

CLEMENT J. ROHEE, M.P.
MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS

Government's Public Safety and Security Strategy is now on the cusp of a critical but necessary phase. If this phase is not implemented the result would be a backward step for the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Security Sector as a whole.

First, the background and context in which these proposed measures are necessary.

It has been argued by some that there is incompetence and "lack of leadership" at the highest level at the Ministry of Home Affairs. Opposition Leader, David Granger is on record stating;

"we are not concerned with one single incident; we're concerned
With a pattern of behavior over a six year period";

Granger is also on record as stating:

"no one on either side of the House believes that Public Security
In good hands which is the ultimate principle"

For your information and guidance I have attached to the Ministry's presentation the following documents;

- (i) Press Release by PNC Reform;
- (ii) Letter to the Editor, Stabroek News issued by the Guyana Police Force;
- (iii) Press Statement issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs;
- (iv) Notice of a Motion by the Opposition Leader;

The APNU/PNC documents show two things one, the inconsistency of the Opposition with respect to the periodization of the crime situation in Guyana and two, the constant shifting of the goal posts from the specific to the general in order to regain lost ground and maintain as current events that have been subjected to due process within the Criminal Justice System.

The claim by the Opposition that the Security Sector, and by implication Public Safety and Security has been jeopardized is baseless, without foundation and cannot be justified by the facts.

The Ministry of Home Affairs/Guyana Police Force documents (attached) provide the statistical data and exposes the inconsistencies and false propagandistic claims in respect to the 2006 to 2012 period.

The number of fatal accidents that occurred during the six year period, 2007 to 2012 reduced by 25% when compared with the period 2001 to 2006.

During the period 2001 to 2006, a total of 901 fatal road accidents were recorded by the Guyana Police Force while during the period 2007 to 2012, six hundred and seventy three (673) fatal accidents were recorded.

As regards actual deaths, during the two periods 2001 to 2006 and 2007 to 2012, one thousand and seven (1007) persons lost their lives between the years 2001 to 2006 while seven hundred and seventy five (775) persons lost their lives during the years 2006 to 2012 reflecting a 23% reduction.

If the total of all categories of road accidents are compared between the two aforementioned periods it would show that there was a 26% reduction in the number of reports during the latter 6 year period.

During the years 2001 to 2006, fifteen thousand four hundred (15,400) traffic accidents of all categories were recorded while during the period 2007 to 2012 eleven thousand three hundred and ninety five (11,395) road accidents were recorded by the Guyana Police Force. This represents a 26% reduction of reports during the years 2007 – 2012.

This is an indication that the Guyana Police Force has been more effective in managing Traffic during the period 2006 to 2012 and there has been more deliberate citizen and institutional efforts and collaboration to reduce accidents on our roads.

A comparative glance of the total reports of serious crimes committed in Guyana for the cluster of years 2000 to 2005 and 2006 to 2012 indicates the reports for the years 2006 to 2012 reduced by 7%.

For the years 2000 to 2005, twenty eight thousand four hundred and seventy one (28,471) reports of serious crimes were recorded by the Guyana Police Force but for the years 2006 to 2012 the total reports were twenty six thousand four hundred and sixty seven (26,467).

While there may have been fluctuations in the number of reports of specific categories of crimes during both periods, the fact remains that the latter period up to December 24, 2012 recorded a 7% reduction of reports.

During the period 1999 to 2005 the Police were involved in one hundred and twenty nine (129) fatal shootings and forty seven (47) firearms of varying caliber were recovered.

During the period 2006 to 2012, the Police were involved in eight seven (87) fatal shootings and fifty three (53) firearms were recovered.

These figures indicate that the number of fatal shootings by the Police has reduced during the latter period 2005 to 2012 and more firearms have been recovered.

Moreover, these claims made inside and outside of Parliament are fundamentally political, spurious and false in essence. Further, they are historical and vindictive and have absolutely nothing to do with “a pattern of behavior” nor whether “Public Security is in good hands”.

Were the Opposition to move away from the narrow, myopic approach in viewing developments in the Security Sector, they would obviously see the holistic, well thought-out and carefully executed new dispensation prevailing in the Sector. One of the characteristic features of this new dispensation is the involvement of the Private Sector and other non-governmental Stakeholders in process of institutional strengthening and capacity building of the institutions under the Ministry of Home Affairs. Never in the history of our country and this sector in particular has there been such productive involvement of non-governmental Stakeholders in assisting to build greater confidence in and support for the Security Sector.

Another valuable feature of this new dispensation is the solid support and cooperation given by the Guyana Police Force, Guyana Prison Service and the Guyana Fire Service to every single measure collectively agreed upon.

The announcements that follow are all supported by the Agencies to which they have relevance.

This new phase which we are about to embark on will be characterized by the following:

Changes will be brought about with the implementation of a Strategic Plan for the Guyana Police Force (2013 to 2017). The Strategic Plan will see the establishment of a Strategic Management Department which will have

oversight for the Strategic Plan's implementation. The employment of ten (10) high level civilian professionals in non-line positions within the Guyana Police Force will ensure a high degree of professional, technical and efficient inputs to guarantee implementation of the Plan. The Strategic Plan was drawn up by the UK based Capita Symonds Consultancy in 2010 while the Implementation Plan was drawn up and commenced by the US based Julian Laite Consultancy in February, 2012.

Marked adjustments to the Internal Management Structure within the Guyana Police Force are envisaged.

Monthly consultations between the Ministry of Home Affairs and a Guyana Police Force Change Team established since 2006 under the Citizen's Security Programme to ensure implementation of the Institutional Modernization of the Guyana Police Force have finally brought the transformative process at the Guyana Police Force to this critical stage.

Implementation of the GPF Strategic Plan will cost approx: G\$35M annually.

Side by side with the implementation of the Strategic Plan, the UK based Capita-Symonds Consultancy will be contracted to focus on four specific but critical areas at the Guyana Police Force. These include;

1. Administration: Aimed at strengthening the Administration of the Guyana Police Force with particular reference to standards for recruitment and retention of staff;
2. Succession Planning: develop a sustainable approach to succession planning with particular reference to career planning and retention of Cadet Officers.
3. Integrity/Probity (Professionalization): Aimed at improving the Professionalism of the Force through strengthening its accountability and instigating a more rigorous approach to Development of integrity;
4. Public Relations/Communications: Aimed at developing a sustainable approach to public relations/communications with particular reference to a modern and responsive approach to dealing with the media and other internal and external stakeholders

Implementation of these four (4) key areas may see the involvement of IPO's as Consultants however, the contractual agreement in the main will see the procurement of highly qualified specialists.

The first phase of this Consultancy will last for a period four (4) to six (6) weeks, beginning in January 2013 and will cost approx. US\$129,750.00 or approx: G\$25M.

The Ministry of Home Affairs is committed to ensuring that the Strategic and Implementation Plan as well as the specifically targeted Capita-Symonds consultancy will be fully implemented within the agreed time frames. The Ministry is pleased to note that the current Leadership of the Guyana Police Force is on board and supports fully these initiatives.

The Ministry wishes to add that efforts to civilianize mutually agreed clerical positions within the GPF has already begun with the employment of sixty (60) Data Entry Clerks to input data generated by the Integrated Crime Information System (ICIS) Facilities at forty two (42) Police Stations at “A”, “B”, “C”, “D” and “E and F” Divisions.

In addition, a qualified civilian/professional has been recruited to the post of Policy Analyst at Force Headquarters. Moreover, Cabinet at its meeting held in November 14, 2012 agreed to effect a name change from Guyana Police Force (GPF) to Guyana Police Service (GPS).

The legal and other adjustments inherent in this change are profound and far reaching; and will result in a number of institutional and operational adjustments to the Guyana Police Force.

In preparation for the 2013 Budget the Ministry of Home Affairs has submitted a radically different draft budget to the Ministry of Finance for its consideration.

The Ministry of Home Affairs has recommended severe adjustments particularly in the area of training in the allocation for the Guyana Police Force in the Ministry of Home Affairs 2013 Budget proposal. This adjustment will see significant increases in this area which must now be given greater attention.

Whereas in the past only five percent of the Ministry of Home Affairs' budgetary provision was allocated for local training, for 2013 more than thirty (30%) of the Budgetary provision will be utilized for training both locally and overseas.

The Ministry of Home Affairs in consultation with the Senior Management of the Guyana Police Force has agreed that for the year 2013 Ranks from the level of Constable to Assistant Commissioner will be sent abroad for overseas training. This is to be made mandatory.

At the local level, with the recent approval by Cabinet of a Policy on Study Leave for Ranks in the Guyana Police Force, by Cabinet the Guyana Prison Service and the Guyana Fire Service, the way has now been opened for Ranks from these Departments to pursue academic studies at the University of Guyana and other institutions of higher learning at home and abroad without losing any benefits and entitlements.

Work with respect to the completion of the state of the art Forensic Laboratory is moving apace. The hiring of a Barbadian Consultant to oversee

all works for the completion of the Laboratory by April, 2013 is a clear indication of the Ministry of Home Affairs' interest in ensuring that the best and most affordable equipment and human resources are in place to operationalize the Laboratory.

A draft Strategic Plan for the Forensic Laboratory has been formulated and is now being studied by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The Plan will address the Administration and Management of the Laboratory which will come under the purview of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Issues pertaining to staffing, the establishment of a Board, the composition of the Board, the clientele for the laboratory among other critical issues are currently under consideration.

Agreement has been reached with the Commissioner of Police to have Police Division "E" & "F" delinked and to form two separate and distinct divisions; this means that there will now be seven Police Divisions, namely; 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E', 'F' and 'G'.

The Commissioner of Police has assured me that these two Divisions will be headed by two experienced Senior Police Ranks at the Senior Superintendent level.

Further, the Commissioner of Police has assured that adequate support staff, equipment as well as land and water transport will be made available to service the two Divisions to ensure their smooth and effective functioning. In this regard, “E” Divisional Headquarters is to be located at Linden, while for logistical and other reasons, “F” Divisional Headquarters will be located at Force Headquarters.

Continuing with the impending changes on the public safety and security horizon.

The Ministry of Home Affairs will soon undergo internal administrative and institutional adjustments. These will be done in compliance with a (2012-2017) Strategic Plan for the Ministry of Home Affairs which was formulated by a Local Consultant and approved by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

As part of the Government of Guyana/IDB funded Citizen Security programme, the Institutional Modernization of the Ministry of Home Affairs was agreed to. This process is comprised of 4 components:

1. The Development of a Strategic Plan for the Ministry;
2. The Development of an Internal Control System;
3. The Development of an Electronic Document Management System;
4. The Development of a Communication and Public Relations Strategy;

The Strategic Plan for the Ministry has been given greater priority over the other three components because of its importance.

However, efforts are currently on stream to address those three components.

Because of the role of the Ministry of Home Affairs in which it is responsible for the formulation and evaluation of National Policy aimed at ensuring that the State provides a safe and secure environment for all persons, the development of a Strategic Plan that is aimed at ensuring that the Ministry is positioned where it could carry out its core functions was considered necessary.

The aim of the Plan is to identify the Ministry's vision for the Security Sector. In so doing, it will provide a strategic direction for the subvention Agencies that fall under the overall supervision of the Minister of Home Affairs.

A key reform that is planned is the comprehensive review of the Ministry of Home Affairs structure which is aimed at rationalization and restructuring existing Units and Departments within the Ministry.

The Implementation Plan for this Strategic Plan has been considered and approved by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Plan was submitted to Cabinet and approved on December 11, 2012.

The Strategic Plan for the Ministry of Home Affairs will target seven (7) goals:

- i. Realign and modernize the Ministry of Home Affairs' Organizational Structure for greater responsiveness;
- ii. Establish the Ministry of Home Affairs as a Centre of Excellence in the Public Service;
- iii. Enhance the physical infrastructure at Ministry of Home Affairs;
- iv. Deepen inter-organizational linkages for greater Security Sector cohesiveness and impact;
- v. Increase border surveillance and management for greater citizen security;
- vi. Enhance citizen security through greater effectiveness of the performance of the subvention agencies;
- vii. Reduce road fatalities through enhanced Traffic Management Surveillance;

The Plan will see the establishment of the following new internal mechanisms at the Ministry of Home Affairs;

- A Crime Prevention and Community Policing Unit;
- A Research, Documentation and Evaluation Unit;
- An Immigration Services Unit;
- A Project Formulation, Monitoring and Works Unit;
- A legal and Legislative Unit;
- A Public Security Unit;
- An International and Regional Affairs Unit;
- A Cyber Security Unit;

The cost to implement the Ministry of Home Affairs Strategic Plan will amount to five million, seven hundred and ninety seven thousand, (US\$5,797.00) or (G\$1,182,588.00). The Plan will cover a five (5) year period. An estimated one million, one hundred and sixty-two (US\$1,162.00) will be spent in 2013.

In the context of the Criminal Justice System changes are also envisaged at the Guyana Prison Service. In this regard, a Strategic and Implementation Plan for the Guyana Prison Service has been adopted by Cabinet. The cost to implement the Plan will be US\$4,755,500 or G\$970,122,000 over a five (5) year period.

The priority areas of the GPS Strategic Plan are:

- 1 Modernize and make secure, existing prison infrastructure;
- 2 Modernize Penal Legislation;
- 3 Enhance human resource management and financial administration;
- 4 Strengthen inter-agency collaboration;
- 5 Promoting successful offender reintegration into society;

A Civilian Oversight Body is to be established and a number of civilian professionals are to be employed to ensure implementation of the Plan.

A Ministry of Home Affairs/Guyana Prison Service Retreat held recently adopted a number of recommendations in pursuit of implementation of the Strategic Plan. In the meanwhile, a number of measures have already been implemented consistent with the Strategic Plan. These include the establishment of:

- (1) A Recruitment and Training Board;
- (2) A Sentence Management Board;
- (3) An Agricultural Development Board;

These Boards comprise mainly of civilians who have expressed a willingness to serve. A Team has been established to review, formulate and produce the first ever printed Edition of Standing Orders for the Guyana Prison Service. Work is currently on-going.

In the meanwhile, consultations have already begun on the implications of transitioning from a Guyana Prison Service (GPS) to a Guyana Correctional Service (GCS).

In pursuance of fulfilling its role and functions as regards the Criminal Justice System a High Level Meeting was recently held between the Chancellor (ag), the Chief Justice (ag), the Chief Magistrate (ag), the Minister of Home Affairs, the Commissioner of Police, the Director of Prisons and the Director of Public Prosecutions. The Meeting was timely as it was productive and augers well for the future in so far as the effective and efficient functioning of the Criminal Justice System are concerned.

At the level of the Community, in a few months' time Community Police Divisional Annual General Meetings will be completed and elections of new Divisional Executives will take place across the country.

And in February 2013, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the National Community Policing Organization will be held to elect a new National Community Policing Executive Committee.

At that meeting a new CPOG Constitution will be presented for discussion and adoption. With the election of these new Bodies, it is expected that a fresh impetus will be given to Community Policing across the country.

These developments coupled with the Ministry's push for the creation of Safe Neighbourhoods under the Citizens Security Programme (CSP) and the establishment of Houses of Justice in Regions two and three will result in greater people's participation in support of the Ministry's efforts to secure greater involvement of citizens in public safety and security issues.

Houses of Justice are multi-agency service centres that will address pressing social and safety needs of citizens at the community level. Houses of Justice are designed to improve access to public services, including public safety and

will be located within the communities. Houses of Justice will introduce a novel approach to individual safety concerns, conflict resolution and limiting the everyday frustration people face (“the royal runaround”) in accessing public services by bringing together under the same roof several official institutions in charge of providing social services and public safety.

In the first quarter of 2013, the Ministry of Home Affairs will establish Houses of Justice in ten (10) communities in Regions 2 and 3. In the inception phase it is envisioned that staff from the General Register Office, the Guyana Police Force, the National Insurance Scheme and Community Policing Volunteers will be rendering services and advice to members of the communities where the facilities are located. The main beneficiaries will be individuals living in the following communities:

Regions	Communities
Region 2	Good Hope Onderneeming to Perseverance Lima to Reliance Charity Wakapau Village
Region 3	Patentia Canal No. 1 Klien Pouderoyen Zeelugt Parika

An advertisement for the recruitment of a Coordinator for the Houses of Justice has been placed in the local media.

Never in the history of our country and the Security Sector have such initiatives been undertaken.

At a recent Retreat with the Guyana Fire Service and the Ministry of Home Affairs, it was recommended that the Guyana Fire Service be re-branded the Guyana Fire and Rescue Service.

The recommendation is currently before Cabinet for consideration.

The proposed change of name from Guyana Fire Service to Guyana Fire and Rescue Service reflects a long established function carried out by the Fire Service.

The Strategic Plans for the Guyana Police Force, the Guyana Prison Service and the Ministry of Home Affairs will be posted on the website of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

It is important that these initiatives be supported by all Guyanese, including the Opposition.

The Ministry is of the view that a new preventative and pro-active approach is required on the issue of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse. Such innovative measures must be introduced where others have failed.

In this regard, the Ministry is of the view that an expanded physical presence on the ground for the purpose of information gathering and prevention could go a far way in preventing and reducing Domestic Violence and Child Abuse.

An appropriate approach in our view would be a three pronged approach. First, would be to recruit larger numbers of Social Workers who would be stationed at an appropriate location in each Station/Magisterial District or National Democratic Council (NDC) and second, increase the numbers of Neighbourhood Police who patrol the neighbourhoods twenty four seven (24x7) principally by day since, on the one hand, the Police do not have the numbers to patrol on foot in each village day and night while on the other hand, members of Community Policing Groups are active usually by night.

The answer therefore lies in the recruitment of more Neighbourhood Police. Advertisements will soon be placed in the local Media inviting persons to apply to be members of the Neighbourhood Police. In this regard, Cabinet has approved the recruitment of one hundred (100) Neighbourhood Police ranks.

The Ministry will work closely with the Ministry of Human Services in respect of the possible recruitment of an increased number of Social Workers.

Soon our first batch of Traffic Wardens will complete training and will be issued with Kits to begin performing duties on the streets of Georgetown. Road users are asked to cooperate with the Traffic Wardens. Cabinet has approved the recruitment of one hundred (100) Traffic Wardens.

Finally, but importantly, on the advice of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Commissioner of Police has identified several Police Ranks at the level of Cadets to be trained at the Art Williams and Harry Wendt Aeronautical Engineering School and the Guyana Defence Force respectively.

The objective being to establish an Aeronautical Branch of the Guyana Police Force. Strong possibilities now exist for the Guyana Police Force to own and operate its own aircraft.

In addition, it was precisely in what I would describe as a preparatory and finalization period, that work was done with a view to bringing to finality the reforms that were just announced.

During that period, the Citizen's Security Programme was rolled out and successfully implemented much to the satisfaction of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB).

The jewel in the crown of the Citizens Security Programme (CSP) was undoubtedly the Community Action Component which resulted in the training

of one thousand, three hundred and seventy-seven (1,377) young people over a two (2) year period in Regions Four and Six at a cost of US\$1,657,810. Training in twenty-four (24) skills such as carpentry, mechanical engineering, computer technology and electrical installation among others took on a holistic dimension with courses being held with the very young people in Anger Management and Violence Prevention.

To take the process forward to the ultimate objective which is the establishment of Safe Neighbourhoods, the Project Implementation Unit of the CSP is currently engaged in consultations with the various communities where the young people were trained and where thirty community based Rapid Impacs Projects were commissioned to have Safe Neighbourhoods established.

Moreover, during the 2006-2011 five year period, a number of new institutional mechanisms were put in place at the Ministry of Home Affairs these include; the Task Force on Fuel Smuggling and Contraband, the Task Force on Narcotic and Illicit Weapons, the Task Force on Trafficking in Persons, as well as a number of new institutional arrangements at the Guyana Prison Service, and the Guyana Fire Service. The Cheddi Jagan International Airport Security Committee was established in December 2007, while the Security Monitoring Committee of the Ogle Airport was established January 2012. And a large number of community Policing Groups were either established, re-established or strengthened. Currently, there are two hundred and fifty two (252)

Community Policing Groups across the country with a Membership of three thousand, four hundred and two (3,402).

It was on the basis of recommendations by the Task Force on Fuel Smuggling and Contraband that Cabinet agreed to the establishment of Charity, Parika, Eterinbang and Ogle Regional Municipal Airport as official Ports of Entry and the de-establishment of Good Hope Police Station in Region 9 and the Omai Airstrip as Ports of Entry. Moreover, the issue of sufferance wharves which allow for the entry and departure of small ocean going vessels came up for intense discussion at the Task Force in view of certain irregularities that have been occurring at these locations.

And the regularization of the “back track” illegal points of Entry and Departure between Guyana and Nickerie, Suriname will be a major focus of attention for the Task Force in 2013.

Polygraphing of Law Enforcement Officers was also introduced for the first time between 2006-2011. Above all, it must be noted that over thirteen (13) pieces of Anti-Crime Legislation were passed during that five year period.

As regards polygraphing of Law Enforcement Officers, this year 2012, fifty seven (57) Ranks were polygraphed for the first time. Of the fifty-seven (57), forty (40) failed the test.

In early January 2013, sixty two (62) ranks are to be re-examined.

The results of the 2012 tests were submitted to the Defense Board for consideration, directives were given on the course of action to be taken.

The Commissioning of three (3) new and eighteen (18) remodeled Police Stations, six (6) new Outposts, two (2) Remodelled Police Training Colleges and two (2) Computer Laboratories, as well as the Holding Center at Sophia for Juveniles consumed much effort and energy on the part of the Ministry during the period 2006-2011.

The installation of traffic lights and CCTV Cameras in the City saw the Ministry working in collaboration with the Office of the President and the Ministry of Public Works during the 2006-2011 period. These were major projects undertaken by Government to render more effective traffic control and to have greater technological oversight of City life for the purpose of safety and protection of citizens.

Further, determining and agreeing on the design, security features the installation and other institutional arrangements for the new Machine Readable Passports as well as setting up and implementing the new Visa Policies for foreign nationals desirous of entering Guyana were matters that occupied the attention of the Ministry for a considerable amount of time during the 2006-2011 period.

Only recently, Cabinet approved the sum of US\$2.1M for maintenance and provision of support services for the Machine Readable Passport Issuing System and for the Border Control System being upgraded with the installation of new hardware and software to record passport biometrics and photos of foreign nationals who arrive at CJIA and wish to have a visa on arrival in accordance with any of the four (4) categories of visas, namely: student, visitor, employment and business.

Consequent to the establishment of the Firearms Licensing Approval Board, the Ministry of Home Affairs in collaboration with the Board, embarked on a review of the application process for firearm licence, to improve accountability and efficiency in the firearm licensing process. To date, a Firearms Licensing Management System (FLMS) has been developed for the Guyana Police Force, to support application, maintenance and renewal of firearm licenses, by the Guyana Police Force.

The Firearms Licensing Management System (FLMS) will allow Police Divisions to electronically record firearm licence applications. It uses an activity-based methodology to support the process from application to approval or rejection. The Ministry will have full access to this system.

Application Forms have been designed for ten (10) categories of applicants, and purposes.

The application Forms will replace the letter of application, which more often than not, excludes vital information necessary to arrive at a decision, on the applicant's suitability for a firearm licence, or other requests made.

Persons with technological capabilities will be able to download and print the application forms via the website of the Ministry or the Guyana Police Force.

However, for persons who are unable to access the application forms electronically, copies will be made available at Police Stations across the country.

The Ministry has noted the absence of a processing fee for the issuance of firearm licenses, to recoup costs for the resources expended in the processing of applications.

In this regard, Cabinet has approved:

- a. The introduction of a non-refundable processing fee in the following amounts to recoup costs associated with the activities listed above, with immediate effect:

\$5,000	-	Shotgun (<i>small-scale farmers, fishers, small-scale Amerindian farmers/loggers</i>)
\$20,000	-	Handgun (<i>9mm pistol and .32 pistol/revolver</i>)
\$25,000	-	Rifle
\$30,000	-	Firearms/Ammunition Dealers

- b. Exemption from the payment of a fee will be limited only to those persons who appeal the refusal of their applications;
- c. Issuance of firearm licence in 'plastic' form is to be mandatory for all licensees;
- d. Payment of the processing fee corresponding to the various categories of firearms, by persons who were previously licenses, and who will be required to obtain a 'plastic' licence;
- e. Payment of fees on submission of applications at Police Stations; Divisional Headquarters; or Police Headquarters, Eve Leary, where an official receipt will be issued

The construction and renovation of new Blocks to house inmates, at all the Prison locations, the rehabilitation of Trade Shops and the increasing emphasis on Correctional and Rehabilitation efforts at the Guyana Prison Service, were not overlooked during the first five years of my tenure.

The construction of six (6) new Fire Stations at Linden, Bartica, Mahaica, Onverwagt, Rose Hall and Diamond, to service communities who hitherto never had such facilities fully equipped with tenders and other necessary equipment was a major undertaking by the Ministry during the 2006-2012 five year period. And for the first time ever in the history of Guyana and the Guyana Fire Service fire-fighting equipment operated by trained Auxiliaries of the Guyana Fire Service has been installed at interior locations at Mahdia and Lethem and will later be established at Kwakwani, Mabaruma and Port Kaituma.

During the 2006-2011 period we initiated certain organizational and leadership changes at the Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit (CANU). Greater focus and a more robust pro-active approach was adopted by the new leadership of the Organization. In the end these changes bore fruit so much so that we saw CANU scoring more and more successes in their fight against trafficking and possession of narcotics.

An Inception Report which will help inform the consultative process and the design for a Successor 2013-2018 National Drug Strategy Master Plan has been completed. The Inception Report will be sent to Cabinet shortly for consideration. Once approved, the Ministry will move swiftly to advance the consultative process with a view to completion of the Master Plan within six (6) months. In the meanwhile, the Ministry and Law Enforcement Agencies are guided by those aspects of the current Maser Plan which can be deemed as work in progress as well as the collective understandings reached at the level of the Central Intelligence Committee and the Task Force on Narcotics and Illicit Weapons.

We are pleased that the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) has taken the bold initiative to establish a Drug Enforcement Unit and a Port Control Unit under the GoG/UNODC Container Control Programme. These initiatives will help considerably in strengthening the efforts of the Guyana Police Force's Anti-Narcotics Branch and the CANU.

There is now more than ever before greater coordination and collaboration between the Law Enforcement Agencies engaged in the fight against drug trafficking.

Certain new and innovative approaches to crime fighting have been introduced; these include the Electronic Crime Reporting System using BBM, Facebook and the internet.

Messages have reached over two hundred and sixty thousand (260,000) cell phone users throughout Guyana making them aware of the new innovation and encouraging them to take advantage of it.

In addition the Ministry of Home Affairs has introduced the “Ipaid a Bribe” website which encourages persons on the basis of anonymity to provide information on payment of a bribe for a public service rendered at any of the agencies under the purview of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

And a Ministry of Home Affairs (24x7) “hotline” was launched resulting in heavy traffic with calls for assistance from members of the public.

Over the past five years the Ministry worked hard to build mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation relations with its counterparts in the neighbouring countries as well as other countries with which Guyana enjoys friendly relations.

We attended numerous international fora treating with Transnational Organized Crimes, Trafficking in Narcotics and Firearms, just to mention a few.

Representatives of the Ministry and Law Enforcement were active participants at international events organized by UNASUR, the OAS, UNODC, IMPACS and CONSLE. By participating in these events, the Ministry of Home Affairs has gained a deeper and broader appreciation of regional, hemispheric and global developments and trends in respect to the global fight against crime, trafficking in narcotics and firearms and the collective efforts that are required to cooperate in countering these criminal enterprise.

Thus the past five (5) years, at the Ministry of Home Affairs was a very productive period insofar as policy formulation, implementation and fulfillment of its oversight role is concerned.

The announcements just made should certainly not be a matter of “too late! too late! Is the cry!” Rather the cry should be “better late than never”.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the question may very well be asked, why so late with these important reforms and why these reforms were not brought to light in the 2006-2011 period of my tenure.

I must point out that during that period I spent most of my time and efforts acquainting myself with the sometimes complex institutional and

organizational arrangements as well as other critical aspects of the functioning of those Agencies that fall under the purview of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

I spent a lot of time travelling around the country to acquaint myself with the local conditions from a public safety and security perspective and to listen to the views of the people on the ground.

Having recognized that we were over the 2006-2011 period so to speak and are better prepared technically and institutionally; it became necessary for the Ministry of Home Affairs to approach Cabinet for the green light to embark on the path reflected in this presentation.

The Ministry of Home Affairs is of the view that the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. David Granger is committed to the same course to which the Ministry is committed in so far as the security of our country and people is concerned.

It is time that entrenched party politics and intractable positions are expunged from initiatives aimed at enhancing Public Safety and Security.

The Ministry of Home Affairs wants a constructive engagement with the Parliamentary Opposition. It must be an engagement that must be structured, sustainable, and all-embracing with well established reporting and accountability mechanisms, worked out and approved by both sides.

The Ministry of Home Affairs is prepared to bring to the Parliamentary Oversight Committee for deliberations the Strategic and Implementation Plans for the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Guyana Police Force and the Guyana Prison Service as well as its projections for the 2013 Budget for the Guyana Police Force.

The Ministry is agreeable to the setting of agreed and specific timelines for reporting back to the Oversight Committee on the progress and challenges that have arisen to facilitate or hinder implementation of the Strategic Plans earlier mentioned.

The Ministry is prepared to make itself available regularly to the Parliamentary Oversight Committee on the Security Sector in an effort to ensure greater transparency and accountability of its activities and those of the Departments that fall under its jurisdiction.

The Ministry of Home Affairs is convinced that in the spirit of compromise and accommodation, the maintenance of peace and good order in our country can be further advanced.

December 31, 2012