

Guyana Public Service Union

“RIGHTS AT WORK – ENDING POVERTY & INEQUALITY”

PRESIDENT **Patrick M. Yarde**

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Established 8th June, 1923.

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

November 15, 2011

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

Dear Mr. President,

Displeasure with arbitrary imposition of increases in salaries and wages; failure to respect collective bargaining and agreements and to act in improving relationship between the Government and the Union

The Guyana Public Service Union (GPSU) would like to bring to your attention two merited issues that require your involvement to be resolved.

First, the Union would like to register its disgust and displeasure with the pattern of salary imposition that has been characteristic of your administration from its inception in office. This autocratic and arbitrary approach to collective bargaining is appalling and acts counter to the practice of sound industrial relations norms and the preservation of peace in the society. As you are aware, there are domestic laws that address collective bargaining as well as ILO Conventions that Guyana has ratified and, therefore, is obligated to follow. Notwithstanding the existence of these laws, your actions are in clear violation of the laws of Guyana and your oath of office, which you swore to obey. It is indeed regrettable that the adherences to these well established norms and practice of good governance have been disregarded.

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That apart, it is clear that in dealing with these remuneration issues there is no real relationship among the performance of the economy, the imposed salary increases and the scant regard paid to revising the allowances of public officers as part of their conditions of service. The GPSU views the recently announced 8% increase (and all similarly imposed increases over the years) as repugnant to free collective bargaining, and therefore has no hesitation in rejecting it as both inadequate and as the final position in respect of the negotiations for increases in salaries and wages for 2011. What is particularly upsetting is that the considerable treatment and alacrity that attended the passage of your significant benefits' package, on your demitting office, has been missing whenever emoluments of public officers are to be increased. In our view, this shows a discriminatory approach to treat with a matter of similar nature, on one hand, with such extensive consideration while, on the other hand, with nothing more than handouts for lesser mortals.

Second, the Union would like to refer to your several undertakings, and several pieces of reminder correspondence from the Union to you dated April 4, 2005; January 11, 2008; September 9, 2009 and October 31, 2011, urging that the matters presented to the joint forum (Presidential Team, Dr. Roger Luncheon, Minister Dr. Jennifer Westford, Minister Dr. Ashni Singh and Dr. Nanda Gopaul and GPSU delegation) be resolved since their non-resolution was devastating to the wellbeing of public employees and an obstacle to the Union's ability to make effective representation in an enlightened environment, which modern laws, conventions, regulations and practices are designed to facilitate. However, to date, there has been no favourable response, in spite of your assurances of having the outstanding matters resolved.

Having been given repeated assurances, the Guyana Public Service Union was optimistic of a favourable outcome, and enthusiastically communicated your desire to our members. We are crestfallen, therefore, that the situation remains the same currently, even as you are mere weeks away from demitting office. Our overseas consultant, Professor Ivor Mitchell, has essayed a reason for the continued inaction on your part as you not wanting to appear to be acceding to the Union's demands. We do not want to believe that this is true, especially in view of the fact that the Union is acting as the interlocutor between the Government and its public officers. Thus, were you to adopt such a position it would only result in hurting the long-suffering workers, who have toiled resolutely in face of continued hardships.

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President
Cooperative Republic of Guyana

November 15, 2011

Mr President, the successful conclusion of your term of office would depend on your ability to prove to workers that which you have claimed, but failed to support with action, a true working class administration.

Sincerely,

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Patrick M. Yarde
President/CEO