

Guyana Public Service Union

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT/CEO, MR. PATRICK YARDE OF THE GPSU ON THE OCCASION OF UNITED NATIONS PUBLIC SERVICE DAY 2023

The annual celebration of United Nations Public Service Day on June 23 of every year is undertaken to “celebrate the value and virtue of public services, emphasizes the contribution of public service in the process of development, recognizes the work of public servants, and encourages young people to pursue careers in the public sector”.

This year the observance of United Nations (UN) Public Service Day is “Leaving No One Behind through Innovative Public Service Delivery”. The Guyana Public Service Union (GPSU) wholeheartedly endorses this theme, as innovative methods must be realized to cope with the changing nature of service delivery.

It is a travesty that Governments of Guyana have shown much disrespect for the Constitutional Rights of Public Servants since at the highest level of the Country, the **Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana** guarantees the protection and integrity of the Public Service from political interference, as stated at **Article 38G: Public service to be free from political influence. [10 of 2003]**

“Article 38G

- (1) The integrity of the public service is guaranteed. No public officer shall be required to execute or condone irregular acts on the basis of higher orders.
- (2) The freedom of every public officer to perform his or her duties and fulfil his or her responsibilities is protected.
- (3) No public officer shall be the subject of sanctions of any kind without due process
- (4) In the discharge of his or her duties a public officer shall execute the lawful policies of the government”

The same farcical approach is adopted for the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 151, Labour Relations (Public Service) that was first adopted in June 23, 1978 and ratified by the Parliament of Guyana on January 10, 1983 and is in force. As can be gleaned from the foregoing, the celebratory date is in fact the date of adoption of the Convention 151 by the International Labour Organization.

The prescriptions of the Convention “**protects public employees against anti-union discrimination and undue interference, and guarantees public employees’ organizations appropriate facilities to enable them to carry out their functions promptly and efficiently.**” Governments, while celebrating the occasion, have also shown scant regard for the basic tenets of the ILO

Convention in the management of the Public Sector, even though the very Convention was ratified by the Parliament of Guyana and is in force. The pellucid and blatant hypocrisy does not augur well for good governance in Guyana.

Currently, Public Servants are under siege because the Public Service Commission has not been reconstituted and reconvened since the expiration of its three years term which ended on August 9, 2021. This body has responsibility for appointments, promotions, discipline, transfers, retirements, etc. This means that vacancies within the establishments cannot be filled, promotions and benefits for acting arrangements are on hold, among other matters. This travesty has been the bugbear of a number of Public Service workers, some of whom are put into retirement without confirmations into higher positions, thereby losing out on much needed additional superannuation benefits.

As the PSC saga drags on, the Administration gloats of a part-time work force that operates within the structure of the Public Service, the benefits from which are questionable. While there is hope that the extra numbers provide relief from the burdens delivered through the sustained vacancy rate, it was reported that the new operatives are in fact political implants to further destabilize the service.

Whether this is true or not, the Public Service remains troubled by the persistent impositions of miniscule wages, salaries and allowances and a noted absence of a national wages policy. This has incessantly gnawed the professional fabric through abnormal attritions. Nonetheless, it is hoped that the omission of Governments to engage the Guyana Public Service Union (GPSU) through the collective bargaining processes, as required under the Constitution and Laws of Guyana, would be summarily corrected in the near future and a proper determination is made of what constitutes a living wage and the realization of improved and modernized conditions of service. This would certainly enhance the livelihoods of Public Servants and Government's image as an employer.

On this note, it is opportune to wish all Public Servants a happy Public Service Day, on behalf of the Executive Council and members of the Guyana Public Service Union, hoping that irrespective of the pressures that envelop you during the discharge of your public functions, you continue to do so with due diligence and professionalism and fully committed to the provision of quality public services to the citizenry and ultimately the development of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana.

160 Regent & Shiv Chanderpaul Drive,
Bourda,
Georgetown.

June 23, 2023.