

building needs. In this regard, a draft National Trade Capacity Building Strategy (NTCBS) was completed this month and is presently before a Cabinet Sub-Committee on Trade. The NTCBS identifies Guyana's needs in three key areas: negotiating capacity, implementing capacity and adjustment capacity.

TRADE POLICIES BY MEASURES

The government continues to improve the institutional and regulatory mechanisms in the trade related institutions such as the Customs Department, the Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS), Food and Drug Administration and the SPS Unit in the Ministry of Agriculture. The strengthening of these institutional structures is important not only in relation to Guyana's multilateral obligations, but importantly also for Guyana's participation in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

A number of Members referred to Guyana's tariff. Guyana accepts that duty transparency is important to the promotion of trade and this is addressed in the Fiscal Enactments (Amendment) Act 2003 to which I alluded earlier. This Act will improve the transparency and predictability of the tax system, as well as go a far way in leveling the playing field. Contrary to the view implied by several questions, Guyana applies the Common External Tariff (CET) in conformity with the rules and guidelines of the Tariff. In fact, each Member State of CARICOM, given its own peculiar circumstances and conditions, can use the CET, through additions of items to the Conditional Duty Exemption Schedule, to fully or partially exempt goods from duty.

In terms of the tariff bindings, these represent maximum rates and though Guyana is within its right to apply any rate within the range of zero to the maximum rate, it has only done so in one instance as part of a CARICOM-wide decision. As a Member State of CARICOM, Guyana is obliged to obtain the prior approval of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) before it can adjust the applied rate above the established CET rate. Also, CARICOM countries, individually and collectively, are not in a position to resort to the use of subsidies and other non-tariff distorting measures. The tariff is the only mechanism available to Guyana to provide some protection against unfair trade practices.

SECTORAL POLICIES

The Guyana economy remains heavily dependent on the agriculture and mining sectors. With increasing trade liberalization and globalization, serious challenges in terms of commodity pricing and market access have arisen in recent years for Guyana's key traditional industries, such as sugar and rice in agriculture and bauxite in mining.

The viability of the traditional sectors will be crucial over the long-term to the successful diversification of the economy. In this regard, with respect to sugar and rice, the Government has been moving apace to reform the industries to improve their competitiveness.

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A BRIEF NOTE ON THE PARTIAL SCOPE AGREEMENT AND TRADE BETWEEN GUYANA AND BRAZIL

- From the Desk of the NACEN Coordinator

The Partial Scope Agreement between Guyana and Brazil aims "to foster bilateral trade flows, by the exchange of tariff preferences between the Parties, cooperation on trade matters and increased participation of the private sector".

Following the signing of the Agreement in June 2001, the CARICOM Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) at its 12th Meeting in January 2002 raised objections to specific issues regarding the text of the Agreement, as well as certain products on the Brazilian product list, which were granted preferences by Guyana.

In keeping with the decision of the COTED, Guyana engaged in extensive consultations with other Member States through the CARICOM Secretariat and at the level of COTED, following which Guyana and Brazil had technical discussions on May 5-6 in Georgetown and reached agreement on the outstanding matters.

The revised proposals were in keeping with the specific requirements of the COTED and were presented to the 15th Meeting of COTED at the end of May. The Secretariat was mandated to carry out further consultations with member states on the revised proposals, following which the Secretariat was authorized to 'Certify the Agreement' as acceptable to CARICOM Member States so that Guyana could proceed with implementation.

On November 14 the CARICOM Secretary General issued the relevant "Certification" of the Agreement and Guyana and Brazil signed the amending Protocols in Brasilia on November 17, 2003 on the occasion of the President's visit to Brazil. This has effectively cleared the way for Guyana to implement the Agreement. The implementation procedures are being followed through the Ministry of

NEGOTIATION OF NEW WTO COMPATIBLE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH THE EU

The second phase of the negotiations of new WTO compatible Economic Partnership Agreement has been launched in a number of ACP regional groupings namely Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Central Africa. Other regional groupings such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Pacific and CARIFORUM / CARICOM are expected to be launched early this year.

In terms of the CARIFORUM region, in keeping with the decision of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, negotiations are expected to be launched in February 2004. The Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) and the Caribbean Ambassadors in Brussels are engaged in preparations for the launch.

The African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Committee of Ambassadors is continuing to engage their European Union (EU) counterparts in addressing outstanding issues in all ACP Phase of the negotiations. Those matters are expected to be concluded by the end of the first quarter of 2004.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REVISED GEORGETOWN AGREEMENT:

The 1974 Georgetown Agreement that allowed for the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group has been revised based on the decision of the Summit of the ACP Heads of Government and state. The revision is in keeping with the need for the ACP to respond to the changes as a re-

sult of globalization, so as to enable the group to effectively respond to the challenges.

The ACP Council of Ministers agreed at their 78th Session in November 2003 to the implementation of the revised Georgetown Agreement.

SUGAR

AUSTRALIA, BRAZIL AND THAILAND CHALLENGE TO THE EU SUGAR REGIME

In January 2004, Guyana and other ACP countries requested Enhanced Third Party status in the challenge by Australia, Brazil and Thailand to the EU Sugar regime. The WTO recently established panel is to consider the applications by the countries to determine if enhanced Third Party Status will be granted.

Enhanced Third Part Status would be extended to countries that had previously requested and were granted third party status. This would enable those countries to have the right to attend the first and second substantive meetings and to make an oral statement during the second substantive meeting.

The Panel proceedings should get underway in February 2004. Guyana is in preparing for active participation in the process.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO) GLOBAL STRATEGY ON DIET, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH

The World Health Organization (WHO) has embarked on the development of a global strategy on diet,

physical activity and Health in keeping with Resolution (WHA 53/17) adopted by that body at its 53rd Assembly in May 2000. The Resolution emphasized the need to prevent and control non-communicable diseases, which mainly dominate the developed countries and are increasingly affecting the low and middle income countries as well.

In effect the strategy is proposing a reduction in the current consumption of sugars. The ACP Sugar producing countries have expressed concerns about the WHO's strategy on the basis that it does not consider effects on the countries whose economies are heavily dependent on the production and exportation of sugar.

The draft strategy is to be presented to the Assembly at its May 2004 meeting for consideration. Guyana among other Caribbean and Pacific countries has indicated its concerns to the WHO and would like the strategy to give consideration to the economic implications of the proposed strategy.

RICE

The CARIFORUM Rice industry is making arrangements at the national/regional level for the eminent draw down of approximately 24 million Euros earmarked for improving the competitiveness of the rice industry.

Consultations are ongoing at the national level with the relevant government and private sector entities to ensure that preparations are undertaking in a timely manner.

STATEMENT ON GUYANA'S TRADE POLICY REVIEW

Madame Chairman,

On behalf of the Guyana delegation, I take this opportunity to express our gratitude to WTO members who participated in the first Trade Policy Review of Guyana, as well as, yourself and the discussant who helped guide the sessions.

The document that has been circulated represents a detailed response to questions raised at the Opening Session and that were advanced in writing. In the case of Canada we will endeavour to respond through the Secretariat within three (3) weeks of our return.

As a weak trading nation with a small vulnerable economy, Guyana fervently supports and advocates equitable rules and their fair even-handed application if its interests are to be protected and enhanced.

In the context of Guyana's socio-economic realities, a more favourable treatment based on Special and Differential Treatment is justifiable given the structural and ever growing asymmetries between developed and developing countries. Whatever the level and/or scope of the reforms and/or measures reflected in the Government of Guyana Report, the main objective is to bring about improvement in the well being of the Guyanese people, to overcome adjustment difficulties and costs with a view to improving the country's supply-side capacity.

This first trade policy review for Guyana will obviously generate certain expectations on the part of the Guyanese authorities from the international donor community in general and the WTO in particular. It is our fervent hope that as we proceed hereon, the fruits of cooperation and collaboration between WTO and the Guyanese authorities as regards capacity building and institutional strengthening will grow from strength to strength and eventually result in a stronger more vibrant member of the WTO.

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The efforts and actions by the Government of Guyana to improve the country's overall macroeconomic framework, enhance the revenue base, and reduce poverty have been reported throughout the Review process. I wish to highlight some key issues:

In the area of poverty reduction, the Government rec-

ognizes that trade policy and export promotion strategies are only two aspects of a broader national undertaking that will require a sustained and coordinated national effort to reduce poverty through economic opportunity.

In the area of taxation, the policy position is to widen the tax base through increased coverage of goods and services, reduced exemptions and the introduction of a VAT in 2006, increasing transparency and efficiency in tax administration and collection, and stimulation of investment, savings and growth.

With respect to the financing of public enterprises, over the last four years, Government transfers have been restricted to the Linden Mining Enterprise (LINMINE), and in the past year, to the Guyana Sugar Corporation (GUYSUCO). Government has agreed to continue transfers to meet part of

the cost of electricity consumed by the bauxite mining community. With respect to GUYSUCO, all transfers are in the form of loans from multilateral financial institutions that are granted to the Government and lent to GUYSUCO for financing of its modernization project.

With respect to debt reduction, the Government is engaged in a multi-pronged approach to this issue. It is working with the international community, in the context of the Enhanced HIPC initiative. Guyana expects to meet the floating completion point before the end of December, signaling its eligibility for a top up to 90 percent write-off of eligible debts. This would result a saving of over US\$500 million over 20 years and would effectively bring the stock of external debt to under US\$1 billion. At the same time, it has been granted 100 percent write-offs by some bilateral Paris Club donors. We are pursuing a similar approach with the non-Paris Club donors. In the event of new borrowing, the government has followed a strategy, that this would only be undertaken where the terms are extremely soft and generous.

In the area of public procurement, a new Procurement Law was passed in June 2003. While the new law is in place, it awaits the detailed regulations to bring it into force. We anticipate that this process would be completed before the end of 2004.

The National Trade Strategy deals with the trade policy area. A critical off-shoot of the National Trade Strategy is the identification of Guyana's trade-related technical and capacity-

STATEMENT ON THE FTAA 8TH MINISTERIAL MEETING HELD IN MIAMI NOVEMBER 20-21, 2003

The 8th Ministerial Meeting of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) was convened from November 20-21, in Miami, USA. That meeting marked the commencement of the final year of the FTAA negotiations, scheduled to be completed in January 2005.

At Miami, Trade Ministers appraised the current state of play in the FTAA Negotiations and agreed on modalities for the final phase of the negotiations toward January 2005. In this regard, the Ministers discussed the overall scope or vision of the negotiations in the context of the hemispheric SOA process (Vision of the FTAA); the integration of the smaller economies in the hemispheric arrangements (including technical assistance and financing mechanisms); and the location of the permanent site for the FTAA Secretariat.

In the run-up to the Miami Ministerial and especially following the failure of the WTO Cancun Ministerial Conference in September, the general sense among FTAA countries was that the FTAA process would not be able to sustain its original scope or ambition for the agreed January 2005 completion date.

The major disagreements which erupted earlier between the US and Brazil had threatened the Miami Ministerial with a Cancun-like failure. The United States, backed by Chile, Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica and Central America, insisted on a comprehensive Agreement which maintains the original scope and coverage of each negotiating area in keeping with the mandates established by Ministers at the launch of the negotiating phase in San Jose in 1998. In the case of agriculture, however, the US and Canada, themselves major agricultural producers and exporters, have argued that unless the multilateral disciplines are first settled in the WTO regarding agricultural domestic supports, etc., it would not be realistic to implement hemispheric rules.

The MERCOSUR group, led by Brazil, wanted a scaled down Vision of the FTAA and advocated a hemispheric trade accord to be comprised of or achieved through dif-

ferent components, namely: bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral arrangements. In this vein, countries which want to negotiate deeper or additional commitments could do so in the context of bilateral and plurilateral agreements, but within the framework of the FTAA. Concerning agriculture, however, MERCOSUR's position remains diametrically opposed to that of US/Canada.

Mr. Speaker,

Guyana has always considered it to be in CARICOM's better interest to hold to the stated deadline with a trimmed agenda, common for all countries, since delaying the conclusions to the FTAA key market access issues well beyond 2005 could likely complicate matters for the region in the other external negotiations as well as delay any adjustment assistance (which is important for all negotiations) and which could likely accrue to the region under the hemispheric and sub-regional processes. In this particular sense, therefore, at the Miami Ministerial, CARICOM reaffirmed its support for the January 2005 deadline but argued that "the agreement must have a balance of ambition, accommodating capabilities and need" and include a comprehensive package of special and differential measures in each negotiating area.

The Ministers agreed on an FTAA vision which would be realized through a two-tiered approach. At the first level all countries will accede to a common set of rights and obligations. At the second level countries, on their own determination, may agree to additional rights and obligations on a plurilateral basis.

Mr. Speaker,

Guyana remains committed to the FTAA negotiations. In the context of CARICOM's group approach, Guyana has reaffirmed its active participation in three of the existing ten groups and committees, namely: Consultative Group on Smaller Economies, Agriculture Negotiating Group and the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC).

Thank you.

REALISING THE CSME: PROSPECTS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*National One-Day Summit on the
CARICOM Single Market and Economy*

The Ministry of Foreign Trade & International Cooperation, during its encounters with members of the local private sector and other stakeholders, found that many are yet to have an understanding of the basic tenets of the CSME. Further, there has been a continuous call from various circles for the dedication of one day for the convening of a National Summit on the CSME. It is in response to this call that the Ministry convened a National One-Day Summit on the CSME under the theme: "**Realising the CSME: Prospects for National Development**". This Summit was held on Monday, December 01, 2003, at the Le Meridien Pegasus Hotel.

The day's programme included a formal Opening and Plenary Sessions, as well as a break-out Working Group Session. During the Opening Session which was chaired by the Honourable Clement J. Rohee, M.P., Minister of Foreign Trade & International Cooperation, His Excellency Samuel A. Hinds, Acting President, delivered the feature address. Presentations were also made by Mr. Lincoln Lewis, General Secretary of the Guyana Trade Union Congress, Dr. Peter De Groot, Chairman of the Private Sector Commission and Ambassador Havlock Brewster, Alternate Director of the Inter-American Development Bank.

The Break-out Working Group Session focused on the following presentations which were made by senior officials of the CARICOM Secretariat, Dr. Ian Mc Donald, Chief Executive Officer, Sugar Association of the Caribbean; Mr. David De Caires, Editor-in-Chief, Stabroek News; Mr. Rolland Bertrand, President, Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce and Ms. Bevon Mc Donald of the Ministry of Foreign Trade & International Cooperation.

- Basic instruments, Institutional and Regional Arrangements under the CSME
- The Judiciary and Legal System under the CSME
- Positioning the Agricultural, Mining and Manufacturing Sectors to face the challenges and opportunities in the CSME
- Exploring the potential of the Services Sector under the CSME
- The Banking and Financial Institutions under the CSME
- Challenges and opportunities to the Health, Labour

and Education Sectors and the Movement of CARICOM Nationals under the CSME

- Security considerations with the advent of the CSME
- Participants were drawn not only from Government Ministries and Agencies, and the private and labour sectors, but all other interested stakeholders including the media, professional bodies and other non-governmental organisations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Included amongst the recommendations emanating from the Summit are:

- A strong ongoing public awareness/sensitization programme on the CSME.
- Equal provision of the enforcement of the Rules of Trade.
- Establishment of a National CARICOM Assembly to exclusively deal with defining Guyana's interest position. This body should include NGOs.
- Opposition parties should request that a consultative structure be created to ensure that issues being dealt with at the CARICOM level are discussed with them.
- The reports arising out of the Working Groups should be used as a guide with a view to revising the CSME implementation schedule.
- Special workshop training for facilitators for onward transmission of information to participants of the various workshops/working groups. The workshops should be spread to the other Regions to engage in discussions at a "grass root" level.
- Further consultation on the Draft Rules of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) in both its Original and Appellate Jurisdictions. Therefore consultations should be held with the local Bar, Attorney General's Chambers and the Judiciary with respect to inputs needed to finalize the Rules of Court.
- Convening of a committee to bring together key players in production (logs and wood processing).
- Examination of the policy framework by Government to target high value-added products for CARICOM and international markets.

- Efforts should be made to encourage joint-venture arrangements within CARICOM.
- Strengthening of Regional/national standards and quality infrastructure. Also the full application of CARICOM Rice Standards.
- Proper implementation of the rice monitoring mechanism.
- Ensure that the CET mechanisms are utilised effectively to sustain the viability of vital and sensitive agricultural industries in the face of subsidised and dumped extra-regional imports.
- Ensure that sugar refining capacity utilizing regional production is established to fulfill demand, with appropriate CET mechanisms (that were already approved in principle).
- More stakeholder consultations. Government should encourage timely responses in the future.
- Need for relevant legislation, for example, for engineering services, real estate and distribution services, that is, the legislative framework for trade in services.
- Identification of inter-sectoral linkages in developing a national strategy for trade in services.
- Domestic Asset Ratio should be adjusted by insurance companies, to include CARICOM as part of the domestic market.
- Despite the possibility of moral hazard, a Deposit Insurance Scheme should be introduced as a form of protection to investors, in the event of bank failure.
- Establishment of a Financial Sector Agreement in respect of Banking, Insurance, and Security, so as to create a level playing field for all CARICOM member states.
- Establish a centralized Credit Bureau to provide personal information for the purpose of verification for credit in the free movement of capital and persons.
- Establish a Bond Rating Agency.
- The Central Bank must become more proactive and give direction in terms of Monetary Policy.
- The Central Bank must formalize policy to allow for citizens to hold foreign currency accounts.
- Guyana's Anti-Money Laundering legislation must be fully operational.
- University of Guyana should offer short-term courses in financial engineering, which is the development of new financial products for trading.
- Urge the harmonisation of labour laws across the Region; as well as other relevant and concomitant legislation, noting that Guyana is ahead in some areas.
- The development and establishment of common examinations for medical doctors, pharmacists and nurses to assist in accreditation issues. It is imperative that more resources be allocated to address the issues pertaining to chronic diseases as this will increase health costs, etc.
- Urge the conclusion of the discussions and the early establishment of the National Accreditation Board by March 2004.
- Development of a specialised marketing campaign to promote and encourage a policy of immigration by skilled qualified CARICOM nationals to Guyana in specified areas of critical need. In this regard, a specific market analysis of the other Member States would be required.
- Urge the standardization of the age of retirement across the Region. With respect to Guyana, having regard to the economic, societal and demographic considerations, it is recommended that the age be moved to 60 years.
- The private sector must adopt a progressive and proactive thinking outlook, and take initiatives

and approaches to the CSME, organizing themselves and investing in training and seeking relevant technical assistance, recognizing that the Guyanese private sector is young and that it will need to seek technical assistance to help it to be competitive.

- The speedy establishment of the Business and Labour Advisory Committee (BLAC). However, it is to be recognized that the two (2) sectors will have to internally resolve their outstanding issues.
- The educational system must be put under constant review to ensure that we are producing persons with the skills that are required in the Region under the CSME.
- Implementation of an Integrated Intelligence Network System – Computerized Database for tracking persons across the Region.
- The establishment of a national body equivalent to the Regional Law Enforcement Technical Committee to feed into this Regional body.
- The expansion of the RSS – new dimension of operational capabilities.
- The establishment of a National Commission of Law and Order.
- Closer involvement in partnership with the Private Sector and Labour is both urgently needed and critical to the success of the CSME. This must be done in an effective and sustained manner and requires a continuing institutional mechanism.

The Ministry is currently in the process of compiling a report which would not only be circulated to participants and other relevant Ministries and agencies, but the recommendations contained therein would be adapted into the Ministry's Work Programme.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS' DAY 2004 AND OVERVIEW OF PROJECTIONS

The Government of Guyana has been a recipient and beneficiary of the services of international volunteers, since its independence in 1966. The work of volunteers aim to inspire others to advance human development through voluntary efforts.

The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation coordinated a number of activities in observance of International Volunteers' Day on December 5, 2003.

In 2004, emphasis would be placed on rationalizing bilateral economic cooperation programmes. Intensive consultations are to be pursued with current beneficiary sectors with a view to identifying projects which would have an immediate and positive impact on the development

agenda. Cabinet would be consulted on these new approaches.

Therefore, the cooperation programmes with China, India and Brazil are to be intensified for optimum returns, in terms of Human resources development, project development and financial cooperation. Cooperation would also be expanded considerably with the Commonwealth Technical Assistance Programme, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/CDCC and the Organisation of American States (OAS) in terms of capacity development and institutional strengthening. The focus of these programmes is to be narrowed considerably to achieve maximum advantage.



Volunteer Org. reps. with Hon. S. A. Hinds, at the Police Officers' Mess, Eve Leary.



Minister Rohee at tree planting ceremony at UG.



Dr. Abdulla, UNV, with mothers-to-be at Kitty Health Centre.



United Nations Volunteers (back row, left to right) from Kenya, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Bangladesh (Front row) Japan, Korea and Australia

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS' DAY (IVD) PARADE



THE PARTIAL SCOPE AGREEMENT

Continued from page 1

Legal Affairs and the Ministry of Finance. The agreement is expected to enter into force by the end of January.

Background to Bilateral Trade Relations

The Governments of Guyana and Brazil have been seeking to enhance bilateral trade relations for many years. In this long process, the major propelling force has come from those communities residing in the south of Guyana and in the northern states of Brazil. Clearly because it is those areas that would, expectedly, derive the most direct benefits from increased economic collaboration between the two countries.

Guyana's disposition towards bilateral trade relations with Brazil has always been influenced by the following factors:

- (i) Guyana's policy of pursuing friendly relations with its immediate neighbours. In the case of Brazil there exists an impressive cooperation programme of which trade is one element.
- (ii) Actual trade and movement of people taking place between the border communities on both sides.
- (iii) Representations made to the Government by the border communities including the indigenous population on the Guyana side.

Bilateral discussions between the two countries, concerning the enhancement of bilateral trade relations by way of a formal trade agreement, date back to August 1973, on the occasion of the Inaugural Guyana/Brazil Joint Commission. At that time the two countries pursued talks on the establishment of a Duty-free Warehousing Zone in Guyana. In 1986 the two sides exchanged draft texts of a Border Trade Agreement and a General Trade Agreement but the matter was not pursued further.

The Partial Scope Agreement in the context of Guyana/Brazil Relations

The significance of promoting healthy and vibrant trade relations extends far beyond the trade aspect.

The Guyana-Brazil Trade Agreement which is but one component, a very critical one in fact, of a dynamic bilateral cooperation initiative underway between the two countries. The other components of this bilateral program include the Guyana-Brazil Road Project, the bridging of the Takatu River and the Border Land Cargo Agreement that will enable the passage of vehicles and freight between designated areas of both countries. Once the road link is completed, an Interna-

tional Agreement will be concluded that will allow full passage.

Within the context of the excellent bilateral relations that exist between Guyana and Brazil, increased trade will mean the deepening and consolidation of the policy of good neighbourliness that has been forged over long years of friendship and cooperation. At the regional level, it will assist Guyana in its move towards the attainment of economic and physical integration. And, looking beyond the region, it will help to craft a pragmatic and effective response to the ongoing changes in the global economy.

The historical pattern of development in Guyana has traditionally focused the attention of the vast majority of the population on the countries and peoples beyond our Atlantic coast. It is not surprising, therefore, that Guyanese are still largely unfamiliar with the Brazilian market, with the exception, of course, of those who live in the border regions, in the Lethem/Rupununi area for example.

The Caribbean Link

Over the last few years, however, Guyana has been actively promoting and pursuing a strategy of recognition as the country within CARICOM that can best act as a link between the Caribbean Community and Brazil. A number of reasons can be cited in support of this approach including the following:

- Guyana shares its borders with two Brazilian States, Roraima and Para. We also have close traditional links with the State of Amazonas. In particular, our frontier with Roraima State is of significant length and generates much cross border activity.
- In the near future Guyana will be the only Caricom member state to possess a direct road link with Brazil, and through Brazil with the whole South American continent.
- Brazil's Northern Arc Project (Arca Norte) is aimed at the economic and social development of its northern states. The road link from the State of Roraima through Guyana is perceived to be a multifaceted and critical aspect of this plan. Not only will it join the northern states of Brazil in a great loop through the Guianas, but also it will facilitate access for Brazil to the north Atlantic, the Caribbean, North and Central America and Europe. It has been suggested elsewhere that, by way of the Panama Canal, the road link through Guyana could easily connect Brazil with the Pacific.
- Considering the fact that Guyana is both a founder member of Caricom and the seat of the Caribbean Community Secretariat, its position with regard to the promotion of Caricom/Brazil relations is a pivotal one.

In the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) Brazil (through Mercosur) and Guyana (through CARICOM) share a similar (though independent) position with respect to proposals to liberalize agriculture trade. Both countries (and groups) agree that the FTAA agreement must demonstrate a clear commitment to reduce or eliminate export subsidies and non-tariff barriers in order to achieve “balanced” progress in the tariff liberalization of goods in the hemisphere.

For Brazil market access in Agriculture is perhaps the single most important issue in the determination of “balanced” progress in the overall FTAA negotiations.

For CARICOM, progress in the agriculture negotiations is important, however, special and differential treatment (SDT) for the smaller economies in all the areas, including agriculture, is the more critical issue for the region. Brazil has in recent times taken a more open and positive approach to the small economies concerns (eg. Special and Differential Treatment, Regional Integration Fund etc), especially where these matters are pursued by CARICOM.

THE PRODUCT LISTS

Guyana’s Product List - Exports by Guyana (to Brazil)

The Guyana product list which was compiled on the basis of submissions made by the various private sector organizations and exporting companies as well as key government agencies, covers 157 tariff lines or products for which Brazil has agreed to extend 100% preference (zero duty), on entry into Brazil.

Some of the products include calcined bauxite, rice (all categories), sugar, bottled rum, copra, Red peppers, fruits and vegetables, Plywood, Canned Heart of Palm, wooden furniture, sawn lumber, PVC pipes, corrugated cardboard, paper

towels, chemical paper and aluzinc sheets, as well as a wide range of primary agricultural products. Guyana will be able to export annual quotas of sugar (10,000 tonnes), rice (10,000 tonnes) and red peppers (100 tonnes).

Brazil’s Product List - Imports by Guyana (from Brazil)

The Brazilian product list consists of 820 tariff lines. Guyana granted a 15 % on 16 tariff lines, 25% on 6 tariff lines, 50% preference on 172 tariff lines, and 100 % on 626 tariff lines.

On the import side for us, the Brazilian product list which will attract either 50% or 100% reduction in duties include a wide range of products which are needed for our national development drive. For example, capital goods such as machinery and parts and building materials such as steel products were given 100% preference (zero duty) to facilitate the construction, housing and agricultural sectors. Other products that can be imported at reduced duties include a range of industrial equipment, medicines, new tyres and electronic equipment.

Most of the products on the Brazilian list are not produced by Guyana or Caricom. The agriculture based products for which the current CET ranges from zero to 20% mostly, will attract 100% preference or a zero duty rate. The manufactured or industrial products, including parts, will attract a preference or duty reduction of either 50% or 100% as the case may be.

Trade Opportunities for Guyana

Brazil is already a major source of Guyana’s imports. The trade data for the past three years (2001-2003) the data reveal that imports from Brazil are almost 55 times the value of Guyana’s exports to that country. This is summarized in the Table below.

GUYANA’S IMPORTS FROM AND EXPORTS TO BRAZIL FOR THE PERIOD 2001-2003

YEARS	IMPORTS (G\$ M)	% Change	EXPORTS (G\$M)	% Change
2001	888,064,566		27,374,426	
2002	1,195,954,670	34.6	4,367,500	-84
2003	1,179,810,330	-1.4	27,620,775	632.4
Total	3,263,729,566		59,362,701	

Source: Guyana National Bureau of Statistics

**REMARKS ON THE OCCASION OF INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS’ DAY BY THE HON. CLEMENT J. ROHEE, MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE & INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
POLICE OFFICERS’ MESS, EVE LEARY, DECEMBER 5TH, 2003**

His Excellency, The Hon. Samuel A Hinds, Acting President of the Republic of Guyana, Colleague Ministers of the Government, Senior Government Officials, Members of the Diplomatic Community, Special Invitees, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen, when the Government of Guyana took the decision to mark for the first time International Volunteers Day this year it did so in recognition of the fact that here in Guyana there are currently one hundred and ten (110) volunteers actively engaged in specific fields of endeavour where we do not have enough Guyanese or with the requisite skills. That is one reality.

The other reality is that when people leave their country of birth to go to a foreign land to help the people of that country on a voluntary basis to improve their social and economic well-being, it is an act of international cooperation that must be given due recognition and the appreciation it deserves.

People to people contact, primarily for the purpose of working together to achieve shared goals is an important factor towards the achievement of Human Development.

Countries who continue to suffer from the brain drain are usually the developing countries, and it is these countries that are perhaps the principal demanders for human capital on a voluntary basis to assist with capacity building and institutional strengthening.

The fact of the matter is that until such time when these countries reach a certain level of development will they be in a position to stem the flow of outward migration thus enabling them to

keep their skilled human resources at home and reduce reliance on volunteer support.

From a development perspective this is an uphill task that requires bold and innovative measures by Governments who have limited resources but are none-the-less committed to overcoming the development deficit at the social and economic levels.

Resource mobilization through international cooperation to fill critical gaps at the administrative and technical levels is one such innovative, non-conventional measures albeit of a temporary nature.

Thanks to our cooperation with the Peace Corps, the VSO, the UNV, ITEC etc, Guyana is now a principal beneficiary of international volunteerism.

At the local level, the international volunteers are predominantly involved in activities in the social sector, specifically in the Health, Water, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Education Sectors.

I must point out however, that the Government of Guyana through its own efforts and initiatives is taking steps to correct the human resource deficit. In conjunction with the Cuban Government, the Government of Guyana is sending one hundred students to Cuba every year to pursue under-graduate studies in the fields of Agriculture Sciences, Medical Sciences, Natural Sciences, Technical Sciences and Physical Culture.

In addition, scholarship offers by the Governments of Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, India, China, the Commonwealth and the OAS contribute signifi-

cantly to the upgrading of the skills of technical staff within Government Agencies and Departments.

On behalf of the Government of Guyana, I wish to place on record our deepest appreciation for the assistance extended to Guyana by these Governments and International Organizations.

In a similar vein, the Government of Guyana expresses its deepest gratitude to the Peace Corps, the VSO, the UNV, ITEC and ODI for providing much needed human resources to fill critical gaps in our country.

Today, we celebrate with the volunteers and their important contributions to our society. Both national and international volunteers have played and are playing a vital role in the development process of Guyana.

They not only give of their time, energies and expertise to better human conditions, but also receive satisfaction, cultural experiences and an expanded view of the world.

On this occasion the Government of Guyana wishes to extend its sincere congratulations to all International Volunteers serving in this country and to express its gratitude for their service. The Government of Guyana remains committed to promoting, recognizing and facilitating volunteerism in the full knowledge of the critical contribution which it can make to the building of strong and cohesive societies.

Thank You!

Among other activities a Parade was held through the city of Georgetown on Saturday December 6; articles featuring the role and scope of each volunteer Organization were carried in the local print media; a Mobile clinic to provide medical assistance and the distribution of medical supplies was established at the Kitty Health centre and a Tree Planting Event was held at the University of Guyana campus at Turkeyen.

In keeping with Guyana's Millennium Development goals for the delivery of quality education in Guyana, the National Coordinating Committee in cooperation with the Ministry of

Education arranged for lectures at a selected number of Urban and Rural Secondary Schools.

On this occasion the Government of Guyana has extended its sincere congratulations to all International Volunteers serving in this country and expressed gratitude for their service. The Government of Guyana remains committed to promoting, recognizing and facilitating volunteerism in the full knowledge of the critical contribution which it can make to the building of strong and cohesive societies.

**ADDRESS BY HON. SAMUEL A. HINDS,
PRIME MINISTER
ON THE OCCASION OF INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS' DAY
POLICE OFFICERS' MESS, EVE LEARY, DECEMBER 5TH, 2003**

It is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to address you in the absence of His Excellency President Bharrat Jagdeo, who is at present in Abuja, Nigeria attending the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting.

The World today on average or in total is richer than it has ever been before, but within this average there are extremes: There are still large numbers of low income people in developing countries and in developed countries there are significant pockets of people with relatively low income. Many of these persons with little need material assistance and services as well as a revival of spirit which comes with the demonstration of someone being concerned about them. Whilst rich developed countries may have the resources of money and people to manage the problems of their low income areas, poorer developing countries do need help from richer countries and much help is had at Government to Government level. Such help is very welcome. But there is always need for more expert and experienced people and in particular people who are willing to live in less developed countries such as Guyana. United Nations Volunteers are examples of such individuals and there are others – VSO's, Peace Corps, CESO to name some groups which are known in Guyana. We can think too of all the service clubs and charitable organizations manned by persons working without pay.

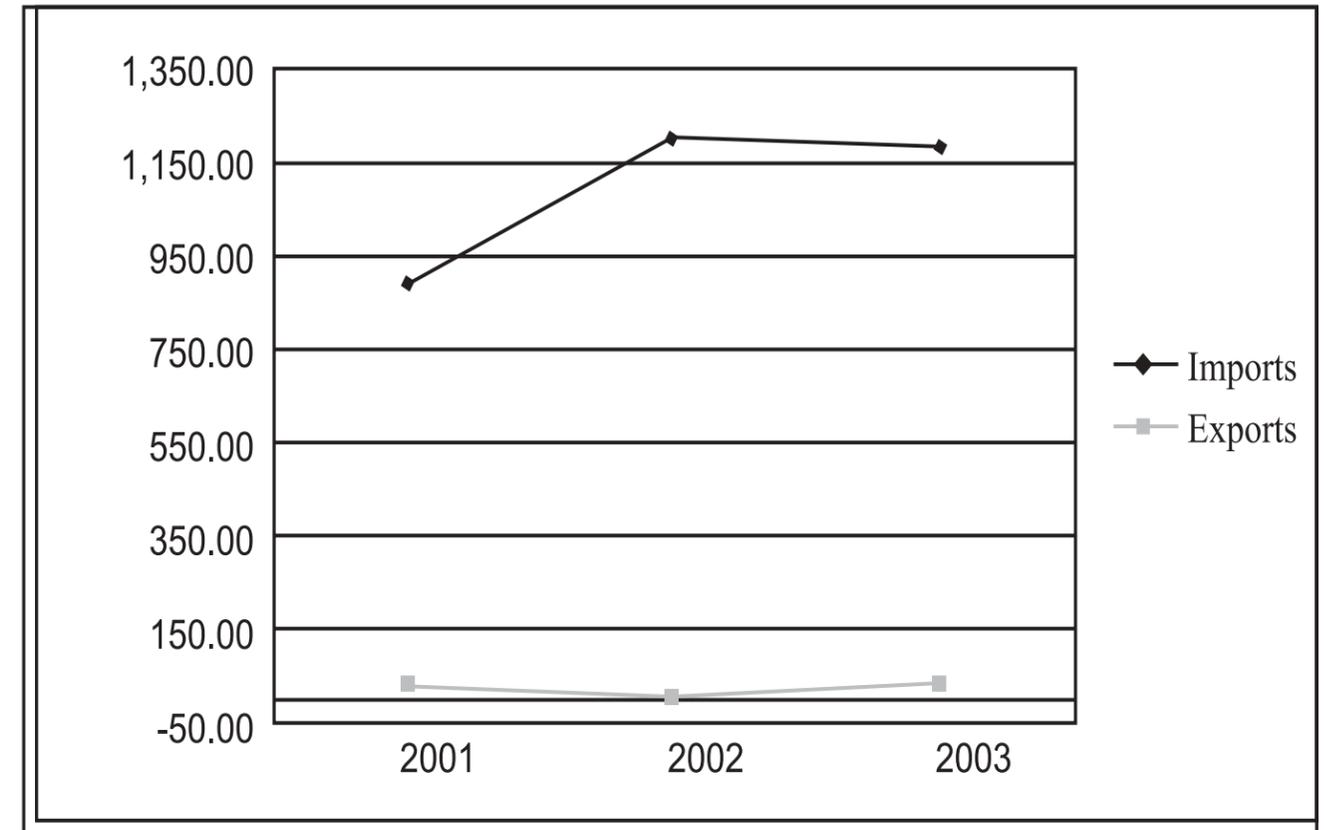
These days when cost recovery approaches prevail, and we all must toe the line of budgets and bottom line, and our youths, and girls appear to be all materialists, it is necessary and good that many persons volunteer and so demonstrate that volunteerism has not been driven out of the breast of all. We Humans will no longer be Humans if the plight of any one of us would not elicit sympathy in the hearts of others.

Over the years volunteers from home and abroad have given indispensable service of incalculable worth to Guyanese and Guyana. Volunteers are evident in many sectors and locations across Guyana. Volunteers from Overseas and UN Volunteers in particular are helping us in achieving our Millennium Development Goals in health, education, agriculture, natural resources identification, water, information technology and the social and community development sectors. Considering the boundaries set by our low national production, volunteerism provides an essential contribution to the fulfilment of Guyana's Millennium Development Goals.

The Government of Guyana remains committed to encouraging and facilitating the work of Volunteers in Guyana.

My charge to you today, International volunteers Day, is to keep on demonstrating by your volunteering and through your volunteer work, your commitment to help in building peace, affirming democracy and promoting respect for Human Rights, the relief of suffering, the alleviation and ending of poverty and sustainable human development.

**COMPARISON OF GUYANA'S IMPORTS FROM
AND EXPORTS TO BRAZIL FOR 2001-2003**



In 2002 imports from Brazil accounted for \$1,195 million, an increase over 2001 by approximately 34.6%. Imports in 2003 recorded a slight decline of 1.4% on 2002.

In terms of our exports, 2002 data revealed that exports to Brazil in that year declined steeply from a total of approximately \$27.3 million in 2001 to \$4.3 million in 2002, the lowest level of trade for the three year period. In 2003 however, exports increased significantly to exceed the 2001 level. A closer look at the recorded export trade data revealed that all exports were concentrated mainly in a few areas despite there may be potential for exports in other sectors/areas. Bearing in mind that trade so far is not yet benefiting from the preferential access under the Partial Scope Agreement, the potential for increased trade with Brazil could be enormous once the Agreement is implemented. The challenge that Guyanese exporters face is to ensure that they take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves under the Partial Scope Arrangement. Exporters and manufacturers need to examine the product lists and embark on effective marketing ventures to ensure that the current exports gain enhanced market access and new products are penetrated

in Brazil's market. We will have to ensure that our products meet the specifications required of the Brazilian consumers and that they are produced based on recognized conformity assessment systems and standards.

The Agreement provides for the establishment of an Administrative Commission after the agreement has entered into force. The Commission, which will be comprised of representatives of Guyana and Brazil, will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Agreement and resolve disputes that may arise. The role of the private sector will be pivotal in this respect.

Prior to the negotiation of the Agreement the local private sector had suggested the establishment of a Joint Business Development Council (BDC) between the Guyanese and Brazilian private sectors. The fact of the Partial Scope Agreement will be a major fillip to such an initiative and would permit a more structured level of cooperation between the business communities of Guyana and the Brazilian States of Roraima and Amazonas.

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF GUYANA

What are Geographical Indications?

Geographical Indications (GIs) are signs used to identify products as originating in a territory where a given quality, reputation or other characteristics of the product is essentially attributable to its geographical origin. They may also highlight specific qualities of a product which are due to human factors that can be found in the place of origin of the products, such as specific manufacturing skills and traditions. That place of origin may be a village or town, a region or a country. In the case where such goods are manufactured goods, one of the activities of production or of processing or preparation takes place in such territory or locality.

In general, GIs are intended to designate product quality, highlight brand identity, and preserve cultural traditions. Examples of familiar GIs include Champagne, Irish Whiskey, Scotch Whiskey, Pride of New York Ohio River Valley Wines, Real California Cheese, Florida Oranges and New Zealand Lamb.

While most often used on food products, GIs can be used to identify any product (e.g., Murano glass, Swiss watches, Bukhara carpets, Irish whiskey) that may be associated with a specific geographic place. At present, there are no GIs which are protected in Guyana. However, products which could qualify for protection as GIs include Demerara Rum, Demerara Sugar and products carrying the name El Dorado.

Geographical indications are distinct from indications of source, which are nothing more than signs that specify that a product originate in a specific geographical region (for example: Made in France; Product of the USA), without bearing 'quality' function.

Why are Geographical Indications an Issue?

Like trademarks, GIs are **valuable marketing tools**. They afford protection, market recognition and premium prices to producers and manufacturers.

As **source-identifiers**—GIs identify goods as originating in a particular territory, or a region or locality in that territory. As **indicators of quality**—they let consumers know that the goods come from an area where

a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the goods is essentially attributable to their geographic origin. In addition, GIs are **business interests**—they exist solely to promote the goods of a particular area. With global markets now increasingly open, GIs have become a key source of **niche marketing**. They are also often associated with non-monetary benefits, such as the protection of traditional knowledge and community rights.

Why Geographical Indications Need Protection?

According to the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), GIs need protection because they are understood by consumers to denote the origin and quality of products. Many of them have acquired valuable reputations which, if not adequately protected, may be misrepresented by dishonest commercial operators.

Misuse of geographical indications by unauthorized parties is detrimental to consumers and legitimate producers. Consumers are deceived into buying supposedly genuine products with specific qualities and characteristics, when in fact they get a worthless imitation. Producers suffer damage because valuable business is taken away from them and the established reputation for their products is damaged.

Protection of Geographical Indications at the International Level

Intellectual property owners are finding that protecting intellectual property is no longer just a domestic endeavor. GIs are intellectual property, eligible for relief from acts of infringement and/or unfair competition. This protection comes from an intellectual property right that is embodied into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement, notably Articles 22 to 24, currently the principal international instrument for protecting and defending GIs.

How are Geographical Indications Protected?

GIs are protected in accordance with national laws and

International Cooperation to assist in identifying resources, both traditional and non-traditional, for technical assistance.

Mr. Buchaca paid courtesy calls on the Honourable Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation and other key officials involved in International Cooperation issues.

VOLUNTARY SERVICE OVERSEAS (VSO)

The VSO Programme Office is in the process of formulating a Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for 2004-2008. The established theme for the period is "Strengthening Guyana's Decentralization Process by Supporting the Building of Local

Capacity of Regionally focused Organizations and Institutions."

The proposed CSP for 2004-2008 targets three programme areas: disability, education and secure livelihoods. The identified programme are in keeping with Guyana's National Developmental Agenda and therefore stand to augur tremendous benefits for the people of Guyana.

Consultations are expected to commence with VSO to evaluate the current MOU and engage in preliminary discussions on the proposed CSP.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS' DAY

December 5, 2003



The Government of Guyana observed International Volunteers Day on December 5, 2003. The theme for this year's observance was "Volunteerism and the Millennium Development Goals". Guyana joined several other countries across the globe in endorsing the role volunteerism can play as a catalyst for reducing world poverty by half by 2015. Volunteerism which has been defined by UN experts as the non-profit, non-wage and non-career contributions of individuals for the well being of their neighbours, community or society at large can serve as a strategic asset for building a dynamic and prosperous society. Indeed, it has been affirmed that volunteerism is at the "heart of social capital".

For several years the government of Guyana has been welcoming international volunteers to its shores. They have given their skills, expertise, time and creativity towards improving the well-being of the Guyanese people. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation in consultation with representatives of the USAID, Peace Corps, British Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), United Nations Volunteers (UNV), the Guyana Parenthood Association (GRPA), Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC), Youth Challenge Guyana (YCG) and Lifeline Counselling Services, planned a wide range of events across the country to mark the occasion.

At present there are one hundred and ten (110) international volunteers working in Guyana. Volunteers are concentrated in the productive and infrastructural sectors, as well as in the Education, Health, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Water and Social and Community Development sectors. In observing International Volunteers Day this year, the Government of Guyana expressed its appreciation to those volunteers who have given and are giving their unstinted service in the urban and rural areas in Guyana. These sectors which have benefited from the services of International Volunteers have recorded significant gains over the past decade.

To mark International Volunteers' Day 2003 several activities were convened with a view to sensitizing the nation as a whole about the work of volunteers. The activities were coordinated by a National Coordinating Committee comprising of representatives of local and international voluntary organizations. The activities included a televised discussion on Guyana Television Broadcasting Corporation (GTV) comprising representatives of the Peace Corps, Voluntary Service Overseas, United Nations Volunteers, Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation, Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association and the Youth Challenge Guyana with an intervention by the Minister responsible for cooperation with international volunteer organizations at home and abroad.

supply of five solar photo voltaic water pump systems. The Ministry of Housing and Water is the beneficiary of this gift from the Government of India. The Water Pumps will enhance the provision of potable water supply to residents of rural communities.

President's State visit to India

The Department of International Cooperation continues to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of some projects arising out of the President's State Visit to India during the period August 24-28, 2003.

The Government of Guyana has submitted a draft Bilateral Investment Treaty for consideration by the Government of India. Tangible forms of cooperation in the area of investment are expected to be stimulated.

Consultations are also in train for the conclusion of a Double Taxation Agreement.

ITEC Programme

On November 17, 2003 the Honourable Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation convened a meeting

with the current ITEC Experts in Guyana.

Discussions focused on the roles and duties of the experts within the various sectors. Currently, there are six ITEC experts working in Guyana in the Agriculture and Housing sectors as well as the Communication field.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

High Level Bilateral Commission

On the occasion of the presentation of her Letters of Credence to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, Mrs. Elizabeth Harper, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Guyana, raised the issue of the dormant High Level Bilateral Commission, which was inaugurated in January 2000. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trinidad and Tobago, expressed a fervent desire, to put together a Joint Committee to review the work of the Commission and to recommend proposals for its resuscitation.

It is possible that a meeting at the technical sub-committee level will be convened during the first quarter of 2004 in Georgetown. Issues in the area of trade will form the basis for discussions.

COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

ORGANISATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS)

Guyana is expected to benefit from "Meeting Special needs in the Classroom for disabled students," a project concept submitted by the Ministry of Education under the Special Multilateral Fund of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (FEMCIDI).

The Ministry of Education is expected to submit a Plan of Execution and a Memorandum of Understanding to the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation for onward transmission to the Organisation of American States by January 31, 2004.

Guyana will also benefit from two regional projects to be funded by the Inter-American Agency for Cooperation and Development (IACD):

- (1). Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network Project
- (2). Regional Satellite – Delivered Distance Learning for teacher Training, Education and Human Development in Rural Areas.

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC)

Mr. Raul Garcia-Buchaca, Chief Programme Planning and Operations Division, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean paid a visit to Guyana on October 1-2, 2003.

The purpose of his visit was to assist with the formulation and development of a strategic plan for the Department of

under a wide range of concepts, such as laws against unfair competition, consumer protection laws, laws for the protection of certification marks or special laws for the protection of geographical indications or appellations of origin. In essence, unauthorized parties may not use geographical indications if such use is likely to mislead the public as to the true origin of the product. Applicable sanctions range from court injunctions preventing the unauthorized use to the payment of damages and fines or, in serious cases, imprisonment.

Implementation Options for TRIPS

The TRIPS Agreement has provided members with the legal means by which they can protect GIs. For a country like Guyana, which is yet to finalize a system of legal rules to protect GIs, it is important to know of the different forms of possible regimes. Such knowledge would be invaluable in designing and implementing an appropriate regime. In general, WTO Member States have utilized the following regimes:

- Regulations focusing on business practices such as unfair competition, consumer protection, trade descriptions, labelling and food standards. This system may not be the best because the aim of such regulations is usually not to protect the GI but rather to ensure that the use of the GI has not contravened standards contained in the laws.
- Through the use of trademark laws which may prevent the regulation and use of a GI as a trademark.
- Through the use of collective guarantee or certification marks. This approach is favoured in common law countries. It is in use in, among others, the USA and India, to protect products such as 'Real California Cheese' (USA), and 'Darjeeling Tea' (India).
- Through a *sui generis* system of laws and regulations which are specifically dedicated to the protection of GIs. This approach has been favoured by those countries which have not had a system of protecting GIs in the past. It enables policymakers to draft legislation suited to their needs, and which at the same time is compliant with TRIPS. The European Union and CARICOM countries, such as Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, St. Lucia and Dominica have used this approach.

Guyana and Geographical Indications

• Implementation of TRIPS in Guyana

The TRIPS Agreement in Article 24.9 states that where a product is not protected in its country of origin (Guyana), it cannot be protected elsewhere. Consequently, Guyana's Demerara Rum, Demerara Sugar and El Dorado products cannot be protected and this places local producers at an unfair disadvantage vis-à-vis foreign producers.

For instance, Demerara Sugar is being produced in Florida and Mauritius. However, local producers of Demerara Sugar cannot challenge the makers of Demerara Sugar in these countries because of the absence of the requisite legal protection. Thus, they are unable to carve out a niche market and develop the brand for their exclusive use.

The fact that Guyana does not have a legal regime for the protection of GIs creates several implications for the country. The absence of this legal regime means that Guyana is not yet compliant with this aspect of its TRIPS obligations and, therefore, nationals of other WTO member states who may believe that their GIs are being misused by Guyanese producers have no legal recourse in Guyana.

Guyana should accumulate the benefits associated with GIs by way of its Demerara and El Dorado products, while at the same time be able to offer protection to potential investors. Therefore, it is imperative that a legal regime for the protection of products be implemented. A *sui generis* form of legislation seems most appropriate for Guyana, the advantage being that it will enable policymakers to tailor the legislation to Guyana's context.

• Guyana and the debates on TRIPS at the WTO

Debates are ongoing at the WTO on GIs. The first debate is on the establishment of a multilateral register of GIs for wines and spirits as envisaged by the TRIPS Agreement in Article 23.4. The second debate is on the extension of the special protection given in Article 23 to products other than wines and spirits.

There are broadly two opposing camps on these matters, which are broadly referred to as the Old World and the New World. The Old World is comprised of the EU and countries such as Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Georgia, Hungary, Nigeria, Romania, Sri Lanka,

Switzerland, Turkey, Malta, Mauritius, Moldova, Slovenia, Slovak Republic and Turkey. The New World on the other hand is made up of countries such as the USA, Australia, Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Namibia, Philippines, Canada, Chile, Chinese Taipei, Japan and New Zealand. Most of these New World countries have large migrant populations who came from the Old World bringing with them skills and knowledge of producing products which are now being claimed as GIs in the Old World.

With regards to the establishment of a multilateral system of notification and registration, the debate surrounds the form it will take. The multilateral register, as envisaged by Articles 22 and 23 aims to facilitate the protection of wines and spirits. The register aims to facilitate protection against illegitimate use by providing Members with a list of products which are recognized as GIs in their countries of origin.

The Old World argues that the system should be that of a register where registration shall have the legal effect of indefinite, legally enforceable protection in all the WTO Member States, while the New World feels that the proposed register should have no legal effect but rather that it be a mere database which the national authorities of Members can consult in the operation of their own national systems.

On the extension of the special additional protection for wines and spirits to other products, the issue is that TRIPS reserves the more effective protection for GIs for wines and spirits. It does not prohibit the use of GIs in ways such as 'Swiss watch made in China' or 'Demerara Sugar made in Florida'. By contrast, 'Swiss Tequila' or 'California wine produced in Mexico' is unlawful under TRIPS. Thus producers of sugar, rice, coffee, carpets and other products which are not wines or spirits are discriminated against.

The argument of the Old World is that the protection in Article 23 should be extended to all GIs. The New World on the other hand opposes protection stating that Article 24.1 only refers to negotiations to provide more protection to individual GIs concerning wines and spirits. They also argue that extending Article 23 protection would involve considerable cost to both governments and consumers. The costs to governments could be in implementing new laws and for consumers it would create confusion because of the re-labelling of products.

Both issues were laid on the table at the 5th WTO Ministerial Meeting held in Cancun Mexico in September 2003. During the discussions, the opposing camps remained intransigent in their positions. In the end, no meaningful progress was made on these as with all the other matters discussed. The meeting concluded with the issuing of a general Ministerial statement instructing their national officials to continue with a 'renewed sense of urgency and purpose and taking fully into account all the views we have expressed in this Conference' to work on the outstanding issues.

It is necessary to realize that the position being taken by the Old World and the European Union is really a disguise for trade protectionism. Already, the EU has published a list of 41 famous food and drink names which it says should not be produced outside of Europe. The list includes names such as Champagne, Bordeaux, Parma Ham, Roquefort Cheese, and Feta Cheese. The EU complains that these are GI names which are being abused outside of their original regions.

The dangers with agreeing with the Old World proposal would be that it may lead to the closing down of productive industries in those countries which may be manufacturing products that can be protected as GIs. It may also incur additional costs on countries such as Guyana which are already struggling to implement the TRIPS.

In the same vein, the extension of Article 23 protection to products other than wines and spirits may not be in Guyana's interest. Apart from the reasons put forth by the New World, it is also possible that such an extension could be used to develop a worldwide patent system which would further be unfavourable to Guyana's best interests.

Conclusion

The area of GIs is one which offers opportunities for Guyana to develop niche markets for products which are unique to its geography. In this regard, it is essential that Guyana moves as quickly as possible to create the enabling legislation to protect GIs. However, the international debates on GIs are a minefield which Guyana must negotiate carefully if it is to avoid pushing for international agreement on the multilateral register and the extension of Article 23 protection which may ultimately work against its interests.

BILATERAL COOPERATION

BRAZIL

Cross Border Activities

Preparations are in progress for the commencement of a Portuguese Language Training Course to benefit Government officials involved in cross border relations with Brazil. The aim is to promote effective communication between Guyana and Brazil. The course is expected to commence during the first quarter of 2004.

CUBA

Guyana-Cuba Joint Commission

Preparations have commenced with the aim of convening the twenty-second session of Guyana-Cuba Joint Commission during the first quarter, 2004.

Consultations with the Cubans and local potential beneficiaries to determine precisely which projects are to form the basis of the cooperation programme for 2004-2006, is expected to commence shortly.

COLOMBIA

During a meeting between the newly accredited Ambassador of Colombia to Guyana and the Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation, Honourable Clement J. Rohee, Guyana was welcomed to table two draft agreements for the consideration of the authorities in Bogotá. The agreements are:-

- **Agreement on Trade**

The agreement will seek to further expand and diversify trade relations and the promotion of economic and mutual interests on the basis of equality, non-discrimination and mutual interests.

- **Agreement establishing the Guyana/Colombia Joint Business Development Council**

This agreement is expected to facilitate the development of trade and commercial relations between Guyana and Colombia.

The draft texts are under the consideration of the Colombian Export and Trade Promotion Institutions.

CHINA

The Department of International Cooperation continues to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of projects following the visit of H.E President Bharrat Jagdeo to China in 2003.

Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)

A symposium aimed at sensitizing the private sector on the steps to be taken and possible projects to be undertaken to implement the BIT, is to be conducted during the period January to March 2004 in Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice.

GTV/CCTV 9 Exchange Programme

Exchange of Notes for Cooperation between GTV and CCTV 9 was concluded on December 10, 2003. The signing will facilitate the dispatch of a technical team from China to Guyana to perform a feasibility study on the proposed cooperation programme between GTV and CCTV 9. Guyanese will benefit from the broadcasting of programmes from CCTV 9 in Guyana.

Bamboo Craft Project

Four bamboo craft technicians arrived in Guyana on October 19, 2003 to assist in training of Guyanese in bamboo craft production. The training sessions for local interested persons in the skill of bamboo craft production have commenced.

INDIA

Guyana- India Joint Commission

Consultations for the convening of the fourth session of the Guyana/India Joint Commission are still ongoing. It is expected that the Joint Commission meeting will be convened during the third quarter of 2004.

During the Third Session of the Guyana/India Joint Commission, a proposal was made for the provision of five solar photo voltaic water pump systems.

On November 6, 2003, the Honourable Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation and H.E Avinash Gupta, High Commissioner of India to Guyana, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate the