



UNITED NATIONS

dignity and justice for all in Guyana



Living Human Rights in Guyana

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards
one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” Article 1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights



“Our very mission for peace, development and human rights depends on fostering inclusive societies that are stable, safe, just and tolerant - societies that respect diversity, equality of opportunity and participation of all.”

UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, 2007

PREFACE

On this Human Rights Day, the 10th of December 2008, when we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Country Team in Guyana launches its joint publication: “Living Human Rights in Guyana.”

Drafted amid utter destruction and destitution following the Second World War, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reflects humanity’s aspirations for a future of prosperity, dignity and peaceful coexistence. Its adoption was a landmark. Today, the Declaration remains a core part of the UN’s very identity. The challenges we face today are as daunting as those that confronted the Declaration’s drafters.

The luckiest among us, those who are spared the most negative effects of disaster, poverty or instability, cannot turn a blind eye. The cascading effects of abuse and indifference can eventually engulf the entire planet. Rights, and especially their violation, must hold the whole world in solidarity.

This publication is a collaborative effort of all UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes that work in and for Guyana. It is intended to be as inclusive as possible, highlighting the role of each of us as the custodians of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. On this Human Rights Day and forevermore, we, the United Nations Country Team in Guyana, commit that we will all act to honour our collective responsibility to uphold the rights enshrined in this Declaration.

We can only honour the towering vision of that inspiring document when its principles are fully applied everywhere, for everyone.

On behalf of the UN Country Team in Guyana,

Kathleen Israel
United Nations Resident Coordinator, a.i.
Georgetown, Guyana
10 December 2008

FACTS ABOUT GUYANA

Guyana gained independence from the United Kingdom on 26th May 1966 and became a Republic in February 1970. Guyana is considered part of the Caribbean and is a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Bordered on the north by the Atlantic Ocean, on the east by Suriname, on the south and southwest by Brazil, and on the west and northwest by Venezuela, Guyana is the only English speaking country in South America.

With an area of around 215 000 square km., Guyana boasts an abundance of natural resources, fertile agricultural land, diversified mineral deposits, and a large acreage of tropical forests. The economy is natural resource-based, with agriculture bauxite, gold, and timber accounting for most of the output.

Guyana's multi-racial population of around 750 000 (2002), lives predominantly in the coastal regions. The population is made up chiefly of people of East Indian descent (43%), African descent (30%), and indigenous Amerindians (9%).



INTRODUCTION

By adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Guyana has agreed its citizens will benefit from those basic rights that every person, regardless of race, religion, gender, ethnicity, age or wealth, has the right to receive and enjoy.

Under the Guyana Constitution it is noted that “the interpretation of the fundamental rights provisions in this constitution a court shall pay due regard to international law, international conventions and charters bearing on human rights.”

The full access to and the enjoyment of human rights is a key objective of Guyana's National Development Strategy (NDS). The NDS is a policy framework structured around priority objectives of the country, including poverty alleviation, geographical unity and the equitable distribution of economic activity. These goals also form the basis of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) - the document increasingly used to focus Guyana's partners' and donors' contributions on the priorities of the country.

Over the past two decades, concerted efforts to eliminate legislative and administrative impediments to redress the plight of those most needy and vulnerable are evident in Guyana. These strides are commendable and pave the way for more to be done.



“...Fellow Guyanese...let us all work to realise not only our dreams and aspirations for this year but also to ensure that we do so as a united, free and democratic nation where fair play, justice, peace, security, prosperity, and compassion to each other are our defining ideals.”

His Excellency, Bharrat Jagdeo, President of Guyana, 2008
(extract from the New Year's address)

HUMAN RIGHTS

On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), thus setting forth the 30 articles and accompanying preamble that comprise the inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms of every person.

According to the Vienna Declaration of 1993, all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated. The international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis.

“Human rights are the foundation of human existence and coexistence. They are universal, indivisible and interdependent. And they lie at the heart of everything the UN aspires to achieve in its global mission of peace and development.”

Former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, 1997



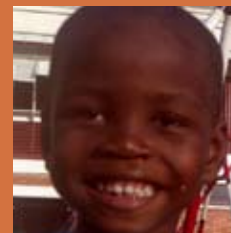
Human Rights Treaties

The human rights treaties are at the core of the international legal system for the promotion and protection of the human rights of every child, man and woman. International human rights standards were developed to protect people's human rights against violations by individuals, groups or nations. Successful implementation ensures the protection of human rights; the prevention of abuses; and access to effective remedies to victims in the event of violations. Every UN member state is a party to one or more of the major human rights treaties.



Guyana is signatory to the seven major international human rights treaties:

- CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child
- CAT – Convention Against Torture
- CERD – Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
- CMW – International convention on the protection of Migrant Workers' rights
- ICCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political rights
- ICESCR – International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights



THE HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

Human rights and human development share a common vision and a common purpose: to secure the freedom, well-being and dignity of all people everywhere.

The Human rights approach to development seeks to make sure that the content of policies and programmes are informed by national and international human rights standards and that programmes and actions result in promoting the wider enjoyment of these rights. Guyana's approach to development are the National Development Strategy (NDS) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) which both draw from international human rights standards and principles.

When human development and human rights advance together, they reinforce one another – expanding people's capabilities and protecting their rights and fundamental freedoms.



The realisation of human rights is the ultimate goal of all development programmes.

The National Development Strategy and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper are the most important documents in Guyana's development process and establish the Guyanese people as rights-holders and the Government as chief duty-bearer. The process of preparing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) additionally fulfills the commitment to the UN to enhance the contribution of non-governmental actors, civil society and other partners in Guyana's development. Additionally, the PRSP outlines a comprehensive strategy to put Guyana on track to meet the eight Millennium Development Goals set down at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000.



A human rights approach to development is all inclusive; meaning every human is entitled to active, free and meaningful participation in and enjoyment of civil, social, economic, cultural and political development.

HUMAN RIGHTS & THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In September 2000, world leaders agreed to set a time-frame for measurable goals and targets to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and gender inequality. These Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), endorsed again at the 2005 World Summit along with the Millennium Declaration, are now at the heart of the global development agenda and at the centre of Guyana's National Development Strategy.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) present a key opportunity to improve the enjoyment of human rights around the world. Conversely, the MDGs will only be achieved if States' human rights obligations are respected and strengthened.

Notwithstanding the severity of the challenges posed by the MDGs, the Government of Guyana continues to press towards their achievement through implementing reforms and measures to sustain the stability of the macroeconomic framework, strengthen institutional and regulatory systems and improve governance.

"Strategies based on the protection of human rights are vital for both our moral standing and the practical effectiveness of our actions."

Former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, 2005



There are eight Millennium Development Goals, geared towards human rights, development and poverty eradication, to be achieved by 2015:



Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger



Achieve universal primary education



Promote gender equality and empower women



Reduce child mortality



Improve maternal health



Combat hiv, malaria and other diseases



Ensure environmental sustainability



Develop a global partnership for development



HUMAN RIGHTS & THE UN SYSTEM

The promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms is a priority objective of the United Nations in accordance with its purposes and principles.

UN agencies and programmes have been integrating human rights principles in all their activities and programmes since 1997 when human rights were declared by the UN Secretary General as inherent to the promotion of peace, security, economic prosperity and social equity. UN agencies in Guyana are increasingly using the human rights based approach in their development programmes.

Human rights bring together cross-cutting, inter-related issues of universal significance. Human rights are integral to every UN agency, mandate and programme. In addition, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) provides the means for a collective, coherent and integrated response of all UN agencies to Guyana's development priorities and human rights issues.



“We will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights.”

Former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, 2005

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework is focussed around three main outcomes determined by the national priorities of Guyana:

- 1 Increased proportion of the population accessing quality services in education, health, water and sanitation and housing with capabilities enhanced to maximise available opportunities.
- 2 Empowered individuals and groups, strengthened institutions and an enabling constitutional and human rights framework.
- 3 Reduced poverty through stimulation of growth and job creation.



Dignity and justice for all of us



IMPROVED ACCESS TO QUALITY SERVICES & ENHANCED CAPABILITIES

The concept of quality of life and social well-being is best expressed through the aspirations of individuals and families.

It is about equal access to quality services, offering possibilities and enhancing capabilities so people can stand up for their own rights and make their own life choices; securing personal justice and allowing the realisation of peace, social cohesion and respect for human dignity.

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family...”

Article 25(1) Universal Declaration of Human Rights



Quality Education

Equal access to quality education is vital to ensure a better life for all children and a better world for all people.

Human rights must be implemented in all learning environments to ensure education is universal, functional, child-friendly and inclusive. Key priorities of Guyana's Education Strategy are: improving the quality delivered and improving equity of education by paying special attention to those in remote areas. With a net primary enrolment of 94%, Guyana is well placed to achieve the second Millennium Goal of Universal Primary Education.



UNICEF's provides technical and financial support to the Ministry of Education's reform process based on the National Strategic Plan and addresses the right of all children to have the best start in life and reach their full potential.

UNICEF's also supports Early Childhood Development (ECD), under the programme Child Survival and Development, focuses on safe motherhood and capacity building of caregivers, including parents, ECD practitioners and health workers.

IMPROVED ACCESS TO QUALITY SERVICES & ENHANCED CAPABILITIES



UNESCO published 'Education and HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean' which highlighted the need to expand the response to hiv from the health to the education sector.

The new education-based approach to hiv has begun in Guyana with an Advocacy and Leadership Campaign by the Ministry of Education in partnership with UNESCO, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the University of the West Indies.



Since September 2006, Guyana has 41 schools participating in UNESCO's Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) carrying out activities to improve the quality of education, particularly the ethical, cultural and international dimensions, by developing effective teaching approaches, methods and materials.

The World Bank is implementing the Education For All, Fast-Track Initiative in Guyana with the goal of achieving universal primary school completion for all children by 2015.

Specific initiatives include: (i) improving the quality of the teaching force in the country's hinterland; (ii) enhancing the teaching/learning environment in primary schools; and (iii) strengthening school/community partnerships.

"Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms."

Article 26 (2) Universal Declaration of Human Rights



Quality Healthcare

Better living conditions and health empower people to better help themselves. Health policies and programmes can promote or violate human rights in their design or implementation.

Guyana's Ministry of Health is committed to improving the physical, social and mental health of all Guyanese by ensuring that health services are as accessible, acceptable, affordable, timely and appropriate as possible given available resources.

The Government of Guyana is engaged in a significant restructuring programme to improve the health sector over the next five years as outlined in the National Health Plan (NHP). The NHP aims to involve all players in the process of improving and maintaining health and will be used to allocate new financial resources and to begin relocating existing resources in a more equitable, cost-effective, information-based and target-driven way.



IMPROVED ACCESS TO QUALITY SERVICES & ENHANCED CAPABILITIES

World Health Organisation / Pan-American health Organisation (WHO/PAHO) work in Guyana is based on a belief in the rights of all individuals to basic conditions for health, irrespective of gender, race, age, religion or sexual orientation and on the values of the organisation.

The mission of WHO/PAHO in Guyana is to provide technical leadership in public health and bring together local, regional and international partners to strengthen national capacity for health development. WHO/PAHO aims to provide specific policy advice; serve as broker; and influence policy, action and spending. WHO/PAHO aims to ensure their work is supported by research, development and monitoring of health sector performance.



The World Bank's supports universal access to safe and affordable water for the population of Guyana, particularly the poor. More specifically, it aims to provide access to treated water through the development of treatment facilities and distribution systems in three areas of Guyana, and to support the ongoing water sector modernisation and reform process.

Guyana has a very successful immunisation programme in place, assisted by WHO/PAHO. More than 14 vaccine-preventable diseases are covered in the programme and more than 90% of children are covered. The Ministry of Health has set the goal for 2008 that vaccines are to exceed 95% coverage and that in no region of Guyana should less than 80% of children be covered.

WHO/PAHO's anti-malaria programme in Guyana aims to assist technical coordination and cooperation to reduce malaria and prevent reintroduction of transmission where reduction has already been achieved.

Since 2004, health workers from the Ministry of Health and University of Guyana have benefited from WHO/PAHO training programmes exposing them to new technologies to forecast drug resistance with the use of invitro-studies and molecular workers.



Maternal and Child Health are ongoing priorities in WHO/PAHO's programme of assistance to Guyana: reducing the maternal mortality rate and saving the lives of newborns are chief objectives as is consolidating implementation of clinical and community integrated management of childhood illness.



THE HIV EPIDEMIC

The risk of hiv infection and its impact feeds on violations of human rights, including discrimination against women and marginalized groups such as sex workers and men who have sex with men. Over the past decade the critical need for strengthening human rights to effectively respond to the epidemic and deal with its effects has become evermore clear. Protecting human rights and promoting public health are mutually reinforcing.

Several countries still have policies that interfere with the accessibility and effectiveness of hiv-related measures for prevention and care. Examples include laws criminalizing consensual sex between men, prohibiting condom access for prisoners, and using residency status to restrict access to prevention and treatment services. At the same time, laws and regulations protecting people with hiv from discrimination are not enacted, or fully implemented or enforced.

Reforming laws and policies that are based in deeply-rooted social attitudes and norms such as gender inequality requires multi sector collaboration. Although not sufficient to change social attitudes, legislation is important for addressing acts of discrimination. Civil society, including organizations of people living with hiv, as well as other parts of society, including police and justice systems, have a critical role to play. International organizations and donors can also play a positive role in support of local and national actors.



- The protection of human rights, both of those vulnerable to hiv infection and those already infected, is not only right, but also produces positive public health results. In particular, it has also become increasingly clear that:
- National and local responses will not work without the full engagement and participation of those affected by hiv, particularly people living with hiv.
 - The human rights of women, young people and children must be protected if they are to avoid infection and withstand the impact of hiv.
 - The human rights of marginalized groups (e.g. sex workers and men who have sex with men, prisoners) must also be respected and fulfilled for the response to hiv to be effective.
 - Supportive frameworks of policy and law are essential to effective hiv responses



The International Labour Organisation (ILO) works with the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, employers and trade unions to prevent the spread of hiv in the world of work and reduce its adverse consequences on social, labour and economic development. Chief objectives are to reduce hiv risk behaviours among workers and to reduce employment-related discrimination against persons living with hiv

How do some of the relevant rights apply?

To empower rights-holders to claim their rights, to protect human dignity and to prevent the transmission of hiv, the following rights should be protected so that people will come forward for hiv information, education and means of protection, and will be supported to avoid risky behaviour:

Non-discrimination : protected against discrimination if seek help or are hiv positive

Right to privacy : protected against mandatory testing; hiv status kept confidential

Right to liberty and freedom of movement : protected against imprisonment, segregation, or isolation in a special hospital ward

Right to education/information : access to all hiv prevention education and information and sexual and reproductive health information and education

Right to health : access to all health care prevention services, including for sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis, voluntary counseling and testing, and to male and female condoms

Vulnerable populations

Some groups may be more vulnerable to infection and impact because of their legal status or lack of human rights protection, e.g. women, children, minorities, indigenous people, poor people, migrant-workers, refugees, sex workers, men having sex with men, and prisoners.

These groups should have equal access to hiv prevention information, education, and commodities, and to hiv care, support and anti-retroviral treatment; should not be subject to sexual violence or coercion, where applicable; and should be able to participate in the formulation and implementation of hiv policies that affect them.

- Non-discrimination/equality before the law : same access as others to services
- Rights to education and health : same access to hiv prevention education and information, and health care services, including STI services and condoms
- Liberty , security of person and freedom from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment : freedom from violence, including sexual violence, freedom from mandatory testing
- Right to participate in public life : participation in the formulation and implementation of hiv policy



The Minister of Health mandated PAHO/WHO with the responsibility of facilitating preparation of a new National hiv and AIDS Strategic Plan for 2007-2011. This plan was prepared in collaboration with all partners and stakeholders involved in hiv work.

UNFPA in Guyana focuses on hiv prevention among vulnerable groups including young people. Support for the provision of youth friendly services is provided through the adolescent and young adult health and wellness unit of the Ministry of Health.

In addition UNFPA provides support to secure reproductive health commodities including the female condom. Training is also provided for health care workers in sexual reproductive health within the context of gender and cultural sensitivities.

United Nations Volunteers (UNV) has provided hiv physician specialists working with the Ministry of Health to help deliver culturally relevant and sustainable strategies feasible in Guyana's public health system, with a focus on hiv care and treatment.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched the Global Campaign on Children and AIDS called "UNITE FOR CHILDREN. UNITE AGAINST AIDS." in Guyana in May 2005. The campaign seeks to put focus on children in the response to the epidemic. UNICEF Guyana's country programme with the Government focuses on the campaign's pivot areas of:

- Prevention of mother-to-child transmission of the hiv virus
- Primary prevention of hiv among adolescents and young people
- Protection and support for children infected and affected by hiv

UNICEF supports the Ministry of Health primarily in ensuring targets set in these areas are met. Other partners include the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security and civil society.



As part of a regional programme, UNIFEM has worked in partnership in Guyana to build capacity of governmental and non-governmental institutions on the gendered causes and consequences of the epidemic.

This work has contributed to the call within the Second PANCAP Caribbean Regional Strategic Framework for the incorporation of gender analysis in all national plans and programmes. Understanding how sexual expression is informed by gender identity is important in developing prevention programmes and in combating stigma and discrimination.



EMPOWERED PEOPLE & STRENGTHENED INSTITUTIONS

Strengthened institutions and an enabled constitutional and human rights framework provide the means with which to realise human rights.

Individuals become empowered when they can shape the State and the State, in turn, is capable of creating enabling social, political, economic and legal conditions wherein people can exercise their rights and realise the freedom from fear and want.



Participation in the Development Process

All individuals and groups have the right to full and equal participation in developmental and environmental planning and decision-making, and in shaping all policies affecting one's community and living conditions, at the local, national and international levels.

A fundamental part of UNDP's mission in Guyana is to support the government's efforts towards achieving sustainable human development through strengthening institutions and deepening democracy. UNDP's work thereby involves capacity building of key national institutions of governance and focussing on monitoring and evaluation processes.

Inclusive Governance Structures

To assure a human rights perspective, national and local Government systems should be decentralised, inclusive and participatory. They must follow the rule-of-law, promote gender equality, accountability and combat corruption.

Governance is not a unilateral process whereby Government determines the direction for the people. Men and women must be recognised as having a significant and ongoing influence on Government.

The United Nations is committed to maximising its comparative advantage in Guyana as a trusted and impartial partner and as an honest broker to promote democratic governance that fosters inclusion, accountability, transparency and social justice in the public and private sector and civil society at all levels.



Democratic Governance is a core area of UNDP's work and support to the electoral process is a key priority in Guyana. Strong emphasis is placed on the participation of all citizens, including women and the most disadvantaged, to take part in public life and to influence government policy and practice.

UNDP facilitated donor efforts during the 2006 elections in Guyana and was also responsible for pooling funds and disbursements to the Guyana Electoral Commission (GECOM). All activities went according to schedule and the result was a free, fair and non-violent election.

“Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.”

Article 21 (1) Universal Declaration of Human Rights

EMPOWERED PEOPLE & STRENGTHENED INSTITUTIONS

Social Cohesion

All human beings' rights and fundamental freedoms must be promoted and protected, whatever their historical, cultural and religious backgrounds.

Building cohesion is essentially a process to shift relationships, assuming that conflict is an inevitable and necessary dynamic of human relations. While conflict cannot always be managed or resolved, it is possible to transform relationships into interdependent safety networks. Awareness of human rights can go a long way to improve citizens' attitudes and behaviour.

Support was directed towards the needs of the National Assembly as the ultimate forum for airing differing views and reaching consensual solutions to Guyana's development challenges. Support was also directed to assist the effective functioning of the Ethnic Relations Commission.



"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression."

Article 19 Universal Declaration of Human Rights



The Millennium goal for gender equality speaks to equality in access to primary school education as well as to increased levels of women in parliament. Guyana is set to attain these targets. In relation to political participation, the Guyana Constitutional Reform Act ensures that 33% of all candidates must be women. This has led to an increase in women's political participation at all levels. Guyana is the only CARICOM country with such a provision.

However it has been recognised in the Caribbean that important indicators of gender equality have been omitted, especially violence against women.

UNIFEM has supported the Task Force on Violence in Guyana established by the Women's Affairs Bureau. The task force did a situational analysis of gender-based violence which led to recommendations and further action on the development of a national plan of action; legal reform; and increased public awareness to prevent gender-based violence.

UNFPA supports the Government of Guyana for the development of sexual offences legislation.



Access to Justice

Equal access to justice and protection

of human rights in accordance with national and international standards is the right of every citizen. Public awareness of these rights and standards is vital to ensuring justice is sought and prevails.

Access to justice can be impeded by harmful gender stereotypes.

Prevention and protection against domestic violence and sexual assault, including child sexual abuse, will be better assured when state actors (such as police, health workers, administrators of justice) and communities have a better understanding of the causes of such violence and respond to ensure that there is no impunity for perpetrators of abuse.

Promoting and supporting a functioning, accessible and transparent justice system helps create precedent, empowerment and knowledge where everyone, including the poor and vulnerable groups, can seek justice. Legal services need to not only be in place but responsive and accountable to win public confidence.

“All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.”

Article 7 Universal Declaration of Human Rights



UNICEF is developing an essential package of public policies and legislation for the protection of children in compliance with international human rights instruments in relation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Riyadh Guidelines as well as the Millennium Development Goals.

Legislation includes the Children's Bill (encompassing 5 bills: Adoption of Children; Child Care and Development Services; Custody, Access, Guardianship and Maintenance Bill; Status of Children, Protection of Children Bill) and a revised legislation to address the administration of juvenile justice.



PROTECTION OF THE MOST VULNERABLE

Everyday, vulnerable people are exploited, abused or are victims of violence. The UN pays special attention to uphold the rights of the most vulnerable groups of society and to protect them from neglect, abuse and exploitative and hazardous labour.

The protection and promotion of the rights of the poor and most vulnerable groups - including children, adolescents, the disabled and their caregivers - is at the heart of the UN's work in Guyana.

Orphaned and especially vulnerable children require particular attention as these children face uncertain futures and an increased threat of exploitation, violence and abuse. Further studies are needed to establish the number of children affected by AIDS, but it is evident that this has become a major challenge for Guyana. In 2004, according to UNICEF, 37% of vulnerable or orphaned children were missing one or both parent because of AIDS.



Children's human rights are the blocks with which we build a human rights culture in societies and secure human rights for future generations. What happens or doesn't happen to children in the earliest years of their lives is of critical importance, both to their immediate well-being and to their future.

Building upon previous progress and the national development strategies and priorities, UNICEF has entered into a Programme of Cooperation with the Government of Guyana from 2006-2010 with the chief goal of ensuring that all children enjoy greater respect and realisation of their human rights to survival, development, participation and protection.

UNICEF supports NGOs working with orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC). The Guyana Office currently supports NGOs in three different regions of Guyana at the community level. These four NGOs provide a range of services to orphans, other vulnerable children and persons living with hiv. It includes the provision of hot meals, psychological support and establishing child-friendly spaces.

The Amerindian Act 2006 ensures Indigenous peoples' legal access and entitlement to communal lands. Additionally the Act sets up community-based mechanisms to empower indigenous peoples to manage their own affairs. One of the challenges which is being met is capacity building for managing these governance processes.

Fold-out section

Adolescents in Guyana face a wide range of challenges such as unemployment, violence and lack of opportunities. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supports the Ministry of Culture Youth and Sport, Faith Based Organisations and NGOs for the establishment of community adolescent youth friendly spaces to facilitate sexual reproductive health and life skills education.



PAHO has been working in close collaboration with the Rehabilitation Department of the Ministry of Health in setting up a surveillance, monitoring and evaluation system to gather and collate information on persons with disabilities to determine the level of care and service required.



The National Commission on Disabilities is supported by UNICEF to empower those with disabilities, particularly children, through such initiatives as the preparation of draft legislation outlining their particular rights.



“Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.”

Article 25(2) Universal Declaration of Human Rights

REDUCED POVERTY

Tackling poverty is a complex mission requiring multi-dimensional approaches. Efforts to reduce poverty should go hand in hand with efforts to increase respect for human rights and to engage people and communities in finding solutions for their problems and in their search for a better life.



To reduce poverty and ensure the well-being of all people, strategies must integrate social development, economic development, and environmental conservation and protection.

Guyana's poverty reduction programme is embedded in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper I (PRSP), supported by the IMF and the International Development Agency (IDA). The PRSP II is currently under preparation.

UNDP poverty reduction support in Guyana focuses on:

- building national capacities to collect, analyse and disseminate key economic and social data;
- building capacities at the regional level to formulate development strategies;
- building capacities at the community level towards increasing employment opportunities;
- developing a sustainable monitoring and evaluation system; and
- providing support to align the Millennium Development Goals with the National Poverty Reduction Strategy.



Undernutrition and hunger are constitutive of poverty. Thus, the right to adequate food has a crucial role to play in relation to poverty reduction strategies.

The Government of Guyana has made significant inroads in the fight against hunger, particularly through programmes directed at the nutrition of expectant mothers and children. There has been a clear decline in the number of children under five suffering from malnutrition. Guyana is, in fact, very well placed to achieve the second Millennium Goal of eradicating extreme hunger by 2015.

The Household Income and Expenditure Survey (soon to be complete) will provide a comprehensive measure of poverty to facilitate future poverty reduction programmes, in particular the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper II.



Under the Education For All, Fast-Track Initiative programme, the World Bank facilitates the provision of 'Hot Meals' for schools in hinterland regions. This nutrition-based programme targets short-term hunger and thereby performance of children in the classroom.

REDUCED POVERTY

Sustainable Economic Growth

Concrete growth strategies require strong stakeholder processes and must be formulated with appropriate means to diversify the economy and to strengthen capacities in external trade negotiation.

Key initiatives being taken by the Government of Guyana to improve sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty are: improving the business environment to attract investments and prioritising investments in the social and economic infrastructure.

The Government of Guyana is committed to the principle of sustainable development and has ratified a number of major international agreements. The Environmental Protection Agency is currently focussed on developing a National Biodiversity Action Plan, Land Use Policy, Mangrove Action Plan and Intercoastal Zone Management Plan. Guyana is well placed to achieve the seventh Millennium Development Goal of ensuring environmental sustainability.



UNDP collaborates to varying degrees with most of the key environmental agencies in Guyana with reference to the document: Capacity Building for the Management of Natural Resources and the Environment. This document is a joint document between UNDP and the Government. Objectives are: to enhance the effectiveness of biodiversity and natural resources management with specific focus on the sustainable use of biodiversity and pollution prevention and control.

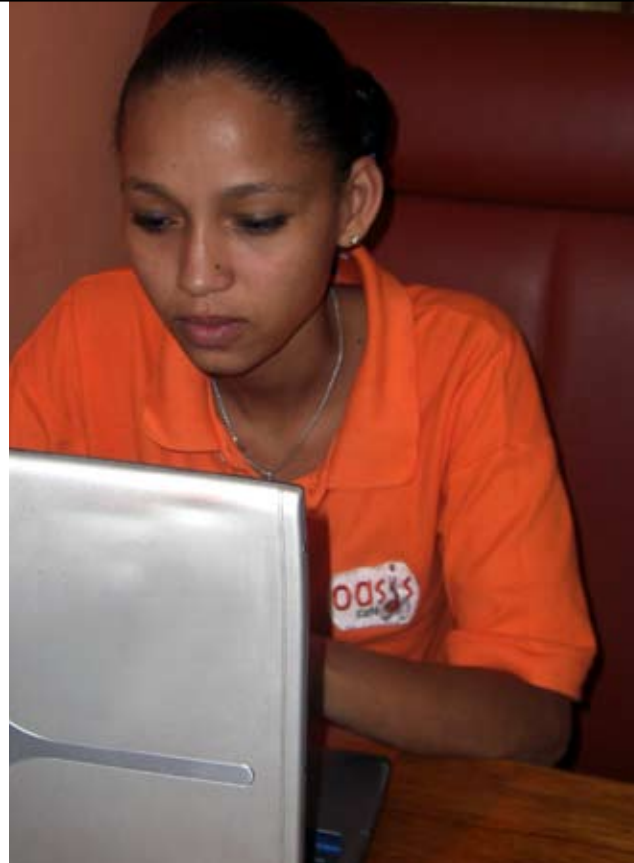
With an abundance of natural resources and a Government committed to the principle of sustainable development, Guyana stands in a unique position to set an example of how real sustainable economic growth can be achieved.



The Private Sector

The private sector has great potential to become an engine of economic growth and sustainable development.

The Government of Guyana is focussed on improving the business environment and attracting both local and international investment. Towards this end an Investment Code has been enacted, a Small Business Law Act has been passed and the Guyana Land and Survey Department has been reformed. The Government's investment guide 'Doing Business in Guyana' additionally identifies three key priorities: improving transport infrastructure; enhancing the role of Information and Communication Technology and implementing the recently prepared National Competitive Strategy.



“We must now make our number one strategic economic priority the goal of enhancing the competitiveness of our economy to deliver greater economic growth.”

His Excellency Bharrat Jagdeo, President of Guyana, 2007

REDUCED POVERTY

Equitable Budget Allocations

Public budgeting must be directed equitably to facilitate both economic and human development, taking into account the rights of all, especially the most vulnerable. Public budgets are often the chief instruments through which governments comply with their human rights obligations.

The Government of Guyana is prioritising investments in the social and economic infrastructure to improve economic growth and reduce poverty. Increased allocations over the last ten years have improved access to basic social services, although challenges still remain in the hinterland regions.

“Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.”

Article 23 (2) Universal Declaration of Human Rights



The World Bank has helped the authorities strengthen their institutional capacities to manage, monitor, and evaluate the country's progress in implementing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

The UNFPA provides for the institutional strengthening of Bureau of Statistics in the area of demography, census analysis and reporting, data collection system and the conduct of population censuses and surveys.

Technical assistance also strengthens the country's fiscal, financial, and fiduciary management in areas such as revenue collection, procurement administration, and strengthen the effectiveness of the country's social safety net programmes.

Strengthened Partnerships

National poverty reduction strategies stand to gain substantially from partnerships with international organisations where related links between human rights and sustainable development are already well understood.

Since 2001 Guyana's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) has become the framework for donor support and the associated development agenda. Improved coordination has helped reduce duplication of donor projects and assisted in targeting resources more efficiently.



UNDP works with the Guyanese Government to coordinate donor support, prepare the PRSP progress reports and build capacities for coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the poverty reduction strategy towards strengthening partnerships with donors and foreign investors.

Guyana benefits from IMF recommendations through Article IV consultations - which include surveillance of economic developments at the regional level and post-programme monitoring - based on staff team visits. With the consent of the Government, IMF issues a public information notice online outlining the findings and thus providing an important source of information for other existing or potential donors/partners.

GENDER EQUALITY

Mainstreaming gender equality is crucial to forwarding womens' rights – this means ensuring a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages.

UN agencies are working with the Government of Guyana to mainstream gender issues into education programmes and focus assistance towards vocational education to get more women into the workforce. Guyana looks likely to achieve the third Millennium Goal of promoting gender equality and empowerment of women.



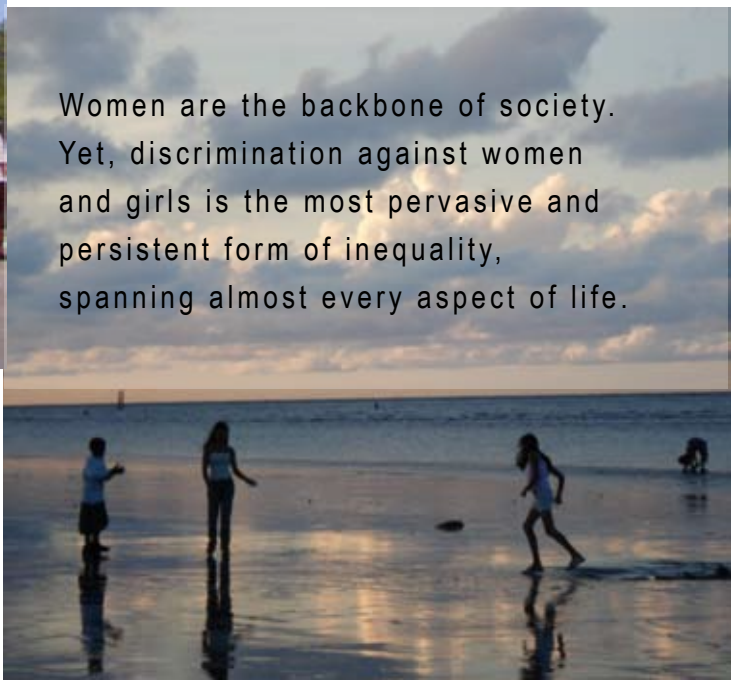


Women Across Differences (WAD)

UNFPA supports WAD to work with adolescent and teen mothers to reduce unplanned pregnancies through empowerment programmes which focus on personal development sessions, literacy, vocational, life and income earning skills. UNFPA has also collaborated with WAD to promote self-awareness, gender issues, including gender based violence and sexual and reproductive health education and services among young women and men in selected communities.



Single fathers face certain difficulties that require particular attention. UNICEF is addressing their particular needs with the development of a specific programme in Guyana. UNFPA supports a network of male advocates against gender based violence



Women are the backbone of society. Yet, discrimination against women and girls is the most pervasive and persistent form of inequality, spanning almost every aspect of life.



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YOU ARE INVOLVED

This I have learnt:
today a speck
tomorrow a hero
hero or monster
you are consumed!
Like a jig
Shakes the loom:
like web
is spun the pattern
all are involved!
All are consmed!

Martin Carter, Guyana - from the Kind Eagle, 1952

