

1. In signing the 'Herdmanston Accord' on 17 January 1998, the Leaders of Guyana's two main political Parties stated that they are doing so 'specially mindful of the willingness of (their) CARICOM colleagues to remain engaged with Guyana in this endeavour'. It is in this spirit that as colleagues we have taken the opportunity of our St. Lucia Summit, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of CARICOM, to initiate a dialogue with them on the current situation in Guyana – conscious of our own full participation as signatories to the 'Herdmanston Accord'.

2. We are also fully resolved that it is pre-eminently our task – to be in the front line of all efforts to assist Guyana as part of our own family.

3. Our conversations with President Jagan and Mr. Hoyte have convinced us all of the necessity to return Guyana to the agreed path of the 'Herdmanston Accord' – within the time-frame agreed in the Accord. Convinced that there is no time to lose in securing this, we have resolved together to place our collective commitment behind the undertakings, arrangements and measures in paragraphs (a) to (j) below to which President Jagan and Mr. Hoyte, representing the PPP/Civic and the PNC respectively, have agreed between themselves and with CARICOM, namely –

All parties to the 'Herdmanston Accord' reaffirm their commitment to the Accord, and to the implementation of its provisions as initially contemplated.

Both stages of the Electoral Audit as provided for in paragraph 1 of the 'Herdmanston Accord' have been presented to the political Parties in Guyana. All the parties to the Accord have agreed to accept the findings of the first stage of the Audit – as set out in paragraph 1(i) (a) of the Accord – as binding upon them; but it is recognised that this does not preclude the pursuit of electoral petitions which have been filed in the courts by both parties.

The next substantive step to which the parties are committed under the Accord is that of Constitutional Reform on the basis and within the framework provided for in paragraph 4 of the Accord. We recall that provision specifically and reaffirm our determination to pursue it in spirit and letter.

Mindful that among the matters to be addressed by the Constitutional Reform Commission will be 'Measures and arrangements for the improvement of race relations in Guyana, including the contribution which equal opportunities legislation and concepts drawn from the CARICOM Charter of Civil Society can contribute to the cause of justice, equity and progress in Guyana' – It is accepted that the parties will take steps for the early implementation of specific measures to achieve these objectives in advance of constitutional reform itself.

We are all agreed that it is feasible to complete the work of the Constitution Reform Commission and to have the Report submitted to the National Assembly by 16 July 1999 as originally contemplated, thereby maintaining the timetable in paragraph 4 (ii) of the Accord, and we commit ourselves to achieving it.

To enable this timetable to be met, the parties have agreed that they will settle as soon as possible, by law in the manner required by the 'Herdmanston Accord', the terms of reference and the naming of the Constitution Reform Commission mindful that CARICOM is resolved to assist them in every way required, but more specifically by arranging for the provision of constitutional experts and facilitators.

GUYANA: THE ST. LUCIA STATEMENT

JULY 2, 19981,6704

MINUTES READ