



The Private Sector Commission

August -
September 2010

Working Lunch with Dr. Sabga

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Chairman of the Private Sector Commission (PSC), Mr. Ramesh Dookhoo and members of the commission met with Dr. Anthony Sabga, Chairman Emeritus of the ANSA McAL Group of Companies, the largest conglomerate in the Caribbean, with Headquarters in Port of Spain on Thursday, August 26, 2010 for a Working Lunch at the Georgetown Club. Dr. Sabga had expressed his deep interest in having an opportunity for dialogue with the representatives of the PSC in order to scope opportunities for investments/partnerships with the private sector in Guyana. The representatives of the PSC used the opportunity to share with Dr. Sabga the multitude of new opportunities for consideration available in Guyana in the real sectors especially as it relates to tourism, infrastructure and large scale farming and Agriculture linked to manufacturing. Dr. Sabga in speaking to the gathering stressed the importance of partnering and working together. He noted that Guyana has excellent resources and opportunities, but individuals and businesses involved need to form workable partnerships and cohesive relationships. The Chairman of the PSC then invited the group to join the PSC, this invitation was accepted by the Chairman of ANSA McAL.



Pictures from the Working Lunch with Dr. Sabga

Trade and Investment Sub Committee Meeting



**Trade and Investment
Sub Committee Meeting**

The Private Sector Commission's (PSC) Trade and Investment Sub-Committee chaired by Mr. Clinton Williams held its first committee meeting on Friday, September 3, 2010 at the PSC's Boardroom. It being their first meeting the committee decided to brainstorm ideas and to review the Terms of Reference. After perusing the Terms of Reference, the Chairman beckoned members to suggest an appropriate approach to deal with trade issues and also to suggest relevant areas which can be looked at as a mode of highlighting issues related to trade in the business community, and Guyana as a whole. A number of areas were suggested but the list was not limited. The following are areas slated for discussion during upcoming Trade & Investment meetings as the committee attempts to address a wide range of trade issues: Agriculture, Services, Forestry, Mining, Light manufacturing and Maritime. The Committee also discussed developments and challenges in various sectors and how they can work towards improving these sectors.



GuyExpo, Guyana's premiere trade fair and business exposition, gets bigger and better with each passing year. GuyExpo continues to attract more and more exhibitors, both local and regional. This trade fair paves the way for our local businesses to attract customers as well as investors. This year's theme was "Expanding investment in a sustainable environment." Chairman of the PSC, Mr. Ramesh Dookhoo lauded this year's GuyExpo and affirmed that "GuyExpo is a product of the expanding public-private partnerships between the Government and the private sector which are growing in number and increasingly bearing fruit." Guyana can be deemed a haven for investment, with a budding economy like ours, we can all understand why this is so. Evident to this is the inclusion of exhibitors and investors from the region. Lots of companies would jump at the prospect of investing in Guyana. GuyExpo 2010 highlighted the Low Carbon Development Strategy. This is not only timely but imperative for sustainable development. GuyExpo opened on Thursday, September 30 and culminated on Tuesday, October 5, 2010. Lots of emerging businesses were able to showcase their products and services this year. The improvements and achievements in a number of sectors were also highlighted. The Private Sector embraces any opportunity that would allow investors to explore the many possibilities available for investment in Guyana. The PSC looks forward to more trade fairs and exhibitions of this kind both locally and internationally.

Competition Law Workshop

The Private Sector Commission (PSC) in collaboration with the Demerara Tobacco Company held a Competition Law Workshop on Monday, September 27, 2010 at the Savannah suite, Pegasus Hotel. The PSC recognizes the need to inform businesses and the general public about the Competition Law which now forms part of our legal framework. Competition Law can be defined as a set of rules and regulations governing the behaviour of firms and enterprises, ensuring that such entities do not abuse their dominant positions; restrict competition and/or engage in anti-competitive behaviour. Competition Law is paramount, because it serves to foster competition as well as to create a level playing field for all stakeholders who are given the opportunity to operate in a transparent environment. Presenting at the workshop were Mr. Teni Housty, who gave an overview of the Guyana Competition Law and Mr. Uri Weinstok, Competition Law Expert from Costa Rica. The opening remarks were given by Honourable Jennifer Webster, Minister within the Ministry of Finance. Chairman of the CARICOM Competition Commission, Dr. Kusha Haraksingh also sat as a member of the panel at the Workshop. Participants were also able to ask questions and clarify misconceptions in a discussion segment. Managing Director of Demerara Tobacco Company, Mr. Chintamani chaired the workshop. Chairman of the PSC, Mr. Ramesh Dookhoo and other Executive Members were also at the workshop.





Governance and Security Sub Committee meets with members of the AFC

As part of a series of meetings with different stakeholders, the Private Sector Commission's (PSC) Governance and Security Sub Committee met with members of the Alliance for Change (AFC) on Friday, September 10, 2010 at the PSC's boardroom. The AFC was glad to re-engage with the PSC since communication which had started some years ago had broken off. They then went on to delineate the issues which concern them and these included governance issues, the crime situation, high corporate tax rates, the VAT, and levies on rice, timber, etc which are all impediments to business. The PSC noted that there is need for a complete defence and security sector reform strategy and opined that it should not be possible to tamper with the security sector without the approval of stakeholders. The Governance and Security Sub Committee took the opportunity to highlight the strides that they are making in a number of areas. The committee is in the process of lobbying for a reform of the tax system; and mentioned the there are numerous problems with Customs and that a Public/Private Dialogue Body which was formed to deal with the issues meets every two months and a meeting was held with Minister of Home Affairs to discuss issues of crime and security. Recently, the PSC has taken up the issue of the 911 system and has since held meeting with GT&T and the Guyana Police Force. The Sub Committee reiterated their commitment to fair local and national elections. The Governance and Security Sub Committee will

continue to meet with relevant stakeholders to learn about their issues and to try as best as they can to assist/ remedy them.

Crime Prevention Workshop



Section of the Gathering at the Crime Prevention Workshop

The Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI) in collaboration with the Private Sector Commission (PSC) and the Guyana Police Force (GPF) held a Crime Prevention Workshop on Thursday, September 30, 2010 at the GCCI's Boardroom. The intention of the workshop was to educate the business community on tips for crime prevention and to allow all stakeholders to share ideas on how to minimize such criminal activities. President of GCCI, Mr. Komal Ramnauth welcomed all the participants and stated that a workshop of this nature is imperative because of the upsurge in criminal activities which have affected the business community. He affirmed that business persons should be able to

recognize suspicious criminal movements and that crime prevention is crucial for the development of a country. Chairman of the PSC, Mr. Ramesh Dookhoo in his remarks alluded to the fact that the business community is usually a target for numerous criminal activities. He went on to say that there are a number of simple things business owners can do to minimize the risk of being targeted / attacked by criminals. The business community was urged to be more vigilant when conducting business especially when moving around with large sums of money. Presenting on behalf of the GPF were Assistance Commissioner, Mr. Clinton Conway and Senior Superintendent, Mr. Cosbert. Mr. Conway explained thoroughly the number of safety precautions needed in any business or home, ranging from personal safety to identity theft issues. Mr. Cosbert's presentation focused on practical tips for the business community. He advised participants to try as best as they can to minimize activities that would attract criminals. Senior Vice President of GCCI, Mr. Eon Caesar in closing stated that this workshop is the first of many to come and that its just one of the many ways the private sector lets its members know that they are there for them. It also indicates the beginning of a prolific relationship between GCCI, PSC and the GPF. The PSC is currently working with GCCI, GPF and major telecommunication organisations to rectify the current problem with the 911 system. Participants left the workshop with a wealth of information on crime prevention and with the assurance that they would be fuelled with necessary resources and additional information to assist them in protecting their businesses and by extension the wider community.



President of the GGCI, Mr. Komal Ramnauth unveils the Code of Conduct, in the presence of Chairman of the PSC, Mr. Ramesh Dookhoo (left) and Senior Vice President of the GGCI, Mr. Eon Caesar.

The Georgetown Chamber of Commerce (GGCI) launched their code of conduct at Roraima Duke Lodge on Monday, October 4, 2010. This Code of Conduct has already attracted some 25 businesses. The Code of Conduct is a behavioural guide for businesses in Guyana. It outlines principles, values, standards, or rules of behaviour that will in turn guide the decisions, procedures and systems in an organization. The document provides a framework to direct members on fair and ethical practices in their businesses. There are eight principles outlined in this document, they speak to Legislation and the Government, Employees, Customers, Suppliers, Owners and Investors, Competition, Communities and the Environment. President of the GGCI is encouraging all businesses to become signatories this he believes will “symbolize their

commitment to the principles outlined in the document.” Chairman of the Private Sector Commission, Mr. Ramesh Dookhoo lauded the Chamber for this initiative and noted that it is imperative that businesses are guided by firm principles of ethics and professionalism. All businesses are urged to sign on to the code.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Corporate Governance, most simply put, speaks to the processes and guidelines governing how an organization / company is managed and controlled. Corporate Governance highlights the accountability and transparency in these organizations / companies and clearly states the responsibilities of governing body. The Private Sector Commission (PSC) through its Corporate Governance committee is currently in the process of developing a Code on Corporate Governance for Guyana. This code is being developed through discussions within the private sector. Such a Code will describe good business practices in Guyana. The Corporate Governance committee is chaired by Honourary Treasurer of the PSC, Mr. Chandradat Chintamani. Recently, the committee met on September 24, 2010 at the Cara Lodge to complete the formalization of the Code on Corporate Governance for Guyana. The Code will be presented for consideration by the Private Sector before formal adoption. The initially adopted Code will remain open for future revisions to accommodate additions and changes in keeping with advances and refinements to the Principles. It is anticipated that the Draft Code will be ready for review in the near future.

PSC and the 911 System

The Private Sector Commission (PSC) has taken the lead role in ensuring that the 911 system functions effectively. A committee has been formed with representatives from the Guyana Police Force (GPF), the Guyana Telephone and Telegraph Company (GTT) and the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce (GGCI) to examine the problems encountered by the 911 system and to highlight possible methods of fixing them. Chairman of the PSC, Mr. Ramesh Dookhoo and Executive Director of the PSC, Mr. Roubinder Rambarran visited the 911 Centre and reported that the phones were ringing and the Ranks are answering them but they were no answers at the other end. There seem to be minor issues and the committee with the help of the relevant technical persons are working to get to the bottom of the problem. The PSC is committed to do all in its power to ensure that the 911 system function effectively since there is an upsurge in criminal activities and as we are approaching general elections season, its imperative that the 911 system works effectively throughout Guyana.