 2012, with the aim of supporting the continued involvement of senior citizens in the economic and community life of the country.

In 2017 the Commission for the Elderly continued to formulate new initiatives through the distribution of breakfast at central post offices in the capital to elderly persons at the commencement of every month when senior citizens uplift their pensions at post offices. The programme will be expanded to other locations throughout Guyana in 2018. In addition, health fairs with free services such as testing of vital signs, blood sugar, eye screening and dental care are offered to senior citizens. A pilot programme was launch in March 2018 to sensitize seniors on prevention and control of non-communicable diseases and these were conducted at post offices where pensions are uplifted.

Priority service lines for seniors in private sectors organisations, including commercial banks, airlines, insurance, telephone and other public organisations and Ministries are common throughout Guyana. Newly built public buildings are equipped with ramps and rails to allow accessibility of senior citizens. These measures encourage older persons to enter the public space, conduct business, and interact with other seniors and the general public. In addition to that several supermarkets throughout Guyana offers senior citizens discounts on specific days during the week in an effort to ease the financial burden.9

The Commission for the Elderly in February 2017 commenced a national school outreach program. The program was geared towards raising awareness and changing attitudes as it relates to ageism and abuse of elderly persons and targeted both Primary and Secondary school aged children.

Within the past five years’ assistance to the senior citizens has increased by 56% percent, with a total of approximately fifty thousand five hundred and fifty-six (50,556) senior citizens currently benefitting from old age pension. In addition, senior citizens over the age of sixty-five (65) are no longer requirement to pay for drivers’ licenses and travel tax, among others.

Table 5 shows the significant % of the Ministry of Social Protection’s budget that is allocated to pensioners only. This signifies Guyana’s commitment to assist with the financial well-being of the elderly.

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9 Ministry of Social Protection
Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Protection Budget</th>
<th>Total allocated to Pensioners</th>
<th>Percentage of Social Protection Budget allocated to pensioners</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G$16.988Billion</td>
<td>G$12,589Billion</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$16.617Billion</td>
<td>G$12,266Billion</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$13.366Billion</td>
<td>G$10,771Billion</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Finance Budget Estimates

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Protection Budget</th>
<th>Percentage of Social Protection Total Budget</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G$16.988Billion</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$16.617Billion</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$13.366Billion</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$5.196Billion</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$9.789Billion</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$9.031Billion</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Finance Budget Estimates

In May 2017 the Minimum Standards for Elderly Residential Facilities was established as well as a visiting Committee for Elderly Residential Facilities to ensure that the minimum standards are implemented and that senior citizens are well cared for.

Members of the visiting committee are mandated to work along with these institutions to identify gaps and guide them regarding the required regulatory standards that must be upheld. They are required to ensure that their dignity, privacy and independence are retained; that their health and nutritional needs are taken into account; and that management and staff are readily on hand to assist persons within these institutions.

Training of patient care assistants has been rigorously intensified and the programmes are design to help them become more equipped to effectively service the elderly. While assistance to senior citizens through the Difficult Circumstances Unit at the Ministry of Social protection is offered to purchase food supplies and medication for those who may be experiencing economic difficulties. Free medical assistance is offered to all senior citizens at all public medical facilities as well as all senior citizens’ homes controlled by the Government without discrimination based on ethnicity, gender or class.

There is currently no policy for the elderly, however, a National Policy on Ageing is expected to be completed in 2018. The overarching goal of the national ageing policy is to achieve the overall social, economic and cultural reintegration of older persons into mainstream society and to enable senior citizen population as far as practicable to fully participate in the national development process.
In addition to that an Elderly Welfare Section within the Probation and Social Services Department will be established in 2018 to monitor the daily operations of Elderly Residential Care Facilities in collaboration with the Visiting Committee and investigate reports of elderly abuse.

D. **Universal Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services**

Measures taken to help identify and review legislation, standards and practices that restrict access to sexual and reproductive health services.

Guyana wishes to report that initiatives in keeping with universal access to sexual and reproductive health remain a national priority in keeping with SDG 3. The national health sector strategy – the Health Vision 2020 – continues to guide investments and interventions in the sector, with the ultimate aim of achieving universal coverage of health care inclusive of sexual and reproductive health services.

However, the challenges faced by the public health sector are many and varied: shortage of drugs and problems of procurement; continued strain on the National Referral Hospital; health infrastructure deficits; and disparities between the hinterland and coastland. Nevertheless, government continues to make every effort to ensure that every dollar invested in the public health system is geared towards improving service delivery – quality, efficiency and effectiveness. In 2018, GUY$33.3 billion, has been budgeted which is 7 percent more than 2017, 12.5 percent of budget 2018 and 4.2 percent of the GDP, to modernise and transform the sector.

The table 7 highlights the significant portion of the annual budget allocated to the Health Sector and the continued increase over the past 5yrs with 2017 and 2018 allocation remained fixed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Sector</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Budget</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G$17,712,739,749</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$21.5 Billion</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$22,070,101,000</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$27,651,862,898</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$31.2 Billion</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$33.3 Billion</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 7- Source- Ministry of Finance Budget Estimate*

A review of the practices and attitudes of staff at Sexual and Reproductive Health facilities in Guyana was conducted to determine the barriers to access of Sexual and Reproductive Health services.

Findings from several focus group discussions and key informant interviews of men who have sex with men (MSM ) and Female Sex Workers (FSW) revealed the following barriers to access:

That non-medical staff at health facilities were more likely to discriminate or breach confidentiality; sensitization traditionally excluded auxiliary staff; auxiliary staff would observed clients who regularly attend clinic and would draw conclusions as to who is HIV positive based on frequency and duration of membership at the clinic; auxiliary staff such as guards and maids need to be
sensitized and also held accountable for client confidentiality; FSW and MSM who are HIV positive face double stigma; FSW are reluctant to disclose their true occupation due to anticipated stigma; MSM are reluctant to purchase condoms or lubricants due to stigma; attitudes of staff or other patients can be intimidating for MSM and FSW; dress codes at health facilities place hardship on transgendered and FSW; and denial and self-stigma.

- **Measures to eradicate discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the exercise of sexual rights.**

In keeping with article 146 of the Constitution Guyana recognizes the impact stigma and discrimination has on reducing access to prevention, care and treatment services. Therefore, the government remains committed to creating an environment free from prejudice, regardless of the age, creed, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation of those seeking health services.

An anti-stigma and discrimination policy document was developed by the Ministry of Public Health in 2011 to support the creation of an enabling environment for access to health services by those most in need of them- The most at risk populations who have been defined in Guyana as Men who have Sex with Men, commercial sex workers and mobile populations such as miners and loggers.

Extensive training of all categories of health workers was carried out across the country targeting all sites that provide sexual and reproductive health services. Gay men and FSW were trained and empowered to be part of the sensitization team targeting health care providers. Sensitization training ended in staff pledging to support the access of all persons to SRH services regardless of sexual orientation, class or creed. Confidentiality clauses are required to be signed by all staff and the policy document provides for the transfer or dismissal of any staff that can be proven to discriminate or breach confidentiality of a client.

The Ministry of Public Health has completed a draft Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy which will seek to address all issues regarding the access to information on sexual and reproductive health inclusive of sexual orientation.

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Community is seeking the removal of certain laws from the body of laws of Guyana on the basis that such laws discriminate against the LGBTI community and hinder the enjoyment of their basic human rights.

One of the challenges is that the Criminal Law Offences Act, Cap 8:01 Sections 351-353 criminalises certain sexual acts between men and Section 153(1)(xlvi) of the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act commonly known as the “cross-dressing” are discriminatory towards the LGBTI community.

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10 Ministry of Public Health
These laws are considered to be in breach of human rights as the laws deprive the LGBT community from exercising their sexual rights as certain homosexual acts and transgender activities are criminalised and do not facilitate the progressive realisation of the full rights afforded to the LGBTI community in other countries.

In addition, requests have been made by several NGOs and civil society organizations for section 4 of the Prevention against Discrimination Act, Cap. 99:08 and Article 149 of the Constitution of Guyana to be amended to include sexual orientation as a ground upon which persons shall not be discriminated against.

Therefore, as it relates to steps taken to eradicate discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the exercise of sexual rights, there has not been any legislative reform of the laws of Guyana.

The LBGTI community has been campaigning for the repeal and/or amendments of the laws and decriminalization of consensual adult same sex, sexual relations and discrimination. The government had announced that it would consider having a referendum to decide the issue of the legality of homosexuality. Although, no final decision has been taken. Government wishes to note that the state does not discriminate against persons based on their sexual orientation and that every Guyanese is entitled to their right to freedom of expression, employment, housing, medical care, education as provided for in the constitution, laws and policies of Guyana. Any aggrieved person is free to approach the courts on a constitutional motion.

Guyana acknowledges that there are interpersonal prejudices based on cultural attitudes and religious beliefs as reflected in a 2013 survey which indicated that 25% of Guyanese are homophobic.

**Measures taken to encourage men to take responsibility in sexual and reproductive health matters and in the reproductive care burden.**

In implementing the SDGs to promote healthy lives and well-being for all ages, the Ministry of Public Health in collaboration with United Nation’s Children Fund (UNICEF) successfully rolled out programmes, in 2017, for men’s health, at 7 health care facilities in Guyana aimed at improving healthcare services for adolescents and men.

The number of clinics will increase as more providers are being trained and communities sensitized. Posters, murals, TV ads and edutainment programmes are in place to raise awareness on the need for men to access SRH services. Round table discussions on SRH issues and access to services are conducted at community level targeting men. Information from such focus group discussions provides valuable input for the tailoring of services to facilitate specific community needs. Services targeting men are typically provided with extended hours to cater for workers.

To ensure that males are adequately informed about the benefits of sexual and reproductive health for themselves, their partners and families, and actively participate in and access sexual and reproductive health services, the Government of Guyana committed to: reorienting sexual and reproductive health services to make them male-friendly and cater to the specific needs of men and boys; implement strategies to encourage men to access sexual and reproductive health counselling and services; develop programmes to increase awareness among men and boys of their role in SRH so that men and boys take responsibility for their own health as well as that of their partners and families; engage men and boys as positive agents of change for achieving gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights and ending violence against women and girls; ensure the active
involvement and participation of males in the development of sexual and reproductive health programmes and interventions; support men and encourage them to share equally in child rearing and child support, household and family responsibilities and family planning practices; develop and disseminate information, education, communication (IEC) material that respond to the specific needs of men; provide information, education and services to prevent and treat male sexual dysfunction; and provide complete and accurate information to parents and men to allow them to make informed decisions regarding circumcision.

These measures are aligned to encourage men to take a more responsible role in SRH.

- Measures taken to guarantee conditions for the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights, including those of adolescents.

There are several health care facilities which provide primary and secondary health care services for women and young girls. These facilities have also been fortified with the necessary supplies and staff to provide follow-up services, including emergency services for women and young girls. There has also been the introduction of a wider range of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (OB/GYN) services including high risk clinic, VIA screening and treatment, and other OB/GYN consultations. Through support from UNFPA, maternity waiting homes were established to accommodate pregnant women and their families from interior locations during pre and post-delivery. The curricula for health workers include comprehensive, mandatory, gender-sensitive courses on women’s health and human rights, gender-based violence through formal diploma to post-graduate training at the University of Guyana Medical School and the Nursing Schools. Additionally, the Ministry of Health from time to time conducts seminars and specialized courses for health practitioners.

Guyana is pleased to note that there has been a sustained thrust to educate the public on family planning and contraception by the MOPH and more specifically through the Regional Health Departments of all hinterland Regions. Given the unacceptably high rate of teenage pregnancy, high risk pregnancy and maternity complications from Hinterland Regions, these interventions have commenced at the level of schools, village councils and community-based organisations. For women accessing precondition care and postnatal care, contraceptive services and education are accessible in the package of maternal and child health services. For instance, in 2014, a total of 24 doctors and nurses from all 10 administrative Regions benefitted from ‘contraception use’ training and returned to their regions with IUD kits.

In accordance with the CEDAW and Beijing+20 commitments to remove regulatory and social barriers to reproductive health information and care for adolescents, Guyana has taken steps to ensure that health care providers do not restrict access of adolescents to reproductive health information and counselling.

Through the maternal health thematic fund implemented by UNFPA support was provided for the prevention and reduction of adolescent pregnancy. Contraceptive methods (which include, intrauterine device placements, injections, pills, condoms among others) have been promoted to women and men in isolated communities, through the Maternal Child Health program and at all the public health facilities across the four hinterland regions. Additionally, other methods have been accessible through the Surgical Outreach Program and permanent methods have been provided to women. These services have been strengthened by capacity building of 30 health care workers in
contraceptive counselling. UNFPA has also provided capacity building support to the Ministry of Health in the area of Family Planning methods.\textsuperscript{11}

Once Implemented, the SRH Policy will cater for adolescents, the elderly, men, female sex workers and male sex workers as each priority population has a section that lists the actions that are recommended to increase access and reduce barriers.

The SRH Policy proposes the following four elements to be institutionalized throughout all health facilities if universal access to sexual and reproductive health is to be achieved: \textit{availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality.}

\textbf{a) Availability:} Functioning public health and health-care facilities, goods and services, as well as programmes, available in sufficient quantity.

\textbf{b) Accessibility:} The concept of accessibility has four components: (1) non-discrimination – they must be available to everyone within the jurisdiction; (2) physical accessibility – they must be within safe physical reach for all sections of the population especially vulnerable or marginalized groups; (3) economic accessibility – they must be affordable for all; and (4) information accessibility – everyone has the right to seek, receive and impart information concerning health issues.

\textbf{c) Acceptability:} All health facilities, goods and services must be respectful of medical ethics and culturally appropriate, i.e. respectful of the culture of individuals, minorities, peoples and communities, sensitive to gender and life-cycle requirements, as well as being designed to respect confidentiality and improve the health status of those concerned.

\textbf{d) Quality:} As well as being culturally acceptable, health facilities, goods and services must also be scientifically and medically appropriate and of good quality. This requires, \textit{inter alia}, skilled medical personnel scientifically approved and unexpired drugs and hospital equipment, safe potable water, and adequate sanitation.\textsuperscript{12}

It has also been imperative to develop interagency collaboration between the Ministries of Public Health and Education to co-design IEC materials for delivery in schools that include sexual and reproductive health education targeting adolescent girls and boys and paying special attention to prevention of teenage pregnancy. This has been complementary to the Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) programme in all secondary schools which incorporates prevention of teenage pregnancy in the curriculum and preventative methods in relation to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS.

The Ministry of Public Health Adolescent Health Unit has established the Adolescent Health Clinic Days at specific Adolescent Friendly Health Centres. There are support groups formed for young teen mothers and their partners. Thirty-nine (39) clinics have been opened across the country with more expected to be opened during the course of 2018. There is a link between the Adolescent Health Programme, the School Health programme and the Peer Educators programmes in schools. The Health and Family Life Education programme provides in school youth with comprehensive SRH education which is reinforced in the revitalized health clubs.

\textsuperscript{11} Guyana State Party Report on CEDAW “Article 12- Equality and Access to Health Care
\textsuperscript{12} Ministry of Public Health
Children are provided with information on the Adolescent Friendly centres in their neighborhoods where they can seek SRH services Ministry of Public Health.

The Guyana Responsibility Parenthood Association, an advocacy group for sexual and reproductive rights has also led in educating communities on family planning and its importance in nine administrative Regions of the country. Through UNFPA’s collaboration with Women Across Differences (NGO) a ‘Comprehensive Empowerment Programme for the reduction of adolescent pregnancy was initiated with over five hundred (500) adolescents benefitting from the programme with a 90% percent success rate of no second or third pregnancy.

During 2014 with support from the UNFPA, GRPA rolled out a National Family Planning Initiative in the coastal regions of Guyana with the aim of narrowing the family planning gap and addressing unmet needs. The project components covered in service provision, educating communities on family planning and its importance for balanced family life, community and society, and to build confidence among the women and men in the use of contraceptives. In total 3,649 persons benefitted directly, including community health workers and midwives. Women Across Differences in collaboration with UNFPA through its interventions to reduce adolescent pregnancy also advocated for family planning among the young mothers in several communities. One outcome of the initiative was the establishment of ‘The Young Mothers of Change’ where schools and communities are targeted by the young mothers to interact with their peers on adolescent pregnancy reduction.

In 2014, the MOPH also collaborated with GRPA, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), and the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) to conduct a training-of-trainers of medical professionals for 20 doctors and 16 nurses who provide abortion services. The following year, the GRPA added an abortion anti-stigma training workshop with 30 youths and 5 adults. Young people, MSMs, sex workers and transgendered persons have also been key target populations of the campaigns. Last year alone 5974 youths benefitted directly from the Teen and Youth Clinic, which provides a youth-friendly environment, services, education, training and counselling.

Guyana’s National Aids program secretariat continues to provide information and care and treatment to all individuals living with HIV/ Aids and sexual transmitted infections including adolescents.

Information provided includes one on one and group counseling on secondary prevention through abstinence, partner reduction, faithfulness to one partner who is faithful, correct, consistent condom use and limits on alcohol use. Trained counselors during the one –on- one sessions would do risk assessments of the client’s sexual practices and discuss steps for risk reduction. Pap smears and VIA- (visual Inspection using Acetic Acid) are promoted for eligible women and the use of dual methods of contraception for HIV positive women.

The Adolescent Health Unit currently conducts youth empowerment sessions with adolescents living with HIV. The Youth Empowerment sessions deal with self-esteem, managing significant relationships, family planning, and the ABC’s of safe sexual practices. In future, such clubs will link vulnerable adolescents in need of skills training to vocation skills training programmes for youth run by the Ministry of Social Protection.
One of the greatest challenge Guyana is facing within the health sector is that despite progress achieved during the last decade, Guyana continues to experience one of the highest maternal and infant mortality rates in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Table 8 shows Guyana’s Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births) within the past five years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Public Health

Nevertheless, government continues to work to address these critical areas that can impede national development. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) approved an US$8 million loan for a program to help reduce maternal, perinatal and neonatal deaths in Guyana. This program sought to improve the quality of care at 140 health facilities and in 88 communities, benefitting at least 140,000 women and 9,000 newborns per year.

A total of US$8 million, will be invested in 2018 over the next five years, to improve maternal child health. The project got underway in 2018, and budgeted to spend $150 million on activities, which include the rehabilitation of the obstetric unit at regional Hospitals and the provision of essential obstetric and newborn care equipment for the largest hospital in Guyana (Guyana Public Hospital Corporation). The project also involves capacity building towards an eventually improved supply chain management system for health facilities. These initiatives and more are intended to improve the health outcomes for mothers and children, by contributing to the reduction of the maternal and infant mortality rates.

It is worthy to note that Ninety-eight percent (98%) of all births are attended by skilled health personnel in comparison to 94% in 2014. While antenatal care provided by a skilled professional has improved from 81% in 2006 to 91% in 2014.13

The Ministry of Public Health through the Maternal and Child Department have structured programs in place that focuses on detecting high risk pregnancies, including at the preconception stage and improving the quality of antenatal care. For those high risk pregnancies in the hinterland locations, the Ministry plans on building more maternity resting homes where a mother can be observed and cared for whilst she awaits delivery or transportation out of the region for delivery.

In 2017, work commenced to equip and upgrade district hospitals to deliver the full suite of mandated services, as this would lead to greater equity between the hinterland and coastland. Additional specialists, specialising in areas such as pediatrics, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, dental, and general surgery, are deployed to hinterland regions.

13 UNICEF The Situation Analysis of Women and Children in Guyana 2016
Government continues to assess the potential for a Geographic Health Information System, which was piloted, in 2017, at 7 locations. This is intended to improve data collection, allowing for the coordination and harmonisation of the various aspects of patient care towards effective resource allocation and care management. Further, it is anticipated that in 2018, the System of Health Accounts, which commenced in 2017, will be completed and will map the financing flows of the entire health sector by its various sources.

Guyana continues to offer free prevention of Mother to Child Transmission Treatment and free Anti-Retroviral Treatment at its facilities, thus significantly reducing levels of transmission and extending life and wellness of those affected. All pregnant women are tested for HIV, Syphilis and other STIs. Once tested HIV positive, the prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) Plus programme is activated which guarantees the initiation of antiretroviral (ARVs) regardless of CD4 count. One Hundred and ninety (190) Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission sites have been established all 10 Administrative Regions as Guyana seeks elimination of mother to child transmission. In 2014, 94.4% of the pregnant women accessed PMTCT services and were tested for HIV. Among those identified as HIV positive, 97% of them had received Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) in 2014.14

Dry blood spot testing is carried out on new born babies and prophylactic treatment given. Mothers are given formula for 18 months and encouraged to not breast feed at all or to exclusively breast feed if not breast feeding isn’t an option due to non-disclosure.

Since 2012 Guyana has in place the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act Chapter 32.05 in the Laws of Guyana. The Ministry of Public Health is now seeking to ensure that mothers who seek these services are able to access them once she is clinically eligible. Medical Practitioners are required to be trained and certified by the Ministry of Public Health in order to be permitted to provide termination services. Only certified institutions can offer termination of pregnancy services. In 2014, the MOPH also collaborated with GRPA, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), and the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) to conduct a training-of-trainers of medical professionals for 20 doctors and 16 nurses who provide abortion services. In 2015, the GRPA added an abortion anti-stigma training workshop with 30 youths and 5 adults. Young people, men who have sex with men (MSM), sex workers and transgendered persons have also been key target populations of the campaigns.

The Ministry of Public Health Adolescent Health Unit has launched and is currently supporting Antennal Clinics and Community Parenting Support Groups which main aim is to provide support to adolescent pregnant girls and mothers.

The teen mothers and pregnant teens are given care packages that comprise pampers and clothing for babies. Monthly support groups are facilitated at the clinics by providers and the partners of the teens are encouraged to attend. One on one and group family planning counsellings sessions are conducted to avoid repeat pregnancies. Teens desirous of returning to school are identified and referred to the Ministry of Education.

14 UNICEF Situation Analysis of Women and Children in Guyana 2016
**E. Gender Equality**

Priority measures taken to eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls in public and private places.

Government’s national approach to tackling the interpersonal violence epidemic in the country has seen numerous initiatives undertaken and implemented. The promotion and enforcement of the Sexual Offences Act (SOA) 2010, the 1996 Domestic Violence Act and its regulations, and, the National Domestic Violence Policy form the framework for the reduction of all forms of violence and abuse against women and children and protection to the victims. This is enhanced through a multi-sectoral multidimensional approach. The 2013 amendment to the Sexual Offences Act 2010 removed flaws in the paper committal procedure based on the recommendations of the Rules Committee of the Judicial Service Commission. The Domestic Violence Act (1996) specifically provides victims of domestic violence with a relatively simple, quick and inexpensive means of obtaining protection from their abusive partners, through protection orders, and occupation and tenancy orders. Victims are afforded free legal advice and representation by the Guyana Legal Aid Clinic.

Also in 2013, the collective commitment of Parliament was demonstrated by the unanimous passage of Resolution No. 47 on Interpersonal Violence that condemned all forms of interpersonal violence and supported new and existing programmes to address the scourge by government and CSOs.

Government will establish two (2) Domestic Violence centers in 2018 which will function as safe havens for victims of abuse. These will offer additional protection for victims in areas outside of the capital and add to the space offered by another NGO- Help and Shelter that receives annual financial support from the government.

Another measure for addressing violence against women has been boosting the capacity of the Guyana Police Force to adequately prosecute perpetrators. Police stations precincts are constantly being upgraded across the country to handle domestic violence interviews. The Guyana Police Force has taken measures to (i) establish Domestic Violence and Sexual Offence Units at Police Force Headquarters, (ii) train Ranks and encourage more people-friendly precincts; (iii) remodel key precincts with designated private spaces to facilitate reporting such cases; and (iv) work with Non-Governmental Organisations and the Ministry of Social Protection.

Even with progressive legislation one of the main challenges remains application of the Sexual Offences Act by front line workers. Thus, Guyana has taken significant strides towards the implementation of a responsive mechanism that seeks to hold several categories of practitioners/professionals accountable, and improve the quality of care and service being provided to victims and survivors of sexual violence. In this regard, Protocols for Medical Practitioners, Prosecutors and Police Officers have been developed and endorsed by the respective Ministerial heads.

The endorsement and implementation of these protocols will strengthen national commitment towards a process of strategic and purposeful alliances; that may result in the reduction and subsequent elimination of all forms of sexual and domestic violence.
One hundred and sixty (160) Frontline workers [including Probation & Social Services Officers, Child Protection Officers, Schools Welfare Officers, Regional Health Officers, Officers from the Regional & Local Democratic Organs (RDCs & MTCs), Community Health Workers, Social Workers] across Guyana benefited from training in the Domestic Violence Act, the Sexual Offences Act and the training sought to:

- Increase the participants’ knowledge about and clarified their attitudes to sexual violence, domestic violence and gender-based violence;
- Increase the participants’ ability to respond appropriately when intervening in sexual violence, domestic violence and gender-based violence cases;
- Clarify their roles as explained in the Sexual Violence and Domestic Violence protocols; and
- Allow participants to embrace an attitude of sensitivity, care and responsibility in the execution of their duties.

At the end of the training participants developed 3-month work plans and were required to implement programs and activities in their respective communities with support from the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Policy Unit.

Training and capacity building for staff members of the focal point Ministry responsible for gender affairs has been operationalised through a series of workshops and collaborations with UN agencies namely UNFPA and UN Women. Staff benefitted from training and seminars on Gender Equality, Self and Self Assertiveness for Women, Women and Sexual and Reproductive Health, Gender-Based Violence, Planning through a Gender Lens, Barriers for Women and Men in the Work Environment and Exploring the linkages between Gender-Based Violence and HIV/AIDS.

a) Violence, Planning through a Gender Lens, Barriers for Women and Men in the Work Environment and Exploring the linkages between Gender-Based Violence and HIV/AIDS.

b) Subsequently, training sessions were held by the MoSP with the Guyana Business Coalition through the Guyana National Shipping Corporation and seven other rural-based NGOs. Gender awareness programmes held in workplaces and prisons covered gender-based violence, sexual harassment and anger management respectively. Along with support from UN Women, several initiatives were executed during the sixteen (16) days of activism across the country, including video shows, sharing of experiences by survivors and edutainment, dramatization to depict all forms of violence, discussions about the leading causes of domestic violence and rape.

In November 2013, approximately thirty-five (35) persons benefitted from a two-day workshop on CEDAW and the Gender Dimension of HIV in the Caribbean. The participants comprised representatives from government agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, representatives of the network of Guyanese living with and affected by HIV. This workshop was sponsored by United Nations (UN) Women, who also participated in the workshop and made presentations along with the National AIDS Programme Secretariat.

Aware that gender empowerment programs should move beyond the urban centres, amplified its outreach in collaboration with the Regional Women’s Affairs Committee (RWAC) to other Regions in 2014. One hundred and forty-four (144) women benefitted from empowerment and gender awareness sessions.

In 2014, thirty-five (35) members of the Regional Women’s Affairs Committee attended the Annual General Meeting under the theme ‘Enhancing the Development of our Women and Embracing Gender Equality. Their participation in the dialogue, on the role of women and climate
change, women in health, gender-based violence and its effects on the family and women in entrepreneurship.

Three (3) sessions were held with members of the Regional Women’s Affairs Committees in several regions, where there were reportedly high incidents of violence. In this regard they benefitted from specialised training. Following these sessions, approximately sixty (60) persons including representatives of the communities have been equipped to network with other agencies. One main achievement of their newly acquired skills and networking has been the delivery of counselling services to beneficiaries in selected communities.

Extensive government-led campaigns and advocacy work done by non-governmental organisations, has disseminated the relevant messages in schools, the mass media, in communities and at other levels, and has resulted in increased awareness. The establishment of a hotline has been another such initiative. A list of Probation and Social Welfare Officers available for this crucial task has been published. Extensive training has commenced for Protocols that were developed to guide the police, health practitioners, social workers and the Judiciary with regard to domestic and sexual violence cases.

The Gender Affairs Bureau was established in 2015 and is responsible for the implementation of programmes to advance the equal rights of women and men. The Regional Gender Affairs Committee exists in each of the 10 Administrative Regions. The Guyana Women’s Leadership Institute under the direction of the Director of Social Services, Ministry of Social Protection also implements, programmes for the advancement and empowerment of women.

In strengthening the national machinery, government has facilitated initiatives to formulate a National Gender and Social Inclusion Policy. The formulation process for the National Gender Policy and Social Inclusion Policy which began in August 2015 is complete. Approximately 350 persons including members of parliament, regional and municipal councils, civil society, youth representatives from youth-led organisations; social workers and practitioners, participated in a national conference to share their views and make recommendations for the development of the policy.

The National Gender and Social Inclusion Policy is expected to be implemented in 2018 and will aim to mainstream gender issues into all sectors in order to eliminate all negative economic, social and cultural practices that impede equality and equity. It will strengthen links between Government, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in mainstreaming of gender in the respective sectors and develop, maintain and provide gender sensitive information and gender disaggregated data for use in planning and project implementation at all levels and in all sectors.

The Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Policy Unit was established in October 2016 and commenced rolling out its communication strategy as part of a holistic response to addressing gender-based violence in Guyana. During the period October 2016-July 2017, the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Policy Unit embarked on a series of edutainment activities, training and capacity building aimed at influencing attitudinal and behavioural change among the general populace about all forms of sexual, domestic and gender-based violence.
The Ministry of Social Protection has collaborated with the Ministry of Education to conduct several sensitization and awareness sessions in schools. Topics included: Understanding Sex and Gender; Gender-based violence – its definition, acts categorized as GBV, Solutions for ending GBV and Central Government’s response to addressing GBV.

Guyana is in the process of conducting a comprehensive review of our National Plan of Action, for the implementation of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Acts; and has initiated the resuscitation of the National Task Force for the Prevention of Sexual Violence. This Inter-Agency Task Force will have specific responsibilities for the development and implementation of a national plan for the prevention of sexual violence.

Guyana is the first in the Caribbean to have established a specialized court for sexual offences that is sensitive to the needs and circumstances of victims. This court will hear all indictable sexual offence cases, and will offer a rights-based approach, in recognition that victims tended to be re-victimized under the previous format. As such, the court has been outfitted with protective screens and dedicated rooms, among other features. To support the operations of the court, model guidelines for sexual offence cases were developed, taking into account international best practices for the management of such cases.

- **Aim to eliminate gender discrimination and asymmetries in relation to access to decent employment, job security, wages and decision-making on labour issues.**

Government continues to collaborate and expand several programmes to facilitate women becoming economically independent and empowered these includes; the office of the First Lady of Guyana capacity building workshops where over 900 persons mainly female single parents, female young adults have been trained in the areas of information communication technology, care for the elderly, first aid, childcare, early childhood development, self-reliance and success in business. Workshops have been held across all the ten administrative regions.

Small grants are offered by the Ministry of Social Protection to disadvantaged women for the startup of small business to sustain the live-hoods of themselves and family. The Women of Worth (WOW) Loans Programme and the People of Worth Entrepreneurial Resources (POWER) Loans Programme with funding from the Ministry of Finance’s Poverty Alleviation Programme and managed by the Guyana Bank for Trade and Industry (GBTI). A total of $G9.0million was allocated to the WOW programme, 33 loans were issued since its re-commencement in 2015 totaling $G6.03million, while 7 loans were issued in 2017 to the tune of $G1.05Million while current operating loans stands at 25.

The Guyana Women Leadership Institute implements programmes to help women develop leadership skills essential for institutional and community successes. The institute in 2018 commenced workshops on gender and local government with the objective of equipping women with the requisite skills and knowledge to improve their individual and institutional competence within their communities. The women will be enabled to design, plan and monitor and evaluate policies from a gender perspective at the level of local government. The aim of the programme is also to encourage women to take up active roles in local government organs.
Guyana continues to make progress on the status of women in public life and has been maintaining steady ratings with regards to representation of women in Parliament. Since the amendment of the electoral laws the proportion of women in Parliament has increased in each consecutive Parliament. It is well ahead of many developed countries on the Women in National Parliament index. According to the 2018 Index women hold 31.9% of seats in the National Assembly in Guyana. The 2015 Global Gender Gap Report ranked Guyana at 37 out of 145 in the area of overall Political Empowerment. In Women in Parliament, Guyana is ranked at 29th and 24th for Women in Ministerial Positions.

Ten (10) women Ministers are currently serving as Members of Parliament, in the 11th Parliament (2015-2020). Also the Chief Whips for both the Government and the Opposition during the 10th and 11th Parliaments are female MPs while the chairperson of the social services committee is chaired by a female. Female MPs presence are in all the committees which work to influence policies and decision making to better the lives of all Guyanese.15

Women continue to occupy key ministerial positions in, Health, Education, Foreign Affairs, Social Protection, Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs, Public Infrastructure, Public Telecommunications and the Public Service. Four (4) women are currently cabinet members while more than ½ or fifty-two percent (52%) of the Permanent Secretaries are women. Women also hold key decision-making portfolios which include the Director of Budget, Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Director of Public Prosecutions, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly, Registrar of the Supreme Court, Registrar of Deeds, Registrar of the Land Registry, Chief Magistrate and Principal Magistrate. Today in Guyana, the Chief Justice and the Chancellor of the Judiciary are women while there are several High Court Judges and Magistrates who are female and there are more female lawyers practicing at the Bar than male lawyers.

During the period 2013 to 2015 women representatives were more than 30 percent on a majority of Regional Democratic Councils. Overall, women’s representation in this first tier of local government was 34 percent in 2011, remained consistently over one-third for successive years and declined to 29 percent in 2015. When the local government elections were held after a 22-year hiatus, three new municipalities were added to Local Authority Areas and the representation of women also improved. Prior to March 2016, only 30 percent of women held positions in municipalities, after local government elections 50 percent of all representative are women, At the level of Neighbourhood Democratic Councils, the representation of women improved slightly from 41 percent prior to local government elections to 42 percent of all elected officials.

The Equal Rights Act and the Prevention of Discrimination Act (1997) provides protection regardless of gender race, ethnicity and sexual orientation in relation to access to the labour market and employment opportunities as well as sexual harassment in the workplace.

In July 2013 there was the introduction of the National Minimum Wage for regular Working Hours (For All Workers in Guyana) Order, made under Section 8 of the Labour Act, Chapter 98:01. The Government of Guyana approved a National Minimum Wage and a forty (40) hour work week for both Private and Public sector employees. The National Minimum Wage specifies that a minimum

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15 National Assembly of the Parliament of Guyana
wage shall apply, but is not limited to workers employed in all the sectors, and shall be applicable to all workers in similar categories.

- **Promote the shared responsibility of the State, the private sector, the community, families, women and men in unpaid domestic tasks and care work.**

There are policies for the protection of all workers including domestic workers. These policies are implemented through programmes formulated through an effective Tripartite Body comprising representatives from Government, Organised Labour, Private Sector, Civil Society and employers. The Tripartite Body acts as an advisory board to the government regarding amendments to current labour legislation, adoption and implementation of international conventions and policy modifications to improve working conditions for all.

However, effort will be made to place the issue of unpaid domestic and care work, on the national agenda so as to bring recognition to its economic value.

In particular, with respect to 2012, data indicate an increase in the participation rate of women (from 34.6 to 43.6 percent) and a decrease in the participation rate of men (from 77.5 to 68.9 percent). The urban labour force represents the majority of the total actively engaged persons (69.6 percent of the total labour force).

The employment-to-population ratio of persons aged 15 and above is 49.2 percent, with the rate being substantially higher for men than for women (62.1 percent against 36.9 percent). There is a marked disadvantage for women in the labour market that is confirmed by the indicator regarding the proportion of women in managerial positions (SDG Indicator 5.5.2) which in the third quarter of 2017 was recorded at 37.8 percent.  

## F. International Migration and Protection of the Human Rights of All Migrants

Provide information that shows the gap between migrants and national populations and between migrants of different origins.

Foreign born residents in Guyana account for a small percentage of the population. As such, their contribution to the size of the population is minimal. In addition to those who have been naturalized, foreign born residents presently account for approximately 1.1 percent of the total population. This current figure shows a decline of 15.0 percent compared to ten years ago. However, looking at the recorded number of foreign born residents at each census Guyana seems to be a transit point for migrants over the past three decades. Interestingly, about 47.8 percent (3,788) of the foreign-born residents residing in the country in 2012 reported that they had since naturalized. Foreign-born population covers all people who have ever migrated from their country of birth to their current country of residence.

**Table 9 shows distribution of Local and Foreign- Born population, Guyana 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guyanese</th>
<th>Foreign Born</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>715,254</td>
<td>98.90</td>
<td>7,927</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Guyana National Bureau of Statistics

Guyana being a member of CARICOM, the citizens from the region dominate the foreign-born residents. CARICOM member states accounted for about 41.1 percent (3,256) of the foreign born residents reported in the 2012 Census. Accordingly, Suriname, Brazil and Venezuela ranks first, second and third respectively in the size of their citizens residing in Guyana. Suriname alone consisted of 17.8 percent. Expectedly, there had been a compensatory rise in the proportional shares of other countries of CARICOM.

Besides Guyana’s immediate neighbours and CARICOM member states, another country whose citizens make up nearly one-tenth of the foreign-born residents is the United States of America (USA). The proportion of United States of America citizens had remained somehow stable and at Census 2012 comprised 8.9 percent of the total foreign-born residents. The United States’ proportional share is almost twice as high as United Kingdom (UK) and Canada combined (4.8 percent). This may be due to a higher incidence of Guyanese re-migrants from the USA who having obtained their US citizenship and retired from their jobs in the USA, reside once again in Guyana. China, also with a historical link to Guyana contributed about 7.7 percent to the foreign born population. In addition to that all, foreign-born females were marginally less when compared to the males. They comprise about 44.6 percent (3,538).

Table 10 shows total # of legal migrants by top 5 countries in 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suriname</td>
<td>4,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>2,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)</td>
<td>2,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>1,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11,399</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Measures to encourage the elimination of all forms of discrimination experienced by migrants.

- Encourage the implementation of standards and policies based on the protection of all migrants, independent of their status or condition.

Guyana has an open and liberal immigration policy with most countries especially its neighbouring countries and CARICOM member states. Legal migrant workers and members of their family are treated equally and enjoy almost the same benefits as most Guyanese nationals, they are entitled to free health care and education for their children.

Section 17 of Chapter 14:02 of the Immigration Act identifies measures taken to permit a prohibited immigrant to remain in Guyana.
The criteria set out for a migrant student is not discriminatory and all children in Guyana, including separated, unaccepted or illegal migrant children, have equal access to social services such as the right to health, housing and education.

Guyana over the years has developed strong regional and bilateral Co-operation and agreements with its neighbouring countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Through its membership in the OAS, UNASAUR, MERCOSUR and CARICOM it has friendly and constructive engagements for the free movement of people, goods and services.

In February 2014, the Caribbean Community (Free Entry of Skilled Nationals) (Amendment) Bill 2014 was passed in the National Assembly, the Bill’s passage made Guyana the first in the Caribbean Region to pass such legislation, which Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Member States are all required to enact. The Bill amends the 1996 Caribbean Community (Free Entry of Skilled Nationals) Act and now allows for spouses of the certified persons to be able to work in the same country, allows the certified person to apply to the subject minister to verify his or her certificate, and allows the certified person to work while his certificate is being verified – a process that takes up to six months. The passing of this Bill signals that Guyana’s commitment to regional integration.

The expected outcome is to arrive at a policy that is founded on the principles of equity for migrants, transparency and increased accountability and to strike an appropriate balance between protecting the legitimate rights and expectations of migrants with the need to preserve the interest of citizens.

Guyana has an open immigration policy that encourages foreigners to work and invest in Guyana. Work permits are facilitated through this mechanism. In April of 2013 the Ministry of Home Affairs organized a meeting with immigrants and non-immigrants along with representatives from the Chinese and Brazilian embassy to permit non-Guyanese nationals to highlight the problems they were facing as it related to acquiring work permits and extension of stay. At the conclusion of the meeting immigrants were allowed to give their relevant information to officials of the Home Affairs Ministry so that their work permit and extension of stay papers could be dealt with expeditiously.

Once the relevant contributions have been made nonnationals can make claims through the National Insurance Scheme, the same privileges given to a Guyanese national; the same is afforded to a non-national or migrant workers and members of their families. According to the Act once a person, gainfully occupied in insurable employment that person shall be insured under this Act, and shall remain so insured for life.

In 2013 for the benefit of the Brazilian and Chinese community operating businesses in Guyana, the Ministry of Labour has made several pieces of Guyana’s Labour Legislations available in Portuguese and Chinese. This initiative of translating the labour laws is intended to guide the manner in which Brazilians and Chinese employers and employees operate in Guyana’s business environment. Copies of the translated laws were distributed during training seminars for Brazilian and shop, hotel and restaurant owners and Chinese nationals operating business in Guyana. These seminars for Brazilians and Chinese migrants were held separately. Similar seminars were also held in hinterland regions primarily targeting the mining sector- where Brazilians are major employers. These seminars were held in collaboration with The Chinese Association, the Guyana Brazil Development Institute and Brazilian Mining and General Association. It is the intention of Government to continually collaborate among these organizations to educate migrant workers about their rights.
Any migrant that enters the country illegally their human rights is upheld. In some cases, if they are seeking asylum they would be referred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who would then examine their case and make a determination based on the facts presented. In addition to that if persons are not seeking asylum and it was proven that they are illegal there are taken before the Courts where they would be charged for entering the country illegally or pay a fine and deported to their country of origin.17

A challenge in implementing the consensus is that although Guyana has an official liberal immigration policy no official or standardized policy exists on migrants. Therefore, this can lead to some limitations in adhering to provisions that are in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers.

In the 2017 the US State Department report on combatting trafficking in persons lifted Guyana from tier 2 to tier 1 which means that Guyana fully met the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking in persons. The achievements included approving the 2017-2018 national action plan for combating trafficking in persons; increasing the number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions; and identifying and assisting more victims. However, the challenge of increasing protection and services for victims outside the capital or provide adequate protection and shelter for child and male victims. These are areas that the government will work to improve.

Section 17 of Chapter 14:02 of the Immigration Act identifies measures taken to permit a prohibited immigrant to remain in Guyana.

G. Territorial Inequality, Spatial Mobility and Vulnerability

Priority action taken to guarantee universal access to basic services (drinking water, sewerage, electricity) for the entire population and in all territories.

Guyana is committed to promoting the development and well-being of people in all territories without any form of discrimination, and provide full access to basic social services and equal opportunities for the population weather they live in urban, rural areas, in small intermediate or large cities or in isolated areas or small rural settlements. In keeping with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of ensuring universal access to basic services (drinking water, sewerage, electricity) for the entire population and in all territories Guyana Water Incorporated (GWI) has been guided by several policies, projects and programmes.

In 2011 the Government of Guyana secured a loan amount of US$12,000,000 from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to finance Water Supply Rehabilitation Programme. The programme was executed by GWI over a five (5) years period. Over the past years some of the main objectives were achieved such as improvement in the operational performance of the water supply system in several regions through the replacement and rehabilitation of its most critical components viz. treatment plants, ground and elevated storage tanks, booster stations, transmission mains, and sections of the distribution network. Improvement in the service provided to customers by providing water that meets World Health Organization standard twenty-four hours per day. The project covered the rehabilitation of the two water treatment plants constructed in 2015 that underwent substantial remedial work in 2016.

17 Ministry of Citizenship
In keeping with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, related to Goal 6 (“Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”) major improvement has been made in the access to portable water, particularly to Guyana’s indigenous population. Under the Hinterland Water Programme residents from hinterland regions now have access to potable water supply for the first time. The intervention has precluded them the arduous task of walking long distances to access potable water. Over 750 residents benefitted from this intervention. Under the said programme, in 2016 residents of one hinterland region saw improved access to potable water, even if there is drought, more than 600 persons benefitted. Another plausible output of the Hinterland Water programme is the installation of mains and reconfiguration of systems.

The many outputs that have been achieved in coastal water programme includes the installation of transmission mains and expansion of distribution network. Approximately 500 persons benefitted from the improved level of services, the installation of water supply system, benefitting approximately 1000 residents. The general objective of the proposed operation is to improve efficiency, quality and sustainability of the potable water services.

Overall, 94% of the population in Guyana use an improved source of drinking water – 99% in urban areas, 93% in rural areas, 98% in coastal areas and 71% in interior areas. 18

Under the Urban Water programme, the 2016 budget of GUY$226.1 million was expended to achieve the following: the supply and installation of distribution mains and service connection upgrade, benefitting over 8,000 residents. Residents from these areas now have access to high level of water service for the first time in 10 years.

However, continued improvement in the level of services and water supply across the country and increased treated water coverage are of priorities to the government. In 2016 a total of GUY$4 billion was allocated to improve and expand access to water across Guyana. While in 2017 Government expended G$3.2 billion to improve the quality of water supply across the country, 9.7% above the projected amount for 2017, aimed at achieving universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water. In 2018 G$3.8 Billion was allocated to the improvement of water supply services to both coastal and hinterland areas.

Table 11 represents government investment in the both the housing and water sector from 2013-2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing and Water</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G$5.6 Billion</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$6.4 Billion</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$2.3 Billion</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Government continues to support the efforts of the electricity company to improve the quality and efficiency of its electricity distribution network. About 34,000 people benefit from the installation of electrical distribution networks in 16 government housing schemes across five regions in 2016.

GUY$2 billion have been allocated for the Power Utility Upgrade Programme, in 2018. In addition, the feasibility study will be assessed on using natural gas as a more affordable and cleaner energy.

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• **Promote sustainable urban development and strengthening of city systems and their rural environments.**

In focusing to achieve SDG #6 the government of Guyana with support from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the European Union embarked on a water supply and Sanitation Infrastructure Improvement Programme. One of the components intends to improve access of sanitation services for low income house-holds by assisting in the replacement of their pit latrine with a septic tank (with toilet) system. Percentage of household members using improved sanitation facilities is 86.9%.  

The Ministry of Communities signed three contracts totaling $125M as part of its effort to bolster the solid waste disposal programme in outlying regions and to ensure adequate facilities are in place for the disposal of waste. The signed contracts cover the design of sanitary landfills which includes waste profile studies of the three towns and recommendations for resource recovery and recycling programmes. The projects are estimated to commence in 2018.

The mandate is to safeguard the wellbeing of citizens and preserve the environment for future generations through the relevant policies, infrastructural development, institutional strengthening among other areas which are in keeping with the government’s ‘Green Economy’ agenda.

Proper solid waste management has not been emphasized in the past, hence the initiative that led towards modern management of solid waste disposal.

The landfill design would incorporate topographic surveys of the sites, access to the site, site security, waste disposal and fill management, leachate management, landfill gas management, operations and maintenance manuals, environmental audit and environmental monitoring and management systems. In 2017, government expended GUY$338 million on improving our solid waste management.

The approach to the sanitation initiative is not only to address infrastructure work or developing land facilities but importantly given our green development strategies is to ensure that Guyana has sustainable approaches to sanitation management.

Despite progress over the past decade in access to safe sources of water and sanitation, water and sewage services in Georgetown and other coastal areas still face constant institutional, financial and operational challenges. Development works will continue to address gaps that still exist. One area of priority is the construction of waste water treatment systems for the new government schemes. The design of the new plant will address the increase demands being place on the existing central sewerage system in the capital.

Recognizing that there is need to find an optimal mix of providing site and services and completed housing solutions, while giving due regard to accounting for affordability, efficiency, innovative financing, in order to address the needs of a wider cross section of the population. Government has placed affordable housing at the forefront of its social policy.

A joint technical working group was established and tasked with examining the challenges that the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHPA) must overcome, in order to deliver on its mandate.

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19 **Guyana Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014**
and realise Government ‘s vision. A position paper that addresses the challenges facing the housing programme has been developed.

Solutions that target low and middle income households, including young professionals, was considered, such as: (i) public-private partnerships towards community solutions; (ii) access to more affordable financing including graduated interest rates; and (iii) shared ownership/phased equity.

The CHPA has already commenced looking at ways to deliver the promised complete housing units such as single houses, duplexes, and condominiums to the public. In 2017, CHPA piloted 6 duplexes, 2 elevated single family houses; with hundreds expected to be constructed in 2018. Between 2012-2017 approximately 8901 land titles were distributed, 8171 house lots were allocated and 495 squatters were regularized.

Guided by several policies and programmes, that remain grounded in ensuring access for all is adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgraded slums.

In 2013 Ministry of Housing focused on promoting community development planning and implementing a hinterland housing improvement programme. Over the past three years continued development was made in government’s priorities with a view to adjusting the programme. The now Hinterland Sustainable Housing programme is aimed to improve livability of low income families in select communities of the hinterland through better access to housing, potable water, sanitation and the promotion of women’s empowerment because they were given the opportunity to participate in project design and implementation.

Under this programme twelve (12) communities in 2 indigenous regions benefitted significantly from the delivery of full house replacement subsidy. The housing solutions include “full house replacement” and/or a “roof replacement”. The project has been successful in gaining support from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to commit to investing US$3M for the implementation of Low Income Settlement programme targeting the housing needs of the hinterland. The third Low Income Settlement programme as requested by the Government of Guyana, follows up on a second for which a US$27.9 loan was made available by the IDB, 19,000 benefited from this phase. The hinterland communities saw the construction of 122 core houses and the repairs of 86 roofs. The project has been extended from July 2016 – December 2019.

In achieving SDG Goals, 10 and 11 by 2030, CH&PA developed a National Housing Profile for Guyana which aims to improve coherence and the capacity of the government to provide response in the housing sector and also, identification of gaps in the various housing sector regarding availability and collection of data for further research.

While much is being done in recognizing the type of housing quality, the Central Housing & Planning Authority has invested $1.6B in new infrastructures with the development of town houses, duplex and single flat houses. Housing units are designed to ensure ease of access for differently able persons, units are made disability friendly, with ramps, internal configuration suitable for blind and disable applicants. This project is part of CHPA’s efforts to address the increasing density of the population and lack of available house lots. The project will be piloted in Regions three four and ten, the designs in region three has been completed and received successful reviews, and it will be instituted in other regions where possible.\(^\text{20}\)

\(^\text{20}\) Ministry of Communities- Department of Central Housing and Planning
Although Guyana has seen some amount of success in designing housing policies and programmes that is affordable, appropriate and assessable and addressing the needs of the hinterland population, the following areas are priority focus:

- Making housing affordable as possible and, also furthered provision in improved access to housing for poor families in hinterland regions as such government has purposed building houses for indigenous citizens in need.
- Continuous improvement in the availability of basic amenities such as provision of electricity and safe water supply. To provide for energy needs of hinterland communities, renewable source of energy is being examined and to achieve this priority, a feasibility study has started for large hydropower development.
- Development of a National Housing Strategy, the strategy being developed will be built on the housing profile created by UN-Habitat in collaboration with the Central Housing and Planning Authority. The Guyana Housing Profile was completed in February 2017. Following meetings with key stakeholders in the Ministry of Communities, it was agreed that the project will address several critical areas: Improving institutional capacity of the CH&PA to design, manage and implement housing and urban policy; Strengthen CH&PA’s capacity to manage and analyze territorial information and to facilitate multi-sectoral knowledge-sharing on housing and urban development topics.
- Regularizing those areas that are not zero tolerance areas, unfit and conducive to healthy living and relocate residents to areas more suitable for housing development.

Local Government in Guyana is a vital level of public administration, in 2016, Guyana held Local Government Election under the supervision of Ministry of Communities. Local government elections were held in the nine (9) municipalities and sixty (62) Neighbourhood Democratic Council country wide after 19 years.

In 2017, the Government signal the establishment of the National Regional Development Consultative Committee (NRDCC). The objectives of this committee is a step towards increasing the efficiency of the regional administrative structure to support the bottom-up approach to democratic governance. Since the principal function of the Committee will be to facilitate collaborative financial planning and administration it will allow for more: Accountability, Transparency, and Partnership among key stakeholders and, Planning which will aid in the effective delivery of public services throughout Guyana. It is through these organs that government is able to expand and improve the processes of decentralization, de-concentration and participatory planning at the subnational and local levels, with emphasis on availability, accessibility and the quality of basic services, education and health, including sexual health and reproductive health and the prevention of violence against girls, adolescents and women.

• **Facilitate the prevention and mitigation of the impact of socio-environmental disasters and environmental vulnerability.**

To facilitate the prevention of the impact of socio-environmental disasters and environmental vulnerability, a department of environment was established in 2016 to oversee implementation of
environmental management countrywide through the agencies under its purview. These are the Protected Areas Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Parks Commission and Wildlife Conservation and Management Commission.

Projects that may have significant impact to the environment are required to conduct environmental and social impact assessments to assess impacts and recommend mitigation measures for implementation towards determining whether a project can be approved. There is also an environmental education arm that promotes awareness on environmental best practices and measures to attain sustainability. Several internationally funded projects are also implemented that target environmental protection such as strengthening institutional frameworks for environmental protection in the mining sector.

With respect to promoting energy transition, it is mentioned in Guyana’s Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement that Guyana would strive to 100% renewable energy sources by 2025 subject to international assistance. However, projects are currently being undertaken by the Guyana Energy Agency to facilitate transition towards the use of energy saving lights. These include replacement of fluorescent and incandescent lights in government buildings with LEDs. There is also a project in Bartica which is poised to become the first green town in Guyana whereby solar photovoltaic systems are being installed.

Furthermore, Guyana has acquired funding from the Global Environment Facility to implement a project to “Mainstream low emission energy technologies to build Guyana’s Green Economy”. The Project is in its development phase. It aims to promote low-emission energy technologies across prioritized sectors, thereby increasing competitiveness and climate-resilience of the national economy.

In 2017 Government commenced the construction of Guyana’s first ever solar farm in one of the villages in the hinterland regions which is expected to become operational in 2018. Feasibility studies have commenced for the establishment of solar farms in two other areas. Government buildings, including ministries, schools, and health centres, are being outfitted with solar photovoltaic panels, to reduce Government’s dependence on the national grid. Seventy (70) buildings have been equipped with such panels, resulting in a 1.86 gigawatt of power savings. In 2018, another 74 buildings will be outfitted. Government is also implementing an energy efficiency programme. A total of 10,427 LED lamps and 3,766 motion-sensors across 46 buildings have been installed, and an additional 10,610 lamps and 1,486 motion sensors are expected to be installed by the end of 2018.

As Guyana beings the transition to an oil producing nation, Government will implement prudent structural reforms, environmental safeguards, and strengthen our institutions to promote inclusive development of natural resources, avoiding the social and environmental damage that this may cause.
**H. Indigenous Peoples: Interculturalism and Rights**

Prioritised measures taken to
- Adapt the legal and institutional framework to make it coherent with international standards with regard to the rights of indigenous peoples.

The government of Guyana remains fully committed to enhancing the quality of life of the Indigenous Peoples through formulating policies and implementing programmes that facilitate cultural, social and economic development, promotes equity and protect Indigenous rights.

Policies are being developed and actions carried out with full recognition of and respect for indigenous peoples’ rights in accordance with international norms, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the related human rights instruments.

The Amerindian Act of 2006 provides generally for the recognition and protection of the collective rights of indigenous villages and communities, the granting of land to indigenous peoples, the promotion of good governance within their communities. This Act is the primary legislation on the property rights of indigenous peoples over lands, territories and natural resources.

Guyana’s land ownership is unique. The largest land owner is the state and the second largest landowners are the indigenous villages who own communal land titles totaling 14% of Guyana’s land mass.

Section 4 of the Amerindian Act provides for the establishment of locally-elected Village Councils and Community Councils whose mandate is to ensure good governance and management, and use of land and natural resources in their respective villages. The election of the Toshaos and Indigenous Village Councils and Community Councils takes place every 3 years as required by the Amerindian Act 2006.

Guyana’s model of inclusionary governance facilitates the participation of indigenous leaders and people in the political landscape, free to determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development. Elected leaders and communities are included and participate in all major national strategic, legislative, and developmental forums.

There are currently four indigenous ministers serving in the government with one appointed as Vice President while 11.7% of seats are held by persons of Indigenous origins in the National Parliament.

In an effort to support self-governance within Indigenous communities, the established National Toshaos’ Council Secretariat is provided with financial assistance from the government to enable the Council to effectively carry out its mandate and promote the interests of Indigenous peoples.

In accordance with Part IV of the Amerindian Act No.6 and 2006, the National Toshaos Council (NTC) is a body corporate comprising of all Toshaos of which the NTC should elect an executive committee.

The National Toshaos Council (NTC) Conference takes place annually and is funded by the Government of Guyana. It is the gathering of all indigenous leaders from 215 communities across all 10 administrative regions of Guyana for discussions with Government Ministers and key agencies on issues pertaining to the development and preservation of indigenous rights.
Some of the major outcomes between 2013 – 2017 included: the creation of a network with various agencies; MOU with Conservation International to provide institutional support; development of rules and procedures for the National Toshaos Council Executive- transition and succession, creation of an environment for the National Toshaos Council to develop a work plan; development of a plan to establish a Secretariat; training provided in capacity building for NTC Executive, data collection from communities, frame work developed to address indigenous issues.

A department of community development and governance has been established under the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs to provide support to indigenous communities through the respective governance structures by providing required information and guidelines in accordance with the prerequisite statutes.

- Improved governance and developmental policies and structures in Indigenous communities
- Coordinate the Ministry’s programs within the Communities and provide feedback
- Capacity Building
- Village profiles and data collections
- Hosting of Indigenous Heritage Month Celebrations to observe Guyana’s first peoples culture and traditions

The Government of Guyana strongly believes and practices Free, Prior and Informed Consent relevant to (Article 10 and Art. 11 (2), Art. 19, Art. 32(2) of the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) and does not force or compel Indigenous Peoples’ to make any decisions without having Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

The Amerindian Act 2006 provides for free, prior, and informed consent of the Villagers on issues that require their involvement/support with respect to land, mining, etc. The Act also makes provision for FPIC in regards to the processing of titling and demarcation of village lands, entry and access to Indigenous Villages, and use of natural resources. In addition, no project or programme or initiatives are undertaken in indigenous communities without proper consultation with the community members.

The National Toshao Council General Meetings are an excellent demonstration of free prior and informed consent on issues both local and national where the dialogue and exchanges are needed to enhance the voice of the people on Guyanese issues. Notwithstanding, the engagements begin at the village level.

Government has continued to channel resources toward the development of Indigenous communities through the REDD+ GRIF programme\textsuperscript{21} and expanded budgetary allocation for the Ministries of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs, Education, Health and Communities.

\textsuperscript{21} Guyana-Norway partnership which is the second largest interim REDD+ partnership in the world and the first national scale model. Under this partnership, Guyana is targeted to earn up to US$250 Million for its forest climate services. Guyana has earned approximately US$150 million and these funds are being channeled through the Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund (GRIF) for the implementation of projects and initiatives. Identified by the government.
Table 12 shows % of National Budget allocated to Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs. Between 2016-2017 there was an increase in allocation.

Additional monies are allocated to indigenous communities through the Ministries of Health, Education, Social Protection, Communities, Public Infrastructure and Indigenous Peoples’ Commission to guarantee the rights of indigenous peoples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount allocated</th>
<th>% National Budget allocated to Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G$833.8Mil</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$1,554Bil</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$575,048Mil</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$2.239Mil</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$2.462Mil</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G$2.219Bil</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12

The other two main initiatives for Amerindian development are through the REDD+GRIF these are: Amerindian Development Fund (ADF) – where US$ 8.2 million has been allocated. The Amerindian Development Fund provides funding to support the socio-economic development of Amerindian communities and villages through the implementation of their community development plans. All community plans are approved by consensus or majority vote at village meetings. Also Amerindian Land Titling (ALT) – US$ 10.8 Million has been allocated. This project aims to have land titles issued and the demarcation process completed for Indigenous villages that submit requests, including those that request and qualify for extensions. It is expected to strengthen land tenure security and the expansion of the asset base of Indigenous, enabling improved long term planning and future development. This project is currently ongoing.

The Hinterland Green Enterprise Development Centre, is being constructed at a cost of GUY$200 million in one of the indigenous communities. This is a key facility for job creation for hinterland communities. The new centre will focus on training that leverages indigenous and traditional knowledge and drive upstream demand for local products and services. The Centre is expected to serve 120 students from five indigenous regions and has been allocated $79 million to commence the construction and 2 dormitories will be constructed in 2018 that will cater for 60 males and 60 female students.

Efforts will also be geared towards establishing a community based sustainable income generating project under which ground coffee farming, processing & packaging will be conducted in one specific indigenous community. This initiative is expected to create employment for approximately 20 farmers and 5 agro processors.

Additionally, an agro-processing facility will be established in one specific indigenous community with the aim of creating a sustainable village economy through the production of cassava and wheat flour mixture geared targeted at local markets. This undertaking will benefit approximately 48 farmers. Further, farmers residing in other communities can also benefit from an agricultural...
investment fund which will be established to support farmers in the growth of traditional and non-traditional crops.

**Measures that aim to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against indigenous individuals and peoples and guarantee their right to health and physical and cultural survival.**

**The Constitution of Guyana strictly** prohibits discrimination “on the grounds of race, place of origin, social class, belief or culture.” *(Article 149 (1) and (2)).*

Article 212S of the Constitution provides for the establishment of the Indigenous Peoples Commission (IPC), which was appointed through a parliamentary mechanism. The objective of the Commission is to “establish mechanisms to enhance the status of indigenous peoples and to respond to their legitimate demands and needs” such as any form of discrimination and violence against indigenous women.

The National Toshaos Council (NTC) and Indigenous NGOs choose their representatives to sit on the 3 constitutional rights commissions – the Indigenous People’s Commission, the Ethnic Relations Commission, and the Women and Gender Equality Commission which offer direct opportunities to address any violation of their rights and to advocate for change.

- The Social Welfare and Health Department within the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs is responsible for formulating and coordinating responses to social issues affecting the Indigenous Peoples of Guyana.
  1. The Welfare Department of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs works with the General Register Office, Toshao’s and Village Leaders to facilitate late Birth Registration for Indigenous person who were never been registered.
  2. Work with the Administration and the Medical Social Work Department of Georgetown Public Hospital and other Public Hospitals to assist persons seeking medical attention.
  4. Financial Assistance for burial and Medical treatment and difficult circumstance is given to indigenous persons in need.

There has been numerous inter-agency collaboration between the Welfare Department of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs and the Ministry of Social Protection to host a sensitization workshop. These workshops seek to educate, provide awareness and clarifications to the Village Councils in the hinterland and by extension the villages of their rights and responsibilities under the Sexual Offences Act, the Domestic Violence Act, the Labour act and labour related issues, and the Combating Trafficking in Persons act 2005.
The government, as a part of its continued efforts to meet the needs of Indigenous Peoples, has recognized the need for the Indigenous peoples to be more informed about the afore mentioned issues and how to deal with them. Therefore, sensitizing the community leaders on these issues, empowers them as well as other community members about their rights and responsibilities regarding social issues that may occur in their communities, be able identify and/or address and report to the relevant authorities any of the social issues that are governed by the laws.

The Sustainable Development framework is a project that is in collaboration between the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs, Conservation International-Guyana (CI), World Wild Life (WWF) and an indigenous Community Regional Group. It is designed to provide a holistic approach to achieving sustainable development targets based on the creation of strong long-term Sustainable Village Plans. The purpose of the Sustainable Development Framework is to help communities to define and achieve their own development vision and priorities. The framework will also support communities to monitor the impact of the resources invested and enable better coordination and planning and also enable local sustainable development targets to be matched with the international sustainable goals (SDGs), so that Guyana can monitor it contribution to the SDGs agreed to at the global level. By the end of 2017 twenty-two (22) indigenous communities completed their sustainable development framework.

In an effort to preserve Guyana’s Indigenous People’s diverse languages the Indigenous Language Revival Project commenced in 2013, and aimed to preserve the Arawak language and also the rich heritage of the people. However, in 2015 the project was modified to include other indigenous languages with the intent of preserving all Indigenous languages across the country. The preservation of the Indigenous languages is critical to the sustenance of the culture and identity of Guyana’s first peoples.

In addition, GUY$150 million was allocated in 2017 for the establishment of four radio stations in selected hinterland communities to stimulate communication and information sharing in English as well as native languages. The goal is to preserve the cultural richness of Indigenous peoples as Guyana pursues accelerated development of the hinterland.

A 5-year project was designed to take the internet and government’s e-Services to hinterland, poor and remote communities. This 17 Million US Dollar project is being funded under the Guyana REED + Investment Fund. The project will be implemented in 2018 and the benefits in the identified communities will be significant. Over 89,000 residents in approximately 170 communities will have access to more than 200 ICT hubs to be created over the 5-year period. Access to online public eServices such as filing tax returns and applying for business compliance certificates.

Moreover, education assistance for hinterland students have been in the form of provision of school uniforms for over 30,000 school children at a cost of over GUY$89 million and over 450 hinterland students benefited from the Hinterland Scholarship Programme in 2016.

The Hinterland Scholarship Programme has been designed to offer hinterland students to further their studies in the capital city, Georgetown. The intention of the scholarship is to develop the young minds of indigenous children in providing an opportunity to pursue a sound education while also enhancing their social and cultural potentials. A student dormitory was constructed to house students attending Secondary and Tertiary Institutions in the capital city Georgetown.
The school feeding programme and the school uniform programme continue to be implemented in public schools throughout Guyana as part of a wider effort by government to improve students’ attendance, build their self-esteem and provide them a better opportunity to complete school. Over GY$1B was expended on the National School Feeding Programme which benefitted over 65,000 children across the country with fortified snacks and or hot meals. Over 16,000 school children in three interior regions benefitted. The government also offers universal school uniform allowances to all children enrolled in the government education system at nursery, primary and secondary levels.

Guyana’s indigenous communities present distinct characteristics due to its geographic isolation, poor infrastructure and high proportion of ethnic indigenous peoples’. In the past while health and other development indicators at the national level have rapidly improved, levels for Amerindian peoples including indigenous women and children had remained significantly lower than among nonindigenous groups. Hinterland communities remain with disproportionately less access to key social services. Indigenous peoples’ have had limited access to primary and preventive health care, education, housing, portable water etc, largely due to their geographic isolation, which had posed a significant barrier to the provision of these and other social services.

- **Provide timely, good-quality and relevant information on the situation of indigenous individuals and people from a gender and generational perspective.**

A study on Indigenous Women and Children was recently completed in collaboration with the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs and UNICEF Guyana. The study was conducted in twelve (12) communities in administrative Regions One, Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight, Nine and Ten, to garner a better understanding of the situation of these groups.

The study revealed that Indigenous Peoples experience poverty at twice the rate and sometimes even five times more than the non-indigenous population. They are also less likely to access social services and are suffering from the effects of environmental degradation and climate change on their health and wellbeing.

The study also noted that the access to good quality education, health and other social services by the Indigenous peoples continues to be crippled by the lack of access to infrastructure and modern life facilities to the same extent of their counterparts residing on Guyana’s coastlands.

The study is important in that the information gathered will now inform projects and programmes aimed at empowering women, and ensuring their survival, development participation and protection of children.

This initiative is critical since it geared at bridging the gap as it relates to indigenous women and children and giving them an equal opportunity to a better quality of life.

Since the reduction of economic and social disparities between coastland and hinterland communities is a necessity towards the promotion of inclusivity and equality.
The project also sought to assess cultural, social, economic and other related vulnerabilities and deprivations faced by women and children along with prevailing barriers and bottlenecks that impede the realization of such rights.

I. Afro-descendants: Rights and Combating Racial Discrimination

Measures taken to implement laws, standards and policies (including institution strengthening) to promote and protect the rights of Afro-descendants.

Guyana does not have legislation specifically targeting combatting racial discrimination against Afro-Guyanese. However, there are general discrimination laws that apply to all races that seek to eradicate all forms of ethnic violence and discrimination. There are also certain constitutional commissions that seek to combat ethnic discrimination and ensure gender equality. Article 149 of the Constitution of Guyana makes provisions for the protection from discrimination on the grounds of race, etc.) Article 149 states – (1) Subject to the provisions of this article – “(a) no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect;” and “(b) no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person acting by virtue of any written law or in the performance of the functions of any public office or any public authority.”

Also section 4 of the Prevention Against Discrimination Act, Cap. 99:08 (Prohibits grounds of discrimination.) While these laws do not specifically target Afro-descendants, they protect all Guyanese (inclusive of Afro-descendants) from discriminatory laws being made on the basis of race and also protect from discriminatory treatment in the employment sector on the basis of race.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana was given the responsibility to execute and to implement the mandate of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 68/237 of 23rd December 2013 and Resolution 69/16 of 18th November 2014 that focus on the International Decade for People of African Descent and the associated Programme of Action.

It is under this framework that the Government of Guyana is taking concrete and practical steps to focus on the rights of Afrodescendants, combating racial discrimination, racism, xenophobia and the related intolerance faced by people of African descent.

The Government of Guyana has pledged its commitment to support the Programme of Action for Implementation of the Decade for People of African Descent. Government has begun working with Afro-descendant groups to develop State policy, adapting legal framework and formulating policies necessary for the implementation of the Resolutions to ensure the full participation of Afro-descendant persons.

In addition, consultations for the preparation of the National Budget were held with Afro-Guyanese groups to gather information about their needs.

A country coordinating mechanism has been established and the Government is also in the process of implementing public policies and considering a proposal to create a Secretariat which will act to support
the work of the various Afro-descendent groups as a guide to carry forward affirmative action, policies, plans and programmes at the sectorial level to foster development among Afro-descendants.\textsuperscript{22}

The International Decade for People of African Descent – Summit 2018 was held in March 2018 in Guyana. The aim of the summit was to audit where people of African Descent are, rationalize Afro-Guyanese where they ought to be as a people, and to set goals for 2024.

The summit brought together African Descendants from around the world to focus on eradicating the plight of African descendants through the implementation of possible solutions to issues affecting the race. The conference was intended to encourage delegates to collaborate more fully across disciplines. To share working models that can assist in the development of African descendants and their communities. The conference also sought to provide a venue for delegates to openly discuss the serious issues facing them, as well as the solutions they envision to address the problems, and ways of implementing these solutions.

In Guyana, the National Reparations Committee spearheads activities that encompasses claims for reparatory justice with focus on, among other issues, land ownership; youth and entrepreneurial growth; communal cohesion; remedies for cultural losses; research and documentation of history; and education and awareness for a national ‘buy-in’ of the reparations concept for the descendants of Africans who were enslaved and brought to work in the British, French, Dutch and Spanish colonies. The local body was established in 2013 after CARICOM Heads of Government agreed to advance the reparations process.

- **Aim to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against Afro-descendants and the overlapping of ethnic, racial, gender and generational inequalities.**

As it relates to institutions created in this regard, it should be noted that the Constitution creates an Ethnic Relations Commission. This Commission is a constitutional institution that seeks to ensure that the standards and policies as it relates to protecting and promoting the rights of all ethnic groups are given due cognizance. Guyana being a multi-ethnic society, the laws of Guyana provide for equal treatment for each ethnic group, one of which is Afro-Guyanese.

The Commission is mandated to uphold equal opportunity among different ethnic groups, encourages good relations among people of different racial backgrounds and monitors media reports and the behaviour of the government and political parties with regards to anti-discrimination rights and statutes, and makes recommendations for its improvements.

Article 212D (j) of the Constitution mandates the Ethnic Relations Commission to “investigate complaints of racial discrimination and make recommendations on measures to be taken if such complaints are valid.” However, the Commission is currently not functional. Nevertheless, the institutional framework needed to uphold these rights is present. Upon the appointment of a new Commission, its work in guaranteeing equality and non-discrimination among the races will continue.

\textsuperscript{22} Ministry of Foreign Affairs
The Women and Gender Equality Commission was established in 2010 under Article 212 Q, and is mandated to deal specifically with promoting ‘national recognition and acceptance that women’s rights are human rights, respect for gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality”. Members of the Commission are nominated from civil society bodies through a Standing Parliamentary Committee and an agreed on consensual mechanism.

The efforts at reducing poverty and improving equal access to goods and services to all citizens aim to ensure that neither Afro-Guyanese nor any other ethnic group is excluded.

An Ombudsman was appointed in January 2014, after the position had been vacant for nearly eight years. The Ombudsman under the Constitution and the Ombudsman Act Cap: 19:04 is empowered to “investigate any action taken by any department of Government, by the President, Ministers, officers or members of such a department or authority, being action taken in exercise of the administrative functions of that department or authority.

Provide timely and good-quality information on the situation of Afro-descendants from a gender and generational perspective.

A major hurdle that Guyana is faced with is the lack of timely, quality data required to target and inform policies and evaluate programme effectiveness for Afro-Guyanese. The 2012 National Population and Housing Census has resulted in a considerable amount of data, on Afro Guyanese as well as other ethnicity, however, regrettably the data has neither been disaggregated nor effectively analyzed.

Guyana is cognizant that the data should be used to monitor the situation of people of African descent, assess progress made, and identify social gaps in social and economic conditions and will work to ensure that this becomes a reality. In addition to that the data will also be used to assess and guide the formulation of policies and action to prevent, combat and eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, Afrophobia and related intolerance.

However, with the current programmes being implemented to strengthen institutional capacity for agencies responsible for data collection, it is expected that positive outcomes regarding enhanced statistical system will emerge to provide timely and quality information to address gender, racial, ethnic and intergenerational inequalities of Afro-descents.
**Part IV**

**Conclusion and Future Priority Actions**

The Montevideo consensus provides the roadmap for the development of Guyana and the report provides an avenue in which Guyana will work to fully realize its achievements. While progress has been made in several areas the state party is cognizant of the numerous challenges that exist specifically with collection and analysis of disaggregated data within health, education, social services among others.

As a developing country Guyana will continue to implement programmes and policies that will address the high rate of youth unemployment, teen pregnancy, limitations to achieving gender equality and empowerment of women, gaps between indigenous population in rural areas in comparison to those on the coastlands, and the numerous challenges of poverty and vulnerability of the population, through the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus.

As Guyana moves forward to align into greater compliance with the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), other treaty obligations and its own national developmental agenda. These are the main future priority focus:

- **Full integration of population dynamics into sustainable development with equality and respect for human rights:**
  - Implementation of the Green State Development Strategy - To raise the quality of life for all people through appropriate population and development policies and programmes aimed at achieving poverty eradication, sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development and sustainable patterns of consumption and production, human resource development and the guarantee of all human rights, including the right to development as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights;
  - Continued strengthening of the institutions with responsibility for population and development;
  - Enhance statistical systems

- **Under Rights, needs, responsibilities and requirements of girls, boys, adolescents and youth priority actions for the future will include:**
  - Effective implementation of the youth policy review and amend as necessary to enhance the rights of youth;
  - Decreasing the high youth unemployment rate;
  - Improve literacy and education attainment;
  - Address and reduce violence against adolescent and youth.

- **Ageing, social protection and socioeconomic challenges;**
  - Continued increase in pension;
  - Improved health care including chronic illnesses;
  - Effective implementation of the National Policy on Aging.
Universal access to sexual and reproductive health services:
- Guyana will seek to ensure the effective implementation of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy;
- Implementation of the policy on reintegration of teenage mothers;
- Reduce the high level of teen pregnancy;
- Increase access to health for all regardless of sexual orientation; reduction in maternal mortality.

Gender equality:
- Guyana will work towards effective implementation of legislation and policies relevant to reduce gender based violence;
- Implement programmes that facilitate the economic empowerment of women;
- Increase in women in decision making bodies – private, public, civil society

International migration and protection of the human rights of all migrants:
- Creation of policy on rights of migrant;
- Effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their families.

Territorial inequality, spatial mobility and vulnerability:
- Improved access to quality, affordable housing, water and sanitation within coastal, riverine and hinterland communities;
- Disaster risk reduction and preparedness.

Rights of Indigenous Peoples:
- Completion of demarcation and land titling,
- Increased access to health, education social services, job creation, access to ICT, improve communication, infrastructure & transport, improved village governance for indigenous peoples

Rights of Afro-descendants:
- Execute and implement the mandate of United Nations General Assembly Resolution on the International Decade for People of African Descent and the associated Programme of Action.
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