

# Guyana Public Service Union

“RIGHTS AT WORK – ENDING POVERTY & INEQUALITY”

PRESIDENT **Patrick M. Yarde**

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Established 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1923.

IN REPLYING PLEASE QUOTE DATE  
HEREOF AND No. **PSU: 135/5**

**October 31, 2011**

His Excellency Bharrat Jagdeo  
President  
Cooperative Republic of Guyana  
Office of the President  
Shiv. Chanderpaul Drive  
**GEORGETOWN**

Dear Mr. President,

**Re: Wages and Salaries Negotiations; and Matters in discussion with the Presidential team and the GPSU**

The Guyana Public Service Union (GPSU) is compelled to draw to your attention two outstanding and important issues that are of great and grave concern to the Union, since they continue to negatively impact on the economic wellbeing and welfare of our members and their families. The Union has been pursuing these matters for several years without any success, but remain optimistic that with reasoned and purposeful intention on the part of the Government, they can be resolved quickly and positively.

Firstly, the Union would like to draw your attention to correspondence (which is attached) dated September 24, 2009 under the caption “Proposals for remuneration for public service workers for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012”. It is important to note that we have had several meetings with Dr. Nanda Gopaul, Permanent Secretary, Office of the President (a leading member of the Presidential team that has met the Union intermittently) - one of which was as recent as October 20, 2011 - but the situation has remained the same. This has led us to conclude that the negotiations have become permanently stalled. The first and only offer by the Government of a 5% across-the-board increase in wages and salaries of public servants, which in essence amounts to a meagre 3.4% after-tax increase and which effectively turns to a negative 1.6% after further adjusting for a 5% inflation rate, has been rejected by the Union. This position has been endorsed by the General Council and ratified by the Biennial Delegates’ Conference in September 2011.

His Excellency Bharrat Jagdeo  
President  
Cooperative Republic of Guyana  
Office of the President  
Shiv. Chanderpaul Drive

October, 31, 2011

The Union has consistently represented and shown that these arbitrary increases have resulted in depreciation of the real income of public servants, which compounds their economic plight by incrementally reducing their ability to enhance their livelihood thereby endangering their and their families' welfare.

The absence of any movement on this matter for over six months is an indication that the negotiations have reached a deadlock. In the meantime, workers who are to benefit from the fruits of these negotiations continue to experience hardships, which have been most devastating in many cases as a result of their vulnerability and financial inability to access needed resources otherwise. The tenth month of 2011 is completed and still workers are without a salary increase, forcing them to eke out a living whilst being in receipt of a declining real income - a situation that is aggravated further for those who have to use their wages to subsidise employment-related expenses because of the inadequacies of their allowances. This lack of progress is heightening tension among public servants at a time when the nation is preparing for an exercise in democratic renewal, that is, the holding of General and Regional Elections. The Union views this scenario as most undesirable and requiring immediate attention. We are, therefore, remitting these matters to you for your intervention.

Secondly, we were persuaded that you shared the view of the membership that the relationship that existed between the employer and the employees' representative needed to be improved as a precursor to more productive and harmonious interactions. At a meeting held with you and representatives of the Union in 2001, where issues affecting public workers were brought to the fore, you expressed interest in having these matters favourably disposed. We were encouraged and had high hopes when, subsequently, in 2008, you appointed a high-level four-person team, comprising Dr. Roger Luncheon, Head, Presidential Secretariat; Dr. Jennifer Westford, Minister of the Public Service; Dr. Nanda Gopaul, Permanent Secretary, Office of the President; and Dr. Ashni Singh, Minister of Finance, to address these issues and other matters that had developed over time. In spite of the agreements reached and accepted by the team, these matters have remained unresolved and the Union considers them at an impasse. The Union believes that it is now opportune to bring these matters to your attention for a speedy, positive and favourable determination.

The Guyana Public Service Union anxiously awaits your favourable response on these matters.

Sincerely,

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 Patrick M. Yarde  
*President/ CEO*