

MEDIA RELEASE

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HOUSE-TO-HOUSE REGISTRATION – January 7 – July 4, 2008

The Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) will commence the conduct of a House-to-House Registration exercise on January 7, 2008. This exercise, the primary objective of which is to establish an accurate, complete and current National Register of Registrants' Database (NRRDB), is scheduled for completion on July 4, 2008. Accordingly, the mandatory Order was published in the Official Gazette of Thursday, January 3, 2008 clearing the final legal requirement for commencement of the exercise.

Any person who will be 14 years or over by June 30, 2008, and who is a Guyanese citizen by birth, descent, naturalization or is a citizen from a Commonwealth country living in Guyana for one year or more is eligible for registration during this House-to-House Registration exercise.

An **original Birth Certificate** issued by the General Register Office or a **valid Guyana Passport** must be provided in support of an application for registration.

Other source documents which will have to be provided in support of applications for registration are:-

- **Original Marriage Certificate** (and **original Birth Certificate**) – in the case of a name change by way of marriage.
- **Original Deed Poll and original Birth Certificate** – in the case of any change of name other than by marriage.
- **Original Naturalization Certificate** issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs and **original Birth Certificate/valid Passport** – in the case of naturalization.

In consideration of the above stated eligibility requirements, all persons who qualify for registration, but are not in possession of the relevant supporting document(s) are urged to take immediate steps to acquire it/them in order to ensure their respective registration is complete during the House-to-House Registration exercise.

Teams of Registration Clerks II, wearing visible badges of identification, will be visiting persons at their respective places of residence for the purpose of Registration on **MONDAY TO FRIDAY from 3:30 PM to 6:30 PM, SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM and on HOLIDAYS from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM.**

Registration Clerks will be making house to house visits in the respective Divisions/Sub-Divisions to which they have been assigned to complete Application for Registration forms for persons eligible for registration and to take their fingerprints and photographs. All of the collected data will be forwarded

to the GECOM Secretariat via the respective Registration Area Offices for completion of the application process.

Members of the Disciplined Forces comprising the Guyana Defence Force (GDF), the Guyana Police Force (GPF), the Guyana Prison Service (GPS) and the Guyana Fire Service (GFS) will generally be registered at their respective places of residence. Special arrangements will be made to ensure that members of any of the Disciplined Forces who are stationed at locations far removed from their places of residence will be registered at their current locations. However, under such circumstances, the members will be required to provide their respective home addresses for the purpose of registration.

Scrutineers from the Governing and Combined Opposition Political Parties have been appointed as required by law, to monitor the House-to-House Registration process. The collective responsibility of the Scrutineers is to scrutinise the House-to-House Registration process at various levels, but more specifically at the first level i.e. at the point of filling out of the Application for Registration Forms and the taking of fingerprints and photographs at the applicants' respective places of residence.

The imperative to conduct House-to-House Registration was born out of the need for the creation of an indisputable NRRDB which could be used as the basis for the preparation of Electoral Lists that would be commonly acceptable by all stakeholders as being unblemished. With this in mind, the Government of Guyana, Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) and the Parliamentary Political Parties agreed on June 14, 2007, to the preparation of a new NRRDB by House-to-House Registration. It is the expectation of GECOM therefore, that the primary outcome of the exercise will be the creation of a pure NRRDB which would lead to the establishment of future Electoral Lists that would be commonly acceptable by and among all Political Parties and other stakeholders.

In wrapping up preparations for the commencement of House-to-House Registration, the GECOM Secretariat, on January 3, 2008, held a one-day working session with Registration Officers (Ros) from all of Guyana's 23 Registration Areas to get status reports on the state of preparedness for the commencement of House-to-House Registration in the ten Registration Districts across Guyana. Chairman of GECOM, Dr. Steve Surujbally, participated fully at this meeting. Dr. Keshav Mangal – Commissioner, Mr. Vincent Alexander – Commissioner, Mr. Mohamood Shaw – Commissioner and Mr. Robert Williams – Commissioner participated in an interactive session during which the opportunity was taken by the Commissioners to emphasize the need for strict adherence to legal and administrative provisions/principles/processes at all levels throughout the conduct of the exercise.

Emphasizing the importance for the House-to-House Registration to be done in an efficient manner, during the working session, Dr. Surujbally told the ROs that there was no room at the Commission or its Secretariat for persons who were unwilling to work as a part of the GECOM Team. He recalled the success of the 2006 elections and posited that it was particularly because of excellent teamwork that this was achieved. Dr. Surujbally said that the ROs should ensure that they, and all of the temporary staff who were hired to work under their supervision for the House-to-House Registration exercise, should at all times conduct themselves in a manner that will never bring disrespect and disrepute to GECOM. "You have an opportunity to take part in an historic event and you should ensure that you do so with pride and dignity" he stressed while underscoring the need for successful completion of the exercise.

Giving status reports on the state of preparedness for the commencement of House-to-House Registration in all of the 23 Registration Areas on January 7, 2008, all of the ROs gave their individual assurances that they are ready. In addition to the status reports from the ROs, interactive discussions

during the session also focused specifically on Operational Plans, Logistics, Civic and Voter Education, Security and Administrative and Financial matters.

In closing remarks, Dr. Surujbally said that based on the day's discussions, he was convinced that the Commission and its Secretariat had achieved the desired state of readiness for House-to-House Registration to commence on January 8, 2008. More specifically, he assured the ROs and that, based on their individual presentations he was confident that the House-to-House Registration exercise will be conducted in a manner that meets the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

Resource persons at the working session were Mr. Gocool Boodoo – Chief Election Officer, Mr. Calvin Benn – Deputy Chief Election Officer, Mr. Keith Lowenfield – Assistant Chief Election Officer, Mr. Deolall Ramlall – Civic & Voter Education Manager, Mr. Colin April, Logistics Manager and Mrs. Beverley Critchlow – Voter Registration Manager.

Article 42 of the Constitution provides entitlement for citizens of Guyana to be so registered. GECOM is empowered by Election Laws (Amendment) Act No. 15 of 2000 to register persons under the National Registration Act, Chapter 19:08. The passage of the National Registration (Amendment) Act 2007 by the Parliament on 27.12.2007 cleared the way for GECOM to carry out this House-to-House Registration exercise.

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