

Guyana Public Service Union

Message in Recognition of International Youth Day 2023.



The Guyana Public Service Union extends greetings and best wishes to all youths, locally and internationally. This year marks the 23rd year of recognition, since it has been designated by the United Nations in 2000 to heighten awareness of the plethora of legal issues and cultural challenges that youths encounter. According to the United Nations there are 1.8 billion young people in the world today and with proper guidance and opportunities they can be a force for development, especially in responding to the global climate crisis and effecting a more sustainable future and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals that make up the 2030 Agenda.

This year International Youth Day is being celebrated under the Theme: **Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World.**

The urgent call worldwide is for all to embrace a more sustainable way of life, a shift towards green jobs, and a more climate friendly environment as a response to the global climate crisis. The skills required to embrace a sustainable green world are “knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed to live in, develop and support a sustainable and resource-efficient society” according to the United Nations. The World Bank Publication 2021 *Making the Green Transition Work for Labour Markets* focuses thinking on a strategic shift towards more sustainable economic activities with better environmental outcomes and targeting skilled and unskilled labour. The idea is that youths would inherit the benefits of the environment in the long term therefore they should be incorporated into the efforts to achieve and safeguard better results.

Equally important also is the immediate, urgent and pressing call for workers to earn better wages and secure conditions of service. This forms part of the bigger equation of climate issues. The Youths employed in the Guyana Public Service encounter many challenges to secure their professional lives, anchoring in security of tenure while delivering quality public services to the nation. Earning a living wage is at the heart of the challenge, while being enticed with contract employment that erodes the established structures and conditions of employment. The majority of young workers are employed at the minimum of the

public service salary scales, each earning approximately \$1.2 million dollars gross salary per annum. Contract employment is therefore very appealing, with the promise of a gratuity bi-annually. This situation is very precarious, to say the least.

The Guyana Public Service Union is confident that Youths at the forefront of change and the development process would build cooperation and having their involvement in issues that affect them creates a better chance of participation and commitment. However, there is need for policies that are inclusive and there should also be the recognition that youths are the future leaders. The GPSU has always been at the forefront advocating for youths to be trained and given opportunities to develop competence, confidence and knowledge to navigate these circumstances. It has been this drive and focus that was strategic to the mandate of a youth arm of the Union. However, much more needs to be done to develop the technical skills in transitioning to green technologies.

Once again the Guyana Public Service Union extends congratulations on the occasion of International Youth Day 2023.

August 12, 2023.