

**REMARKS BY THE  
HON. CLEMENT J. ROHEE,  
MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS  
SENSITIZATION SEMINAR ON THE DISABILITY ACT 2010  
JUNE 24, 2013  
POLICE OFFICERS' MESS HALL**

I am very pleased to have been asked to make opening remarks at this seminar, which was convened to discuss and bring attention to a salient matter – the Persons with Disabilities Act 2010 with an emphasis on the obligations of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Guyana Police Force.

Let me say at the outset that the Ministry of Home Affairs considers persons with disabilities as being just as deserving as all others in receiving the various Government services, including those provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs, and its constituent agencies.

This is why I promptly responded to a request by representatives of the Guyana Association of the Visually Impaired, and convened a meeting on August 29, 2012, to discuss matters of concern to the Association. This seminar, I am pleased to say, is a product of those discussions. Following that meeting, we immediately engaged the National Commission on Disabilities, as the national oversight body for disability issues, for further discussions.

I wish to assure the Commission and indeed all persons with disabilities that the Ministry of Home Affairs will not shirk its responsibility to you, as provided for by law. We are eager to work with you in bringing the provisions of the Act to fruition, in the shortest possible time.

This activity is called a sensitization seminar targeting members of the Guyana Police Force, the National Road Safety Council, volunteers and road safety stakeholders. Just as important, however, is for the wider society to be sensitized on matters pertinent to persons with disabilities, recognizing that they are also our fellow citizens. I am aware that the National Commission on Disabilities does some amount of work in this respect. This is good and should continue.

It is important that citizens develop an appreciation for the circumstances of persons with disabilities. Too often we receive complaints from persons with disabilities, including visually impaired persons being aided by the 'white cane' about mistreatment meted out to them and even refusal of entry on public transportation, by operators.

We also hear about the dangers experienced by visually impaired persons as a result of vehicles parked on pavements, which are intended for the safety of pedestrians. The Ministry has had cause to intervene in specific reports about this occurrence on Durban Street, in the city.

I take this opportunity to urge all Guyanese, particularly motorists, to recognize the special circumstances of persons with disabilities and to demonstrate greater care and consideration for them. Members of the Guyana Police Force, traffic ranks in particular, are also urged to be even more responsive to persons with disabilities who they may encounter in the execution of their duties.

I look forward to receiving the final report and recommendations from your engagement today, so that the Ministry may benefit from your input as we seek to fulfill our obligations under the Persons with Disabilities Act 2010.

I leave with you every best wish for a successful seminar. Thank you!