

CHAPTER 21

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

21.I BASIC FEATURES

21.I.1 Guyana has six urban municipalities: Georgetown with an estimated population of 177,900; Linden with a population of 33,500; New Amsterdam, the population of which is 21,700; Corriverton with a population of 15,700; Rose Hall with a population of 8,000; and Anna Regina with a mere 2,600 citizens.

21.I.2 Despite their relatively small sizes, these urban areas are very poorly serviced. In all of them the roads are in various states of disrepair. In all but one of them the drainage systems are so ineffectual that there is flooding every time the rainy seasons come around, and often even in the dry seasons. Silt and solid waste and various other kinds of refuse block the drains; water overflows into the streets and yards; and whatever detritus there is in the water finds its way into the dwelling places, particularly of the poor. There are heaps of rubbish in most parts of the cities, sometimes even on the main roads. In short, the cities are unsanitary and a breeding ground for the vectors of many diseases.

21.I.3 Multitudes of people abound within the yards of the poor, where small rooms are occupied often by upwards of eight people: men, women, and children, frequently spanning three generations. There are, on average, about eight rooms per yard. In each of the yards there are, on average, two latrines and one stand pipe.

21.I.4 Water supplies are generally erratic and often impure.

21.I.5 The abattoirs and municipal markets are unclean and over-crowded.

21.I.6 The main streets are crowded by vendors who occupy both the pavements that are intended for pedestrians and the roadways that are meant for vehicles. Not unnaturally, progress in certain areas is slow and hazardous. Indeed, driving in the cities is considered by some to be somewhat of a lottery.

21.I.7 In many of Guyana's municipalities, street lighting is extremely rudimentary, either because there are no lighting facilities, or because there are no electric bulbs available. In the one city in which a few traffic lights have been installed, they are more often off than on.

21.I.8 The municipalities are supposed to be governed by two pieces of legislation: the Municipal and District Councils Act of 1969, and the Local Democratic Organs Act of 1980. These Acts give very wide powers, as well as responsibilities, to the Municipal Councils. Through them the municipalities are responsible for water supply, sanitation, street paving, drainage, solid waste management, street lighting, environmental matters, recreation, markets and abattoirs. They may also take grants, accept loans, and issue bonds, all with the approval of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (MLGRD). However, although the Municipal Councils possess wide powers, they are subject to a set of bye-laws which are archaic, and ought to be amended to suit modern requirements.

21.I.9 The Municipal Councils, in addition to being liable to the direct supervision of the MLGRAD, are required, by law, to follow the various policies of the Central Government. Often, therefore, there is an overlap of functions and authority, and much obfuscation.

21.I.10 Allied to the problem of administrative and managerial responsibility, is the fact that the Municipal councils themselves are either under-staffed, or possess staff of relatively poor quality.

21.I.11 On top of all this, they are, in general, severely under-funded. They are supposed to obtain the financial resources to undertake their manifold tasks through the collection of rates and taxes, rents, and a plethora of fees, and through subventions from the Central Government. However, the existing rates, taxes and fees are based on parameters which have been established a long time ago and are now woefully out-of-date, especially as they have not, over the years, taken account of inflation, increased property values, and, most important, greater demands on the cities' coffers. For example, while a not very successful attempt was made by the Georgetown municipality to revalue the property in Georgetown in the early 1990s, the other municipalities still use valuations which were undertaken in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

21.I.12 Moreover, many properties, in addition to those which are currently under-valued, have never even been recorded. No taxes of any kind are therefore received from their owners.

21.I.13 Government subventions to the Municipalities are also derisively low. In addition, there appears to be no system on which transfers are made from the Government to the Municipalities. For example, in 1997, the last year for which relevant statistics are available, the transactions were as follows:–

	Georgetown	Linden	New Amsterdam	Corriverton	Rose Hall	Anna Regina
Transfer from Government (US\$'000)	118.5	66.7	74.1	44.4	51.8	51.8
Population ('000)	177.9	33.5	21.7	15.7	8.0	2.6

21.I.14 The disparity in the population/subventions ratios is most evident. Moreover, even though Government transfers were in every case the major source of funding, the amounts that were ultimately transferred were almost never assured before the actual subvention was made. This, of course, seriously inhibits any sort of planning and meaningful budgeting. Indeed, the amounts transferred often appear to be subjectively assessed and, more reprehensibly, to be linked to the political configuration of the members of the municipalities.

21.I.15 There is no fixed procedure for evaluating requests for funding. Often it appears that resources are allocated on an *ad hoc* basis, or on perceptions of the council's ability to spend in areas which meet the central government's, not the municipality's, criteria and priorities.

21.I.16 The amount of subvention given by the Central Government, when added to the revenues collected by the cities and town councils, is insufficient to provide for the efficient financing of municipalities.

21.I.17 The members of the town councils are elected under a system of proportional representation, from a slate presented by the leaders of political parties, and not on the basis of constituencies. There is therefore very little, if any, organic and political connection between a councillor and a particular part of the city. No one seems to be accountable to any group of voters. Not surprisingly, therefore, the quality of the services provided by the councillors is very often poor, even when the low level of funding is taken into account.

21.I.18 Much of the work that is performed by the municipalities is undertaken by the staff of the municipality itself, even though an increasing amount of their services is now being provided by contractors. This latter procedure is, however, the exception rather than the norm.

21.I.19 In addition to the poor hygienic conditions which have already been mentioned, water supplies in the urban areas are sub-standard, the treatment of sewage inadequate, and there is a plentiful number of stagnant pools of water that encourage the breeding of mosquitoes.

21.I.20 These deficiencies and inadequacies are manifested in low levels of public health, insufficient recreational facilities for children, juvenile delinquency, and higher levels of crime than for other areas of the country.

21.I.21 The Central Housing and Planning Authority is the principal element in the local physical and planning system. It is the hub with direct functional linkages with Regional Democratic Councils, local authorities, and the Central Board of Health. It also liaises closely with those statutory authorities which supply such urban services as electricity and water, and maintain the sewerage system.

21.I.22 In most towns, development seems to be haphazard and unplanned. While there are zoning regulations, these are honoured more in the breach than in the observance. Everywhere, in all the towns, business places, vehicle repair shops, and manufacturing enterprises are permitted to grow up, like Topsy, alongside and within districts that have been zoned for residential occupation alone.

21.I.23 There is much illegal occupation of land. Indeed, so-called "squatting" areas abound mainly on the outskirts of the towns. Apart from being unseemly, they tend to contaminate the areas in which they are sited, because of a multitude of poor hygienic practices and conditions, and because of the intricate drainage and irrigation systems which service the coastal areas of Guyana.

21.II Issues and Constraints

21.II.1 The basic issues and constraints to urban development in Guyana are financial, administrative, and managerial. Because of the low levels of rates and taxes that are collected, because of the low bases for these rates and taxes, and because Government subventions bear no relationship to the needs of the urban areas, the amounts available to the municipalities for their mere existence are always most inadequate.

21.II.2 Also, mainly because the municipalities cannot afford to pay attractive salaries, they are unable to hire the most competent persons. As a result they spend even the pittance which they collect and receive, most ineffectively. Moreover, because the councillors are elected from lists, they do not, as has been pointed out, have any allegiance to, and responsibility for, any particular district. As a consequence, often the whole municipality is neglected. Ways must therefore be found to widen and deepen the revenue base; ensure that funding from the central government is both adequate and reliable; and make certain that individual councillors are accountable to specific districts.

21.II.3 Very little urban planning is being undertaken. Whatever planning is being done does neither attempt cohesively to establish goals and objectives at a national level, nor to link their attainment with economic and financial policies. In practice, sectoral strategies have been formulated in isolation, with little attempt being

made to integrate them into national strategies, and with little consideration as to how the plans are to be implemented, whether through communities, the private sector, the municipality, or even the government.

21.II.4 The expanded boundaries of the city of Georgetown and other municipalities have placed severe strains and pressures on their drainage systems. In addition to the heavy siltation of canals and the dumping of refuse, the lack of *maintenance* of the sea and river defences, indeed of the entire drainage system, is the main cause of poor drainage of the cities.

21.II.5 The Sewerage system in Georgetown was established nearly seventy years ago, and has not been extended. It cannot therefore now cope with the demands of a much greater Georgetown, and is over-loaded. In addition, it is in a state of disrepair. In other words, it needs both extending, repairing and modernising.

21.II.6 The sewerage outfall at the mouth of the Demerara River is too close to land, and must be extended several more kilometres out to sea.

21.II.7 Septic tanks without leaching beds and pit latrines are malfunctioning and discharging effluents into adjacent drainage canals and ditches, in many parts of the extended city and are fast becoming a great health hazard.

21.II.8 All the cities have inadequate telephone services, poor supplies of electricity, and unreliable supplies of water.

21.II.9 Waste disposal and refuse collection in urban centres has reached a critical situation as large amounts of waste are being dumped outside the identified sites, creating nuisance and health hazards to the people. Municipalities are unable to maintain and clear the areas under their control due to a lack of manpower and a shortage of garbage trucks. The incinerator in Georgetown, which is very old, does not have the capacity to burn the very large quantities of refuse that is thrown up in the city every day. Therefore, the municipalities have to resort to dump sites for disposal and are finding difficulties in identifying new sites away from residential areas, that are economical. New systems to dispose of the very large volumes of refuse must be developed as economic ventures so that this service could be self-financed.

21.II.10 For the reasons listed above (inadequate finances, unqualified staff, and ineffective management) all classes of services that are provided by the municipalities have considerably deteriorated. Most important is the lack of direction to support effective and efficient services. To improve, organise, maintain, develop and sustain a high standard of environmental development (e.g., adequate and well-maintained drainage, roads, recreational facilities, markets, abattoirs, day care centres, waste disposal, sanitation), there must be greater attention from the municipalities.

21.II.11 The irresponsible behavioural traits of the municipalities have impacted heavily on the urban societies of Guyana, and have transferred themselves to the communities, into the negative attitudes of some youths as they mature into adulthood. This has resulted in an increased incidence of crime, a disregard for law and order, and a lack of a sense of responsibility for other members of the community.

21.II.12 The severity of urban sprawl has a greater effect within the boundaries of Georgetown, although it also affects other urban centres, to a lesser degree. Containment will be very difficult because education, employment, and government administrative facilities are all in the capital city, where most of the commerce and industries are located. However, Georgetown's 'advantages' in these matters are in many respects only a mirage. It will therefore be necessary to develop the other towns and rural areas of the country, if Guyana's overall quality of life will be enhanced.

21.II.13 Unauthorised development on the fringes of the growing urban area violates sanitation and environmental regulations, planned development, and exerts severe pressure on existing infrastructure and related services. As a result, the population becomes more susceptible to disease and flooding as uncontrolled housing development escalates. In addition, the sprawl will eventually increase daily transport times for most residents.

21.II.14 High costs of materials, labour and machinery are the major constraints that restrict infrastructural development and the execution of other development work. Larceny and the deliberate damage of materials and equipment contribute to the financial burden of municipalities, government, and other related agencies.

21.II.15 A major factor which impedes better performance are the poor working conditions found in the government agencies (malfunctioning equipment, cramped office space, poor lighting, sanitation and telephone services, etc.). In addition, many agencies, – Neighbourhood Democratic Councils, regions, municipalities, GUYWA, GSWC, GPL, CH&PA, the Central Board of Health, etc. – operate in isolation, within their own institutional framework, and do not benefit from the synergies which ought to exist in a rational system. Indeed, because in many instances their functions and responsibilities overlap, they hinder development by their very presence.

21.II.16 The lack of full-time paid mayors and deputy mayors, chairmen and vice-chairmen of Neighbourhood Democratic Councils, also affects levels of participation and involvement for effective coordinated efforts to improve urban development.

21.II.17 Until the signing of an agreement with the Inter-American Development Bank very little capital was available to improve and adequately maintain infrastructure. Development has therefore been heavily constrained due to years of economic crises in the public sector, which resulted in the increased migration of skilled manpower. A high poverty ratio and a still high unemployment rate are elements of concern for municipalities, local government, and other institutions, as they affect the economic base of the urban centres.

21.II.18 Some of the constraints in the water area are:

- parts of the water and sewerage system date back to the late 19th century;
- adequate investment to meet increasing operational and maintenance costs not been available over the last two decades;
- the inability to provide satisfactory remuneration for senior employees is having a negative impact on the ability of the organisation to improve operations;
- the poor structural conditions of most of the water distribution network, lead to water losses of up to 75 percent of total production;
- the poor operation of the sewerage system due to pumps being out of service, broken sewers, and blocked lines, sometimes makes the cities virtually unlivable;
- many of the electrical and mechanical plants are in very poor condition; and
- there are too many undefined policies and goals for the system, with unclear strategic directions; and
- Georgetown has expanded beyond its boundaries, eroding even its greenbelt zone around the city. Even some of the open spaces within the city and towns are now being used for residential development. This trend has to be stopped.

21.III SECTORAL OBJECTIVES

21.III.1 The overriding objective is to make Georgetown and other cities more habitable places in the 21st century, meeting their citizens' requirements for improved access to basic services and amenities, and fulfilling their physical potential to be unique and attractive places in which to live and work and take recreation.

21.III.2 More specifically the objectives are as follows:

- (i) To improve, upgrade and sustain urban infrastructure.
- (ii) To improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of municipal management and services
- (iii) To improve the financial status of the municipalities.
- (iv) To improve the capabilities of the staff of municipalities.
- (v) To facilitate greater interagency coordination, especially as between infrastructure agencies and municipalities.
- (vi) To embark on an environmental education programme aimed at sensitising the population about urban development and related issues.
- (vii) To reduce the level of unauthorised development and to regularise informal development.
- (viii) To promote higher-density development and re-establish a greenbelt around Georgetown with recreational facilities.
- (ix) To develop an improved system for managing the city's canals and draining areas of water accumulation.
- (x) To zone Georgetown in a way that protects residents from noxious activities and also protects its priceless architectural heritage.

21.IV THE STRATEGY

21.IV.1 The financial base of municipalities and local authorities will be broadened and strengthened through the revaluation of properties and road licenses, revenues, improved systems of rate collection and through municipalities being granted a percentage of the road licenses and other such revenues being collected by the Central Government.

21.IV.2 The authority to make valuations in urban areas in the future will be vested in the six municipalities.

21.IV.3 Special training courses in property evaluation will be conducted in Guyana for these municipalities. In addition, the better students will be sent abroad for further training, and on study tours to observe the valuation methods that are used in other places.

21.IV.4 Higher rates and taxes will be charged for all property in municipal areas. These new rates will not be imposed in one fell swoop, but will be increased gradually over a period of five years. Thereafter they will

be raised at stated periods of time.

21.IV.5 The municipalities will begin to contract out the task of rate collection, with commissions paid in relation to the amounts collected.

21.IV.6 Automatic grants at a rate to be decided by the Central Government and the Municipalities, and then inscribed in a law will be distributed annually to municipalities and NDCs in proportion to their respective populations.

21.IV.7 Income generating activities for urban centres will be initiated. Such activities will include surcharging heavy trucks that use the road networks of the municipalities; selling fertile top soil to farmers in areas of poor soil, for agricultural activities; and exporting sand and other products to local and overseas markets. These activities will be under the direction of professional managers appointed by the Council and all profits will be utilised to improve the general welfare of the towns.

21.IV.8 Municipalities will introduce road taxes on heavy vehicles that utilise the roads of the inner cities.

21.IV.9 To curtail urban sprawl a three-pronged strategy will be put in place: (i) State lands will be allocated to a greenbelt and freehold land will be purchased for that purpose wherever necessary, (ii) measures will be adopted to encourage higher-density housing for the middle class, and (iii) secondary centres will be established beyond the greenbelt with adequate roadways cutting through the greenbelt to the city.

21.IV.10 The following criteria will be used in identifying the proposed secondary centres: population concentration; levels of existing services and facilities; distance from existing urban centres; communication linkages; and functional, economic, and logistic characteristics. Based on these criteria, the following areas will be considered Mahaica, Mahaicony, Rosignol, Lethem, Soesdyke, Parika, Supernaam, Grove, Charity, Bartica, Vreed-en-Hoop. These secondary centres already have access to resources such as waterways for river transport, roads, airstrips, etc.

21.IV.11 With the development of those secondary centres that already have the prerequisites of a town (road networks, markets, education and health facilities, etc.), pressure on the already overloaded systems will be minimised. Development of the infrastructure in these centres and provision of incentives will encourage investors to establish businesses that would create employment for the residents.

21.IV.12 A physical development plan will be prepared for the greenbelt policy and estimates will be made of the required amounts of State land and the cost of acquiring the necessary freehold land.

21.IV.13 A greater density of urban settlement will be created by encouraging the private sector to construct duplexes and condominiums for sale to the middle class. This Strategy is developed more fully in the chapter on Housing. This population group would be the main target group that would need to be persuaded over time to shift its preferences (in part) away from single-family dwellings and towards structures of greater population density. Higher density dwellings will have the further advantage of generating more tax revenues per acre than the current pattern of settlement does.

21.IV.14 In addition, high density business offices will be established. This will help to release more individual homes for residential purposes.

21.IV.15 Garbage collection in all municipalities will be contracted out, with a special system of incentives for cleaning up loose paper and garbage as well as that which is deposited in designated collection points.

21.IV.16 New landfill sites will be identified taking care to avoid seepage into groundwater supplies and to observe other environmental requisites.

21.IV.17 Urban zoning regulations will be updated and their enforcement provisions strengthened.

21.IV.18 Special zoning provisions will be made for Georgetown's architectural heritage, ensuring that buildings constructed or rehabilitated conform to the historical architectural style. Existing buildings that do not conform architecturally need to be required to put on specified kinds of wood facing to bring them into approximate conformance.

21.IV.19 Standard criteria will be adopted in order to instal comparable and uniform methods of property tax assessment.

21.IV.20 A computer mass appraisal (CAMA) system will be selected and adapted for property tax assessment.

21.IV.21 Staff will be trained in data collection and entry tasks; and in mass appraisal methods.

21.IV.22 In all six municipalities, steps will be taken, with the assistance of an international lending agency, to rehabilitate and maintain all the municipal roads and drainage networks, reconstruct commercial facilities such as markets, abattoirs and stellingen, as well as rehabilitate street lighting systems, and upgrade municipal government facilities. All this will be done by 2005.

21.IV.23 In order to improve the drainage system in Georgetown the several sunken wrecks, which are now located at the mouth of the Demerara river, will be removed.

21.IV.24 "Pick-up" and "put-down" passenger points will be constructed at strategic places in all the towns in order to regulate the flow of traffic and to enhance the convenience of passengers. These points will be applicable to all mini-buses and other forms of public transport.

21.IV.25 The private sector will be encouraged to construct parking garages, particularly in Georgetown, by way of incentives and tax rebates.

21.IV.26 Municipalities will also lay down parking sites for private drivers, mini-buses and taxis. These will have to be paid for. Parking requirements will be strictly enforced. Parking metres will be put in place.

21.IV.27 The revised fees for the upgraded laws will be strictly enforced.

21.IV.28 All the avenues in Georgetown will be upgraded and refurbished, along the lines of the Camp Street rehabilitation scheme. This will be the combined effort of the central government, the municipality, and the communities who live along the roads.

21.IV.29 The policing arm of the municipalities will be strengthened in order to enable them to deal specifically with all aspects of municipal crime.

21.IV.30 For the municipalities the system of proportional representation, in which councillors are elected from lists supplied by party leaders, will be changed to a first-past-the-post constituency system, in which prospective councillors stand for election in various "wards" or "constituencies".

CHAPTER 22

LAND

22.1 BASIC FEATURES OF THE SECTOR

22.1.1 There is no land–use policy in Guyana. Although over the years, several attempts have been made to devise comprehensive land capacity classifications for the country, and to utilise these as the basis for land zoning and land allocation, the process is far from complete. As a result, land–use throughout the country is haphazard, unplanned and wasteful.

22.1.2 The problems that are inherent in the absence of a land–use policy and land–use plans are compounded by the complexity of our land tenure system. We have already referred to the special circumstances of GUYSUCO's land holdings. In addition to this, there are the two following types:–

(i) Publicly owned lands that comprise State Lands and Government Lands. State Lands, formerly called Crown Lands, are controlled by the Commissioner of Lands and Surveys. However, the Guyana Forestry Commission, the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, and the Lands and Surveys Department administer land that is utilised for forestry, mining, and agriculture, respectively. Each of these three Government agencies may issue titles for different purposes over the same land space. Government lands are those purchased by, or granted to, the Government to be developed for general revenues, such as hospitals, schools, government administrative buildings, and land development schemes. State and Government Lands are approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, while under the existing legislative framework, Cabinet must approve the sale of State and Government Lands.

(ii) Freehold Private Lands are those lands that have been alienated from the State and which are held by private or corporate interests. Freehold land administration is carried out by the Deeds Registry under the Office of the Attorney General of the Supreme Court. There are two systems of land law and property recordings governing the private market, namely, the "transport index" based on Roman Dutch legal practices, and the "index of land transfer of title," that is, the Torrens System introduced in the early 1950s by the British. An owner of a transported property theoretically owns the land from the centre of the earth to the sky above subject to Government interests, e.g., airplanes flying overhead, minerals, etc. To effect a transport sale of property, proposed sales must be published in the Official Gazette for two weeks before the transaction. If no objections are filed, the transaction is allowed to go on. If timely objections are made, the matter is settled in court. Transported properties are found mainly in the cities. Nearly all of Georgetown's and New Amsterdam's properties are held under this system.

22.1.3 The Guyanese Government owns about 90 percent of the national territory. In coastal areas where most of the population is concentrated, roughly half of the farms are freehold properties. The distribution of lands is characterised by the predominance of small farms of 5–15 acres each. This structure of distribution originated during the colonial period when both the size and number of plots that were allocated to former slaves and indentured workers were restricted. In the post colonial years the predominance of small farms has continued to be encouraged by Government policies that limit the size of plots that are leased or granted to individuals by the State to hypothetical minima that could support a family.

22.1.4 For purposes of defining policies for this National Development Strategy, it is necessary to distinguish several classes of interest in land. These are: (a) *holders of State leases* who are the legal occupants and possess lease documents that are issued by the Land and Surveys Department; (b) *sub-lessees of State leases* who rent lands from principal lessees. Under the present lease arrangements, they are considered illegal occupants of State lands; (c) *unregularised occupants of State Lands*: those who have applied for lands they occupy while waiting on the applications to be approved; (d) *squatters on State Lands* who are illegal occupants of State Lands, not including sublessees; (e) *owners of freehold lands*: those who have purchased

from the State or previous holders by way of transport or certificate of title; (f) *renters of freehold lands*: those who rent under private arrangements from freeholders, both formally and informally; (g) *unregularised occupants of freehold lands*: those who have claims to the lands they occupy but whose claims are not legally documented. This is often the case on old freehold estates that have been subdivided but for which individual titles have not been issued; (h) *squatters on freehold lands*: illegal occupants of privately owned lands; (i) *indigenous communities*: Amerindian communities throughout Guyana, recognised as Amerindian Districts, Areas and Villages; (j) *the sugar industry*: meaning GUYSUICO and inclusive estates; (k) *prospective investors*: those who seek to possess lands for agricultural or other purposes; and (l) *the landless*, may be classified as citizens of the lower income bracket, desirous of obtaining land for agriculture but who are deterred by cost factors, the laborious process and other associated arrangements.

22.II ISSUES AND CONSTRAINTS

22.II.1 Each of the categories of land holdings that have been listed in the previous section of this Chapter embraces a number of issues and constraints in terms of access to lands, the land market, and especially security of tenure. This has led, among other things, to a thriving informal land market, which is beneficial to many absentee land holders, either of freehold or leases, from which the Government loses a considerable amount of revenue that could have been applied to improving land administration, other related services, and infrastructures. It is imperative that these issues be dealt with promptly in order to ensure increase agricultural productivity.

22.II.2 The large number of agencies and sub-agencies that are concerned with the allocation of land and the collection of rents and fees from the plethora of land types has led to accusations of unfairness, bribery and corruption. What is certain is that this high number of government organisations lead to inefficiencies. The whole system of land administration therefore needs to be rationalised.

22.II.3 Land Selection Committees have been established and authorized to approve or deny applications for leases of state land. Their procedures are inefficient because of the absence of clear-cut criteria for approval or denial of applications; the time-consuming and bureaucratic process of decision-making involving the Regional Democratic Council, in addition to the district and regional land selection committees; and the abuse of power by members of the land selection committees at both the district and regional levels.

22.II.4 There exist over 2,000 provisional leases, waiting for surveys to be done before their final determination. Land in this circumstance cannot be used as collateral for production financing, so the 'provisional' lessee is prevented from investing as he or she desires in the land occupied. This obviously impedes agricultural development. This situation also increases the possibility of boundary disputes, since formal boundaries are never demarcated. The Lands and Surveys Department is not now in a position to deal with disputes adequately, because of human resources limitations and the lack of support from an internal legal unit.

22.II.5 The unattractive conditions of State leases include: the *duration* of leases, which is currently twenty-five (25) years. There is great difficulty in obtaining production financing, since most banks do not accept a lease of 25 years as collateral; *transferability and use for collateral*: "The lessee shall not transfer or mortgage his interests in the lands occupied in this lease or any part thereof except in accordance with the provisions of the State lands regulations." This provision also limits the use of leases as collateral; and *subleasing*: "The lessee shall not sublet or give possession of the land thereby leased or any part thereof." This provision creates major difficulties for the lessees in cases of illness or economic difficulty and limits their ability to utilise the land to its maximum capacity and accumulate capital. The landlord/tenant relationship is not recognised. Sublessees are denied access to formal financing for investment in agriculture

since their tenure is not recognised. The provisions also limit long term investments by farmers of leased land who have tilled the same plot of land for a number of years, but are restrained from making significant capital investments for fear of the termination of a lease or sublease, and the lack of security over the long run.

22.II.6 The low rents paid by lessees of State lands directly impact on fiscal revenues and the quality and efficiency of administration and management of State lands. This situation gives rise, among other things, to land speculation and has the effect of subsidising those who are least in need of subsidies, e.g., large landholders, who sublease the land at market rates. Land, like any other input of production, should be priced as close as possible to its market value. If not, the resource will be underutilised or misused. Increased land rents would also serve as a deterrent to land speculation and would, in fact, encourage intensive land use and reduce the amount of idle lands. Ultimately, land rents would provide funds for agricultural research and development and for funding the Land and Surveys Commission towards an efficient and effective agricultural land administration and sustainable land resource development.

22.II.7 Unregularised occupants also include those who have inherited a lease or have had the original lease transferred to them without the necessary documentation, due to the time-consuming process of applying to Lands and Surveys for approval or permission to do so; as well as those whose leases have expired and have not bothered to renew it but still occupy the land.

22.II.8 The illegal occupation of State lands for agriculture and other purposes, especially housing, has increased over the last decade or so. Much of the land squatted on for housing is prime agricultural land for both cultivation and grazing. Many persons resort to squatting for agriculture as a result of slow administrative procedures for granting land. This situation thrives due to a lack of enforcement mechanisms at the Lands and Surveys Department.

22.II.9 The Land and Surveys Commission has been unable to discharge its statutory functions effectively, since under this system the responsibility for routine cadastral surveying and the administration of State lands, was transferred to the Regional Democratic Councils. This has had a profoundly negative impact on the national system for administering Government leases. The absence of an efficient communication system between regions and with head office adds to the inefficient regional service.

22.II.10 There is a tremendous backlog of surveys to be done, because of the inability of the Lands and Surveys Department to perform parcel surveys in support of agriculture leases. In addition, there are outdated cadastral index maps that undermine the reliability and integrity of the records, resulting in uncertainty of land ownership.

22.II.11 As has been emphasized the Registrar of Deeds under the direction of the Attorney General is responsible for the registration of all transactions involving freehold land: buying and selling, creation and cancellation of mortgages, encumbrances, private leases, use rights, etc. It also records intellectual property and functions as a commercial registry. It is considered that both land and commercial affairs are too much for the current registry to deal with adequately, as persons wishing to transact property business at the registry compete for attention with those who are there for commercial affairs.

22.II.12 As has been pointed out, in order to effect a transport (sale) of property, proposed sales must be published in the official Gazette for two weeks before the transaction. If no objections are filed, the transaction is allowed to go on. If timely objections are made, the matter is settled in court. Such a requirement for all transactions is burdensome, expensive and time consuming. In principle, this process could be completed in about the three months that would be necessary for publishing requirements and file review. However, transactions can take a year or much longer, due to institutional and human resource related inefficiencies.

22.II.13 The Torrens System relies heavily on surveyors to demarcate the land into plots. Over the last 15 to 20 years surveying has become problematic. The survey process has greatly slowed and there is little money in the system to pay surveyors and few are willing to work at the rates the Government pays. The decentralisation of survey functions as a result of regionalisation has also contributed to the deterioration of the process of registration of freehold property, since this also requires cadastral surveys.

22.II.14 Freehold lands held under the "transport" and "certificate of title" systems, are administered by the Deeds Registry. Although both yield a secure title to land, they are both subject to procedural problems due to the inefficiencies in various areas of the Deeds Registry, the most important of which are poor data handling systems, the inadequacy of funding, and unqualified personnel.

22.II.15 There is evidence of significant incidences of underutilised freehold lands due to a lack of sufficient stimulation and incentives for agriculture production; the poor state of maintenance of the drainage and irrigation system in many areas; absentee landlords, who either have gone overseas or have neglected the land for other, possibly urban, careers; and restrictive procedures for land rental, which discourage renting out land that the owner cannot utilise.

22.II.16 The complications in trying to rent or lease out freehold land are particularly vexing. Some freehold lands are left idle or are underutilised, leading to the unavailability of good land for agriculture investment, directly as a result of conditions stipulated by the "Rice Farmers Security of Tenure Act" which serve as severe deterrents to rental.

22.II.17 Squatters who have had sole and undisturbed adverse possession of a tract of land for twelve years and more, have the right under prescriptive title, to obtain title to the said land. As a transport deed a new title is passed in the squatter's name; in the case of registered lands, an application is made for a declaration of title. This involves a declaration being published in the Gazette and press; after a period of twelve months the title is passed once there is no objection. The problem lies with the inability of the Deeds Registry to expedite such matters swiftly. As it stands now, a squatter may wait for years before he is granted prescriptive title.

22.II.18 Over time, owing to the workings of legacies, some land holdings have become very fragmented. A peculiar problem has arisen in that the form of agricultural plots has become very long and narrow, in order to assure that each plot retained access to irrigation and drainage canals. In Essequibo some plots are known to have dimensions of 12 feet wide by more than 9,200 feet deep, while in Berbice the extreme dimensions are 12 feet by more than 12,000 feet. Such distorted shapes are highly unsuitable for cultivation.

22.II.19 Unclear or unmarked boundaries of indigenous settlements have led to encroachment from loggers and miners and a general sense of insecurity regarding rights and ownership of the Amerindian peoples.

22.II.20 Underutilised land resources under indigenous holdings are sometimes exploited by others (e.g., foreign investors), and all benefits and incomes they produce elude the community and its peoples, resulting in growing feelings of exploitation and mistrust for the Government.

22.II.21 GUYUSUCO holds a large percentage of coastal lands; although much of it is cultivated a portion has been left idle for some time. This has created a situation where there is idle land that is not available to those who might put it to productive use.

22.II.22 Many prospective investors interested in acquiring portions of land for agriculture, aquaculture and other pursuits are often deterred by unavailability of data regarding the particular parcel of land and the process they are forced to pursue to acquire the land needed. Given the need to promote foreign and local investment, clear and transparent procedures regarding the application and granting of leases should be adopted.

22.II.23 More than eight thousand farm families possess less than ten acres of land with an average holding of two acres in that group. This clearly is an infrasubsistence level of land holding, and very likely it is the major explanation for the poverty found in rural areas. Indeed, because a holding for the rural non-poor is about 26 acres, it might be argued that this disparity in access to land is a contributing factor to rural poverty. Undeniably, the fundamental fact is that having larger farms means having more income. Everything else being equal, too many rural families have too small a land base to rise above poverty.

22.II.24 No central data base system exists for the storage, analysis, management and retrieval of data on title and tenure conditions. There is also inadequate data on existing land-use, soil type, temperature, rainfall, slope, land tenure, indigenous settlements, physical infrastructure, social infrastructure and population, etc. The lack of data hinders the planning and implementation of a land-use plan and subsequent development projects, as well as individual choices and decisions in land-use for agricultural and other purposes.

22.II.25 The absence of a clear strategy for the opening of new agricultural lands puts a greater demand on already limited lands with the necessary infrastructure.

22.II.26 There is no consistency between the acreage restrictions in land development schemes and the lack of such restrictions on the acreage of land that may be leased outside them.

22.II.27 The absence of environmental regulations on the occupation and utilisation of the land resource, can lead to environmental degradation of the land resource through deforestation, pollution from waste disposal etc.

22.II.28 The issues of land distribution, in general, and of ancestral lands, in particular, are of extreme importance in Guyana. Indeed, they are considered by many to be as potentially explosive as the racial problem. Strategies for the settlement of the claims of Amerindians for land titles and extended land rights have been put forward in Chapter 24, which is devoted to Amerindians. However, somewhat similar claims have been put forward by Guyanese of African origin who assert that they have a unique right to be provided with the lands which their ancestors bought and occupied in the years immediately after the abolition of slavery, but which they afterwards lost. It is necessary that these claims be examined and conciliatory mechanisms be established to arrive at an equitable solution to this matter, within the context of the viability of Guyana, and the legitimate desires of all the citizens of the country.

22.III SECTORAL OBJECTIVES

The principal broad objectives for land policy are:

22.III.1 To improve the efficiency with which land resources are utilised in production.

22.III.2 To provide increased access to land on the part of landless rural and urban families and farming families with limited acreages.

22.III.3 To rationalise the land selection process and committees, in order to ensure that applications are reviewed objectively and acted upon expeditiously.

– To eliminate the backlog of provisional leases.

– **To improve lease arrangements towards providing greater security of tenure.**

- To improve access to production financing for agricultural investments.
- To improve the transferability of leased land and its use as collateral.
- To extend security of tenure to sub-lessees of State Lands.
- To accelerate the process of conversion to freehold.
- To improve the process by which the public gains access to State and Government lands by way of efficient lease administration by the Land and Surveys Commission.
- To make more effective the management of Guyana's State land resources by putting in place a proper lease management system, with better documentation, and an effective system for collecting lease rentals.
- To regularise the occupancy of State and freehold lands as promptly as possible.
- To eliminate and prevent squatting on agricultural lands, in part by providing better access to land for poor families and in part by improving the usability of the rental instrument.
- To re-centralise the Land and Surveys Commission functions towards more efficient land administration.
- To make more timely surveys and improve the quality and coverage of data on land registration and land characteristics, and to modernise data management systems.
- To rationalise and modernise the responsibilities of the Deeds Registry and improve its functioning.
- To improve renting conditions of freehold lands, and so make more agricultural land available and increase the average intensity of its use.
- To stimulate and increase the productive use of freehold lands while improving the contribution of such lands to national revenues.
- To eliminate and prevent squatting on such lands.
- To establish clear Amerindian District boundaries both on the ground and in maps.
- **To make available the sugar industry's unutilised land for agriculture and other development.**
- To improve access to State lands for agriculture, aquaculture and other development.
- To provide equal opportunity and improved access to lands for the gainful employment of the landless.
- To improve the coordination and communication among all related institutions, in order to attain improved land utilization.
- To improve the functioning of each institution responsible for land allocation and administration.
- To clarify national land policy, at a broad level in this Strategy and more specifically in subsequent documents.
- To improve the collection, storage, retrieval and dissemination of data nationally.

- To acquire the land use and land capability data necessary for investment.
- To develop new lands that have the potential for sustaining economic activities, clarifying intentions and programmes in this regard.
- To provide economic sized land holdings for all farmers.
- To promote the sustainable use of land for agriculture and other purposes by continuous environmental impact assessments.

22.IV THE STRATEGY

22.IV.1 **The selection of lessees for lease on state lands shall be made using clear established criteria, such as the applicant's ability to work the land, the amount of land already in the applicant's possession, the size of his family, etc. These criteria will be weighted. Reasons for decisions will be clearly spelled out and made available to all concerned, with timely appeal mechanisms in place to deal with queries.**

22.IV.2 **There is no need for the Regional Democratic Council to be involved in decision making since it has delegated to a district and regional land selection committees the authority to review applications, interview applicants and make recommendations before forwarding the application to the Lands and Surveys Department. In this light, the Regional Democratic Council will be omitted from the land selection process.**

22.IV.3 **The members of the land selection committees will be elected to office by the people of the district, and the regional committee will comprise elected members from each district committee. It is important that the composition of both committees reflects the people's choice. Regional committees will no longer review applications directly, but will rather review the functioning of the district committees and once a year issue a report containing observations and recommendations, if any, regarding the process of selection.**

22.IV.4 **For plots that are already surveyed, a time limit of 20 days will be established for review of each application by the district committee and 20 additional days by the L&SD. If no decision is made within those periods, it will be construed as automatic approval of the application at the respective level. Applications will be dated upon submission at each level, and the date will be acknowledged for the applicant in writing. If the 20 days pass with no explicit decision, the recording secretary at the respective level will be required to write "application approved by reason of no decision before the deadline" on the application, enter the corresponding date, and provide a copy to the applicant.**

22.IV.5 **The responsibility of carrying out field inspections for application purposes will be delegated to the Districts' land selection committee, since they are familiar with their specific area. The land selection committee will include in its recommendation report, the present status of the land in question.**

22.IV.6 **The Land and Surveys Commission will embark on a special project to eliminate the existing backlog of surveys. This will involve contracting out the surveys that need to be done, and hiring temporary staff, as technical assistants and others, to do the necessary clerical work. *Donor agencies will be asked to fund this project.* Funds will then be recovered over a period of time from the lessees who will be obligated to pay for their surveys.**

22.IV.7 **A new standard agricultural lease will be formulated. This will include the following provisions:**

- **Lease terms of 99 or 999 years compared with the present 25-year limit.**

- **The ability of lessees to transfer leases freely and fully after ten (10) years of beneficial occupancy, without requiring administrative approval. The parties involved would, however, be obliged to register the transfer for accurate record keeping.**
- **The ability to use leased land as collateral without seeking approval from Lands and Surveys as is now the case. Lessees will, however, be required to register the mortgage with Lands and Surveys.**
- The ability to sublet in full and in part any portion of the land that has been leased, without the consent or approval of the lessor, provided that the sublease is pursuant to a written instrument filed with the Commissioner, in accordance with regulations promulgated from time to time. The lessee will then be obligated to inform the Lands and Surveys Department of such transaction to allow for accurate record keeping. This is administratively simple and effectively regularises the *de facto* position.
- **Lessees who have beneficially occupied the same plot of land for a period of more than fifteen (15) years, will be allowed on conclusion of the leasehold to convert to freehold consistent with established freehold criteria.**

22.IV.8 The new policy for managing leases on State lands mandates the introduction of market valued land rents, based upon relatively few aggregate categories of land, which should be determined by the land's capability, its proximity to transportation and the adequacy of its drainage and irrigation. Few categories will be defined to keep administration of the system as simple as possible and to avoid an upsurge of disputes over land classifications. The method of determining rents will include: an assessed market value based on surveys of price of comparable freehold lands; an administration cost related to cost incurred by the Government in the administration process; and an amortisation cost, to recover monies spent on improvements to the land. The rents need to be reviewed and adjusted annually to ensure they are as close as possible to real market values.

22.IV.9 Special rent provisions will be made for the rural poor (defined as families with incomes below the prevailing poverty line). These rentals will also be subject to annual adjustments.

22.IV.10 The current status of each lease will be investigated and the findings recorded in a computerised lease management system. This system needs to be compatible, permitting a network with all other related data systems, e.g., land register at Deeds Registry, etc. It may be seen as forming part of a multipurpose land information system. Such a system with the data in place will serve as a base for the billing by notice and the collection of rents. A separate unit needs to be formed within the L&SD to deal specifically with billing, collection and accounting of lease fees. This unit needs the support of a legal unit to help with cases involving defaulters. If the unit is not able to make significant progress within a year, then collection of lease fees will be contracted out to private agencies, on a commission basis.

22.IV.11 The Lands and Surveys Department will embark on a special project involving the inventory of occupancy, specifically to identify unregularised occupants with the intention of regularising their occupancy (granting or renewing leases) once their occupancy can be supported. The need for this will be avoided in the future by implementing the improved procedures through which the public gains access to State lands.

22.IV.12 Given the existing problem of housing and the trend to regularise the process, squatters on State lands that show marginal or no agriculture capability should be regularised into a formal housing scheme. Should the lands be of good agriculture quality (be it for cultivation or grazing), squatters should be removed on legal grounds.

22.IV.13 However, being sensitive to the housing crisis, this process should be done after housing areas are identified and made available, specifically to existing squatters. The land involved should then be made available for agricultural leases. It is also necessary that a legal unit be formed within the Lands and Surveys Department to deal appropriately with the legal aspects of removing squatters.

22.IV.14 The selection of citizens for land for housing will follow the same procedures set down for agricultural land.

22.IV.15 Land for housing will be granted free of charge to all those below the poverty line.

22.IV.16 The regional Lands and Surveys offices, will be reorganised and strengthened to carry out an efficient service throughout the country, regionally.

22.IV.17 The regional offices will be staffed with clerks and land rangers as necessary, to handle applications and inspections for applications, along with the district and regional land selection committees.

22.IV.18 The regional offices will be linked by a computer/telecommunication network. The importance of being able to relay rapidly data cannot be underestimated in this sector. With improved communication the Commissioner will be able to deploy statutory functions effectively, especially that of surveying.

22.IV.19 An accurate land register and cadastral maps will be established. Some of the information needed will have to be acquired from an inventory, to verify occupancy on the ground with the existing title records. The acquired data will then be recorded in a computerised land register system that would allow easy access, updating and the production of cadastral index maps.

22.IV.20 Other than the time required for judicial procedures, the time required for transactions under the "Transport System" will be reduced significantly. This will be done by creating a procedural system for receiving and processing transactions, grouped according to subject.

22.IV.21 The Deeds Registry will be established as a semi-autonomous body. Under this arrangement the Registry will be able to retain a portion of revenues generated by its services. Since many fees and charges are outdated, it is also necessary to revise and implement realistic charges for services, to put the institution on a financially sustainable basis. With available funds under a semi-autonomous arrangement, better wages and benefit packages will be offered to personnel. Entrance requirements will be raised from three subjects to five subjects. In-house training programmes will be offered in modern systems of property registry.

22.IV.22 The State will embark on a land registration process to regularise those who have legal claims to parcels of land but have no title to confirm this. The process by which this is done will be revised to ensure its efficiency, this would mean the revision of the Land Registry Act.

22.IV.23 An assessment of the status of all lands held by GUYSUOCO will be made to determine immediate and future needs, and to develop a programme for relocation of lands to other users.

22.IV.24 L&SD will start a central data base where information to guide prospective investors can be accessed, such as land capability maps. The process of applying for land will be improved and opportunities for funding or credit will be sought by providing full documentation on the land to banks.

22.IV.25 At the same time, Government will identify and open new frontiers for agriculture development. The necessary infrastructure can be made available through two schemes:

- i. Granting land to those capable of providing the necessary infrastructure on condition that a portion is released to small farmers without charge, except annual D&I maintenance fees paid to a users' group.
- ii. Government will carry out an institutional analysis of current land administration, including non-agricultural lands as well, eliminating existing overlaps and giving the responsibility to the institution most related to and involved with each function. Given the historical role as manager of the land resource, and that the Commissioner of Lands and Surveys is the custodian of all lands, the Lands and Surveys Department should be the final clearing house regarding land use.

22.IV.26 A communications network will be established, with each institution feeding data into their relative systems, which are then fed into a central system housed in the Lands and Surveys Department that would be accessed by all.

22.IV.27 The formulation and implementation of a National Plan on Land Use, based on present land use patterns and possible opportunities, are critical in this effort. This plan should take into consideration physical, environmental, economic, social, cultural and demographic factors from a Guyanese perspective.

22.IV.28 The national land use plan will utilise the concept of sustainability, to protect all lands, in this instance agricultural lands, and it will strive to make that concept operational in as many instances as possible. It will take the lead in defining sustainable land use practices.

22.IV.29 Environmental regulations will be incorporated into all leases or title conditions, regarding proper waste disposal, replanting, etc.

22.IV.30 Environmental impact assessments will be carried out for existing large-scale land uses (agriculture, effect of D&I on soil erosion) and they will be mandatory for any proposed land development scheme, before granting permission, and as a method of monitoring land use regards environmental degradation of the land resource.

22.IV.31 A special Parliamentary Committee will be established to examine, and make recommendations on, the distribution of land among the various races of the country. Although it will pay special attention to the claims for land which have been submitted by Amerindians and African Guyanese to the Constitution Reform Commission, the special Committee will also investigate any other submissions of other racial groups in the country.

CHAPTER 23

HOUSING

23.1 BASIC FEATURES

23.1.1 The housing situation in Guyana is desperate. There is strong evidence of insecure tenure and increasing levels of homelessness. Though Guyana's population growth rates have now become minimal, current housing needs still cannot be adequately met for the major part of the existing population.

23.1.2 An estimated 33 percent of the country's housing stock is over 30 years old, and most have not been properly maintained.

23.1.3 The country needs, at the minimum, the building of 5,200 housing units each year for at least the next ten years. This total is made up of 1,200 new household formations every year, and 4,000 units to replace deteriorating stocks and ease over-crowding.

23.1.4 About one-third of the new housing units are required in Georgetown alone, the other two-thirds being in demand in the country's other five towns, in semi-urban districts, and in a few rural areas.

23.1.5 Approximately 60 percent of the Guyanese population lives in their own homes; close to one quarter of households are renting; and the rest are occupied in rent-free accommodation.

23.1.6 The cost of building a house in Guyana is relatively high. It is high mainly because GUYSUCO and the Government together own about 90 percent of the available land around the towns on the coastal strip of the country. As a result of this virtual monopoly in land ownership, the cost of land is inordinately high, and the private sector is in great part inhibited from engaging meaningfully in house construction.

23.1.7 Another consequence of this preponderance of government land ownership is the fact that a not insignificant proportion (twenty percent) of the households in Guyana is forced to squat or illegally occupy government-owned lands.

23.1.8 Other factors contribute to the slow rate of house construction: inadequate funding in the housing section; moribund methods of transferring land titles; an extremely slow distribution and development process; and seemingly political interference in land distribution. In addition the Central Housing and Planning Authority, (CH&PA), the sole government executing agency for housing projects, is inadequately staffed, in both qualitative and quantitative terms. Indeed, it has been pointed out by one of the International Financial Institutions that the weakness of the CH&PA is a key target for both project investment and policy reform.

23.1.9 Between 1993 and 1998 the CH&PA allocated about 20,000 houselots, and it is estimated that in 1999 another 4,000 would have been distributed. This is an impressive performance. It cannot be emphasised too strongly, however, that what have been given out are not houses, but pieces of land on which it is meant that houses would be built. Moreover, little or no developmental work has been undertaken on many of the houselots, and few houses have been built on the lots that have been distributed. The exercise is more one of land divestment than of house construction.

23.1.10 At the beginning of 1999 there was a backlog of approximately 20,000 applications, dating back to 1993. And although an appreciable number of applications was processed during 1999, the increased number

of new applicants more than compensated for those processed. In other words, the quantum of the backlog remains virtually constant.

23.I.11 What is most reprehensible is the feeling in many parts of the country that the household selection process is still characterised by high degrees of opacity, ministerial interference, extreme elements of official discretion and, perhaps not surprisingly, by a great amount of social and political wrangling.

23.I.12 The current land distribution policies seem geared to favour low-income families with a minimum number of five children. It is obvious that such policies effectively exclude and act against young people and the unmarried. It also militates against marriages by younger couples because they cannot move into houses of their own. In addition, it promotes, albeit unwittingly, out-of-wedlock relationships, and contributes to a general sexual promiscuity.

23.I.13 A house costing G\$320,000 represents the most basic of standards; yet such a building would still be out of the reach of the average Guyanese income earner.

23.I.14 Other almost inevitable consequences of this failure of supply even to approach demand, are high house-lot and house prices, and high rents. Indeed, the selling prices of houses are, on average, about seven times annual household incomes, and monthly rents are from one-half to two-thirds average monthly earnings.

23.I.15 Ince Government owns the bulk of developable land in urban areas, serviced lands are scarce, prices are extremely high, and are affordable only to the elite.

23.I.16 Mortgage financing for middle and upper income households in Guyana is relatively easily available. However, it is often a daunting exercise for the low income classes to obtain loans for housing. This is so partly because there are very few specialised mortgage lenders in Guyana, and partly because of the complex of collateral conditions which the existing mortgage institutions require.

23.I.17 In the two most recent Household Income and Expenditure Surveys, food was clearly the dominant item of expenditure throughout the country. However, in Georgetown, housing was the next highest. It is important, therefore, that this sector be given high priority in the country's quest to eradicate poverty. In this regard, it should be noted that the salaried employee in both the public and private sectors is, apart from the seriously poor, the most affected in respect of housing.

23.I.18 There exists in Guyana a system of rent controls which contributes to the limiting of the supply of rental units, as they make property owners more reluctant to put their houses out for rent, and unwilling to maintain those that are rented.

23.II

ISSUES AND CONSTRAINTS

23.II.1 As has been demonstrated in the chapter on "Land" in this National Development Strategy, land law in Guyana is both archaic and complex. The issues which were discussed in respect of land for agriculture in that chapter apply with equal force to land that is to be used for housing. It is evident therefore that the measures which will be put in place in order to rationalise the transfer of agriculture land must also be used with respect to housing land. Indeed, the same institutions, and the same law officers and surveyors will be employed in order to speed up the transfer of titles.

23.II.2 Another stumbling block in respect of the administration of land for housing lies in the CH&PA. As pointed out earlier, this institution is not only short of staff but many of the personnel who are employed by the Authority do not possess the qualifications that they need to perform their tasks effectively. Moreover, the activities of the Authority need to be more decentralised, and the functions of various categories of staff more clearly described and delineated. In the recent past, the CH&PA did not have at its disposal certain pieces of vital information such as the number of housing lots it had developed, their location, and the amounts of money paid to, and owed to them. This list is not exhaustive, but is sufficiently long to indicate the seriousness of the problem. The information is now being collected, but has not as yet been put on computers.

23.II.3 There is neither a tradition of proactive planning, nor of integrating planning by the CH&PA into national plans, nor of conducting feasibility studies for urban infrastructural projects, nor of developing implementation programmes, in addition to the plans themselves.

23.II.4 As an international report has stated "massive low/moderate-income home lending is a specialised business for which Guyana's mortgage lenders – who have changed little in 30 years – are currently unprepared and is likely to cause great problems for them." Special training processes for bank managers and employees ought to be undertaken in these areas. In addition, the possibility of establishing a special house mortgaging bank, or a special window in a general development bank, ought to be explored.

23.II.5 The lack of private land markets, combined with the absence of adequate mortgage facilities in commercial banks, limits the possibilities of the private sector to play a greater role in assisting in solving the housing shortage. In general, the current policy framework has not sufficiently encouraged the private sector in this direction. Incentives such as the allocation of State lands, and the enhancement of tax incentives in construction activities, should be used to attract private investment in housing.

23.II.6 Moreover, transaction and administrative costs for mortgages to low-income borrowers appear to have risen considerably and are now very high in relation to the costs of other types of debt investment.

23.II.7 Furthermore, the relatively high bank interest rates mitigate against would-be homeowners, by making monthly mortgage payments extremely high. Tax relief should continue to be given on mortgage interests.

23.II.8 In order to overcome the difficulty of mortgage financing, the exemption from corporate taxes which the New Building Society now enjoys should be extended to *all* mortgage lending. This would stimulate greater competition.

23.II.9 Because of the limited availability of houses, there has been an increase in the instances of informal housing development in urban areas. There are also the significant issues of congestion, and the financial inability of many citizens to maintain building standards. This has resulted in high incidences of housing decay in some areas and, on a very large scale, in some housing areas which have been categorised as being "depressed", to use what must be the greatest of euphemisms. This is particularly true in Georgetown, of some parts of Lodge District, Charlestown and Albouystown. There are other districts not only in all the other urban areas, but also in the rural, to which the appellation of "depressed" may also be applied. Government should therefore improve access to land for housing estates.

23.II.10 Insufficient emphasis is being placed by the University of Guyana, and other relevant training institutions, on the development of curricula that include advanced planning techniques and strategies for urban and economic development. This defect should be addressed since there is shortage of qualified specialists to fill key positions in these disciplines.

23.II.11 The high costs of materials, labour and machinery are also among the major constraints that restrict housing development. Moreover, the construction industry in Guyana seems to lack creativity and the ability to adapt and adopt. As a consequence, new and cheaper but effective building techniques and technologies are not being applied.

23.II.12 Given the present level of costs and the current levels of need, it does not seem obvious that the housing development problem can be addressed largely by market-oriented approaches. The existing situation may be characterised as one where the demand and supply curves interact at a very low level of provision. There is therefore an evident need for the State to intervene in specific areas.

23.II.13 Having said this, however, the financing problem could also be seen in terms of market development. In principle, if steps could be taken to lower drastically the present cost of providing housing services, a genuine market will begin to emerge.

23.II.14 There are three avenues which are worth rendering as we seek to revive the supply side of the low-cost housing market: re-examining the present technology of low-cost housing; restoring a community approach to providing labour for low cost housing; and removing the fiscal burden that is currently borne by providers of low-cost housing.

23.II.15 An alternative, though not mutually exclusive, approach would be to bring the market alive from the demand side. In this situation it will be necessary for the government to institute a targeted voucher programme. If, for example, the government adopts a timeframe of five years to deal with the housing problem, with current rates of inflation, between US\$25 and US\$30 million will be needed annually for the programme.

23.II.16 It is to be expected that, with the squatting explosion, serious legal and social problems are being created. These include a violation of property rights, multiple occupancy with exorbitant levels of overcrowding which have effects on hygiene and sanitation, and criminal activity. While it is true that those who settled in squatter communities prior to March 1993 may be able to claim ownership titles, the new policy of the government is that squatting will no longer be tolerated. Firm action is needed but it must be complemented by measures such as improved access to both land and finance.

23.II.17 With respect to private sector participation, research has indicated that many private developers are reluctant to enter into any house provision scheme given the unlikelihood of being able to recoup capital expenditure. Perhaps such individuals may be motivated to intervene in ameliorating the housing situation if the government provided incentives such as land for private development in order to reduce housing costs.

23.II.18 A special effort should be made to link housing policy to community development. The government should increase its land distribution activities to specific communities, provide adequate infrastructural services, encourage targeted communities to work together, and train them in the basic house building skills. Such exercises should seek to build on the resourcefulness of community-based organizations.

23.II.19 The government should proceed with the regularization of pre-1993 squatters by quickly allowing them title to their lands and providing basic infrastructure in the squatting communities. The recent Housing survey indicated that 93 percent of the interviewed population expressed a desire to be involved in self-help projects. Guyanese seem willing to participate in self-help and community projects such as digging drains, laying water pipes and building access roads.

23.II.20 In order to widen and strengthen the housing market, it will be important to bring all the income groups into the picture. This can be done by the use of creative financing mechanisms like that of the Jordanian Housing Bank, which employs a lottery system instead of the interest rate to attract savings

deposits. This approach can be supplemented by more traditional methods like the issuing of housing bonds. Funds from the bond issues would be earmarked to housing projects.

23.II.21 As has been emphasised, the private sector should be activated. Their involvement could be enhanced by tax incentives in construction activities. Moreover, any remaining rent restrictions should be removed. Tax relief should continue on mortgage interests and Government should improve access to land for housing estates.

23.II.22 It has been noted earlier that in Guyana land prices are high, while there is an abundance of unoccupied land. It has also been stressed that one of the reasons for this is the fact that the Government and GUYSUOCO own most of this land, and distribute it to the citizens of this country as though they were being given manna from above. In addition to this overarching restriction on residential land–use there is an anachronistic legal system which dates back to the 1930s, and which has little or no applicability to modern concepts of development. These laws include the Public Health Ordinance, the Housing Act, and the Town and County Act.

23.II.23 In areas such as housing, and in the special circumstances of Guyana, the IFIs should be requested by the Government of Guyana to permit targeted subsidies for those who now occupy the lowest economic and social rungs of the developmental ladder. The efforts of the Government must be focused on particular groups e.g. the rural poor, the urban poor, and the poor of the hinterland. This strategy of concentration should be designed to prevent the not–so–poor from profiting from subsidies that are meant for the truly indigent.

23.II.24 Special attention ought to be paid to the conditions of the urban dwellers in the slums, and to the necessity of relocating the urban poor.

23.III SECTORAL OBJECTIVES

23.III.1 The principal specific objectives in the area of housing are: (i) to expand the supply of housing more rapidly; (ii) to make housing as affordable as possible; and (iii) to provide improved access to housing for poor families.

23.III.2 The operational objectives that must be fulfilled as preconditions for meeting these objectives include: (i) the provision of greater access to affordable funding for housing development; (ii) the provision of greater access to serviced lands; (iii) the elimination of institutional delays in the approval of building plans and the allocation of land; (iv) the establishment of conditions that would facilitate the private sector to play a greater role in developing land for housing and in the construction of houses; (v) the development of special programmes of financial support for lower–income families that would assist them in making rental and mortgage payments; (vi) the regularisation of informal housing development, (vii) the reformation of the laws governing rentals with the aim of increasing the availability of rental housing; and (viii) the development of mechanisms for the greater involvement of NGOs in housing programmes for the poor.

23.IV THE STRATEGY

23.IV.1 A special fund will be established for providing rental supplements to low–income families who meet strict criteria of eligibility. The Board of the fund will include representatives of CH&PA, the municipalities and NDCs, SIMAP, NGOs, and the Ministry of Finance. Once an application is approved, on evidence of the family's income levels and the rental contract, the fund will provide monthly coupons that can

be redeemed through the banking system. Both renter and landlord would be required to sign each monthly coupon, and then the landlord could redeem it directly, as part of his or her rental income. It is suggested that the upper limit on the value of the monthly coupons be approximately G\$15,000 at the beginning, and that this limit be revised annually in view of registered inflation rates. Contributions to the fund will be made by the Central Government. International contributions will be sought as well.

23.IV.2 A fund for supplementing the mortgage payments of low-income families will be structured in a manner similar to the one described above. Its operating rules will also be similar although, in this case, under the eligibility criteria, the topping-out level of family income will be somewhat higher than for the previous fund. The fund for mortgage supplements will assist families of low incomes to make down-payments on houses, provided that they put some of their own funds into the payment, and then it will supplement their monthly mortgage servicing. It is suggested that assistance on the down-payment be provided in a matching fashion, with a maximum amount of G\$250,000 that could be drawn from the fund for this purpose. The upper limit on assistance with monthly mortgage payments would be established at G\$20,000, made directly to the financing institution. Both sums would be adjusted annually for inflation. Again, the fund would depend on contributions from both the Central Government and the international community.

23.IV.3 As well as assisting the poor directly, the presence of these two funds will have the beneficial effect of stimulating private investors to provide more housing, in the knowledge that the effective demand would have increased considerably for this type of housing.

23.IV.4 In addition to these special funds, the Government will establish a rediscount line in the Central Bank that will provide an incentive to commercial banks to extend mortgage loans, in exchange for their reducing interest rates on mortgages below the equivalent level for other classes of loans, by a specified number of percentage points. The subsidy inherent in this rediscount line will be funded explicitly from the annual Central Government budget, with the possible additional contribution of international funding. Through this financial facility, banks will be encouraged to place a higher share of their assets in mortgages without incurring the risk of weakening their capital base because of below-market interest rates.

23.IV.5 The subsidies which are targeted on lower income families in the case of the two special funds, and on lower and middle income families for the mortgage rediscount line, will permit the necessary reforms of mortgage finance institutions. A probing review of these institutions will be carried out, to redefine their role and their manner of operating. The goal of the review will be to seek ways to increase the mortgage content of their asset portfolio. Without prejudging the findings of the review, it can be said that the operations of the two special funds and the rediscount facility will at least permit NBS to raise its interest rates on loans, thus making it more feasible, financially, for it to place more funds in mortgages.

23.IV.6 Incentives will be provided to the NBS to (i) increase the maximum mortgage loan to 90 percent of value; (ii) give short-term loans to finance the acquisition of serviced sites; and (iii) review the reform on their G\$5 share holdings to keep them in line with alternative investments.

23.IV.7 A pilot housing micro-credit programme with IPED will be organised to finance basic home improvements.

23.IV.8 The fundamental institutional objective regarding mortgage finance is to make the institution(s) financially viable over the longer run, in keeping with one of the fundamental policy conditions established for this National Development Strategy. This requires that they be efficient in their financial intermediation, capable of mobilising sufficient quantities of resources, and not dependent on recurring transfers from the Central Government. Among other things, they must demonstrate a high level of loan recovery. If not, they will lose the power to attract deposits as well as face a deteriorated capital base.

23.IV.9 If the institutions are not viable in these respects, Government will eventually find that the burden of sustaining them is insupportable. The institutions will then be forced to curtail operations, thereby losing the ability to provide support to the citizenry for the acquisition of homes.

23.IV.10 Laws and regulations that would permit financial institutions to recover the collateral in cases of default will be strengthened, or otherwise the commitment to service a mortgage would become almost a meaningless gesture from the viewpoint of mortgage finance institutions, and those institutions would be doomed to insolvency.

23.IV.11 Land for housing will be granted free of charge to all those below the poverty line.

23.IV.12 Regional land selection committees for houses will be given the authority to review applications, interview applicants, or representative of groups of applicants, and make recommendations before forwarding them to the CH&PA.

23.IV.13 The members of the land selection committees will be elected to office by the people of the relevant district or ward. It is important that the composition of the committee reflects the people's choice.

23.IV.14 No more than three months will be taken from the time of receiving the application to make the decisions on whether to allocate the plot or not, and to communicate such decision to the applicant.

23.IV.15 The acute shortage of land for housing in urban areas, especially in Georgetown, will be addressed as a priority matter. Government will initiate a programme of making land available in freehold to entrepreneurs who will commit themselves, by way of strict agreements, to constructing houses on the lots. The preferable mechanism for providing land in this way will be through public auctions to interested investors. Government will also commit itself to supplying infrastructural services to such land. Unutilised sugar estate lands, among others, will be dedicated to this purpose.

23.IV.16 The private sector will also be encouraged to construct high-rise blocks of apartments for use by the middle class, or for offices, particularly in some of the areas to be cleared of slums. These high-rise apartments will relieve the pressure on urban land, provide security from vandals, and offer proximity to business enterprises, workplaces etc.

23.IV.17 Government will also accelerate its programme of supplying serviced lots to needy families, with priority being given to those who participate in cooperative ventures which will assist with the labours of construction and the obtention of building supplies. Such lots will be transported in freehold to the beneficiaries, with mortgages extended through the NBS and with the financial assistance of the special fund for supplementing mortgage payments. The selection procedures for recipients of the serviced lots will be reviewed with the aim of making them more rigorous, transparent, and objective. More specifically, the procedures for the allocation of house lots will follow those laid down for the allocation of agricultural land. For ease of reference the provisions are repeated below.

23.IV.18 The current criteria for the allocation of land will be revised to accommodate the poor, youths and the unmarried. Different types of housing units will be recommended for these new recipients.

23.IV.19 A number of townships will be established to assist in the resettlement of youths, public servants, members of the trades unions, members of both the urban and rural poor, and other groups in the country.

23.IV.20 These townships will be designed to emphasize the clear interdependence between urban and rural settlements, and to take advantage of their synergies.

23.IV.21 These semi–urban settlements will be designed to house and provide job opportunities and social facilities for 1,000 families in self–sustainable townships.

23.IV.22 Unutilised sugar lands or unutilised government lands on the outskirts of the towns, and areas in the Intermediate and Rupununi Savannahs, or sites in any other part of the country in which there is land that is suitable for the purposes of the projects, will be selected.

23.IV.23 The Government will, with the assistance of the private sector, develop these lands.

23.IV.24 The private sector will be encouraged to assist through the provision of tax incentives and free land, if it agrees to establish businesses and enterprises in specific areas of the settlement.

23.IV.25 Areas in each settlement, will be set aside for religious worship, a community centre, a primary and a secondary school, a health centre, administrative services, and commercial and industrial activity.

23.IV.26 Each family will be allocated one acre of land for housing. In addition, each family will be provided with an agreed amount of land for either agriculture, or manufacturing or commercial enterprise, or trade, etc.

23.IV.27 All settlers will, of course, have to agree voluntarily to the proposals and arrangements before participating in the projects.

23.IV.28 No attempt will be made rigorously to establish patterns of settlement. However guidelines will be drawn up in order to make the schemes as cost effective as possible. It is suggested that:–

- a. the townships would be circular in shape;
- b. that there would be in the centre of this circle, i.e. in the centre of the township, a substantial area of public open space, bordered by trees and perhaps lined with seats for recreation, and with perhaps a fountain in the middle, such as obtains in many small South American towns;
- c. immediately surrounding this central space would be the areas for commercial activities, shops, a library, pharmacies, etc; in other words a kind of peripheral mall;
- d. the residential houses will be located at the back of the commercial centre, but will be separated by a green buffer belt from it;
- e. surrounding the residential area, but buffered by another but more exclusive green zone would be the industrial area;
- f. on the far periphery of the townships will be areas allocated for farming;
- g. the streets will radiate from the centre. Crossroads will connect the radii;

23.IV.29 Zoning laws will be promulgated and strictly enforced.

23.IV.30 There will be legal security of tenure. In other words freehold titles will be issued.

23.IV.31 Settlers will be required to pay for the land and services over time. There will be different rates for different types of land–uses and different types of settler.

23.IV.32 Although full cost recovery will be the ultimate objective there will be varying arrangements for settlers of different means and requirements.

23.IV.33 Banks, Credit Unions, savings and credit co-ops, etc. will be utilised by the settlers as much as possible, through the facilitation of government for their financial needs. In other words, special provisions for access to developmental financing will be put in place by government.

23.IV.34 It cannot be too strongly emphasised, that in all stages of settlement, there will be full consultation among the settlers, the trade unions, the government and the private sector.

23.IV.35 NGOs will be urged to participate as fully as possible in this type of project.

23.IV.36 While the physical and other development and preparatory works are being undertaken, the proposed settlers will be given intensive training in all relevant areas of their proposed occupations.

23.IV.37 This Strategy finds it imperative to regularise the situation of squatters, so that they may improve the conditions of their shelter and receive the basic infrastructure to which all citizens are entitled. In cases of occupancy of State lands, this means providing them with freehold title, in exchange for a mortgage with the NBS and assistance from the special fund for supplementing mortgage payments. Squatters will be made fully aware of the great responsibility implied by the mortgage, and of the consequences of failing to honor it. NGOs will be encouraged to engage in educational campaigns with squatter families regarding the new policies, their benefits and their responsibilities.

23.IV.38 Instances of squatting on private lands will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and each time one of two outcomes needs to result: either i) the land will be returned to its rightful owner, or ii) the owner will be compensated for it and the squatter will be given title and the concomitant mortgage facilities. In cases in which the regularising of squatting on private lands requires compensation to former owners, such compensation will be channeled through the NBS and a special facility will be established in the NBS for that purpose.

23.IV.39 The experience of many countries has demonstrated that titling the land of squatters results in rapid and significant improvements in the quality of the shelter of those populations.

23.IV.40 **At the same time, new attempts to squat on private or public lands will be rigorously resisted;** without such a policy, the zoning of State lands and the concept of property for private urban lands will become mere ideas that are void of much actual content. The opening of new lands for housing and the new forms of financial assistance for housing that are established in this Strategy will provide the poor with sufficiently attractive options to squatting.

23.IV.41 **The rental regulations will be recast as they have become counterproductive, as explained previously. Landlords and tenants will be free to reach agreement on rental levels, subject only to registering the rental contract with the CH&PA.** This is part and parcel of our new philosophy of liberalisation. The existence of the special fund for rental supplements for poor families will obviate the need to try to control rents, which generally leads to substandard housing maintenance. The right of the landlord to recover the property at the termination of the contract will be unambiguously affirmed. Equally, tenants will be provided with the power of recourse, especially in instances of landlords failing to make necessary structural repairs.

23.IV.42 This kind of reform will lead to an expansion in the supply of rental housing available, while deserving tenants will benefit financially from the special fund.

23.IV.43 A recent study has demonstrated in detail that modular housing, utilising wood from Guyana's forests, can reduce the cost of home construction by as much as fifty percent. This avenue will be explored, mainly for the benefits in the form of affordable shelter, but it could also provide benefits in the form of more

employment and savings in foreign exchange. Government will develop a programme to support the construction, on a pilot basis, of a number of modular homes of this nature, to be sold to low income families with the assistance of the special fund for mortgage supplements. At the conclusion of the pilot project, it will be evaluated to determine its benefits and the wisdom of repeating it on a larger scale.

23.IV.44 At the same time, Government will implement a programme of constructing houses with prefabricated low-cost imported material. Because such houses can be erected more quickly and cheaply than comparable locally-produced structures, they may be ideal for the rapid production of low income homes in Guyana.

23.IV.45 Through the Institute of Applied Science and Technology (IAST), the Government will facilitate the development of low-cost building materials.

23.IV.46 There is an increase in the number of buildings that are being constructed in the towns without the permission of the municipalities and the Central Housing and Planning Authority. To eliminate this practice, municipalities will be given precise guidelines concerning the issuance of building permissions, so that all constructions and renovations may follow the approved building standards. The CH&PA has not always supported areas identified by municipalities for residential purposes or industrial sites. Mechanisms will therefore be put in place for closer coordination and collaboration between the CH&PA and the municipalities.

23.IV.47 The private sector will be provided with tax exemptions on materials used in housing, and with reductions in income and profit taxes for engaging in housing development.

23.IV.48 Fiscal encouragement will be given to the banks and other financial institutions which provide long-term mortgages of up to 30 years at lower rates of interest.

23.IV.49 Financial intermediaries will be authorised to issue tax-free housing bonds to finance low-cost housing.

23.IV.50 Banks will also be encouraged by way of incentives, to adapt the Jordanian Housing Bank Model to Guyana's housing situation. In order to attract savings deposits, banks will employ a lottery system in which the winners will be rewarded with houses.

23.IV.51 Low income tax households will be retroactively reimbursed for the withholding tax on savings interested in owner-occupied homes.

23.IV.52 A National Housing Trust, based on a payroll tax as has been so successfully implemented in Jamaica, will be established. The funds so mobilised will be channeled through a private sector that will be challenged to provide affordable housing through technological innovation. Under such a scheme, houses will be allocated by lottery to eligible candidates in order to remove any scope for partiality.

23.IV.53 There will be a resuscitation of the self-help schemes which have contributed so much to housing development in Guyana in the 1960s and 1970s. Special training courses in the rudiments of house building will be conducted for potential house owners. Some of the lots for such self-help schemes will be allocated free to those below the poverty level. The special fund for supplementing the mortgage payments of low-income families will also apply to structures constructed by self-help.

23.IV.54 Rural and urban communities will be mobilised by all the social partners, including NGOs, to organise these self-help communities, and to assist them in every way possible.

23.IV.55 Self–help communities that are organised for the construction of houses for those below the poverty line will be provided with duty free materials when it is necessary to import them.

23.IV.56 The basic infrastructure for housing lots will be installed over a realistic period, with community participation and other institutional assistance.

23.IV.57 Legislation will be passed with the approval of the Public Servants Union to enable the pension funds of Public Servants to be used both as collateral and for capitalisation in housing projects for both Public Service housing schemes and for Public Service individuals.

23.IV.58 The government will also facilitate the accumulation of financial resources by Trade Unions, and the seeking of concessional financing for residential construction by them.

23.IV.59 The Central Housing and Planning Authority (CH&PA) will be restructured and upgraded, so that it may continue to be the Government's instrument through which the housing sector will be facilitated and national policy maintained and upgraded. It will be restructured around the implementation of a manageable number of distinct lines of business. These will include (i) developing raw land into serviced, individually titled residential lots; (ii) preparing national land–use and settlement plans to guide local decisions; (iii) regularising squatter areas that generally conform to acceptable settlement patterns; (iv) improving depressed areas and removing environmentally unsound settlements; and (v) providing Guyana with reliable information systems to support planning and other policy making.

23.IV.60 The Housing, Housing Development, Town and Country Planning, and Condominium Acts will be brought up to date.

23.IV.61 A modern Building Code will be designed and implemented.

23.IV.62 Regulations will be put in place to reduce the time needed to establish absolute title of residential land ownership.

23.IV.63 A "one–stop shop", with technical competence and authority to oversee all surveying, site preparation, infrastructure construction, and conveyancing will be established.

23.IV.64 The Town and Country Planning Act, using the Model Physical Planning Bill prepared by UNDP/UNCHS for OECS, will be modernised.

23.IV.65 Comprehensive development plans for all population centres will be prepared, and a Geographic Information System with supplementary staff, training and financing will be established.

23.IV.66 Infrastructural standards that permit the progressive upgrading of communities will be developed to replace the single infrastructure standard that now exists and is too costly for low–income neighborhoods.

CHAPTER 24

THE AMERINDIANS

24.I BASIC FEATURES OF THE SECTOR

24.I.1 Distribution

24.I.1.1 The best estimate of the Amerindian population indicates it to be 46,010 or 6.4 percent of the total population. This suggests that the Amerindian population has declined by 5.8 percent between 1993 and 1999, when the two most recent surveys were undertaken. Amerindians rank as the fourth largest ethnic group, after East Indians, Africans and Mixed Guyanese. They comprise most of the population in the remote interior of Regions 1, 8, and 9 and a significant percentage (one-third) of Region 7. The bulk of the Amerindians live in Regions 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9. Regions 1 and 9 have 28.80 per cent and 24.95 per cent respectively of the Amerindian population, followed by Regions 2, 7 and 8 with 11.72 per cent, 9.45 per cent and 8.63 per cent respectively.

24.I.1.2 The Amerindian peoples in Guyana were traditionally separated from each other by natural environments and by their distinct languages. This pattern still holds true, except for the coastal Amerindian settlements of Region 1 and at Orealla in Region 6, in which Arawaks, Waraus and Caribs are often found in the same village.

24.I.1.3 The highest number of Amerindians (about 15,500) is to be found among the Arawaks (or Lokonas as they call themselves). These are followed by the Makushi whose population is about half that of the Arawaks. Next are the Wapishana whose numbers are slightly higher than the Warau, the Akawaio and the Patamona. The Caribs are the next smallest group, and, at the bottom of the Amerindian population scale, are the Arekuna and Wai Wai, remnants of the Atorad people who still speak their own language and can still be found living in Wapishana communities.

24.I.2 Socio economic Conditions

24.I.2.1 While the Amerindian population is important in regional demographic terms, it is not homogeneous. Perhaps as a result of this, it has not traditionally been an effectively organised lobby. There are signs, however, that the position is now changing and that Amerindian groups are exercising an increasing influence on matters which affect their rights. Because Guyana's future would, to a large extent, be based on the utilization of its natural resources, which are generally to be found in the country's interior where Amerindians predominantly live, this is an important development.

24.I.2.2 External influences contribute to profound changes in Amerindian attitudes and in their ways of life. For example, because of the upsurge in mining activities in areas adjacent to their communities, monetary values are increasingly being placed on goods and services which in the past were generally considered to be free. Indeed, young people now measure their status by the possession of consumer goods, and display a growing reluctance to engage in subsistence agriculture.

24.I.2.3 Most Amerindians are self-employed, concentrating on traditional subsistence activities such as agriculture, hunting and forestry. Less than half a percent of them is self-employed in fishing, mining, quarrying, and manufacturing. This suggests that, in spite of the rapid changes which are occurring in many areas of the interior, most Amerindians continue to operate outside the cash economy and are still dependent on a subsistence way of life.

24.I.2.4 The staple diet of the Amerindians consists of cassava, which supplies them with most of the carbohydrates which they consume. Protein generally comes from fish or meat, which is either fished or hunted for, by the family, or bought either from the most successful community fishermen or hunters, or from interior shops owned by coastlanders. However, both sources of protein are now being adversely affected. In the case of fish, the use of heavy duty hydraulic earthmoving equipment on or near riverbanks by the mining industry increases water turbidity, which in turn reduces the quality of the spawning grounds of many fish species and clean water for villages and people. The use of chemicals such as cyanide and mercury is also poisonous to fish life and people. In addition, many of the traditional habitats of birds and animals have been disturbed by timber exploiters.

24.I.2.5 The majority of Amerindian communities have little or no access to potable water. This is due to the fact that the traditional sources of pure water, creeks and rivers, have increasingly come under the threat of pollution from the mining industries that have been established in the interior, beginning in the early 1980s.

24.I.2.6 In comparison with the other ethnic groups, a larger proportion of Amerindians is classified as poor in the most recent survey data available. Indeed, in 1999, 95 percent of the population in Regions 8 and 9, who are preponderantly Amerindian was classified as being in a state of absolute poverty. Given their comparatively small numbers, reversing the poverty status of Amerindians might appear to be a manageable task. In fact, however, it may be extremely difficult, because of their dispersed settlement pattern, the difficult terrain in which they often live, the high cost of administering interior projects, and the lack of skills both in the Amerindian and in the wider population.

24.I.2.7 Less than 1 percent of the interior population had received post–secondary education according to the 1999 HIES. In addition, the urgent need for upgrading basic skills among the adult population to prepare Amerindians to manage the resource base in their villages, as well as to take fuller advantage of job openings within the developing economy in the Guyana interior, has been identified at every recent forum of indigenous representatives.

24.I.2.8 A less easily definable aspect of the existing situation results from the markedly egalitarian ethos that is a significant factor in the traditional Amerindian social organization that is now being transformed in several ways. Until very recently, most Amerindian communities were essentially lacking in hierarchical distinctions. Few villagers worked outside the communities, and those who did generally earned modest wages in timber grants or in other manual occupations. However, beginning in the early 1980s, the expansion of the gold and diamond mining industries attracted many Amerindian males. Some, who worked on their own, struck gold; while others, who hired–out their labour to medium or large scale mining operations, were able to earn considerable amounts of cash in relatively short periods. As a consequence, mining fever extended beyond the mineral–rich areas to attract Amerindian males from all parts of Guyana. There can therefore be little doubt that the scale of Amerindian involvement in mining is a contributory factor to the changing dynamics of village life.

24.II ISSUES AND CONSTRAINTS

24.II.1 Issues

Land

24.II.1.1 The Amerindian Lands Commission Report, published in June 1969, identified 128 Amerindian communities in the country. Requests for land titles were made by 116 of them. Although the other twelve communities did not request land titles, the commission recommended that titles be granted to ten of them. This was done in 1991. The commission also recommended that land titles be vested in Local Authorities and that individual land titles be given to residents of 8 communities. In addition, a conditional grant was

recommended for one community, and reservation status for two other communities. Full titles were granted to 62 communities under the Amerindian Act. Titles for very scattered communities were to be known as Districts, and two were recommended under this head. At the time, 12 villages in the Upper Mazaruni District were not granted title because of their involvement in a proposed hydroelectric scheme. However, those communities also received land titles in 1991. Outstanding issues and problems that remain to this day are the failure to implement all the recommendations of the Land Commission; the inadequacy of the areas covered by land grants; the failure to demarcate boundaries on the ground; the failure to train local authorities to administer and manage titled lands; and the small number of individual titles which were granted, although the Act provides for the issuance of such titles.

24.II.1.2 Approximately 7 percent of the national territory of Guyana has been titled to the Amerindian population. Land title encompasses usufruct rights to fish, farm and hunt on the land as well as rights to all timber on reserved lands, and occupancy rights. Subsoil rights are excluded. It is worth noting that those forest reserves which are at present under the sole control of Amerindian communities are considerable, comprising 1.4 million hectares. If harvested sustainably, these forests alone could support the indigenous peoples for generations.

24.II.1.3 Land titles have been given in different forms, namely as Amerindian villages, Amerindian areas, and Amerindian Districts. Amerindians hold land collectively, although individual/family parcels are identified and generally accepted at the community level. In some communities, the village council has identified parcels for housing, farming, etc.

24.II.1.4 Sixty percent of the Amerindian communities in Guyana now holds title to some of their traditional lands, totaling 7 percent of the Guyanese national territory. Most of this land is within Amazonian or savannah ecosystems, and are of poor soil quality. The criterion to grant land titles is based on the fact that Amerindians occupied these lands before the independence of Guyana. The preamble of the Amerindian Lands Commission Act, Cap. 59:03 states that "Whereas the Government of Guyana has decided that the Amerindians should be granted legal ownership or rights of occupancy over areas and reservations or parts thereof where any tribe or community of Amerindian is now ordinarily resident or settled and other legal rights, such as rights of passage. In respect of any other land which they own by tradition of custom, they *de facto* enjoy freedom and permissions corresponding to rights of the nature of the current Constitution does not guarantee any of these rights and the Minister responsible for Amerindian Affairs holds the powers to adjust, redraw and grant land titles.

24.II.1.5 It might also be of interest to note that according to Articles 2 and 3 of Cap:62:01, State Lands (Amerindian Regulations), half-castes forfeit all the rights of Amerindians over state lands. A gender-related observation is that, according to the same articles, Amerindian women who marry a non-Amerindian man also lose their rights. The converse is not true. It is more than probable that these Articles could create a gender-equity issue.

24.II.1.6 Only Orealla, of the Amerindian communities which have received land titles, has had a physical survey of its reservation boundaries properly carried out. At the time when title was granted in 1976, aerial surveys were done to establish the boundaries of communities and 90 percent of the areas granted to Amerindian communities was demarcated by natural boundaries. The cost of conducting ground surveys is, however, very high. Indeed, the Department of Lands and Surveys has recently estimated that the surveying of boundaries of Bethany alone would cost G\$400,000, while a land use mapping exercise for the nine Amerindian communities in Region Two has been estimated to cost \$4 to \$5 million. It is possible, however, that this is an area in which international agencies may be willing to provide support. Nevertheless, there are still many communities, scattered over the entire country that lack any security of tenure.

24.II.1.7 In summary, the questions that are of primary concern to Amerindians with respect to land, are as follows: (i) resolution of the land issue through the granting of titles; (ii) resolution of the problem of subsoil mineral rights; (iii) regulation of the process of leasing or granting to developers lands that were traditionally used by Amerindians without consulting their communities; and (iv) development of rules for compensation of Amerindian communities for the exploitation of natural resources contained on lands to which they lay claim;

Mining

24.II.1.8 Amerindians do not possess any rights to sub-surface minerals on titled land. However, mining is undertaken by non-Amerindians on lands that lack any form of title, particularly in Regions 1, 7 and 8, that are claimed by Amerindian communities. Amerindians have the right to mine, on community land, to a depth of six inches. However, if an Amerindian wishes to mine at a greater depth on his community's land, that individual must give up, according to the law, the special rights enjoyed as an Amerindian.

24.II.1.9 The scale of mining in and around Amerindian areas has accelerated, and is predicted to increase dramatically in the coming years. In addition, thousands of medium-scale prospecting licences have been issued in the last few years. Even if only 10 per cent of the prospecting companies go on to mine, the effects on the interior and its peoples will be considerable.

24.II.1.10 Mining, whether alluvial or hardrock, river dredging or land mining, causes disturbances to the environment that affect the living conditions of Amerindians. The negative results of mining include, but are not limited to, noise nuisances, pollution of domestic water sources, land degradation, the reduced navigability of rivers, flooding, and death to aquatic life that Amerindians depend on as a food source.

24.II.1.11 The presence of mining operations in or near Amerindian areas tends also to affect the population in several ways. First because mining jobs are generally more lucrative, young men leave the farms and other traditional means of livelihood, for mining. Second, the miners and loggers bring in new ideas and gadgets, that influence the behaviour and expectations of the villagers. Third, miners and loggers often take Amerindian young men and women from the interior to the coastland, where they are likely to be unable to cope with the environment and may become trapped in illegal activities. Fourth because Amerindian culture is fundamentally related to the land, any activity which interferes with this relationship, directly affects their cultural integrity. Fifth, miners often destroy or damage the sacred sites of Amerindians and other areas of cultural significance.

24.II.1.12 Amerindians are generally concerned that valuable minerals are being removed from lands belonging to them without any meaningful consultation and compensation. They are also apprehensive that the unregulated harvesting of trees in areas adjacent to their communities might result in irreversible environmental damage, particularly because they depend upon the forest for food, shelter, medicines, and various other needs.

24.II.1.13 This apprehension extends to the developing tourism industry. Since eco-tourism in Guyana depends on what nature provides, most of that activity will take place in the interior. Contact with interior communities and their environs can therefore be expected. While communities can benefit economically from this activity, they can suffer negative social impacts if the operations remain unregulated. While profitability should remain a goal, protection of the environment and of the lifestyles of interior communities should be the guiding factor.

24.II.1.14 Intellectual Property Rights and Cultural Heritage

24.II.1.15 Indigenous peoples are particularly vulnerable with respect to their heritage. Usually viewed as backward, they have been the targets of a type of cultural imperialism, aimed at their assimilation into what are considered to be more advanced ways of life. Their arts and knowledge are confusingly and contradictorily treated: often not regarded as world treasures, they have been simply destroyed; at other times, they are collected by museums. Today, the threat has intensified, and tourism, a growing demand for primitive art, and the development of bio technology combine to threaten the ability of indigenous peoples to protect what remains of their heritage. Perhaps not surprisingly, indigenous groups have called for legislation to protect their intellectual property rights and to promote the revival and enhancement of their heritage. Indeed, the Convention on Biological Diversity, which has been ratified by Guyana, obligates the state to recognise and protect indigenous intellectual property, to exploit such knowledge only with the consent of the affected peoples, and to ensure an equitable distribution of benefits.

Education

24.II.1.16 Because of several factors, the Amerindian population has been traditionally excluded from the mainstream of educational opportunities. The inability of Government to address these constraints has resulted in a lack of educational opportunities for Amerindians. Education for Amerindians should be wide in scope. It should not only address issues of formal education for children in the school system, but should be extended to empower Amerindians of all ages to improve their standards of living. Education and training policies should be of such a nature that they enable Amerindians to deal with other contemporary issues that affect them. Strategies should therefore be designed to ensure that they encompass all aspects of human development.

24.II.1.17 Training in the conservation and use of hinterland resources should equip Amerindians to benefit fully from the development of these resources. Such training should, among other things, focus on appropriate agricultural techniques and forestry practices, food processing, handicraft, artisanal trades, and on entrepreneurship and management.

24.II.1.18 The overarching economic difficulties which afflict the entire country are intensified and affect education in the interior even more adversely. As a result, Amerindian villages have suffered much in the education sector.

24.II.1.19 Among the most important issues is the lack of trained Amerindian teachers at the community level. The trained teachers in Amerindian villages are often non–Amerindian. Despite the best intentions, the result has been that education has a non–traditional focus that may not be applicable to community development. Students are therefore not inculcated with an appreciation of the value of their own traditions. In addition, many cultural aspects of Amerindian life are being eroded. Among these is the gradual loss of language, traditional dress and dance, and medicinal knowledge. To make education a success and relevant to the needs of the Amerindian peoples, the question of linguistics must also be addressed with urgency.

24.II.1.20 Many Amerindian teachers in the interior are not trained and do not possess the requirements to enter the Cyril Potter College of Education or the University of Guyana. This problem can be tied to a larger issue, which is the absence of secondary schools in the interior. Decisive steps in the educational area are needed to remedy this situation.

Village/Community Administration

24.II.1.21 In many Amerindian communities, the prescriptions of the Amerindian Act are not followed; in others where they are followed, the development of the communities is hampered by the limited powers given to community leaders. It is evident that the relevant regulations need to be modernized so that more authority could be exercised by village and community leaders. However, as with all systems of management and administration, checks and balances should be put in place to ensure proper and efficient administration and to avoid the misuse of power. In addition, substantial efforts are required to train Amerindians in the techniques of administration.

Health

24.II.1.22 The National Plan of Action for Children, launched in March 1995 by the Government of Guyana in collaboration with UNICEF, noted: "Conditions for Amerindian children and women of the hinterland, taken as a group, are harsh in comparison with conditions for children on the coast. Malaria, malnutrition, acute respiratory illnesses, and diarrhoeal–related diseases are especially prevalent due to unacceptable water and sanitation. High levels of teen pregnancy, poor maternal health and a decline in breast–feeding are all of concern."

24.II.1.23 In some areas, individuals are caught up in such poverty and deprivation that they often ignore the practices of basic health care. For example, 8 out of 10 inhabitants in Region 1 habitually have malaria. What is worse is that thirty–five per cent of those who have the illness have not responded to the standard drug treatment, while an equal number are re–infected three times and more during an average twelve–month period. This situation may be rightly termed a national emergency. Indeed, for communities and Regions as stricken as these, direct governmental intervention is critical; not only in the areas of medical attention and supplies, but also through the provision of food and vitamin supplements, particularly for schools, and payments for work done on community projects. Training in public health (e.g., eliminating open stagnant pools of water) is also urgently needed.

24.II.1.24 Worm infestation is endemic in most interior areas. The extremely low haemoglobin levels found in Amerindian patients who are referred to the Georgetown Public Hospital are probably as much a symptom of year–round worm infestation and repeated bouts of malaria as of poor nutrition.

24.II.1.25 Over 50 percent of the children in Region 8 and more than 30 per cent in Region 7 are affected with respiratory tract infections. The highest percentage of children with diarrhoea is found in Region 9.

24.II.1.26 Nationally the rate of Sexually Transmitted Disease (STDs), including AIDS, is high among mining workers whose workplaces are in the interior. Many Amerindians gravitate towards these locations, where there is the possibility of steady or casual employment in mining camps and in surrounding rum shops, discotheques, etc. Given the lack of effective public education on the life–threatening nature of the HIV infection, STDs have the potential for spreading rapidly among indigenous peoples. Indeed, it has been recently reported that the incidence of HIV infection among Amerindians in locations adjacent to mining activities is increasing. An aggressive AIDS public education campaign must therefore target the interior as well as coastal populations.

24.II.1.27 Most of the Amerindian communities depend on nearby creeks and rivers or on shallow ponds, dug close to their homes, for their water supply. Those communities located close to mining areas (including those downriver of the Aroaima bauxite operation on the Berbice River) increasingly lack a safe source of potable water. An increasing incidence of water–borne diseases and skin rashes has been reported in all interior areas, a development which may or may not be blamed on resource extractive industries. In addition, most of the dwellings in the interior have palm–thatched roofs that cannot be adapted effectively for the collection of sterile rainwater.

24.II.1.28 The use of pit latrines is far from universal in Amerindian areas. The number of cases of diarrhoea increases with the rainy season, when the runoff from the ground transfers fecal matter into the river water that they rarely boil. Many adults do not know that there is a connection between diarrhoea and drinking water that is not boiled.

24.II.2 Constraints

Land

24.II.2.1 The ambiguity and vagueness in the laws regarding the issues of occupancy, ownership and control of land need to be resolved. There are also fundamental differences between Amerindians' notions of ownership and those precepts that are to be found in the laws.

24.II.2.2 Interdepartmental conflicts among different Government ministries and agencies have exacerbated the Amerindian land situation. As agencies responsible for indigenous affairs attempt to regularise land use, they have to contend with other ministries and agencies whose purposes are to regulate and exploit natural resources.

24.II.2.3 The unfamiliarity of Amerindian peoples with their legal rights and correct administrative procedures is part of the overall societal neglect of Amerindian concerns and the weakness of the education system in interior communities. Some Amerindian villages did not apply for land titles to which they were entitled according to the Amerindian Lands Commission Report, simply because they did not know it was an option available to them.

24.II.2.4 The dearth of resources to take on as a matter of urgency, the physical demarcation of Amerindian lands is a serious constraint. If this activity is undertaken, fears among Amerindians about their land rights will to a large extent be ameliorated.

Poverty

24.II.2.5 The absence of a centralised entity with the resources to coordinate all governmental, non-governmental and international agency activities in Amerindian and hinterland development hinders the alleviation of poverty in the interior. Because the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs is ill-equipped to perform this task, many initiatives which it might have taken are not seized, or are put in place by other agencies in a haphazard manner.

24.II.2.6 The chronic shortage or nonexistence of appropriately trained personnel with the expertise in matters such as agricultural extension, forestry and natural resource management is part of a larger problem. Other chapters in the National Development Strategy present proposals for addressing this problem. The success of these policies will have a positive impact on Amerindians.

24.II.2.7 The inadequacy of physical infrastructure such as schools and health clinics to deliver basic social services to Amerindians and their frequent remoteness from communities make the general poverty situation worse.

24.II.2.8 The extreme isolation of most Amerindian communities demands that basic physical infrastructure be put in place, e.g., roads, airstrips, river transportation and telecommunications. The absence of these facilities adds considerably to the cost of projects in the interior.

24.II.2.9 There is a historic lack of Amerindian participation in the design and implementation of projects in the interior. This is linked to a poorly staffed Ministry of Amerindian Affairs and an insufficient number of qualified Amerindians. Moreover, even when such knowledge and expertise exist, they are often ignored. This in turn has often led to the design of projects that do not meet the needs of interior communities. By increasing the participation of Amerindians in project design, many pitfalls associated with projects in the interior will be avoided.

24.II.2.10 Access to capital, finance and credit is a major obstacle to Amerindian development. It is difficult for individual Amerindians living in reservations to get access to commercial banks in proof of individual land ownership, which the vast majority of Amerindians do not possess. In other countries, this kind of problem has been circumvented by using other types of collateral, including community-based networks of co-signers and co-guarantors. The Grameen Bank principle is directly in line with Amerindian cultural tradition.

24.II.2.11 Another major difficulty is posed by the absence of banking facilities in most Amerindian areas of Guyana. As a result, indigenous people have no secure and easy way of saving money, and thus are more apt to spend it all on consumables sold in interior shops. Moreover, the current situation facilitates the entry of non-Amerindian intermediaries, who advance credit to cash-strapped communities in exchange for natural resources.

24.II.2.12 There is also a notable absence of micro and small enterprise development agencies in the interior. The primary reason for this is the high overhead costs associated with interior enterprises and the amount of business that each agency can attract.

Education

24.II.2.13 No mechanisms to ensure a coordinated approach to Amerindian education are in place. While education policies are designed in the Ministry of Education, little interaction takes place with the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs; and with Amerindian organisations and communities.

24.II.2.14 The absence of an appropriate curriculum for the training of teachers to be based in Amerindian communities severely affects the quality of education provided to interior locations. Very often teachers who leave the coast to teach in the interior take with them a coastland perception of the interior and irrelevant teaching techniques.

24.II.2.15 It is difficult for Amerindians who wish to be trained as teachers, but do not possess the necessary qualifications, to access training at the Cyril Potter College of Education and the University of Guyana. This severely limits the number of potential teachers in the interior.

24.II.2.16 The curricula designed for students in the interior are often inappropriate for the needs of Amerindians. Curricula for all levels of education are generally designed with coastland concerns and needs in mind.

24.II.3 Administration

24.II.3.1 The constraints of the present village administration system include the inability to monitor and control the activities of non–Amerindians in or close to Amerindian communities, especially with regard to the operations and activities of itinerant miners and forest operators.

24.III SECTORAL OBJECTIVES

- i. To improve the socio–economic conditions of the Amerindians of Guyana.
- ii. Empower Amerindians to formulate and implement policies, plans and strategies for the development of their own communities.
 - a. To enable Amerindians to participate in all the mainstream activities of Guyanese society, without adversely affecting the enhancement of their communities and the preservation of their culture.
 - b. To provide equal opportunities in all aspects of life to the Amerindian citizens of Guyana.
 - c. To ensure that the rights of Amerindians, particularly those relating to land ownership, and land and natural resources development, are recognised and honoured.

24.IV THE STRATEGY

24.IV.1 General

24.IV.1.1 Government will institute and develop a national dispute resolution mechanism to deal specifically with the settlement of land and resource utilization and management concerns.

24.IV.1.2 The institutional capacity of the Ministry responsible for Amerindian Affairs will be strengthened through the provision of appropriately trained technical and administrative personnel.

24.IV.1.3 A centralised unit directly responsible to the Minister responsible for Amerindian Affairs will be established within the Ministry to coordinate the activities of all governmental agencies involved in Amerindian/hinterland development. *All* decisions by other ministries and public agencies that impinge upon Amerindians or Amerindian lands must be referred to the Ministry for agreement. If there is no agreement the dispute will be settled in Cabinet.

24.IV.1.4 All lands legitimately occupied by Amerindian communities will be surveyed, boundaries clearly demarcated, and maps produced in a process that would be a collaborative effort among the relevant government agencies and members of the communities, who will be provided with the requisite training for this exercise.

24.IV.1.5 Environmental impact assessment studies will be conducted before agreements for development projects and programmes in or adjacent to Amerindian lands are finalised.

24.IV.1.6 Administrators in forestry, mining, and other natural resource sectors will be appointed in those hinterland areas where these activities are taking place to ensure that they are properly monitored. Continuous dialogue between Amerindian leaders and government officials in these sectors will be institutionalised.

24.IV.1.7 Systems will be put in place to ensure that Amerindians have access to credit. In addition, postal agencies equipped to deal with savings accounts will be expanded, in order to allow Amerindian populations to secure their savings.

24.IV.1.8 Government will provide technical assistance to Amerindian communities in the formulation of development projects, and in negotiating the financing of such projects with private commercial banks.

24.IV.1.9 Special consideration (salaries, incentive packages, other benefits) would be given to local and coastland government personnel working in the Public Service in Amerindian communities.

24.IV.1.10 The Amerindian Act will be reviewed by a Committee on which Amerindians will have equal representation.

24.IV.1.11 Legislation will be enacted and enforced to protect cultural and intellectual property rights.

24.IV.1.12 A communications network integrating telephone/ telecommunication systems, roads, airstrips, improved river and sea communication and mass communication systems, will be developed in order to ensure that Amerindian/hinterland communities are in contact both with each other and with the coastland areas.

24.IV.1.13 A body of national guidelines and bylaws will be promulgated to assist in the governance of Amerindian villages. These will be based on the principles of regular democratically held elections, grass roots consultation, and constant dialogue with the Regional Democratic Council, while recognising the right of the Council to exercise legitimate executive authority in day-to-day matters.

24.IV.1.14 An Amerindian Development Fund will be established to support efforts that are required to develop and enhance the quality of life in Amerindian communities. A special tax will be levied for this purpose. Monies obtained from this tax will be paid in to the Development Fund. Guidelines for the utilization of the resources of this Fund will be formulated.

24.IV.2 Specific

Education

24.IV.2.1 Teachers based in Amerindian communities will pursue special training courses conducted by the Ministry of Education. Such orientation courses will be structured in order to expose candidate teachers to the social and economic environment in which they would be required to operate. The curricula for such courses will be prepared by experts in Amerindian culture and other relevant disciplines. **Teachers will not be certified to teach in the interior unless they are successful in these courses.** The course will be geographically sensitive, e.g. a teacher to be moved from the Rupununi to the North West will be required to take a short course on the culture of the native community in that area. Although such courses will undoubtedly lengthen the period of training required to equip a teacher to work in Amerindian areas, they are considered necessary because of the importance attached to imparting environmental relevance to Amerindian education. In any event, teachers who successfully undertake the course will be compensated by additional emoluments and perquisites.

24.IV.2.2 Preparatory training courses including distance education will be offered for Amerindians who do not have the entrance requirements to enter higher institutions of education. These courses will be as wide in scope as necessary to prepare students to enter any stream of their choice. IDCE, UG, distance education courses will be offered in villages.

24.IV.2.3 As a longer term solution to the problem of inadequate preparation of Amerindian students, more secondary schools (Form 1 – 5) will be built and staffed in the interior.

24.IV.2.4 The Amerindian Research Unit, in collaboration with the Ministries of Amerindian Affairs and Education (Institute of Adult and Continuing Education) and other institutions will initiate and continue a series of distance education programmes for the adult community. These programmes will be designed to bring adults up to a basic literacy and numeracy level and develop skills which will enable them to interact more effectively with the wider society.

24.IV.2.5 Amerindians will participate in the formulation of curricula which will not only be appropriate to the unique requirements of their communities, but will also equip them with skills that are relevant to hinterland development. In addition, the curricula will prepare them for further education and training outside their communities, and facilitate their involvement and integration into the society at large. Curricula for Amerindian students will be specialized and geographically and culturally sensitive, and will require special coordination between the Ministry of Education and the communities. Language will be seen as an integral part of the education of Amerindian children and corresponding curricula will be developed by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, and the Amerindian Research Unit in full participation with Amerindian communities.

24.IV.2.6 Integrated training complexes (along the lines of the Zariwa Education Complex) will be established in strategically located hinterland areas to provide training and education in cultural, academic, technical, vocational and adult continuing education programmes.

Mining

24.IV.2.7 Amerindian communities will participate in all negotiations for mining concessions in areas contiguous to their lands, and in the formulation of any agreements arising from such negotiations. Amerindians will also assist in the monitoring of the implementation of these agreements. No mining concessions will be granted unless social and environmental impact studies are undertaken and steps agreed upon to minimise negative impacts.

Forestry

24.IV.2.8 Land claims for Amerindians, in areas where Amerindians are located, will be settled before forest concessions are awarded.

24.IV.2.9 Amerindian communities will be consulted when timber agreements are being drawn up for lands contiguous to theirs. They will also participate in the decision-making processes leading to such agreements

24.IV.2.10 Amerindians will be an integral part of any teams engaged in the monitoring and enforcement of timber concession operations near their communities.

24.IV.2.11 Feasibility studies and social and environmental impact assessments will be undertaken before concession agreements are reached. Their findings would be made available to **NGOs and** Amerindian communities, especially those that stand to be affected by the concessions.

Tourism

24.IV.2.12 Tourism policies will respect and be sensitive to the cultures and lifestyles of indigenous and interior communities.

24.IV.2.13 The natural, economic, social and cultural diversity of Guyana will be maintained and encouraged in all tourism ventures in Guyana.

24.IV.2.14 Social, environmental and economic impact assessments will be carried out as a prerequisite to developing any tourism activity.

24.IV.2.15 Continuous monitoring of the impacts of tourism programmes and projects will take place, and that will be open and transparent disclosure of information.

24.IV.2.16 Local communities will be involved in the planning and decision-making process of any tourism activity by which they might be affected.

24.IV.2.17 Such activities will be structured so that a share of their benefits would redound to the local community.

24.IV.2.18 Monitoring mechanisms will be developed jointly by the Tourism Association of Guyana and Amerindian representatives to ensure that the tourism policies that are formulated in this document are respected and that local resources are used sustainably.

24.IV.2.19 Members of indigenous communities, whenever suitably qualified, should be part of the managerial staff of tourism ventures.

24.IV.2.20 Local and indigenous staff will be trained in all tourism procedures and activities.

National Security

24.IV.2.21 Community policing groups, which can communicate directly with regional police or army posts for quick intervention in matters of security will be established.

Land

24.IV.2.22 Emphasis will be placed on:

- the granting of individual land titles to Amerindians living outside Amerindian communities, as for all other Guyanese;
- the granting of collective titles to Amerindian communities that can prove that their occupancy of specific land areas dates back before the colonization of Guyana;
- the demarcation of Amerindian lands, as mandated by the Amerindian Lands Commission of (1969);
- obtaining a legal clarification of the entitlement to part of the royalties from natural resource exploitation that seems to be implied by the Amerindian land rights;
- developing and implementing mechanisms for including Amerindians in the process of identifying and demarcating their lands.

Intellectual Property Rights and Cultural Heritage

24.IV.2.23 Measures will be taken to increase the capacity of indigenous peoples and national academic institutions to supervise research conducted in their territories, and to develop their own institutions for medical and ecological research and research on medicinal plants etc.

24.IV.2.24 Toshaos and Council will be subject to removal from office for misconduct of village Affairs. This will be done after a majority of resident villagers present a request for such a removal to the Minister responsible for Amerindian Affairs. The ensuing trial will be by way of public hearings at which the accused will have a chance to defend his/herself.

24.IV.2.25 Programmes will be immediately put in place for training leaders of Amerindian communities in administration, accounting, project planning and village development planning.

24.IV.2.26 Amerindian communities will, by plebiscite, determine their own rules of membership.

24.IV.2.27 Government will enter into licensing agreements to provide for the protection of the ecological, medicinal, and spiritual knowledge of the Amerindian.

24.IV.2.28 Government and the RDCs will help in the promotion and development of Amerindian culture through supporting: the inclusion of such topics as Amerindian history, languages, crafts etc., in the curriculum of hinterland schools; the formation of cultural groups in Amerindian communities; an allocation from the Amerindian Development Fund for the promotion and preservation of Amerindian culture, and the establishment of Amerindian cultural centres in hinterland communities.

24.IV.2.29 Amerindians will have the right to own, control and manage their sacred and cultural sites.

Health

24.IV.2.30 Government will institute a coherent system of vector control taking into account locations such as mining and forestry camps, border crossing points, and the Amerindian communities themselves.

24.IV.2.31 Government will implement a comprehensive programme to eliminate malnutrition in Amerindian villages.

24.IV.2.32 Government will begin a health education programme which emphasizes preventive measures and traditional Amerindian medicine, and recognises the position of traditional Amerindian healers.

24.IV.2.33 The training of all health workers in Amerindian communities will be periodically upgraded, and a living wage paid to all of them.

24.IV.2.34 Physical plant and equipment in the cottage and regional hospitals in the interior will be modernised and maintained, and adequate and reliable supplies of medication assured.

Village/Community Administration

24.IV.2.35 A general set of community regulations will be established by the Ministry responsible for Amerindian Affairs in consultation with representatives of Amerindian communities throughout Guyana. Individual communities and their leaders will be encouraged to formulate a more applicable set of local subsidiary rules. These rules will apply to all resident and visiting Amerindians and non–Amerindians alike.

24.IV.2.36 Toshaos will be sworn in as Justices of the Peace and will have the authority to issue birth and death certificates and other official documents to be agreed upon.

24.IV.2.37 Toshaos and Council will be given the power to adjudicate petty civil and criminal cases pertaining to matters which occur at the community level, and to administer relevant penalties for such actions. These penalties will be decided by the community, captain and councillors.

24.IV.2.38 Toshaos and Council will have the authority to grant or revoke permissions to non–Amerindians to enter their communities.

24.IV.2.39 Toshaos and Council will be empowered to discipline and/or expel non–Amerindians from their communities for breach of community regulations.

24.IV.2.40 Rules governing the conduct of captains and councillors, including penalties for misconduct, will be established by the Ministry responsible for Amerindian Affairs after consultation with representatives of the Amerindian communities.

CHAPTER 25

GENDER ISSUES

25.I BASIC FEATURES

25.I.1 Gender issues should not be examined as a separate topic. Indeed, when the subject is treated in isolation, it is often marginalised. It is discussed here in a single chapter merely for convenience, and it is urged that when reading the chapter, its wide-ranging significance and pervasive influence be clearly understood.

25.I.2 Above all, what must be understood is the centrality of gender issues to the key economic strategy of the NDS, which places emphasis on the private sector as the engine of growth: as a document, "Mainstreaming Gender in the National Development Strategy" which was published in 1997 states, the NDS must recognise that "the model for a gender equitable society has to be one that is built on the understanding that women, because of their gendered roles, have multiple responsibilities and as a group, are impoverished, lacking the power and capacity to compete with the strength and tenacity of the market". That document also urges that the State play a strong role in favour of the disempowered of the society, including women, and points out that targeted action is key for equitable and sustainable development.

25.I.3 A definition of "gender" is necessary to avoid misunderstanding. The word "gender", unlike the word "sex", speaks to roles and relationships that are defined by societal norms and practices, and supported by societal attitudes. Thus, while this chapter usually speaks of "women" and "men", it is really discussing the roles and relationships that are ascribed to females (women and/or girls) and males (men and/or boys).

25.I.4 The structure of gender relations is skewed against women: for example, in the world of work, it is women who are overwhelmingly responsible for the unwaged and unvalued work of family care and family subsistence, and it is women who are allocated most low-waged and low-valued caring and service work outside the home. Though the experiences of individual women vary widely, women as a group fare worse than men on a number of fronts, ranging from the incidence of poverty to protection under the law, and from access to health care to decision-making power. This understanding of gender relations does not negate the fact that men can also find themselves in a position of subordination; it merely recognises that women are more often and more systemically subordinated.

25.I.5 Because the roles men and women are expected to fulfill are largely socially defined, they are difficult to change through policy only, particularly if the policy environment is one that favours the maintenance of the *status quo*. In general in Guyana, the planning process does not consider the needs of women, nor the contribution they make through the various roles they play. The answer to this is gender mainstreaming, i.e., the consistent use of a gender perspective at all stages of developing and implementing policies and plans. Gender mainstreaming is not about adding a gender component to existing policies and plans, but using gender as an analytical tool for understanding certain critical social processes and applying that understanding to the shaping of policies and plans.

25.I.6 It is because women are subordinated within gender relations and because their practical and strategic needs are usually excluded from development policy and planning, that gender mainstreaming, and therefore this present chapter, focus on the issues and constraints for women, and on recommendations for transforming their situation.

25.II ISSUES AND CONSTRAINTS

25.II.1 Issues

25.II.1.1 An accurate analysis of the current situation is inhibited by the paucity and unreliability of statistical data on gender matters. However, there is broad agreement on the following description of their status.

Poverty

25.II.1.2 Under a number of indicators, the incidence of poverty is higher among women than men, though higher among some women, such as female heads of household, than others. In particular, women are paid lower wages and salaries, face greater difficulties in accessing credit, and own less property. Further, because of their very limited occupation of decision-making posts in both the public and private sectors, women are often not in positions to make or influence policies on salaries, credit, and other avenues of economic empowerment. In Guyana as in other countries, gender stereotyping in the home, gender bias in education, and gender segmentation in the labour market combine to keep the majority of women at the base of the economy. It is also important to note that a great deal of poverty among women remains unperceived.

25.II.1.3 Weaknesses in physical and social infrastructure have a disproportionate impact on women and are an important factor in their poverty; they increase the time and energy needed to perform daily tasks of family care and, therefore, reduce the time and energy women have available for paid work and other activities.

25.II.1.4 The poorest women in Guyana – Amerindian women – are the most geographically difficult to access. Indeed, by definition, their poverty is produced by their lower access to education and health services and to economic opportunities.

Employment

25.II.1.5 Women's apparently low participation in the work force can be explained by their substantial participation in unwaged work and in the informal sector. Increased participation in paid employment may mean an increase in the hours they have to work each day, unless there are corresponding changes to reduce women's unpaid work burden. In addition, women often work as unpaid labour in agriculture and in family businesses. Neither this, nor most of their substantial involvement in the informal sector, is reflected in the employment data.

25.II.1.6 In general, not only are women paid significantly less than men for similar work, but they are far less represented in higher-paying occupations and higher positions in occupational hierarchies. Women continue to predominate as low-paid domestic workers, and in many jobs which are non-unionised, unregulated and not subject to a minimum wage. As has been found in many Export Processing Zones established in the developing world, women are often exploited as a source of cheap labour.

25.II.1.7 This last point relates to a broader issue in women's employment and in women's poverty. The situation of women in Guyana is shaped by national and global economic factors which have contributed to negating the impact of positive changes in their legal and educational status. To take three examples: (a) the process of structural adjustment has been found to impact negatively and disproportionately on women; (b) as the public sector is miniaturised and the private sector becomes central to economic growth and employment, women are disproportionately affected because of the size of their presence in the public sector, and because the real growth areas of the Guyanese economy are not the areas in which they are concentrated; and (c) given the emphasis on the private sector as the engine of growth, the need to attract foreign investment, and the competition between countries for foreign investment, there is a strong temptation on the part of government to informalise its labour market (in terms of employment law, health and safety and wages), and as might be expected, women suffer more in these circumstances.

Health

25.II.1.8 The principal concerns in the health of women and girls centre on reproductive health, including maternal mortality, anaemia during pregnancy, teenage pregnancies, the prevalence of abortion, and complications arising during abortion. There are regional imbalances in the reproductive health situations of women, for example, the highest incidence of low birth weight babies, indicating inadequate maternal nutrition, is found in Regions 7, 8 and 9.

25.II.1.9 But women's health issues are not limited to their reproductive role; they include other issues deriving from sexuality and gender relations. One critical issue of gender relations is domestic violence, briefly discussed under "The Household". Another is the spread of HIV/AIDS among women; while the incidence is lower than for men, the rate of increase for women is higher. In addition, while Guyana has only just begun to establish a cancer registry (from which reliable statistics can be collected), the Guyana Cancer Society reports what appears to be a level of cervical and breast cancer, especially among women of reproductive age, which is cause for concern. Women's health issues also include other chronic illnesses, e.g., women have a higher incidence of diabetes and hypertensive diseases than men.

Other issues which arise from women's role in healthcare include:

- The increasing burdens of providing and accessing health care, whether in homes, clinics or hospitals, which fall hardest on women as a result of their socially ascribed responsibility for health in both their reproductive and productive roles.
- Empirical evidence that providing assistance to women has a more beneficial effect on the well-being of children, than when the assistance is channeled through men. In general, women tend to spend a higher proportion of their take-home pay on children's nutrition. Indeed, the economic returns on investment are generally comparable to those for men, but the social returns in health and fertility regulation by far exceed what is achieved by educating men.

Education

25.II.1.10 Education has a critical role to play in tackling gender inequality in society, and is vital for the personal growth and self-realisation of all people. In Guyana, though both males and females enjoy equal access to education, this does not necessarily translate into equal outcomes in terms of societal opportunities, a deep-seated problem obscured by legitimate concern over recent female "outperformance" of males in education, and the relative lack of male role models for boys in the education system: it remains true that as a result of gender stereotyping in fields of study, females and males are still largely concentrated in traditional subject areas. For example, females are under-represented in Science and Technology (despite the fact that boys and girls receive a common curriculum up to Form 3) and in non-traditional vocational and technical education. This ensures that women remain in the low-wage segments of the domestic job market which they have been traditionally filled

25.II.1.11 Gender stereotyping in education, then, can be rightfully interpreted as reinforcing and rationalising the pervasive structural imbalances in society. The effects of this are compounded by a number of factors including the sharp systemic decline in educational quality in Guyana, gender stereotyping in the classroom (such as in the areas of teaching style and text books used), the absence of gender-sensitive career guidance programmes, and the lack of female and male role models in occupations which are not gender-stereotyped. In addition, there is an under-representation of women in senior administrative positions within individual schools and the educational system as a whole.

25.II.1.12 Another major area of concern is that the system does not cater for adolescent girls whose education is interrupted due to pregnancy; this is a form of discrimination because there is clearly no

prohibition against teenage fathers remaining in school. It also contributes to continuing the cycle of poverty for adolescent girls who give birth, and for their children.

The Household

25.II.1.13 A high proportion of households in Guyana do not conform to the model used in much development policy and statistical data collection. The prevalence of female-headed households and visiting relationships in Guyana puts into question the stereotype of the "ideal" or "typical" nuclear family headed by a male breadwinner, with a wife focused on domestic duties and child rearing.

25.II.1.14 Household income is a poor measure of the welfare of individuals within the household, given that the distribution of income within the household can be very unequal. It would follow that increases in household income do not necessarily imply the improvement in the welfare of women and children. Studies that have been done elsewhere on intrahousehold resource allocation, but which can be extrapolated to Guyana, have found that women fare worse in the areas of nutrition, medical care, education, and inheritance.

25.II.1.15 Two other major household issues are levels of female responsibility for unwaged work, referred to earlier; and levels of household/family violence, directed by men against women, adults against children, the able-bodied against the disabled, and offspring against elderly parents. There is also an alarming increase in suicide whose immediate cause is often reported as family disputes. Issues of power are clearly at work in domestic violence. In addition, alcohol and other substance abuse, overcrowded housing, and general frustration contribute to the violence, although it is important to bear in mind that it is not a feature in poor households only. In relation to children, there is a generalised acceptance of beating as necessary discipline. In relation to women and girls, both in the household and in the wider society, they are more likely than males to be victims of sexual violence throughout their life cycle.

Institutional Framework

25.II.1.16 The major government institution for addressing women's issues is the Women's Affairs Bureau (WAB), whose objectives are made difficult to achieve by its weak institutional capacity. The effectiveness of the WAB is undermined by two main factors: (a) inadequate staffing: the Bureau is staffed with an administrator and two officers. Given the importance and scale of its task, this, together with budget allocations far below requested amounts, severely limits what it can achieve; and (b) its structural location within Government: during its first 10 years (1981–1991) of its existence, it functioned under six different Ministries and Government offices, which hampered its development. Its current location within the Ministry for Human Services and Social Security inhibits its ability to participate in central decision making and to impact upon policy formulation. Its ability to function is further hampered by the paucity of inter-ministry linkages and focal points in technical Ministries.

25.II.1.17 In relation to the non-government sector, while there are some individually vibrant women's organisations, their efforts have not been coordinated, largely because of political polarisation and racial disunity, coupled with resource constraints within the organisations.

Legislation

25.II.1.18 The current legal situation of Guyanese women reflects a gap between *de jure* and *de facto* position equality. Reasons for this include the existence of remaining loopholes, inadequate awareness of women's rights (including by women themselves), and implementation problems.

25.II.1.19 Despite considerable legal reform, a number of weaknesses remain, including the following:

- The law does not adequately recognise the value of women's reproductive role; thus, the Married Persons (Property) Act discriminates against a claimant who does not work outside the home;
- The law does not recognise common law unions for the purposes of maintenance or rights of intestacy, and such recognition of common law unions as there is, is too restrictive;
- There is no legislation dealing comprehensively with sexual harassment and stalking;
- Sexual offences legislation reflects a concern with preserving the chastity of women rather than protecting the vulnerable from abuse;
- Although it is arguable that under the Prevention of Discrimination Act, a pregnant employee is entitled to paid time-off for ante-natal care and maternity leave, there are no specific provisions according these rights;
- Penalties for infringement of anti-discrimination and domestic violence legislation are not heavy enough;
- Family law as a whole is not only too fragmented, but in need of comprehensive reform.

25.II.1.20 On the practical side, there is a lack of sensitivity on the part of police, court authorities at all levels, medical workers, the media and the general public towards victims of abuse.

Language and Culture

25.II.1.21 Undeniably, language is a powerful tool in terms of acculturation and influence. The aim must therefore be to replace language which promotes concepts of male superiority in public documents with inclusive gender-neutral language. Without attacking free speech, every effort must also be made to discourage public airing of items of popular culture (for example, song lyrics) which both reflect and foster endemic sexual violence against women and girls.

25.II.2 Constraints

The following are constraints to the task of transforming gender relations.

25.II.2.1 Beliefs about the "proper" role of women and men which are ingrained in the society, including in policy-makers and planners, often make the task of confronting women's subordination and marginalisation an exercise in futility. Such beliefs are associated with perceptions about the "natural" traits of women, and often serve to maintain their inferior economic, political and social status, both within the household and within the wider community. The constraints that the belief structure imposes are exacerbated by inadequate awareness and knowledge of gender issues throughout society, from government officials to media executives, from education practitioners to health workers.

25.II.2.2 There is inadequate understanding of the concept of gender and therefore, of the value of gender mainstreaming policies and plans. For example, it is not appreciated that gender analysis would illuminate how what are considered "normal" working hours and conditions act as a brake on women's advancement and a threat to their health, and often result in either the neglect of children, inadequate performance on the job, or both. Gender is mistakenly seen as a peripheral subject and as a consideration which simply increases the financial cost of, and time required in, economic and political transactions. This perception, apparently held by a majority of those in decision-making positions, makes it more difficult to gather the necessary resources and commitment. It must be emphasised that this commitment is obligatory, since Guyana has ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and other related international instruments.

25.II.3.3 The centrality of women to national development is not recognised. Much of women's work is invisible and taken for granted. Yet women contribute to development in three spheres: (a) in their

reproductive role, where their care of the family in fact ensures the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force; (b) in their community role, where they are often the main toilers in social, religious, and other bodies; and (c) in their productive role, where they are sometimes secondary income earners, but often primary income earners.

25.II.3.4 The cost of programmes designed as a result of gender mainstreaming is often cited as a reason why such programmes should be afforded low priority. However, no work has been done to examine the cost-effectiveness of these programmes, for example, of making breastfeeding facilities in public places available to mothers, or daycare services available to parents and guardians; or the cost of failure to introduce such programmes. It is important for those who see gender issues as nuisances to understand not only the moral imperative for eliminating gender discrimination, but also the rational economic arguments. Investing in women's capabilities and empowering them to exercise their choices is not only valuable in itself, but is the surest way to contribute to economic growth and overall development. This is not only because women represent over one half of the country's population, but also because the educational attainment and future financial status of children are much more likely to reflect those of the mother than those of the father. Thus the benefits of current investments in human capital are more likely to be passed on to future generations if gender considerations are brought into the mainstream, and women are successfully integrated into the growth process. It pays to invest in women; not just for women, but for their families and ultimately the society.

25.II.3.5 The fact that women have limited access to economic and political decision-making power acts as a further constraint on the work of changing gender relations. However, having women in such positions would not by itself be enough. Instead, the task requires a critical mass of women in positions of power, working in alliance with men, with both groups aware of and committed to the need for change, and willing to place this above their usual divisions and traditional ways of doing things.

25.II.3.6 The institutional capacity of both the Government (specifically the WAB) and the non-government sector is weak, in terms of both human and financial resources, while the private sector does not address the issue of gender. The weaknesses of the WAB have been discussed above. In relation to the NGOs, there are three other major weaknesses: (a) there is poor coordination among them across regions; (b) they are not attracting a body of younger women; and (c) they are little oriented towards research, advocacy, or monitoring and evaluation, but largely towards income-generation. **However, the major weakness in the capacity of women's agencies and organisations is their continued inability to work together in a sustained way across political party and race differences, referred to earlier.**

25.II.3.7 A significant obstacle to analysis and advocacy on behalf of women is the insufficient level and quality of the data required. Indeed, data are often not broken down by sex/gender. Income, for example, is recorded for the household, and not for the individual. This lack of data hampers efforts to improve our understanding of women's economic position in society.

25.III SECTORAL OBJECTIVES

25.III.1 General

25.III.1.1 To achieve sustainable growth and development based on equity for women and broadly, on social justice.

25.III.1.2 To bring gender considerations into the mainstream of development policy; that is, to promote a pattern of development based on gender-sensitive policies that are designed, implemented and monitored with women's full and equal participation.

25.III.1.3 To improve our understanding and increase our awareness of the situation of women, and develop sensitivity towards gender issues, not only within government but within society as a whole.

25.III.1.4 To work against economic, social and cultural disparities not only between men and women, but between groups of women.

25.III.1.5 To transform the culture that is produced by, and produces, attitudes to violence and other forms of abuse of power.

25.III.2 Poverty

25.III.2.1 To reduce poverty among women, with emphasis on the poorest and most vulnerable groups. Policies should have an immediate impact on their lives and the lives of their families and communities, while establishing the groundwork for lasting change. The aim should be that women participate in designing and monitoring an integrated programme.

25.III.2.2 To ensure that the gender-specific impacts on women are taken into account when designing macroeconomic policy.

25.III.2.3 To improve women's access to economic, political, and social power (in society and in the household), given that their relative lack of power is a key element in their poverty.

25.III.2.4 To improve our understanding of the nature and extent of women's unwaged work, with the ultimate aim of bringing about greater recognition of their contribution to the household in both quantitative and qualitative terms, and the re-valuing of both their unwaged and low-waged work.

25.III.3 Employment

25.III.3.1 To increase the opportunities for employment and self-employment among women, especially in non-traditional areas, and to encourage their entrepreneurial potential.

25.III.3.2 To give practical support (e.g., through credit and training) to women's work within the informal sector.

25.III.3.3 To create a "family-friendly" employment environment, so that women can effectively balance their reproductive and productive roles. The aim will be to make it easier for women and men to combine family responsibilities with work outside the home.

25.III.3.4 To ensure that those areas of employment in which women are concentrated conform to acceptable levels of occupational health and safety, terms of employment and remuneration. The aim will be to ensure that women are not exploited as cheap or informalised labour.

25.III.4 Health

25.III.4.1 To alleviate health problems facing women, such as low nutrition, maternal morbidity and mortality, and the rapid rise in the incidence of AIDS.

25.III.4.2 To support women in their child-bearing and child-rearing roles, by providing better access to maternal and child health services.

25.III.4.3 To improve women's access to health services in general, as well as to potable water supplies.

25.III.4.4 To increase women's control over fertility decisions, including improving access to contraceptive advice and technology, and ensuring that medical terminations are conducted under medically safe conditions, at reasonable cost and in compliance with the law.

25.III.5 Education

25.III.5.1 To improve women's level of educational attainment.

25.III.5.2 To provide second-chance educational opportunities for girls who leave the system early, whether due to pregnancy or otherwise, as well as for young adult females who wish to continue their education.

25.III.5.3 To improve access to education, such as through distance learning and the promotion of non-formal education, so as to take into account the multiple demands on women's time.

25.III.5.4 To increase the number of females and males in non-traditional subjects, such as in Science and Technology courses after Form 3.

25.III.5.5 To encourage females and males to pursue non-traditional careers.

25.III.5.6 To ensure that educational materials, teaching methodologies and classroom management reflect gender considerations.

25.III.5.7 To sensitise and heighten the awareness of teachers, school administrators and education officials, as well as those involved in non-formal education, to gender issues.

25.III.5.8 To facilitate the participation of more women in decision-making positions within the education system.

25.III.6 The Household

25.III.6.1 To improve our understanding of the nature and extent of women's unwaged work, with the aim of valuing this for statistical purposes and for policy and programme formulation.

25.III.6.2 To improve our understanding of the internal workings of the household, not only in relation to the sexual division of labour, but also in relation to the internal distribution of resources and patterns of decision making.

25.III.6.3 To develop effective societal mechanisms to protect women against domestic violence, which is an infringement of their human rights.

25.III.7 Institutional Framework

25.III.7.1 To ensure that the WAB has the capacity to carry out its functions with the greatest possible efficiency and effectiveness. The mainstreaming of issues that concern women's position and condition must be accompanied by effective mechanisms for the review and monitoring of sectoral policies.

25.III.7.2 To improve co-ordination within the non-governmental organisation sector and between this sector and the WAB as the focal point in Government. The ultimate aim will be to encourage the emergence of a women's movement, comprising a network of women's organisations and individuals, regardless of class, race, religious persuasion, age, disability and political party affiliation.

25.III.7.3 To promote and maintain an awareness of key gender issues and develop skills in gender analysis, among policy-makers and planners.

25.III.8 Legislation

25.III.8.1 To address the weaknesses in the content of the law through reform.

25.III.8.2 To improve implementation of the law through increased public awareness and more effective use of enforcement mechanisms.

25.IV THE STRATEGY

25.IV.1 General

25.IV.1.1 "Focal points" will be established within all Ministries and agencies, to ensure the inclusion of gender considerations in policy making, and to act as a source of training in gender planning for all policy-makers. Under the WAB, these focal points will be charged with identifying gender needs as they relate to their Ministry's area of activity, and ensuring that these needs are considered in policy design and implementation, as well as in the distribution of annual budget allocations. The monitoring of outcomes will need to be conducted against detailed objectives, indicators and targets. In addition, the focal points will be charged with the gender sensitisation of government personnel at all levels.

25.IV.1.2 **Private firms and government agencies will be ranked by performance on various gender indicators. Government will indirectly encourage both sectors to move towards gender equality by annually publishing a performance table which ranks firms and agencies by gender achievement. Indicators will include, for example, the percentage of female staff, as well as the proportion of women at senior levels. Consumers will then be able to take their business to those firms of which they most approve, allowing the desire to maximise profits to drive reform.**

25.IV.1.3 Public campaigns will be conducted to raise public awareness of gender issues.

25.IV.1.4 **Budgetary support will be provided to women's groups at the community level so that they may establish shelters for women and children affected by domestic violence, undertake community sensitisation programmes on that subject, and provide support groups and counselling for women and children.**

25.IV.1.5 Linkages will be developed with regional and international efforts on gender, so as to take advantage of support networks, information and, possibly, funding.

25.IV.1.6 There will be regular Human Development Reports on Guyana, and these will include measurements of the country's performance based on the UN Gender Empowerment Measure and Gender Development Index, or any other more appropriate indicators developed in the Caribbean.

25.IV.2 Poverty

25.IV.2.1 Remunerative employment opportunities for women will be increased through a combination of policies to promote economic growth; investment in women's "human capital" such as relevant training and improved health; and **facilitation of women's entry into the labour market by the introduction of flexible work conditions, day care facilities, and facilities for breastfeeding.** Since most remunerative employment opportunities may not be in the formal sector, **strategies will be formulated to support viable self-employment and microenterprise development. The context will be a policy environment supportive to the informal sector.**

25.IV.2.2 Women's access to credit will be enhanced by supporting grass-roots credit schemes, and by encouraging the establishment of a national women's credit institution which will meet the credit needs of low-income women, who often find themselves excluded from formal credit due to collateral requirements. The institution will be a joint project between NGOs, the private sector and the donor community. The Government will have a minority stake in its capitalisation.

25.IV.2.3 Investments will be made in basic social services, with an emphasis on the poorest groups of women. Among other measures, there will be an expansion of SIMAP money supplements; expansion of nutrition programmes; improvements in the social infrastructure and service delivery mechanisms; increased access to productive resources, including training and credit; increased access to education and primary health care; and increased access to safe drinking water. Investment in social infrastructure will disproportionately benefit women, given their need to balance different roles. The aim will be to **earmark at least 25 percent of the national budget for basic social services.**

25.IV.2.4 Special funds for supplementing poor families' mortgage payments and housing rent payments that are called for elsewhere in this National Development Strategy will be established.

25.IV.2.5 Women will be trained in non-traditional and more highly paid trades. Apart from direct provision, financial inducements such as career developmental loans will be offered for women to attend non-traditional vocational training institutions (such as sponsorships or career development loans).

25.IV.2.6 An oversight government agency, to look into the case for affirmative action or to ensure non-discrimination, as put forward in the Chapter on Governance in this National Development Strategy, will be established. Affirmative action in the form of quota systems is used to overcome historical imbalances in many countries around the world, as diverse as Norway, Argentina, Pakistan and Tanzania.

25.IV.2.7 Studies will be conducted into time, in an attempt to estimate the economic value of women's unwaged contribution to the national economy.

25.IV.3 Employment

25.IV.3.1 The policies outlined throughout this Strategy to boost employment opportunities will be implemented.

25.IV.3.2 Policies to create "family friendly" working environments and employment conditions will be introduced. Such policies will include some combination of one or more of the following: (1) the introduction of crèches at work; (2) the provision of more child/family-care facilities; (3) the introduction of "flexitime" systems; (4) the introduction of the option for workers with very young children or other dependent relatives to work at home; (5) the introduction of the option to shorten the working day for mothers while their children are very young; (6) the introduction of the option for mothers to switch to part-time work while a child is very young; and (7) the introduction of parental leave for females and males (that is, both maternity and paternity leave).

25.IV.3.3 The compliance of corporations, local and foreign, with national laws and codes governing the rights and benefits of women workers will be ensured. This will require addressing not only weaknesses in the law but also issues of legal awareness and enforcement. The WAB will be strengthened to allow it to monitor compliance with laws effectively.

25.IV.3.4 The CARICOM model laws on Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value and on Equal Opportunity in Employment will be adopted, as well as ILO Convention Number 156 relating to the rights of workers with family responsibilities. Legal protection will be extended to domestic workers and other workers not presently covered by such legislation.

25.IV.3.5 The introduction of equal pay for work of equal value.

25.IV.4 Health

25.IV.4.1 Improved levels of primary health care and reproductive health care, with a special emphasis on female malnutrition and maternal mortality levels will be provided. An integrated programme will include, among other things, nutrition programmes, health education, improved access to safe drinking water, improved access to health care, improvements in the quality of health care, and the overcoming of resource constraints in the MCH Unit in the Ministry of Health (in terms of staffing shortages and financial resources).

25.IV.4.2 The rapid rise of AIDS amongst women will be tackled through a concerted health education programme and the utilisation of available medical facilities and supplies.

25.IV.4.3 Contraceptives will be made available, in order to enhance women's control over fertility decisions. This will be accompanied by a wider availability of family planning advice.

25.IV.4.4 Health institutions that carry out medical terminations will be monitored to ensure that minimum health and safety requirements are adhered to. In addition, counselling will be provided for those women who have had or wish to have a medical termination and that counselling, as required by law, will be done routinely.

25.IV.5 Education

25.IV.5.1 Women will be trained in non-traditional and more highly paid trades.

25.IV.5.2 The broader approach to technical and vocational education outlined in the Chapter on Education, will be implemented.

25.IV.5.3 Career advice services and systems of industrial placements in non-traditional firms for female students will be established.

25.IV.5.4 Career advice services and systems of industrial placements in non-traditional firms for female students will be established.

25.IV.5.5 The level and quality of education, particularly at the primary level and up to the 3rd Form level, will be enhanced through improvements in (a) teacher quality (which includes an increase in salaries and an improvement in access to teacher training colleges); and (b) the quality and quantity of schools, which includes the provision of up-to-date teaching and learning equipment and materials.

25.IV.5.6 Programmes to promote the inculcation of desirable social skills and an acceptance of a value system as a sound base for quality citizenship will be introduced.

25.IV.5.7 Parenting skills will be imparted through the curricula of both formal and non-formal institutions.

25.IV.5.8 Women (including teenage mothers) returning to the educational system after pregnancy or child raising will be assisted by the provision of grants or loans, as well as formal and informal back-to-school and job training programmes.

25.IV.5.9 Day-care facilities will be provided at secondary and post-secondary academic and vocational institutions, so as to help women *students* with children to balance the different demands on their time.

25.IV.5.10 National distance learning schemes will be strengthened. This will enable those women who do not have access to schools or training centres, to gain an education.

25.IV.5.11 A careers' advice service and system of industrial placements will be established in non-traditional firms for female students. Career guidance programmes at the secondary and tertiary levels will be introduced to emphasise an expanded set of career choices for women. Placements and work-study programmes will be arranged post-CXC, post-A-Level, or as a part of a "sandwich course" at University. These programs will be financed by Government and the private sector firms involved in the programmes.

25.IV.5.12 Guidelines for classroom management and educational materials (such as textbooks and audio visual materials) will be provided. Educational materials that are sensitive to gender issues will be encouraged, while those which are not, will be modified or actively discouraged. In addition, it will be ensured that the curriculum avoids gender stereotyping at all levels and, indeed, that gender sensitivity is included as a topic.

25.IV.5.13 Gender training courses for teachers and educational administrators will be conducted. Trainee teachers will be equipped with the requisite skills and techniques for gender-sensitive teaching and learning, as well as for managing mixed classes.

25.IV.5.14 The employment of female lecturers at tertiary institutions and in management positions will be encouraged, primarily by the removal of discriminatory barriers and by the persuasion of females to apply.

25.IV.5.15 A "Task Force on Gender Issues in Education" will be established, to act as the "focal point" in the Ministry of Education. Members will be drawn from the Ministry of Education, teachers' unions, the Women's Affairs Bureau, the Women's Studies Unit at the University of Guyana, and school administrators, counsellors and teachers. The Task Force will address the re-design of overall curricula; the standardisation of the secondary school/post Form 3 curriculum, with slots for electives; and gender sensitivity training for counsellors, administrators and teachers. The conclusions of the Task Force will be made public and its recommendations will be implemented, in stages, upon review by the Ministry of Education and the Women's Affairs Bureau. It will remain active after presenting its findings as a monitoring and assessment unit, with continued support from government for its administration.

25.IV.6 The Household

25.IV.6.1 Adequate institutional capacity will be provided to monitor and enforce the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act. This will require institutional strengthening of the WAB, a national campaign to bring about public awareness, and training of those directly involved in enforcing the existing law (particularly the police). Counselling facilities will need to be developed alongside this.

25.IV.6.2 In order to gain deeper insights into the situation and position of women, the household and its significance for improving the status of women will be assessed through a series of studies on income distribution within the household; patterns of decision making in the household; and quantification of unwaged work in the household.

25.IV.7 Institutional Framework

25.IV.7.1 The institutional capacity of the WAB will be strengthened so that it may perform its key functions (including training and monitoring) more effectively. Specifically, the inter-ministry committee will be strengthened to provide competent technical expertise in the framing of policy and programme initiatives.

25.IV.7.2 The National Commission on Women will be strengthened by the reorganisation of its membership to include not more than ten persons, female and male, representing sectoral areas of Government as well as relevant social partners, such as the trade union movement and the private sector. Members should be persons recognised for their work at community, national or sectoral level. The Commission will have an independent moderator, and the WAB will be its secretariat. The Commission, which should be non-partisan, will continue in its responsibility for recommending policy and programme directions in regard to gender to the relevant Minister; promoting a lobby for the policies and programmes of the WAB; stimulating a broad national debate on issues of gender equity; and undertaking, or assisting the undertaking by others, of appropriate research and educational activities in this area.

25.IV.7.3 The WAB will be headed by an officer of appropriate status for liaising with the Permanent Secretaries of Ministries relevant to the formulation and implementation of its policies and programmes. Competent professionals will be appointed to staff the Bureau in areas such as policy analysis, research, and data gathering and dissemination. **In support of the accepted strategy of mainstreaming the issues, the WAB will be located within the Ministry which has responsibility for National Development Planning.** The WAB will also be provided with required technical and financial support for its national programmes, as well as for meaningful participation in regional and international organisations. In addition, there will be full recognition at the national level of the linkages between the WAB, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other national, regional and international agencies mandated to address issues that concern the condition and position of women.

25.IV.7.4 Project implementation will be the responsibility of the line ministries, supported by competent NGOs. The role of the WAB will be to formulate policies and programmes, based on careful research, to monitor programme and project implementation, and to coordinate the support of international donors and regional agencies. Coordination between the various non-governmental women's organisations and other gender groups will be improved by strengthening information networks to disseminate relevant information and communicate ideas. The aim will be to establish a forum, bringing together all groups concerned with gender issues, regardless of race, class, religion, geographic location or party political affiliation. **Government will be committed to the provision of technical and financial support for such networks.**

25.IV.7.5 Women's focal points will be established within ministries and agencies, and will be staffed by trained gender-sensitive officials.

25.IV.7.6 In order to fulfil its mandate of promoting the status of all Guyanese women, across all differences of race, class, disability, religion, culture, political persuasion and geographical location, the national machinery, i.e. the WAB, will be given semi-autonomous status. It will have the capacity for policy formulation in all areas relevant to the needs and concerns of women, as well as for on-going programme implementation, thus ensuring continuity across changing administrations. Its operations will be supported by realistic budgetary provisions, in spite of the constraint of an inadequately functioning economy.

25.IV.8 Legislation

25.IV.8.1 A national legal literacy campaign will be conducted to enhance awareness and understanding of women's legal rights, including by women, and to mobilise public opinion in favour of their enforcement.

25.IV.8.2 Gender training for law enforcement officials will be provided so that they may better understand and respond to complaints of abuse and discrimination.

25.IV.8.3 The law will be reformed (by amendment or repeal and enactment, as necessary) in those areas where weaknesses exist. Relatedly, all language which excludes women will be removed and replaced by appropriate, inclusive language.

CHAPTER 26

THE FAMILY AND ITS MOST VULNERABLE MEMBERS

26.I BASIC FEATURES

26.I.1 The family, in all its variety of forms, is the pivotal institution in any society. As the Family Code of the Caribbean asserts: "the family ... is the elementary cell of society, and as such, contributes to its development and plays an important role in the upbringing of the new generations."

26.I.2 The family may also be pivotal in a negative way. Instead of being the primary source of emotional and material support to its members and the primary base for child development, families of all types, across social strata and race, may be places where power, whether based on income, gender, age and/or disability, is misused.

26.I.3 The family is pivotal for the good or ill of the society because it shapes the individuals who in turn shape the society. Put another way, just as the family is impacted on by constraints in the macro economic and social and cultural environment, so it in turn impacts on that environment, most visibly in the skills, attitudes and behaviour of people – whether as they function in the labour force or in the community. The chapter therefore adds to the discussion of the family as a unit, discussion of its most vulnerable members – children, adolescents, the elderly, and those with disabilities.

26.I.4 Neither in Guyana nor elsewhere is the family static in form. Instead, family form is shaped by the environment – for example, by changes in the macro and household economies. Moreover, differences in the social organisation and value systems of families are most pronounced in plural societies such as Guyana in which several ethnic groups, originally from different parts of the world, with varying traditions and distinct cultural practices, inhabit one nation state. There is therefore no one typical Guyanese family structure but different family structures shaped largely by differences in ancestral patterns of life and local histories.

26.I.5 Overlying this, however, is the broadly-shared belief, backed by most religious teaching, that the ideal family form is the nuclear family bound together in marriage that is legally and/or religiously approved. This was the teaching even during slavery when the practice of the slave owners and their allies destroyed any possibility of building such families and began the process through which the single-parent, female-headed household became a dominant feature in the Afro-Guyanese working class. Thus, even as this form of family becomes more and more usual among Amerindians and Indo-Guyanese under pressure of migration, all races and social strata continue to describe the nuclear family within marriage as the norm, and other forms, particularly female-headed, single-parent households, as deviant. This was borne out by a survey undertaken especially for the preparation of this chapter. In fact, what the society must confront is that among all race groups, the growing number of single-parent female-headed households are today especially vulnerable because widespread migration from and movement around the country have dispersed extended family support networks, while alternative support systems are either absent or underdeveloped.

26.I.6 Family structures in Guyana are the nuclear family in both its legal and common law forms: the single-parent, female-headed household, sometimes with three generations headed by a grandmother; the extended family of different types, its members sometimes living in the same household, sometimes in several households; child-headed households; and the household consisting of one individual, often an elderly or old person, more frequently a woman.

26.II ISSUES AND CONSTRAINTS

26.II.1 The Family as a Unit

26.II.1.1 Key constraints on development discussed in other chapters act as critical constraints on Guyanese families:

- At the economic level, macroeconomic decline in the 1980s impoverished many Guyanese families, while the introduction of IMF/World Bank Structural Adjustment Policies reduced employment in the public sector, removed subsidies on basic items, introduced cost recovery for basic services and placed greater burdens on poor households, particularly on the women in those households.
- At the social and cultural level, constraints on families include the critical shortage of housing, the poor quality of and access to services, especially in the hinterland, the decline in the urban environment, and more recently, the social impact of the new mining and logging industries on Amerindian communities.

26.II.1.2 In the survey referred to earlier, respondents emphasised that families are expected to provide support for their members but acknowledged that the challenges they face make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the average Guyanese family to perform its basic functions. This reduced ability of a significant proportion of families to meet the fundamental requirements of their members has induced in many households a spirit of helplessness, hopelessness and despair, and has put both the family's welfare and that of the nation at risk.

26.II.1.3 The new pressures are harsher on poor families of all types than on families of other social strata. With economic decline, the need for parents living in poverty to work in more than one job, or in both the formal and informal sectors, or in several locations in the informal sector, or for longer hours in small family businesses or farms, greatly increased. Some work, notably that of trading, requires regular travel across the country and/or region. The increase in waged work, together with the continuation of women's overwhelming responsibility for unwaged work in home and community, gives them a triple burden which may result in the neglect of children. Poor women completely tied to reproductive work (because of the number and/or ages of the children they are raising), with inadequate support from fathers and/or the State, are among the most economically vulnerable in Guyana today and their children among the most deprived. There is an increase in parents with inadequate parenting skills, commitment and responsibility.

26.II.1.4 In some communities, there is also an increased absence of active fathers, sometimes due to migration; in Amerindian communities of the hinterland, for example, fathers travelling for long periods to work in the growing mining and logging areas create de facto female-headed, single-parent families. Migration, while a factor in the weakening of families across class and race, is differently expressed in poor families; while the issue has not been researched, it appears that among poor families there is a greater tendency for the migration of individual adults rather than of whole families, contributing to the small but telling number of child-headed households and to a growth in child-shifting. According to the abridged version of the report prepared by the WAB for submission to the 4th World Conference on Women, 1995:

"...because the migration is largely of individuals rather than families, it has produced a fragmenting of families and communities. A small survey of 27 Indo- and Afro-Guyanese students aged 11-16 attending school in Georgetown, whose parent or parents had migrated, found that 12 out of 27 families were considered to have broken up permanently, and 19 out of 27 students had negative expectations of a future with their Parent(s). Only 7 out of 27 reported receiving adequate support from their migrant parent(s)."

26.II.1.5 Some of the growing pressures on Guyanese families are faced by all social strata: these include migration itself; political instability; ethnic tension; negative changes in societal values and norms; the steep rise in HIV/AIDS; and the growing culture of illegality, violence and disorder.

26.II.1.6 There is strong evidence, also, that the incidence of violence and other abuse in Guyanese households, mainly against children, women, the elderly and the disabled, has increased significantly in recent years. Such violence is often associated with alcohol and drug abuse. While the evidence suggests that domestic violence cuts across race and class, more precise information is needed. There are also reports of an alarming increase in suicide, particularly among young Indo–Guyanese males, following family disputes.

26.II.1.7 The rise in conflicts in Guyanese families has not been accompanied by a rise in the mediation services available to them. There are no formal alternatives to the courts for the settling of family disputes, even though the matters of disagreement may be relatively trivial in content and substance, if not in the degree of conflict which they engender. The result is that the problems are either left to fester, or are elevated to a justiciable matter, with all the negative results of such action. The judicial system does not currently have a branch which deals specifically with family matters. All family problems are, as a consequence, treated by the courts in the same manner as other quite different types of dispute. Apart from the fact that this absence of specialist courts often leads to a failure to examine adequately and effectively the many sensitive issues which arise in family disputes, there are inordinate delays in their resolution, because of the backlog of work in Guyana's courts. All too often, families disintegrate while waiting for their cases to be settled.

26.II.1.8 Because of the relatively high incidence of divorce and judicial separation in the country, but mostly because of the increasing numbers of children being born in visiting relations, a growing number of children live with single mothers but need to be maintained, at least in part, by fathers. Claims for maintenance may be made both in the Magistrates' Court and in the High Court. However, magistrates can award a maximum amount of only G\$250.00 per month. This is obviously grossly inadequate, and is a further cause not only of the break–up of the family, the abandonment of children, and the prevalence of street children, many of whom are not homeless in the way that homelessness is normally understood, but also of prostitution and the use of multiple male partners for the purpose of gaining income.

26.II.1.9 On the other side of the coin, because marriages in Guyana may be dissolved only if cruelty or adultery or malicious desertion is proven, the complexity of these requirements often leads to the continuation of marriages even in circumstances which bring grief to all family members, and is often the cause of increased bickering, strife, and violence.

26.II.2 Children and Youth

26.II.2.1 Guyanese children and adolescents are growing up in a context where there is still an unacceptably high incidence of poverty; inadequate expenditure on education and health; and a desperate shortage of houses. There are not enough recreational and sporting facilities in many communities. Children and adolescents are also faced with an increasing burden of both unwaged and waged work. In addition, patterns of gender socialisation in Guyanese families, as in the rest of the Caribbean, are working negatively against both girls and boys: in a context of diminished parental attention to both sexes, girls are more restricted and more sexually abused and exploited, and are still trained into areas of interest, study and employment that are less valued and more poorly paid, while boys are being less carefully nurtured and more harshly beaten, and are dropping out of school in larger numbers than girls. All this has implications for the society in areas ranging from violence and crime to employment and income. Above all, it has implications for the kinds of family we will create in the future.

26.II.2.2 In short, the Guyanese child is being born, nurtured, and educated in an environment in which his or her physical and psychological health, viewed from any angle, is far from optimal. Cultural traditions are no longer being passed down to the young generation, resulting in a lack of appreciation of the significance of cultural norms and a lack of interest in cultural practices. Children and adolescents are poorer for not having this value system as part of their knowledge base and are more prey to what was earlier described as the growing culture of illegality, violence and disorder. Children and adolescents may also be particular victims

of the continuing flaws or gaps in the law. For example, no laws exist which empower the Government or any of its agencies to remove children, found to be in threatening and dangerous situations, from the custody and control of parents and guardians. There are currently no laws governing foster care.

26.II.2.3 Schools cannot take up the slack for weakening families. Many teachers are themselves products of an education system which has been in decline, and a society where standards have fallen. This has implications for their teaching of academic, technical, vocational and life skills. Schools no longer provide career guidance. The result, for many children and youth, is a loss of faith in education as a path to social mobility. Indeed, surveys indicate that a significant proportion of them link their hope for the future with migration. As mentioned earlier, there are high levels of dropout, particularly among boys, at the same time that too many girls are being prepared for low-paid work.

26.II.2.4 Not only are many children coming out of school not trained in terms of work or life skills for the labour force; they also face inadequate opportunities for good jobs. Across two decades, a large part of what the economy has created is the opportunity for casual, informal sector and sometimes illegal work. Nor has the drive to survive that many young people have shown over this period been adequately recognised and rewarded so that they might move out of areas and levels of income-generation that are not productive either for themselves or for the national economy.

26.II.2.5 Adolescents, even below eighteen, are increasingly becoming involved in substance abuse. In addition, many begin having sex at an early age (a 1998 survey indicated the age of first sexual contact for some as 12 years old). This has implications for levels of teenage pregnancy (and therefore the continuation of cycles of poverty and of babies born with low birth weight) and for sexual health. Although recent data indicate that the number of youths under 20 years of age using contraceptives for the first time has grown from 1,648 in 1995 to 1809 in 1998, the number of teenage pregnancies has grown at a higher rate. Nor has the increased use of contraceptives protected adolescents from increased HIV and other STD infection: the 1998 statistical report from the Gerito-Urinary Medicine Clinic of the Georgetown Hospital revealed that of the 7,254 patients who visited the Hospital, 1409 or 19 percent were youths. It is also reported that the age group mainly affected by HIV/AIDS is the 19–35 age group, and that many persons 18–25 are being diagnosed with AIDS; given the long incubation period of AIDS infection, many of them must have become infected in their early, mid, or late teens. On the positive side, the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1995 has reportedly led to a decrease in the number of abortions in girls below 19 years.

26.II.3 The Elderly

26.II.3.1 The elderly, too, are in a vulnerable position. Many live below the poverty line, particularly those living on small pensions and, in general, no special provisions are made either by the Government or the private sector to enable them to live in a modicum of comfort. Their nutrition is poor and the health services available to them inadequate. Their private housing facilities are, in general, decrepit and unmaintained.

26.II.3.2 Twenty years ago, part of the value system of Guyana was formal respect for the elderly and a generalised acceptance of the need to care for elderly parents and other relatives. Today, given the dispersal of families, many elderly people live alone, with all of their children overseas, and there is a lack of services to fill the gap. Across different social strata, they face a loneliness due in part to this disintegration of the family structure, but also to the dearth of facilities which can provide them with opportunities for participating in recreational activities and for social interaction.

26.II.3.3 In a survey undertaken in 1997 by a Senior Citizens Policy Development Committee, senior citizens almost unanimously expressed a preference for remaining in their own communities and homes rather than live in either public or private institutions. Moreover, the cost of keeping senior citizens in institutions is higher than that of supporting them to remain at home. In addition, they are often able to maintain or regain

their independence when they live at home, and are provided with at least a minimum number of community services, including services by health professionals and trained volunteers.

26.II.3.4 Although there is strong evidence from many parts of the world that interaction between children and the elderly can be beneficial to both age groups, in Guyana such programmes appear for the most part to have been desultory, unplanned, and unsustainable. Furthermore, the strengths of the elderly in Guyana are woefully under-utilised. There is a failure on the part of both the State and civil society to provide an environment in which they might continue to play an important role in the country's development and benefit in their old age from the contributions which many of them have made to the nation's social and economic growth. There are no programmes specifically designed to impart skills and knowledge to senior citizens, or to upgrade the skills and knowledge which they already possess. It is as if society considers that their productive lives are over. They are hardly ever given the opportunity to begin new careers. Indeed, most employers in Guyana strictly enforce the retirement age. In one respect this is understandable, for the retirement process permits younger persons to be promoted or to enter the labour force. It is evident, however, that there is a critical shortage of skills in areas that are key to the development of the nation; for example, trained and experienced teachers are desperately needed and yet, each year, the qualified elderly are required to retire.

26.II.3.5 In sum, the elderly in Guyana do not constitute a constituency whose needs are addressed. They are not organised in their own interests, not even to the limited degree that other vulnerable groups are. This helps explain why (unlike say, Barbados), public and private companies and agencies are not required or even encouraged to offer rebates and other financial assistance to the elderly. There is no law in Guyana which prescribes that certain types of physical facility be laid down in public places for the elderly and that buildings be designed to avoid impeding their mobility. No special health services are available at the health posts, managed by Community Health Workers, which are located mainly in the hinterland regions, for senior citizens; indeed very few are available throughout the country. There are no geriatric specialists in Guyana. The National Insurance and Social Security Act covers only that proportion of the population of the elderly who are either in, or just out of, the work force; it does not extend to those who were never gainfully employed. In effect, therefore, less than half of the elderly population benefit from the "Old Age" portion of the Act.

26.II.4 People with Disabilities

26.II.4.1 According to the National Policy on the Rights of People with Disabilities, there are no up-to-date data on disability in Guyana. However, the existing information suggests that disability is more prevalent in poorer families, and that its incidence is increasing as a result of a rise in traffic accidents.

26.II.4.2 Not only is poverty one of the leading causes of disability; disability can cause a family already living in poverty to become poorer, especially if the household's sole income-earner becomes disabled. Disability also interacts with other variables to increase poverty.

26.II.4.3 Constraints on the lives of people with disabilities in Guyana are exacerbated by the inadequacy of rehabilitation services, especially outside the urban areas. The experience of the non-governmental, externally-funded Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme suggests that sustainable rehabilitation programmes can be built at community level, using nonprofessionals to deliver services. However, specialised and institutionalised services need to be provided as part of Primary Health Care.

26.II.4.4 The National Policy on Disability emphasises that while the material problems that people with disabilities face in Guyana are critical, societal attitudes towards them are no less crippling, and it adds that "the right of people with disabilities to education, to health services, to employment, to sexual relations and to parenthood...is far from assumed, still less provided for". Part of the reason for this is that organisations of

and for people with disabilities do not focus on advocacy for their rights, nor are these rights raised as a matter of sustained, central concern by organisations and agencies working for the rights of other groups such as children or women.

26.III SECTORAL OBJECTIVES

26.III.1 The overarching goal is to enable Guyanese to create lives that are at least sufficient, at best liberating, in economic, social, cultural and spiritual terms.

26.III.2 What Guyanese families need to begin to regenerate themselves is the progressive transformation in the country's macro-economic conditions, and in the quality of and access of all to basic services, that this National Development Strategy proposes. But it will not be possible to transform the environment and enable development unless the process is led by a population that sees its future here; that has a strong sense of wholeness or nation across ethnic and other differences; that is willing to reduce the disparities that exist between groups and render some groups more vulnerable; and that is healthy and imbued with the skills and values needed for creative and productive work and leisure. All this depends on creating and creating anew, families that can protect, nurture and enable its members. This is work not only for government but for government and civil society.

26.IV THE STRATEGY

26.IV.1 Many of the strategies outlined below are detailed in other chapters, for example, strategies related to economic opportunity and housing. In addition, strategies are drawn from existing documents such as the National Policy on the Rights of People with Disabilities. All these are summarised here, grouped with new strategies, and prioritised, in order to indicate how they will interact in the regeneration of the Guyanese family. It is emphasised, however, that as part of the country's general national development strategy, projects that are designed to raise the incomes of Guyanese families, to provide them with better and more relevant educational prospects and services, to enhance the quality of health care, to make available suitable and affordable accommodation and, most important, to create more job opportunities, will be formulated and implemented.

26.IV.2 Immediate Actions

26.IV.2.1 To jump start the process, the proposed strategy is to put the strengthening of families on the active national agenda. **Wide public discussion of the draft Family Code and the relevant proposals of the NDS will be organised, using the mass media, in order to spur active consideration, leading to increased agreement, about the rights and responsibilities of, and the enabling conditions for, families.**

26.IV.2.2 As emergency action which will not only make a practical difference but demonstrate commitment to supporting families, the proposal is **to strengthen social safety nets for vulnerable families by announcing and implementing the exemption of all persons below the poverty line from cost recovery for basic services.**

26.IV.3 Actions to be initiated in the Short-Term and continued

26.IV.3.1 To provide new economic opportunities for families below the poverty line:

- New, accessible microcredit schemes for the rural, urban and hinterland poor below the poverty line will be introduced.
- Public servants who are retrenched will be offered retraining and low-interest loans.

- Social Assistance for parents unable to have paid employment because of the care needs of disabled dependents will be increased; and National Insurance Scheme provisions amended to provide benefits for such parents as self-employed persons.

26.IV.3.2 To open up opportunities for housing to new groups among the poor:

- **Criteria for the allocation of housing lots will be revised to accommodate poor, unemployed youths, female heads of household, the elderly, and people with disabilities.**
- **Money will be sought to establish two funds to provide rent and mortgage supplements for poor families.**
- Incentives will be provided to commercial banks to extend mortgage loans at reduced interest rates.

26.IV.3.3 To provide better protection for children and adolescents:

- The Children's Service Unit will be empowered to remove from the custody and control of parents and guardians, children found to be in threatening and dangerous situations, including those abandoned, neglected or ill-treated, and to seek the necessary orders from a Court of competent jurisdiction.
- Guidelines for teachers will be drawn up to enable them, as a legal requirement, to report any signs of domestic violence and child abuse which they observe at school.
- Legislation will be enacted to regulate the fostering of abandoned or neglected children.
- Regulations will also be formulated for the operation of orphanages and children's homes and more homes will be provided.
- The Adoption of Children Act will be amended to permit persons living in common law unions to adopt children.
- The maximum age for maintenance of children will be increased to 18 years, and the minimum amount of maintenance which a Magistrate could order for a child and for a spouse will be increased after consideration by experts in this matter. There will be no maximum limit.
- Special programmes, both within and outside of the school system, will be organised to work with Guyanese youth against drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence and teenage pregnancies.
- Legislation will be enacted regulating day care in both private and municipal institutions and requiring all day care centres and child minders to be registered.

26.IV.3.4 To provide better protection for people with disabilities and elderly people in institutions:

- The necessary regulations and monitoring mechanisms and agencies for institutions housing people with disabilities, and elderly people will be established.

26.IV.3.5 To begin the process of providing for the equalisation of opportunities for people with disabilities:

- Existing legislation will be amended, and new enacted legislation as required, to remove areas of discrimination against people with disabilities and promote the equalisation of opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Beginning from the next census, data on the causes, types and incidence of disability will be collected systematically.
- All buildings for public use will be immediately required (in the case of publicly-owned buildings) or strongly urged (in the case of privately-owned buildings), to provide affordable access to people with disabilities, e.g., ramps for wheelchair access such as those at the Public Library, the Cultural Centre and St. George's Cathedral in Georgetown.
- Standards will be established and enforced for the provision of access of people with disabilities to new buildings and facilities.

26.IV.3.6 To offer improved support for resolving family conflict peacefully:

- A number of family conflict resolution centres will be established and developed to deal with family disputes before they escalate into violence and disruption and before they reach the Courts. The establishment of non-governmental organisations with similar aims will also be supported.
- A Family Law Act, incorporating relevant legislation, regulating the relationship of parties in common law unions and providing for the resolution of disputes over property, child and spouse maintenance and the custody of children, will be enacted.
- A Family Court will be established to mediate over these matters.

26.IV.3.7 To use the strengths of the elderly for development:

- The enforcement of the rules *re* retirement will be relaxed, and employers will be encouraged to re-employ retirees with needed skills and knowledge.
- Facilities for adult training which give retirees a chance to update their own skills and enable them to continue to contribute in a meaningful way to society will be established.
- Seniors will be encouraged to develop a second career, and the services of retirees will be used in appropriate institutions and agencies; for example, they will be invited to be involved in teaching programmes in the formal Education system.

26.IV.4 Key Medium- to Long-Term Strategies

26.IV.4.1 To increase protection and opportunities for children, the elderly, and people with disabilities:

- Guyanese nationals resident overseas who can provide evidence that they are fit persons to adopt will be permitted to adopt children, provided that the local Adoption Board and the Courts, informed by the International Social Services, are satisfied that the adoption is in the best interest of the child.
- All new senior citizens' institutions and institutions for people with disabilities will be built to specifications which ensure that all the special services necessary for comfort and security are in place, and provision will be made to upgrade existing institutions to such standards.
- The National Insurance Scheme's medical care benefits will be continued after retirement since this is when illness most often occurs and assistance needed.
- Duty free concessions will be given to the elderly and to people with disabilities for drugs and other health-related necessities.
- A health visitors' scheme will be re-introduced and clinics will place emphasis on the monitoring of the situation of senior citizens and of people with disabilities to ensure that a supply of essential drugs and essential aids is always available for their use.
- For seniors living independently, a programme of Home Help will be institutionalised to ensure that they are cared for and have some contact with others during the day. Economic support, counselling, and care services will be provided to enable people with disabilities to live at home.
- All health personnel will be trained in some aspects of care of the elderly, and geriatric clinics will be established for their use at the central and regional hospitals.
- Access to rehabilitation, health, educational and other services for people with disabilities will be improved through the upgrading of facilities, the establishment of new specialised facilities, and the integration of people with disabilities into general-use facilities, as determined to be appropriate by people with disabilities and their organisations and agencies.

26.IV.4.2 To expand economic opportunities for families living in poverty:

- **Land reform increasing the size of the holdings of the rural poor will be introduced.**

26.IV.4.3 To provide the basis for more families to have access to better housing:

- **Land for housing will be granted free of charge to people below the poverty line.**
- **A new housing policy will facilitate the introduction of schemes which can develop a range of innovative housing arrangements (eg. Home sharing, retirement villages).**
- **For the elderly and people with disabilities in need, a special fund will be allocated for property maintenance for both individuals and established homes.**
- **Housing for seniors and for people with disabilities within new and existing communities will be established at subsidised rental for those with low incomes.**

26.IV.4.4 To expand opportunities for leisure and sports:

- A comprehensive, countrywide recreation and sports programme will be formulated and implemented. It will include the establishment of sports centres in strategic locations throughout the country; the employment of an adequate number of coaches in various fields; the organisation of a greater number of competitive games for all relevant age classes, beginning with the primary schools, and extending through the secondary schools to the University and public at large; the engagement of scouts to recognise early skills and genius in our youth, and the provision of better amenities and services.
- **At least two multipurpose sports stadia, one in Demerara and the other in Berbice, will be established by 2010, and a third will be established in Essequibo as soon as possible thereafter.**
- Senior citizens' clubs will be formed in every community to facilitate seniors' participation in recreational/sports events.
- Facilities for community activities, as well as Health Care Centres, will be erected in housing areas.

26.IV.4.5 To invest in Youth:

- **Across the whole period covered by the National Development Strategy, the provision of training by the Adult and Continuing Education community, both government and non-government, to out-of-school youth, will be actively and concretely supported. This will include re-education for real functional literacy and might include, depending on needs assessments and on the results of consultations with youth, vocational, technical and/or further academic training. The Private Sector will be asked to collaborate with this programme through the provision of funds and/or work attachments or apprenticeship programmes.**
- **In the formal education system, career guidance will be made an important aspect of the education system.**
- **Participatory seminars and workshops involving in-school and out-of-school youth in discussions on all aspects of nation building, with the emphasis on living amicably in multi-racial societies will be organised on a continuous basis. These topics will also be integral parts of the curricula of primary and secondary schools.**
- **In training and educating the young people of Guyana, the specific needs of this development strategy will be taken into account, and a comprehensive system which links training and education to development needs will be formulated and implemented.**

CHAPTER 27

LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

27.I BASIC FEATURES

27.I.1 Perhaps somewhat paradoxically, between 1991 and 1997, when there was a remarkable upsurge in economic growth there was a reduction in employment in the public service, the bauxite sector and in the sugar industry. Indeed, in the public service, between 1992 and 1997, the decline was 46 percent; in Linmine for the same period, it was 43 percent; in Bermine the decline was 30 percent; and in GUYSUICO the drop in employment levels was 31 percent.

27.I.2 It appears, however, that in the rest of the economy, the employment position was more positive. So much so, that the Bank of Guyana, in its Report for 1996 stated that the "buoyant economic activity was accompanied by expanding employment opportunities and higher earnings in most sections. The same optimism was recorded for 1997. In 1999, according to the Household Income and Expenditure Survey which was conducted in that year, the rate of unemployment was 9.1 percent .

27.I.3 The truth of the matter is that most of the public servants and those who lost their jobs in the bauxite industry, did not register as being unemployed. Instead, they occupied themselves as hucksters, as petty traders, and as small-time entrepreneurs, many of them eking out a scanty existence.

27.I.4 Possibly because they are mainly unskilled and untrained many of those who enter the workforce for the first time are forced to resort to the informal sector for employment. This is especially true for women and young people. Indeed, even when jobs are secured by them in the formal sector, these new entrants still tend to cluster in low-paying occupations that require few skills.

27.I.5 It follows, therefore, that if the strategies that are put forward in this NDS are followed, although, the rate of job creation would undoubtedly increase, it would be more than probable that many of these women and young persons will not be qualified enough to be employed.

27.I.6 There is a geographic dimension to the consequences of unemployment. In the rural areas, the unemployed have turned to self-employed agriculture or work as manual wage labourers. In urban areas, unemployed women have been forced into the low-paying market of domestic services, while the unemployed youth, with few jobs available for which they are adequately trained, have fended for themselves, sometimes illicitly. Indeed many former junior-level employees of the public service can now be found among the ranks of pavement vendors, the numbers of which seem to be growing. It is evident that if this trend continues, earnings amongst this group are likely to decrease, unless the disposable income in the society increases significantly.

27.I.7 Much *underemployment* is also to be found in Guyana. This is of two kinds. The first is visible underemployment in which people are not employed for an established minimum number of hours per week. The second is invisible underemployment, in which people are employed in jobs that require a skill-level that is below their qualifications. It would appear that, besides poor wages, underemployment also contributes to poverty in Guyana.

27.I.8 In urban areas there is much invisible underemployment for certain classes of workers. At the highest end of the education scale there is a shortage of skilled personnel. However, many workers with educational qualifications that are at least at the secondary education level have chosen to enter the urban informal labour

force, primarily because of the low levels of remuneration in the Public Service. Perhaps not surprisingly, it is often the more entrepreneurial and better motivated workers that choose this course. The impact of this is that the average educational levels are reduced in the formal labour force, especially in the lower levels of the Public Service. Hence, because of the lack of in-house training, and low wages, the Public Service is left with too many poorly trained individuals.

27.I.9 Despite the reduction in the Government's work force between 1986 and 1999, the core Public Service remains over-dimensioned. There is a chronic lack of upper and mid-level skilled and managerial personnel, while some of the lower tiers are over-staffed. The result is that Government is sometimes unable to perform critical functions in a satisfactory manner.

27.II ISSUES AND CONSTRAINTS

27.II.1 Issues

27.II.1.1 While substantially higher real wages will be essential to attract and retain qualified personnel in higher-level positions of the Public Service, there is a great need for training in management techniques, in the use of computer software, evaluation procedures, and in modern approaches to public policy formulation. Above all, placement needs to be based on merit. A rational performance-based system for evaluations and salary increments is an essential requirement. A system of performance based evaluation was instituted in 1998, but it is too early to determine its rationality and effectiveness.

27.II.1.2 To overcome the problem of inadequate wages in some agencies, Government has created semi-autonomous agencies and project execution units with increased salaries and benefits. This has led to anomalies in the Government Structure. The remaining core structure of the Government has further been weakened, exacerbating Government's ability to fulfill key functions.

27.II.1.3 In addition, not only is insufficient attention paid by senior managers to the development of their staff, but inadequate arrangements exist for setting and maintaining staff establishments, for filling vacancies with appropriately trained staff, and for eliminating nonperforming or surplus staff. Ineffective systems are also in place for the generation, storage and dissemination of operating and management information. Moreover, there appears to be no plan for the systematic computerisation of the service. All activities in this area seem to be piecemeal and uncoordinated.

27.II.1.4 The informal sector, along with emigration, provided a cushion to workers during the 1980s. The sector not only benefited the workers, but consumers gained from its activities. Measures therefore need to be adopted to encourage further, the growth of the activities of this sector and foster its incorporation into the formal economy.

27.II.1.5 Government policies in the past have not directly addressed the needs of the informal sector. For example, incentives and concessions do not generally apply to small and medium scale enterprises, although attempts have been made to strengthen their role through micro and small enterprise development. In addition, high interest rates at commercial banks result in the cost of loans being out of the reach of small scale enterprises. Moreover, the informal nature of these small establishments almost inevitably means that they often cannot fulfill requirements for collateral.

27.II.1.6 It is evident, therefore, that specific incentives should be aimed at the economically marginalised sections of society and, as important, innovative strategies should be formulated to incorporate the informal sector into the mainstream of the economy.

27.II.1.7 Guyana's industrial relations system evolved out of the enormities of slavery and indentureship and, in general, workers' rights were obtained through struggle. This has led to an almost reflex reaction of settling disputes through strikes. This almost historical imperative is compounded by the fact that political considerations are often involved in labour/employer controversies. This is not to say that, in contemporary industrial relations, strikes are to be solely attributed to the trade unions. Strikes also occur very often out of the uncompromising attitudes of managers, and because of breakdowns in union/management communication. There is an evident need to resolve disputes in a more amicable manner through better structures and bargaining procedures. There is equally a need for a more proactive role by the Ministry of Labour, in disputes which do not involve the Public Sector.

27.II.1.8 However, in disputes between the unions which represent the Public Sector and the Government, which are settled by the Ministry of Labour, the unions often perceive themselves as appealing from Caesar unto Caesar. New, palpably fair and separate mechanisms should therefore be introduced for resolving such conflicts.

27.II.1.9 Before 1969, there existed a Workmen's Compensation Ordinance that allowed for the protection of workers in case of industrial accidents, and death and disease that arose out of employment. Because the coverage of this Ordinance was considered to be too restrictive the National Insurance Scheme was established in that year. As a result, employees are now eligible for industrial benefits from the first day of work, maternity benefits after 15 weeks' contribution, and sickness benefits after 50 weeks' of payment. Maternity benefits are paid up to 13 weeks and can be extended to a maximum of 26 weeks, while sickness benefits are paid from the fourth day to a maximum of 26 weeks. Medical care is also paid during periods of sickness and, in certain circumstances, also during period of maternity care. However an actuarial-based analysis should be conducted in order to ascertain on what basis it might be possible to establish private pension schemes, and to assess whether it would be possible to extend existing NIS benefits to cover non-paying family members of contributing persons.

27.II.1.10 Both the public and private sectors must increase their investments in the general economy. The public sector has a specific responsibility to ensure that investments in transportation, communication, power generation, education and training, potable water supply, health and national security are undertaken to bring the quality of services in these sectors up to acceptable and desired standards. The Private Sector has the duty to retool and upgrade plant and equipment. This latter process should be assisted not only by fiscal and other policies, but also by public sector examples in the application of enlightened management techniques and in the constant search for new ideas. This will necessitate significant changes in our Industrial Relation System.

27.II.1.11 A social contract between Capital, Labour and the Government should be formulated, with the monitoring agent being a National Tripartite Committee.

27.II.1.12 The establishment of a labour market information system is an important requirement if Guyana is to have an adequate and reliable basis for formulating, implementing and evaluating employment and human resource policies, and if workers are to receive timely and relevant information on job openings. The lack of information on what is needed and what is available in terms of skills, not only leads to many jobs remaining vacant even though there might be workers willing to fill them, it also results in a failure to train workers for anticipated opportunity. Furthermore, there are no channels for communicating the skills-needs from Government and industry to the schools. In addition, little information is currently available on the burgeoning informal sector and its impact on the national economy.

27.II.1.13 Moreover, the size and characteristics of the current labour force need detailed study. In addition skills-needs in both the public and private sectors, and salary and employment trends in both sectors require ongoing analysis. The Statistics Bureau, which is the official collector and coordinator of labour statistics, is neither adequately staffed nor organised to perform these tasks efficiently.

27.II.2 Constraints

27.II.2.1 Lack of a sufficient number of productive and adequately remunerative jobs in the country.

- 27.II.2.2 Wages in the public service that are still too low to attract and retain the most skilled and talented people.
- 27.II.2.3 On the supply side of the labour market, there are not only too few technically skilled people, but there also exists a system of technical and vocational education that is inadequate. It should not therefore be surprising that it does not attract the finances required to sustain it even at its low level of quality.
- 27.II.2.4 A legacy of a weakened educational system, which produces too many entrants into the labour force who are functionally illiterate.
- 27.II.2.5 Poor relations between unions and employers, and weak mechanisms for the resolution of disputes. These lead to unnecessary strikes, especially in the Public Service.
- 27.II.2.6 The absence of a policy framework to encourage workers and enterprises in the informal economy to enter the formal economy.
- 27.II.2.7 Lack of basic workers' rights for employees in the informal economy.
- 27.II.2.8 Fragmented efforts for addressing the concerns of micro-, small- and medium-scale enterprises.
- 27.II.2.9 Lack of an adequate financial and institutional basis for workers' pension programmes.
- 27.II.2.10 Lack of an effective investigative arm in the Ministry of Labour capable of anticipating incipient industrial disputes, and quickly responding to them.
- 27.II.2.11 An insufficiently mobile labour force and a lack of supporting mechanisms to promote labour mobility.
- 27.II.2.12 Lack of trained personnel, capable of coping with the attitudinal problems which currently exist in the workplace, and with those which will arise in the future.

27.III SECTORAL OBJECTIVES

27.III.1 The broad objective of the labour sector is to reduce unemployment and underemployment, and the concomitant poverty, by creating greater avenues for employment, greater labour flexibility and mobility, and by generally enhancing the productivity of both labour and capital. The attainment of this objective will require the successful implementation of many policies in various Chapters of this Strategy. Labour and Employment Policies *per se*, cannot alone accomplish their realisation.

27.III.2 The sectoral objectives of the Strategy are:–

- (i) To encourage the development of labour-intensive industries and modes of production in the short-term and to increase productivity in the medium- to long-term.
- (ii) To increase the skills, education and productivity of the labour force through improved technical and vocational education and an ongoing, structured and relevant on-the-job training programme.
- (iii) To improve the functioning of the labour market via better information so that job-seekers and policy-makers may access up-to-date information on employment opportunities and data on the status of the country's workforce.

- (iv) To facilitate the mobility of labour so that workers may more easily move from one industry to another, and from one location to another.
- (v) To promote improved working conditions and working environments.
- (vi) To define clearly the role, rights and responsibilities of trade unions, employers and Government and to legitimize the right of collective bargaining.
- (vii) To ease the transitional problems of workers affected by the restructuring of industries.
- (viii) To improve the actuarial and institutional basis for, and benefits from, national pension schemes.
- (ix) To restructure the Ministry of Labour thus enhancing its role in the Industrial Relations System, and its functions in the labour market.

27.IV THE STRATEGY

27.IV.1 The overall macroeconomics framework of this Strategy is designed to accelerate economic growth, a process that will increase both employment and real wages. In fact, over the next ten years some labour shortages can be expected to appear in certain areas of development. This will give further impetus to increases in real wages, attract more re-migrants and possibly migrants, and accelerate the process of reallocating labour to more remunerative occupations. A policy framework will be maintained that does not lead to an excessively high indirect cost of labour to employers and does not subsidise capital, so that the nation's economic growth path is as labour-intensive as possible.

27.IV.2 Specific strategies designed with these purposes in mind, which are also described in other chapters in order to assist the reader who is interested in only particular sectors, include the creation of export processing zones, the promotion of micro, small, and medium-scale enterprises, and the creation of new industrial sites which will allocate space for 'incubators'.

27.IV.3 The creation of export processing zones will provide sources of growth for the entire country in terms of production, employment, foreign exchange earnings, investment and the transfer of technology. EPZs will absorb some of the unemployed and underemployed, and workers from the informal economy.

27.IV.4 The Companies Act will be amended to eliminate overlaps between the personal income tax and corporate taxes. This measure will negate any double taxation for registered micro, small, and medium-scale enterprises.

27.IV.5 A tax rate will be set for registered small companies that is lower than the current corporate tax.

27.IV.6 Legislation which provides for charging household and not commercial rates for public utilities that service registered micro and small scale enterprises will be enacted.

27.IV.7 Legislation that provides for the waiving of stamp duties and other costs associated with the transfer of personal property to a business will be promulgated.

27.IV.8 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) will be improved and expanded, through the rationalisation of the utilization of technical education and training facilities; the upgrading of curricula; and the strengthening of teaching through special teacher training courses and the recruitment of more highly

trained teaching personnel.

27.IV.9 The provision of technical and vocational education and training will be restructured to strengthen the involvement of the private sector in its management.

27.IV.10 A National Council on TVET will be established. In the course of implementing this strategy, the specific mechanisms for funding and administering TVET will be clarified, but the basic policy orientations are clear: greater private sector participation in TVET, through a tripartite governing council in which industry has the majority representation, to guide the training in the direction of the skills needed; and partial cost recovery for TVET through a payroll levy of between 0.5 percent and 1 percent to be instituted on industry.

27.IV.11 The new council will be authorised to receive and allocate international donations and technical assistance in the area of TVET.

27.IV.12 Training outside established institutions will be undertaken by the private sector without direct Government intervention. The private sector could achieve this at a lower cost than Government and it also tends to be more in tune with the requirements of the market.

27.IV.13 Government's direct involvement in training will be limited to retraining public servants and workers who are displaced because of industrial restructuring, and those who are transferred to other forms of employment.

27.IV.14 As cost recovery is begun in public training institutions, Government will shift its public financing away from the providers of training to the demand side of the market, enabling targeted workers to purchase training within a competitive environment of suppliers. One instrument for doing this is through training vouchers to targeted individuals such as the young, unemployed and women.

27.IV.15 Trained workers will be required to repay Government part of the training costs after gaining employment at the end of training.

27.IV.16 A Labour Market Information System for Guyana will be established in order to provide job seekers with up-to-date information on employment opportunities, and to establish an adequate statistical basis for continuously formulating, implementing and evaluating policies and programmes for human resources development.

27.IV.17 Merit-based promotions and salary increases in the Public Service will be premised on performance evaluations that will use redefined annual performance objectives as the criteria.

27.IV.18 Retraining also will be mandatory in most cases as workers receive wage increases.

27.IV.19 The co-operation of the unions in charting this new course for public service remuneration will be an important aspect of salary negotiations.

27.IV.20 A special Reconciliation and Dispute Resolution Committee will be established to settle disputes between public servants and the Government.

27.IV.21 The approach taken by Government in the area of occupational safety and health is pro-active. Government's new occupational safety and health policy involves the Government, employers and workers. A National Council on Occupational Safety and Health was established which comprises the Ministries of Health and Agriculture, the Guyana Fire Service, the National Insurance Scheme, the Guyana National Bureau of Standards, the University of Guyana, the Trades Union Congress and the Consultative Association of Guyanese Industry. These arrangements will be further strengthened.

27.IV.22 The strategy envisaged for encouraging labour mobility requires a multifaceted approach. Creating an environment for such mobility require the implementation of many other policies. Besides a

decompression of wage scales, improved labour market information and improved TVET, which are dealt with separately, these include policies aimed at breaking the link between social services and the conditions of employment, while fostering efficient housing and land markets.

27.IV.23 Because of Guyana=s vast interior, social services will be linked to the conditions of employment to attract labour to these parts of the country. However, linkages will be discouraged in the coastal regions of Guyana, as social services that are independent of employers are strengthened.

27.IV.24 This Chapter does not directly address housing and land markets. However, as discussed before, the availability of land has been directly linked to unemployment, underemployment and poverty. In other sectors of this National Development Strategy, the case has been made for a liberalisation of land markets. Government will pursue policies that ensure that investors and small farmers have forms of land tenure that can serve as acceptable collateral for banks, and that land is made freely available to the poor for housing. Opening land markets is important for increasing the productivity of the land, reducing unemployment and underemployment, increasing the income of farmers, and improving the standards of living of the urban poor.

27.IV.25 Proposals for Public Service Reform have been made in other parts of this NDS. However, it should be noted that the objective is to produce a functional, proactive public service that can support a dynamic economy. A principal requirement for this to occur is that public service workers must be adequately remunerated.

27.IV.26 A Social Partnership Agreement will be entered into by the Government of Guyana, the Guyana Trades Union Congress and the Private Sector Commission. This agreement will be based on the recognition that there is a mutuality of interest and an inherent interdependence among the three parties; and on an acknowledgement that the success of any sustained social and economic progress in Guyana will depend upon their collective commitment to a philosophy of governance which is characterised by participatory democracy and the subjugation of sectoral interests to the national good.

CHAPTER 28

PRIVATE SECTOR

28.I BACKGROUND

28.I.1 The role of the private sector in the growth and development of Guyana's economy is of the utmost importance. Since 1989 Guyana has experienced an historic process of restructuring its economy, moving away from the overly centralised approach that brought about sustained economic decline towards an open market-oriented system that has already given rise to an economic revival. The private sector has played the pivotal role in this recovery.

28.I.2 The macro-economic environment in which the private sector is meant to operate has already been described. Moreover, its activities and structures are analysed in the Chapters in this National Development Strategy which relate to its main component sectors e.g., agriculture, manufacturing, forestry, fisheries, and mining.

28.I.3 The economic activities of the formal private sector may be classified as follows: (i) the primary sector, which includes agriculture, fishing, forestry, mining and quarrying; (ii) the secondary sector, embracing manufacturing, engineering and construction; and (iii) the tertiary sector, which subsumes transportation, communication, commerce, business services, rentals and finance.

28.I.4 In Guyana, there is also a relatively large informal private sector which is primarily engaged in petty trading, although a significant proportion of the members of this group is occupied in manufacturing and as craftsmen e.g. carpenters, masons and cabinet makers.

28.I.5 It is intended in this Chapter, merely to discuss some of the developmental issues with which the private sector has to contend, to examine the constraints which currently inhibit its growth, and then to put forward strategies which would not only release the initiatives and entrepreneurial skills of its members, but would also permit it to optimise its contribution to the country's development.

28.II ISSUES AND CONSTRAINTS

28.II.1 Issues

General

28.II.1.1 The principal issues and constraints facing the sector arise from the legacy of two decades of a declining economy and the absence of a definitive national policy on private sector development. There is, at present, no comprehensive national policy aimed at stimulating investments, industrial performance and commercial development.

Industrial Development

28.II.1.2 Over the past decades, Guyana's development has been concentrated on the export of a few primary commodities. As a consequence, manufacturing has been virtually neglected. The economy is therefore on a narrow growth path that is subject to the vagaries of the international markets for primary products. While not abandoning its production of primary goods for local consumption and export, Guyana should increasingly focus on those industrial subsectors that are linked to its natural resource endowment. The areas that offer immediate prospects are wood and agro-processing and the further processing of gold and diamonds.

28.II.1.3 A long-term policy for the development of the private sector should establish formal mechanisms for cooperation between the Government and the private sector with respect to such matters as the location of industrial estates; the provision of support services including investment promotion, technical assistance, managerial and vocational training, long-term financing, research and development, and adequate physical infrastructure (electricity, roads, ports and airports).

Markets, Marketing and Standards

28.II.1.4 In many manufacturing industries, specialisation is limited by the extent of the market. The domestic market size, with an estimated population of under 800,000, is too small to accommodate output levels of plant which need to take account of economies of scale. Moreover, with firms producing only for the Guyana market, the market structure is oligopolistic for many products.

28.II.1.5 Guyana's exports are mostly earmarked for CARICOM markets. As a result, only limited inroads have been made into the North American and other foreign markets. While the intra-regional market (CARICOM) is crucial for many small and medium-sized manufacturers, finding new extra-regional markets (North American and other foreign markets) is essential if the problems of scale inefficiency are to be overcome.

28.II.1.6 Apart from expanding its market range, Guyana's private sector needs to enhance its competitiveness. However, the potential for the production of high-quality products to compete in export markets now exists in only a small group of industries such as those which manufacture furniture and other wood products, garments, industrial diamonds, alcohol and alcoholic beverages, and non-traditional agricultural products. Because a majority of Guyanese manufacturers operate obsolete and depreciated plants, their output is generally of substandard quality.

28.II.1.7 In addition to the need for improving the quality and standards of products, the information base is inadequate in regard to external markets and market niche structures. Timely information is needed on price, quality, packaging, frequency of delivery and distribution patterns.

28.II.1.8 Less-than-cost dumping and substandard or defective goods are becoming part and parcel of the Guyana market. The National Bureau of Standards and other agencies should further intensify their efforts to control this problem. The Ministry of Trade should also engage in intelligence gathering in order to be able to judge fairly whether products are being dumped at less than fair prices.

Foreign Investment

28.II.1.9 The process of approval of foreign investments is still time-consuming and there is too large a discretionary element. Standard agreements for key sectors are not available. The process is biased in favour of the processing of primary products and other manufacturing. As a result, knowledge-based enterprises, for example, do not receive adequate treatment. Moreover, the responsibility for investment promotion has been *combined* with that of investment approval, when ideally the two activities should be separated. In addition, the existing rules do not seem designed to *promote* investment. For example, foreign investors do not have rights to the full repatriation of profits, and to maintain cash for operating purposes in offshore accounts.

28.II.1.10 Clear and simplified investment codes need to be published and widely distributed.

Company Registration

28.II.1.11 The existing rules for the start-up of companies are too onerous thus effectively discriminating against small firms that are potentially important sources of employment growth.

Financial Support

28.II.1.12 In order to compete with efficient foreign firms, most Guyanese firms must retool. This re-tooling of productive lines requires access to industrial financial assistance. However, the procurement of such support is complex, time consuming and costly. Indeed, the time lag involved in processing investment loans is, more often than not, upwards of six months. As a result, entrepreneurs frequently either abandon projects or seek funding from outside the financial intermediaries. All this while, the commercial banking system accumulates excess liquidity.

28.II.1.13 Financial intermediaries sometimes seem to prefer to give commercial loans for consumption purposes, and to invest in low risk Treasury bills, than to give credit to the manufacturing sector.

28.II.1.14 Industrial micro-enterprises are seldom considered for overdrafts or soft loans.

28.II.1.15 Real interest rates appear to be irrationally high.

Research and Development

28.II.1.16 R&D is almost non-existent in the manufacturing sector. Indeed, there is no institute in the manufacturing sector that is comparable to that which exists for agriculture. A dynamic R&D programme is mandatory if manufactures are to be induced to develop efficient production techniques, and quality control and packaging methodologies. Unfortunately, it would most likely be unprofitable to develop such facilities for a country with an industrial sector of the size of Guyana's. The possibility of establishing a joint venture between a foreign university and UG, to do part of the work in Guyana while supporting UG's development, should therefore be explored.

Qualified Labour Force

28.II.1.17 Manufacturers frequently fail to retain skilled labourers who have been trained at their expense. Once employees have acquired technical skills on the job, they often either migrate or initiate their own business ventures. Furthermore, graduates from the Government Technical Institute are not adequately trained to assume technical positions. In these circumstances, firms experience increased production costs in upgrading the skills of new staff. It is therefore imperative that there be a continuous upgrading of the technical education system if the human resources requirement of the private sector are to be met.

The Tax System

28.II.1.18 The inequities in the tax system, its potential brake on the development of the private sector, and the inefficiencies in tax collection have already been discussed.

28.II.1.19 The customs clearance system is unacceptably slow.

Property Rights

28.II.1.20 The mixed legacy of traditions in regard to land tenure, in combination with the antiquated state of the property registries, often results in entrepreneurs being unable to acquire the property rights that they need in order to justify investing in a project. This circumstance impedes the development of many kinds of activities.

The Legal System

28.II.1.21 There is a lack of adequate legal procedures for the enforcement of contracts. This lacuna introduces additional uncertainty into normal business relationships. As has been emphasized in the Chapter on Governance, the restoration of the hitherto high quality of our legal system is one of the most urgent national priorities.

28.II.2 Constraints

28.II.2.1 Inadequate and deteriorated infrastructure (e.g., electricity, water, road, port and communication facilities).

28.II.2.2 Outdated and inappropriate technology.

28.II.2.3 Scarcity of skilled personnel.

28.II.2.4 Poor marketing capacity.

28.II.2.5 The slowness of the bureaucracy in approving investments, licensing firms and taking other necessary actions. Sometimes this slowness is accompanied by arbitrary judgements, and by demands for rent.

28.II.2.6 Inadequate air and sea transport system. Existing policy has put a cap on the number of commercial airline seats available domestically and has not encouraged competition in providing the vital international air service. Similarly, port facilities are very inadequate, in terms of depth of harbour, bulk-handling facilities and also unloading capacities, for an export-oriented economy.

28.II.2.7 Outdated legislation for quality assurance and product grading. This legislation needs to be updated as a measure to improve performance in both domestic and foreign markets.

28.II.2.8 Inadequate drainage and irrigation facilities.

28.II.2.9 Much valuable time is lost in obtaining necessary documentation and/or permission from the relevant government agencies in order to conduct business. Often there is a failure by certain government agencies to acknowledge, much less act upon, correspondence.

28.II.2.10 Matters previously dealt with at the level of Permanent Secretaries is often referred to Cabinet for decision, causing even further delays.

28.II.2.11 There is a lack of managerial capability in both the private and public sectors.

28.II.2.12 Guyana had no pre-cooling and cooling facilities to be used for the export of primary agricultural products. This situation, combined with high freight costs and unreliable air cargo services, cause these local products to be 'uncompetitive' in overseas markets.

28.III SECTORAL OBJECTIVES

28.III.1 The broad national objective for the private sector is that it should become the engine of growth of the economy, by increasing and diversifying production, by increasing its competitiveness, and by concentrating on the export sector, thereby reducing the incidences of poverty and unemployment, raising the standard of living of the citizens of Guyana, and enhancing their quality of life.

28.IV THE STRATEGY

28.IV.1 All the elements of the Strategy that are adumbrated below for this sector are discussed more fully in other chapters, and the methods of their implementation described in greater detail.

28.IV.2 Although the private sector is expected to be the main productive force in the economy and the predominant source of employment creation, the Central Government will play a major role in the implementation of this Strategy as facilitator. The Government will continue to provide the infrastructural support to the sector along with an appropriate policy and legal framework.

28.IV.3 Since education and training are crucial to maintaining an economically viable and sustainable manufacturing sector, the Government will focus constantly on upgrading the human resources of the economy and will contribute to and encourage the private sector to become involved in manufacturing research and development activities.

28.IV.4 The Government, the private sector, and the University of Guyana will immediately contact the donor community and foreign Universities with a view to establishing linkages, and formulating agreements which could assist Guyana's private sector in the conducting of research that is relevant to the manufacturing processes in Guyana.

28.IV.5 Through its Embassies and Consulates abroad, the Government will assist in obtaining marketing access support to the sector as well as the mounting of trade fairs abroad.

28.IV.6 Government will upgrade the provision of such basic social services as housing, health facilities and potable water.

28.IV.7 In its role as a facilitator, the State will provide the necessary supportive networking of institutions and the institutional framework which aid, promote and foster economic development.

28.IV.8 The overall government administration will be reformed and overhauled. The trades unions and the private sector will be involved in these exercises.

28.IV.9 The State will encourage industrialisation via the provision of industrial space (e.g., industrial estates) support services (including investment promotion and marketing) and technical assistance.

28.IV.10 The State will relate more with the private sector in information sharing, and in negotiations, both at the international trade level and with international and multilateral donor agencies.

28.IV.11 The State will expeditiously pass on to the private sector information on matters relating to the availability of developmental aid and technical assistance from foreign missions and donor agencies.

28.IV.12 The State will commit fully to the involvement of the private sector as a full partner in national decision-making. This is essential to the strengthening of the democratic process. It will also afford Government the opportunity of drawing on certain resources with which the private sector is perhaps better endowed, e.g., management. To this end, formal arrangements will be made for meetings between Government and the private sector, at several levels. Schedules for such meetings will be established.

28.IV.13 Steps to broaden the tax base will be continued.

28.IV.14 The rate of income tax will be further reduced.

28.IV.15 A simple and relatively uniform fiscal incentive regime will be established.

28.IV.16 A value-added tax will be introduced to replace the current consumption tax.

28.IV.17 Export Processing Zones will be established in Berbice and Demerara.

28.IV.18 Monetary and Banking Reforms will be initiated in order to reduce Government borrowing in the open market, to make foreign exchange more easily available, and to ease the restrictions on access to loans in US dollars.

28.IV.19 The procedural and regulatory framework for the registration of more companies will be drastically simplified and speeded up. This is especially important in the registration of new micro-enterprises.

28.IV.20 Personal and business taxes will be merged for smaller firms.

28.IV.21 The approval of investments will be streamlined and expedited.

28.IV.22 The cost of revenue collection will be reduced.

28.IV.23 Greater and more intensive efforts will be expended by both the Ministry of Trade and the Bureau of Standards to ensure that there is no dumping, and no sale of shoddy and substandard goods in Guyana.

28.IV.24 The New Roles of State and Private Society

28.IV.24.1 In any economy it is the Government's responsibility to articulate a vision of national development, foster a consensus around it, and to formulate policies and programmes to address issues that the economy is not dealing with through its own momentum. At the same time, world-wide experience of the last fifty years has abundantly demonstrated that the private sector is far more efficient in carrying out activities of production, commerce and finance, and that lack of efficiency in these areas hurts development prospects by holding back the growth of incomes and employment. Therefore a central challenge of a development strategy is to find the most appropriate ways of combining the power of market forces, as the primary impulse to development, with the role of the State in providing the development framework, monitoring the process, and providing special assistance to target groups and issues.

28.IV.24.2 Under the concept of this National Development Strategy, the following list describes well the functions of Government. It also is quite consistent with a review of international experience in all regions of the world.

28.IV.24.3 Establishing a regulatory and policy framework covering primarily the areas of finance, trade, taxation, investment, the environment and public health and safety. The purpose of such a framework is to establish clear and balanced rules of the game which protect the legitimate interests of consumers, workers, retirees and children, and depositors, investors and producers, while assuring a maximum of economic opportunities for all and safeguarding the environment.

28.IV.24.4 Defining legal jurisdictions and property rights in an unambiguous fashion, to facilitate production, investment and conflict resolution.

28.IV.24.5 Ensuring the provision of specified public goods, such as national defence, education and health services.

28.IV.24.6 Assuring the availability, directly or indirectly, of basic physical infrastructure such as transport facilities and potable water supplies.

28.IV.24.7 Developing special programmes to assist poor households, both to meet their immediate basic needs and to improve their own income-earning capacities.

28.IV.24.8 Carrying out the functions of taxation, budgeting and programme implementation for the above purposes.

28.IV.24.9 Establishing and strengthening the country's judicial and electoral systems.

28.IV.24.10 Continuously endeavouring to improve the quality of public administration at all levels.

28.IV.24.11 Participating as a partner in selected few production activities, normally as a transition measure.

28.IV.24.12 These are examples of areas in which the community or nation may decide to act jointly, as a collectivity, through the agency or Government. The remaining areas of consumer choice production investment trade and finance are normally carried out on the basis of decisions by individuals or small agglomerations of individuals (corporations, co-operatives, association, etc.) and therefore are most appropriately left to the private sector defined in its broadest sense, including non-profit organisations and associations. Lack of clarity in the definition of the Government's roles and policies in these areas can undermine incentives to invest and product and therefore limit the country's economic development. Both clarity and stability over time of the rules of the game are essential ingredients of an economic development strategy, along with an unambiguous commitment that production, finance and commerce are activities in the domain of the private sector.

28.IV.24.13 The policy framework for the private sector presented in this Chapter would require a number of modifications to the existing body of legislation in order to facilitate its full implementation. In summary form, those modifications would include the following:

- (i) Revision of the Companies Act to ease the registration requirements for new firms to reflect different compliance standards for small, medium and large companies and to lessen the burden of stamp duty.
- (ii) New legislation for NGOs and other not for profit organisations making provision for their registration, compliance and exemption from taxes.
- (iii) A new tax regime to put into effect the changes described in this Chapter, including:–
 - The introduction of a value-added tax
 - Widening the tax net
 - Lowering of rates of taxation
 - Reduction in the cost of revenue collection
 - Reduction in the cost of compliance to the taxpayer
 - Better allocation of economic resources
 - Closing of tax loopholes.
- (iv) Legislation to lay the foundation for an export processing zone, with close access to deep water harbour.

- (v) A new investment code for both foreign and domestic investors, including all relevant tax provisions.
- (vi) An overall revision of the legislation for GOINVEST, making it an autonomous body while separating the investment promotion function from that of approval of applications. The revised approval process should incorporate deadlines with automaticity, e.g., requests of specified kinds not acted upon within two weeks are automatically approved.
- (vii) A restaurant of export licensing requirements to simplify them, including the provision of automatic granting of such licenses upon presentation of proof that income taxes have been paid.
- (viii) Legislation establishing rules for patents, copyrights and intellectual property rights.

CHAPTER 29

POVERTY ERADICATION

29.I BASIC FEATURES

29.I.1 Although the 1999 Household Income and Expenditure Survey indicated a marked reduction in poverty since 1993, the incidence of poverty in Guyana is still unacceptably high. The survey revealed that 36.4 percent of the population in Guyana lives in absolute poverty, and 19.1 percent exists in a state of critical poverty.

29.I.2 The highest incidences of poverty are in the hinterland areas of Regions 1, 7, 8, and 9. On the coast, poverty is highest in the rural areas particularly in regions 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. And although a greater number of the population in the cities is better off than those in other parts of the country, there are also large pockets of poverty in urban locations.

29.I.3 Moreover, about half of the population of the workforce are not gainfully employed. However, only 9.1 of the total workforce has sought, but has not obtained, employment and can therefore be classified as being unemployed.

29.II THE CAUSES OF POVERTY

29.II.1 No individual factor, or list of factors, can be singled out as the cause of poverty. Poverty in Guyana is occasioned by an interlocking complex of policies and actions. To adjust or even fundamentally change one or two of them will not necessarily overcome the problem or reduce its incidence. Poverty in Guyana must therefore be attacked simultaneously from several directions.

29.II.2 It is perhaps interesting to note, at the outset, that the high level of poverty in the interior is due in most part to its remoteness: high transportation costs, and the absence of most modern amenities make living in these areas extremely expensive. It is almost impossible to obtain the most basic of goods and services.

29.II.3 In 1993, the very poor were identified as being located mainly in the hinterland, while the not-so-poor were to be found in both the rural and urban coastal areas. By 1999, there had been little or no change in the hinterland, and Amerindian poverty, according to the HIES, remained at about the same level at which it was in 1993. On the coast, however, the incidence of poverty declined in both the rural and urban areas, with the greater improvement occurring in the towns.

29.II.4 This is most surprising for the growth in our economy between 1993 and 1999 was based almost entirely on increased production in sugar and rice (rural coastal crops), and in timber and gold (interior products.) It is true that there was some growth in the manufacturing sector, but this was not significant enough to account for the quantum leap from poverty which took place in the urban areas.

29.II.5 The conclusion is almost inescapable that the urban sea-change had little or nothing to do with official economic policy, but was largely a result of parallel, non-official activities. In short, the influence of our macro-policies on poverty eradication was by no means considerable.

29.II.6 Indeed, the ERP and its successor policies were primarily designed to improve fiscal performance through curtailing expenditure, reforming the tax system, allowing the market to establish the exchange rate, reducing tariffs and removing import restrictions. They were not intended to make any serious impact on the rate of poverty in our country. Poverty was meant to be cushioned by organisations such as SIMAP. It may be concluded, therefore, that although the ERP has been most successful at the macroeconomic level, it has not been effective in respect of poverty eradication.

29.II.7 In addition to the inadequacies of the macroeconomic policies, the evidence strongly suggests that the presence of poverty is associated with low levels of *productivity*, and that there is a direct link between rates of productivity on the one hand, and the levels of *education*, the *nutritional status* of our citizens, and their access to *health facilities* on the other. Also, in those areas in which productivity is low, and where access to education and health facilities is minimal, the *housing* situation is often perilous. The deficiencies in these areas have already been described in the chapters of this NDS that are devoted to Education, to Health, and to Housing.

29.II.8 It cannot be over-emphasised that low productivity retards the rate of economic growth, reduces our competitiveness in the global world, and therefore limits our opportunity to create new jobs and to provide essential and basic services to the poor.

29.II.9 There are, of course, other policies, practices and situations which have been dealt with in detail in several sectoral chapters of this report which contribute to the high incidence of poverty in Guyana. Among these are the difficulty of obtaining credit; the relatively high cost of credit; the practice of the Banks to buy treasury bills rather than to invest themselves or lend money to potential investors; the small size of the average agricultural holding; the obsolescent nature of our land tenure system and our land laws; the inefficiency of the drainage and irrigation system, etc.

29.III THE AMELIORATION OF POVERTY

29.III.1 The social safety nets which exist in the country that are intended to minimise the effects of poverty have not worked optimally. We refer primarily to the National Insurance Scheme (NIS), the Social Impact Amelioration Programme (SIMAP), and some NGOs.

29.III.2 The coverage of the NIS, as currently structured, is not comprehensive enough for it to be a major poverty eradication agency. For example, it does not embrace unemployment, and it excludes groups that are outside the work force (school leavers, women at home, and many in the informal sector). Because of its occupationalist bias it can offer relief to the poor only if it deliberately introduces redistributive features. This it seems to be either reluctant or unable to do. Moreover, the NIS places a cap on insurable earnings. This obviously restricts the growth of its funds.

29.III.3 SIMAP's functional activities may be classified as being either the rehabilitation and construction of infrastructure, or the provision of social services. Occasionally, both types of activity are combined in one location, if not in one project. The former covers a wide cross section: roads, schools, markets, health centres, sanitation, water supply, and drainage and irrigation. The latter is also all-embracing, covering medical supplies, nutrition, food supplementation, education and training as well as cash transfers to targeted groups such as low-wage public servants, mothers and children who visit health centres, poor pensioners, and so on.

29.III.4 Although SIMAP is meant to be a bottom up demand-driven agency, many of its activities seem to be decided by the agency itself, and not in consultation with the ultimate beneficiaries. Moreover, it does not often take a sufficiently integrative approach to development. In addition, perhaps from the time of its

establishment, it is perceived by some as Government's "pork barrel". And finally, the agency has been the victim of conflicting donor priorities and project conditionalities. For an agency that funds itself largely within a well-defined project cycle, this has negatively affected its capacity to implement.

29.III.5 Data on NGOs in Guyana are very sparse. There may, however, be more than 500 NGOs in the country. The amount of human, financial and material resources in their control is not, however, known. The majority are the traditional service, charitable, religious, cultural and recreationally-oriented organisations. Only a few are principally engaged in developmental work although, in one way or another, the activities of all of them impinge on the development process. Overall, they are involved in a wide range of poverty relief actions, from training to cash supplements, medical care, and feeding programmes. The sector has the potential for strong grassroots links, flexibility, and minimal bureaucratic overheads. Most important, it possesses a highly motivated work force.

29.III.6 A few limitations and weakness can, however, be identified in the national NGO sector in Guyana: very few of the NGOs are self-supporting in a significant way and, because of the structure of party politics in the country, a frequent complaint is that political elements have penetrated community-based organisations.

29.III.7 In summary, the NIS, SIMAP, and the NGOs, the social safety nets in the country, have not made as significant contributions as they might to the amelioration of poverty in Guyana. It is evident that the NIS and SIMAP ought to be radically restructured so that they might more effectively serve the poor.

29.IV PROGRAMME ASPECTS OF POVERTY ERADICATION

29.IV.1 The donor agencies' apparent preference for visible and tangible projects as a measure of progress may be responsible for the overemphasis on engineering and construction projects. Although these types of project assist the poor in some respects, they do not always absorb significant amounts of labour. They certainly do not significantly reduce the incidence of poverty either in the medium or in the long term.

29.IV.2 Donor agencies also seem to prefer to utilise the private sector in executing poverty programmes, and pay their workers more than the local and central governments. This sometimes creates difficulties for projects that are run by the Government.

29.IV.3 The restricted access by certain communities to persons and organisations who would articulate and advocate their needs has worked to their disadvantage in obtaining resources for poverty eradication. Two examples are the Amerindians communities (although this is changing rapidly) and those who live in the deprived urban areas.

29.IV.4 Poverty relief programmes with a short life span, i.e., programmes which are not sustainable, often create difficulties of adjustment for beneficiaries, when they come to an end.

29.IV.5 Given the geography of the country and its population settlement patterns, there is a high overhead charge attached to poverty reduction programmes.

29.V SECTORAL OBJECTIVES

29.V.1 The objective is to eradicate poverty from Guyana by 2010. By this is meant that in ten years everyone in the country will be above the poverty line. Put in another way, the objective is that by 2010, every individual or family in Guyana would be able to afford, or to provide themselves with, the basic necessities of life. In a very profound sense this is not a sectoral, but a national objective.

29.V.2 The specific supporting objectives are:–

- Provide effective relief from the immediate deprivation suffered by the poor in respect of basic necessities such as nutrition, health care, schooling, housing, and potable water so that they may be freed from intensive concern in these areas and be able to devote their energies more fully to activities that improve their lives economically, socially, politically and culturally.
- Empower the poor, especially women, and integrate them more fully into the total development process so that they may improve their situations through their own efforts, thus reducing their dependence on special benefits.
- Create and expand opportunities for entrepreneurship, self–employment and employment at a living wage.
- Enhance the capabilities of the working–age poor, especially in terms of education and training, to respond to such opportunities.
- Improve the conditions of supply of basic social services to poor households, whilst maintaining them at affordable levels for that group.
- Provide financial support and basic food supplies to the poorest.
- Improve the access of the rural poor to land, working capital, and agricultural and other technologies and markets.
- Improve the conditions of assistance to the aged and mentally and physically handicapped, and identify and implement ways for them to participate in productive endeavours.

29.VI THE STRATEGY

29.VI.1 The grand strategy is:–

- i. to devise and implement macro–economic policies which, while maintaining monetary and economic stability, provide a sufficiency of fiscal and other incentives to enable the economy to grow rapidly; and are specifically directed towards the eradication of poverty in targeted areas and among targeted groups;
- ii. to ensure that there be put in place and implemented a complex of public policies; e.g.
 - institutional reforms which would cover all the ministries and departments in the Public Service and parastatal organisations;
 - land reform (including the small sizes of land holdings of the rural poor);
 - the rationalisation of the processes for land distribution and land registration for both agriculture and housing;
 - the introduction of more transparent and equitable systems of land distribution for both land and housing;
 - credit reform, particularly with respect to the availability of credit for the development of small–scale enterprises and small–scale farming, and for mortgages for low–income housing;

- the reform of the health and education sectors in order to increase the quality of health services and education that are provided to the poor, and to improve their access to them, paying particular attention to the development, in the education sector, of skills for artisans and technicians; and
- the improvement of the effectiveness and competitiveness of the private sector;
- iii. to diversify the economy in order to reduce our dependency on only a few commodities;
- iv. to add value to our export products;
- v. to develop policies for export promotion;
- vi. to intensify the recruitment of professional and technical staff in such disciplines as policy analysis, engineering, computer science, and technology, accounting, science, various specifications in agriculture and forestry;
- vii. to construct a road network to permit the easier development of areas away from the coast and to unify the country by linking the coastland to all regions, with a complex of roads and bridges;
- viii. to develop water transport and port facilities; and
- ix. to provide safety nets to cushion the effects of this transformation of economic policy, i.e., for those who are not, and would not be, immediately benefited by the development process, and for those who for structural reasons are unable to participate fully in that process, e.g., the disabled and the poor.

29.VI.2 It might perhaps be necessary at this stage to stress again that while much of the content of a policy framework for poverty eradication should be devoted to specific actions that directly assist needy groups, it is essential that the framework should build on the fact that, by a large margin, the most effective way to reduce and eventually eliminate poverty is to promote rapid economic growth. Sustained rapid growth expands employment opportunities substantially and raises real earnings levels.

29.VI.3 It must, however, be recognised that there are different styles of growth. It is therefore important to encourage a channeling of growth into those sectors that provide the most widespread benefits to the population. This typically means the labour-intensive sectors.

29.VI.4 An important factor in the overall strategy would be a larger participatory role for civil society, including the NGOs, and a more articulated working relationship between the State and the various components of civil society for the implementation of major programmes. Civil society should be empowered by transferring some of the State's responsibilities to it whenever appropriate.

29.VI.5 Given that the resources that are available for any kind of programme are always limited by budgetary realities, the ability truly to assist the poor depends in large measure on effectively targeting the measures for poverty eradication on the groups that are the most needy. There are two dimensions to this question: more precise selection of the families and individuals that should receive designated social benefits, and, changing generalised subsidies into targeted subsidies.

29.VI.6 In the first case, improvements are required in the implementation of eligibility criteria for SIMAP projects, food assistance and other forms of public assistance. This prescription applies to communities as much as individuals. SIMAP projects should be located where they are most needed, not where they are easiest to implement.

29.VI.7 In the second case, policy making and implementation should be informed by an appreciation of the fact that many of the current interventions constitute generalised subsidies, conveying benefits to upper income strata as well as lower. In keeping with priorities for public expenditure, the cost savings realised by eliminating generalised subsidies can be applied to subsidies that are targeted on the groups requiring

support. The generalised subsidies, although often implicit, are frequently pervasive. They include a component of transport tariffs, hospital charges, educational fees (or lack thereof), water charges, and other fees for public services. For administrative reasons, it is not possible to convert all of these implicit subsidies into outlays or savings that apply only to the lower income groups, but some progress in this direction can be made once an awareness of the issue and its pervasiveness has developed. The strategies that are directly relevant to this policy are described in the chapters on Health, Education, Housing, and Amerindians.

29.VI.8 Females represent more than 50 percent of the population, but from the available evidence, poverty is a major condition of this social group and, particularly, the large group of female-headed households. A set of socio-cultural and economic disabilities, together with inadequacies in the legal framework governing their integration and participation in society has, in addition, exacerbated the historical marginalisation of women. This strategy must, therefore specifically include measures to redress the problems of the female population in every sector, and in every location of the country. These too have been described in great detail in the chapters on the Family and on Gender.

29.VI.9 Although these considerations have been discussed in some detail in this National Development Strategy, they will again be adumbrated here, in order to provide to the reader, in one place, a comprehensive package of the poverty eradication framework.

29.VI.10 Economic Policy

29.VI.10.1 As we had stressed, it would be extremely difficult to eradicate poverty if the economy did not grow. Accordingly, while maintaining stability, fiscal measures will be put in place:–

- to diversify the economy;
- to increase investment, particularly in those geographical areas in the cities, in the country-side, and in the hinterland that are economically and socially depressed;
- to encourage investment in ventures that are labour-intensive;
- to increase the amount of revenue available to the State through the replacement of the consumption tax by a value added tax;
- to shift investment more to production than to commerce by reducing the corporate taxes on productive enterprises;
- to encourage the banking system to devote more of their resources to investment lending rather than to the purchase of treasury bills;
- to reduce the duty to zero on most imported raw materials; and
- to simplify the tax system to enable more revenue to be collected.

29.VI.11 Credit

29.VI.11.1 Within the general policy of providing credit to Guyana's producers, measures will be put in place to ensure adequate financing for small-scale rice and other agricultural producers. In this regard, the possibility of group lending, in which farmers guarantee each other's loans, will be explored.

29.VI.11.2 Micro-credit schemes will be established in order to assist in the development of the agricultural sector in general. The focus will be on those rural areas and rural citizens, or groups of citizens, identified in the HIES as being deprived and below the poverty line.

29.VI.11.3 The general strategy to make available investment funds for micro-enterprises will embrace fishermen who are not owners of their boats and wish to purchase them.

29.VI.11.4 Credit agencies will be sensitised to farmers' financial requirements by extending their outreach programmes into rural communities and will also introduce systems of lending via small loan schemes for farmers without collateral.

29.VI.11.5 Special micro-enterprise schemes will be established particularly for the urban and for the hinterland poor. In addition to the advancing of credit, technical assistance will be provided in project formulation, accountancy, management, and various other skills.

29.VI.11.6 In order to manage and monitor effectively this very important plank in our policy on poverty eradication, a special unit, the Micro-credit Division, will be established in the Ministry of Finance or in the National Development Strategy Authority to ensure that the poor are professionally and effectively assisted.

29.VI.12 Land for Agriculture

29.VI.12.1 Many of the rural poor occupy land that is leased from the Government. They are, however, unable to obtain loans because such lands cannot be used as collateral. Lessees who have beneficially occupied the same plot of land for a period of more than fifteen years will be allowed to convert to freehold.

29.VI.12.2 Land up to a maximum area will be granted free of charge to the rural poor (defined as families with incomes below the poverty line).

29.VI.12.3 The duration of agricultural leases will be extended to 99 years, and the conditions will specifically include the right to put the land up as collateral.

29.VI.13 Housing

29.VI.13.1 Land for housing will be granted free of charge to all those below the poverty line.

29.VI.13.2 A pilot housing micro-credit programme with IPED will be organised to finance basic home improvements, for the lowest income groups.

29.VI.13.3 Government will accelerate its programme of supplying serviced lots to needy families, with priority being given to those who participate in cooperative ventures which will assist with the labours of construction and the obtention of building supplies. Such lots will be transported in freehold to the beneficiaries, with mortgages extended through the NBS, and with the financial assistance of a special fund for supplementing mortgage payments.

29.VI.13.4 The current criteria for the allocation of housing lots will be revised to accommodate the poor, unemployed youths, and female-household heads.

29.VI.13.5 A number of townships will be established to assist in the resettlement of the poor, along with other groups. The provision of free serviced land and other facilities will be integral aspects of this land settlement scheme.

29.VI.13.6 The situation of squatters, who are mainly poor, will be regularised, so that they may improve the conditions of their shelter and receive the basic infrastructure to which all citizens are entitled. If they occupy Stateland, they will be provided with freehold titles.

29.VI.13.7 A National Housing Trust, based on a payroll tax, will be established. The funds so mobilised will be channelled through a private sector that will be challenged to provide affordable low-income housing through technological innovation.

29.VI.13.8 There will be a resuscitation of the self-help schemes which have contributed so much to housing development in the 1960s and early 1970s. Some of the lots for such self-help schemes will be allocated free to those below the poverty line. Self-help communities that are organised for the construction of houses for those below the poverty line will be provided with duty-free materials, when it is necessary to import them.

29.VI.14 Education

29.VI.14.1 The inefficiencies in the educational system directly affect the quality of the graduates from the schools, and often drive them below the poverty line. Accordingly,

- the share of the national budget allocated to education will be raised continuously from the present level of 14 percent to 20 percent by 2005, and will be sustained at or above that level for the rest of the decade;
- the percentage of primary teachers who are professionally trained will be increased annually so that the proportion of trained teachers by the year 2010 will be at least 75 percent;
- eighty percent of *all* teachers will be trained by 2010; and
- the number of *trained graduate teachers* will be increased by 50 percent over the same period;

29.VI.14.2 Financing strategies will be evolved that will require those who can afford to pay for certain aspects of education at all levels to do so. Such strategies will enable the better targeting of educational expenditure on needy students.

29.VI.14.3 There will be an attack on illiteracy from multiple points, including the testing for illiteracy levels and the building in of remedial programmes well in advance of CXC examinations. The elimination of illiteracy will be the premier priority for the first decade of the 21st century.

29.VI.14.4 Assistance from external donors and local NGOs will be utilised to strengthen school-feeding programmes so that virtually all primary schools will be covered.

29.VI.14.5 The location of new schools and the rationalisation of existing schools will be informed by data gathered in a recently completed School Mapping Exercise and by norms established in the new Education Act and regulations. In this way those vulnerable geographical areas that have been identified in the HIES, in which the poor reside, and which do not have adequate school buildings and effective school facilities, will be serviced. This applies to the urban, rural and hinterland regions.

29.VI.14.6 Scholarships will be provided to needy students (i.e. students below the poverty line), at the tertiary level. The student loan scheme will be maintained for all others.

29.VI.14.7 In consultation with GUYSUCO, the facilities offered at their technical institutions will be remodelled in order to provide training to a wider cross-section of students than is now being catered for. Special emphasis will be given to short courses in rural areas on topics that have the potential to enhance the

income of farmers, and those other activities for which micro-credit will be provided.

29.VI.14.8 The geographical coverage of the TCET system will be widened and made more accessible to rural/hinterland communities.

29.VI.15 Health

29.VI.15.1 The Ministry of Health will be restructured to reflect the decentralisation of service delivery and to improve its effectiveness. This will help the poor in many of the rural areas, and in all the hinterland districts.

29.VI.15.2 Adequate incentives will be developed to stimulate the service of health personnel in the hinterland.

29.VI.15.3 In order to ease the problems of staffing, all persons trained by the Government in medical disciplines and in other related fields will be asked to serve in an interior location for two years.

29.VI.15.4 The training of local people, such as community health workers, has already been proved to be successful. Such training schemes will be strengthened and extended to other extension personnel, such as Medex and Dentex. Outreach activities will be further expanded to increase access to health services in remote areas.

29.VI.15.5 Hospitals that are currently underutilised will be closed. Funds saved in this way will be made available to upgrade facilities in the interior and rural areas; to establish more health posts in remote areas; to provide a fleet of ambulances and other transport facilities; to ensure that radio communication networks are available to all localities; and to finance an expansion of a programme of rotating visits.

29.VI.15.6 Cost recovery mechanisms will be established, but will not be directed to financing the health requirements of the vulnerable.

29.VI.15.7 A social assessment system to determine eligibility to exemptions will be established. Until such a system is in place, means assessments will be carried out at public health facility level.

29.VI.15.8 Within a system of selective fees for medical services, cost recovery will never hinder access to health care and no patient will be refused service because of the inability to pay fees.

29.VI.15.9 The government will further develop a health insurance scheme as a supplementary financing option.

29.VI.15.10 An extensive review of the NIS and a corresponding reform programme will be developed, in order to improve its actuarial basis and strengthen its performance as a provider of social health benefits.

29.VI.15.11 All health centres will be equipped with a phone or radio for emergency calls and all hospitals will have adequate power generation supplies. These will be extremely important in the rural and interior districts.

29.VI.15.12 The programmes of rotating visits to the remotest facilities by physicians will be strengthened, so that villagers would know in advance when a doctor would be in the nearest health centre, for example, on specified days of the month.

29.VI.15.13 Inequalities in access to health care are of particular burden to the poorest of our citizens. The Ministry of Health will examine ways to improve the provision and delivery of services to these groups. The health needs of vulnerable groups are concentrated in the areas of nutritional problems, poor environmental health, vector-borne diseases and sexually transmitted diseases. Hence a health development strategy centred on the objectives of primary health care and health promotion will be designed and implemented to address the needs of the most vulnerable.

29.VI.15.14 Action plans which address the health needs of each vulnerable group and details the action to be taken as well as the institutional responsibilities will be prepared through processes of national consultation, involving all major social actors.

29.VI.15.15 Besides the preparation of ‘basic packages’ of services targeting Primary Health Care interventions, to be made accessible to the entire population, the Ministry of Health will design extra basic packages for needy groups. The institutional responsibilities for the delivery of such packages will be assigned through a process of consultation.

29.VI.15.16 Financing mechanisms, including those for cost recovery, will not be implemented unless they are accompanied by exemption policies and mechanisms targeting the most needy (the elderly, disabled, etc.), other categories of the medically indigent, and the poor (e.g.: the employed poor, who are still below the poverty line; the unemployed; single-parent or single-earner households; the homeless; and youths with no formal education and no job).

29.VI.15.17 Special health needs of vulnerable groups will be identified and attributed adequate priority. For example, the availability of drugs and access to physicians for the elderly, currently poor, is essential for the wellbeing of this vulnerable category.

29.VI.15.18 Monitoring the nutritional status of the most vulnerable groups will be undertaken on a regular basis.

29.VI.16 Amerindians

29.VI.16.1 Systems will be put in place to ensure that Amerindians have access to credit. In addition, postal agencies equipped to deal with savings accounts will be expanded, in order to allow Amerindian populations to secure their savings.

29.VI.16.2 Government will provide technical assistance to Amerindian communities in the formulation of development projects, and in negotiating the financing of such projects with private commercial banks.

29.VI.16.3 Special consideration (salaries, incentive packages, other benefits) will be given to both hinterland and coastland government personnel working in the Public Service in Amerindian communities.

29.VI.16.4 A communications network integrating telephone/ telecommunication systems, roads, airstrips, improved river and sea communication and mass communication systems, will be developed in order to ensure that Amerindian/hinterland communities are in contact both with each other and with the coastland areas.

29.VI.16.5 An Amerindian Development Fund will be established to support efforts that are required to develop and enhance the quality of life in Amerindian communities. A special tax will be levied for this purpose. Monies obtained from this tax will be paid in to the Development Fund. Guidelines for the

utilization of the resources of this Fund will be formulated.

29.VI.16.6 Teachers based in Amerindian communities will pursue special training courses conducted by the Ministry of Education. Such orientation courses will be structured in order to expose candidate teachers to the social and economic environment in which they would be required to operate. The curricula for such courses will be prepared by experts in Amerindian culture and other relevant disciplines. Teachers will not be certified to teach in the interior unless they are successful in these courses. The course will be geographically sensitive, e.g. a teacher to be moved from the Rupununi to the North West will be required to take a short course on the culture of the native community in that area. Although such courses will undoubtedly lengthen the period of training required to equip a teacher to work in Amerindian areas, they are considered necessary because of the importance attached to imparting environmental relevance to Amerindian education. In any event, teachers who successfully undertake the course will be compensated by additional emoluments and perquisites.

29.VI.16.7 Preparatory training courses will be offered for Amerindians who do not have the entrance requirements to enter higher institutions of education. These courses will be as wide in scope as necessary to prepare students to enter any stream of their choice.

29.VI.16.8 As a longer term solution to the problem of inadequate preparation of Amerindian students, more secondary schools will be built and staffed in the interior.

29.VI.16.9 Amerindians will participate in the formulation of curricula which will not only be appropriate to the unique requirements of their communities, but will also equip them with skills that are relevant to hinterland development. In addition, the curricula will prepare them for further education and training outside their communities, and facilitate their involvement and integration into the society at large. Curricula for Amerindian students will be specialized and geographically sensitive, and will require special coordination between the Ministry of Education and the communities. Language will be seen as an integral part of the education of Amerindian children and corresponding curricula will be developed by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, and the Amerindian Research Unit.

29.VI.16.10 Land claims for Amerindians, in areas where Amerindians are located, will be settled before forest concessions are awarded.

29.VI.16.11 Government will institute a coherent system of vector control taking into account locations such as mining and forestry camps, border crossing points, and the Amerindian communities themselves.

29.VI.16.12 Government will begin a health education programme which emphasizes preventive measures and traditional Amerindian medicine, and recognises the position of traditional Amerindian healers.

29.VI.16.13 The training of all health workers in Amerindian communities will be periodically upgraded, and a living wage paid to all of them.

29.VI.16.14 Physical plant and equipment in the cottage and regional hospitals in the interior will be modernised and maintained, and adequate and reliable supplies of medication assured.

29.VI.17 Transportation

29.VI.17.1 There will be established in Guyana, within the next ten years, a road network which would link the coastal regions to all the hinterland areas of the country. As a result, physical access to the gamut of social services will be made to the poor wherever they are located, the difficulties that are now encountered in recruiting personnel to work in the interior districts will be reduced to a great extent, and in general there will

be a freer flow of citizens goods and services throughout the country. In many respects, the construction of such a unifying road network is the key to our attack on poverty in Guyana. Indeed, the proposed infrastructural development would make feasible investment in locations which might otherwise have been considered to be too remote, increase the number of job opportunities, and raise the living standards of the indigent throughout the country.

29.VI.17.2 All the airstrips in the interior will be rehabilitated and maintained.

29.VI.18 The Family

29.VI.18.1 Many of the strategies which have been put forward for the nation as a whole embrace, of course, the family and its members. However, there are a few which are "poor-family" specific. These are listed below.

29.VI.18.2 Government will implement schemes for the development of innovative housing arrangements for low-income single-parent households, and for senior citizens and people with disabilities.

29.VI.18.3 More children's homes will be provided for abandoned children.

29.VI.18.4 Career guidance will become an important aspect of the country's educational system. Particular attention will be paid to linking the training of the poor to employment opportunities which have arisen as a result of the implementation of this NDS.

29.VI.18.5 There will be organised apprenticeship programmes at the central and local levels to prepare youths for employment.

29.VI.18.6 A Welfare System, centering specifically for the elderly, will be established.

29.VI.18.7 Housing for seniors and people with disabilities within new and existing communities will be established at subsidised rentals for those with low incomes.

29.VI.18.8 The NIS's medical care benefits will be continued after retirement, since this is when illness most often occurs and assistance needed.

29.VI.19 Gender Issues

29.VI.19.1 As with the other sections, the general provisions in the NDS will significantly assist in improving the lot of women, particularly of the poor woman. However, some specific strategies will be listed here.

29.VI.19.2 Remunerative employment opportunities for women will be created through a combination of policies to improve economic growth.

29.VI.19.3 Women will be facilitated to enter the market through the institution of flexible work conditions, the provision of credit for a variety of self-employment opportunities, and the establishment of day care centres, etc.

29.VI.19.4 Women's access to credit will be enhanced by establishing grass-roots credit schemes.

29.VI.19.5 A national women's credit institution which will meet the credit needs of low income women who often find themselves excluded from formal credit because of collateral requirements, will be established.

29.VI.19.6 There will be an expansion of SIMAP's money supplements to women; an expansion of nutrition programmes; and increased access to safer drinking water.

29.VI.19.7 Women will be trained in non-traditional and more highly paid trades. Apart from direct provision, financial inducements, such as career development loans, will be offered for women to attend non-traditional vocational training institutions.

29.VI.19.8 The compliance of corporations, local and foreign, with national laws and codes governing the rights and benefits of women workers will be ensured.

29.VI.19.9 Women, (including teenage mothers) returning to the educational system after pregnancy or child raising will be assisted by providing grants or loans to them, as well as formal and informal back-to-school and on-the-job training programmes.

29.VI.19.10 Special efforts to institutionalise the training of women for specific jobs in specific areas will be made.

29.VI.20 Participation

29.VI.20.1 The central logic of sustainable human development rests on inclusive participation as the primary means of ensuring that all members of society are given access to economic opportunities, material resources, and the requisite capacities to benefit equitably from the development process. It seeks to reduce the level of exclusion of the poorest sections by working to integrate them into the productive sections, and to open access to social services.

29.VI.20.2 Its fundamental argument is that the eradication of poverty entails the active and direct involvement of all sections of society, and the mobilisation of the gamut of civil society interests in regard to decision-making, the preparation of project proposals, their administration and monitoring, and the dissemination of information. It aims to ensure the sustainability of efforts, and to take advantage of traditional practices and indigenous technologies, where appropriate, even as it strengthens community consciousness and cohesiveness and reinforces the inclusive approach to democratic governance.

29.VI.20.3 This National Development Strategy, particularly the areas which are focused on poverty eradication, has been formulated in a participatory manner. Every group in society or their representatives, has been consulted on every topic. Their advice, their hopes, and their aspirations, have been included in these proposals. However, merely to put forward a strategy for development is not enough. What is important is for the strategy to be implemented.

29.VI.20.4 Accordingly, a National Development Strategy Commission, with adequate provisions, will be established in order to oversee the implementation of this Strategy, particularly those aspects of it which impinge upon, and are relevant to, the eradication of poverty. In addition it will review public policies for their equity and sustainability; and coordinate national dialogue on, and public participation in, the development of strategies to permit equitable and sustainable development. It will be an independent civil society organisation comprising the trades unions, the private sector, NGOs, and other civil society individuals and organisations. It will, however, establish the closest links with the government, the donor community, and international NGOs. Its emphasis will be on consensual and non-partisan operations. Its establishment is vital to the attainments of the targets which have been laid down in this Strategy.

CHAPTER 30

IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

30.I THE PROCESS

30.I.1 It is intended, immediately after the approval of this National Development Strategy by the National Assembly, to translate its various recommendations into detailed projects. For example, the strategies that have been put forward for the future development of the educational sector in Guyana will be broken down into specific projects encompassing such activities as primary education, teacher training, training in science and technology, distance learning, computer education and so on. Similar approaches will be followed for other sectors.

30.I.2 In addition, projects will be formulated both on a regional basis, and for such cross-cutting matters as institutional reform, family affairs, and information technology.

30.I.3 In all these exercises, specific implementation schedules and costings will be developed.

30.I.4 These projects, with the National Development Strategy as a back-drop and as a strategic-ramework, will then be submitted to the Government, the bi-lateral and multi-lateral communities, and the national and international private sector for possible financing.

30.I.5 The government in office will require ministries to demonstrate how they intend to contribute to the attainment of the objectives of the NDS and, if necessary, request them to revise existing programmes so that they might fall in line with those of the National Development Strategy. If there are compelling circumstances, the government will, of course, amend the NDS's proposals.

30.I.6 The agreed programmes will be incorporated into the annual budgets.

30.II FINANCES

30.II.1 The sources that are normally tapped by governments of Guyana for the financing of their developmental activities will be resorted to for the implementation of this National Development Strategy. These are, of course, the government's own revenues; the resources of the Bretton Woods institutions, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Caribbean Development Bank; the resources of the United Nations system, for both financial and technical assistance; the aid agencies of a range of bi-lateral donor countries; and the local and foreign private sector.

30.II.2 It should be stressed that the greatest reliance will be placed on private sector investment to develop the massive infrastructural programme which has been prescribed in this National Development Strategy.

30.II.3 To this end, a radical departure from the normal approaches to infrastructural development is contemplated. **The government will focus more on facilitating rather than financing the construction of infrastructure in Guyana.** The approach which it will follow, and on which it will concentrate, is known variously as the Build, Operate, Transfer (BOT) system, or as Build, Own, Operate, Transfer (BOOT), or Build, Own, Operate (BOO).

30.II.4 In these types of projects, private sector investors generally provide equity financing in the amount of 10 to 30 percent of the total project costs, and seek debt financing for the balance of the investment. The host government may, on occasion, furnish a portion or all of the land that may be required for the project; or grant partial tax relief in some form or another; or, in road and bridge projects, grant toll rights for a specific amount for a specific period, or divest a part of the land or some of the resources which lie on either side of the road which is being constructed.

30.II.5 Several advantages accrue to the host government through BOT type arrangements. BOT allows a country to obtain much-needed infrastructure project with little or no cost to taxpayers; the government incurs little or no risk as there are generally sufficient bonds in place, and sufficient letters of credit in hand to ensure completion of the project in the event that the sponsors default prior to project completion; the project will probably progress from concept to completion faster than if a government agency was involved; and, because the sponsors are usually required to operate and maintain the facility for periods longer than twenty years, the chances are good that its initial quality will be good.

30.II.6 It should be noted that when projects receive incomes from tolls, only the users of the BOT facilities are required to pay for them. The general public is therefore in no way taxed for the construction of the facility.

30.II.7 Human Resources

30.II.7.1 Although it is customary in Guyana to attribute our failure to develop rapidly almost exclusively to a shortage of financial resources, it is the strongly held view of the team which formulated this National Development Strategy that the major obstacle to its implementation might well be both the quality and quantity of the human resources that are now available in our country.

30.II.7.2 Guyana does not possess a critical mass of professionals, specialists, craftsmen, and entrepreneurs in virtually any sector of its economy. The problem is particularly grave in respect of trained teachers for both primary and secondary schools; university lecturers and professors; scientists; technologists; information technology experts; technicians of all sorts; foresters; agriculturalists and engineers of all disciplines. We are especially short, also, of policy analysts and personnel with the capability to negotiate agreements with the multinationals and other financiers. And yet, we will desperately require such people in order, for example, to conclude satisfactory BOT deals, to obtain the best returns for investment in our mining sector, and to make certain that our renewable natural resources are developed in such a way that both current and future generations would profit from their utilisation.

30.II.7.3 Training courses will therefore be immediately started in order to ensure that at least a minimum amount of such personnel are available in the medium term. The problem is where to acquire the necessary expertise and experience in the early critical and crucial years of the National Development Strategy. We propose to obtain them in several ways.

30.II.7.4 First, as part of the general process of gaining assistance from bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors to implement the National Development Strategy, it will be made clear that the receipt of technical assistance and personnel in several key areas is of paramount importance to our country's development. Every effort will therefore be made to link such technical assistance to capital aid. Of greater significance, however, would be the necessity, in providing such help, to integrate it with the training of Guyanese citizens either on-the-job, or locally, or overseas, or through some combination of these three methods.

30.II.7.5 Second, every possible use will be made of the UNDP programme that is called Transfer Of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals or TOKTEN. Through this scheme, Guyanese nationals living abroad will be paid by UNDP to return to their countries for specific activities and for specified periods.

Many of these TOKTEN scholars will be provided with "repeat contracts" in order to allow them to come regularly to Guyana either to complete the tasks on which they were working or to undertake completely new assignments.

30.II.7.6 Third, a comprehensive but voluntary survey of Guyanese living overseas will be carried out, and a register subsequently prepared. Expatriate Guyanese will be asked to supply particulars of their qualifications and relevant experience either to our Embassies and High Commissioners abroad, or to a focal point in Guyana itself. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that they will be asked to volunteer this information. Once the data have been received and analysed, a number of paths will be pursued: (i) those Guyanese who have been identified as being in a position to assist the country as entrepreneurs, businessmen, and investors will be specifically invited either to return and do so, or to invest from abroad; (ii) those Guyanese whose qualifications and work experience indicate that they are particularly suited for specific available positions in the Public Service, will be invited to fill them; (iii) those Guyanese who might want to assist their country but, for one reason or another, might find it difficult to remigrate permanently will be requested to return for specific assignments, from time to time, as required; and (iv) because there will almost inevitably be a number of tasks which, in this modern age of Information Technology, would not require the physical presence in Guyana of a number of Guyanese specialists, this last group of persons will be encouraged to utilise the computer and the internet to perform, from abroad, a wide range of duties.

30.II.7.7 It should not be necessary to stress that such arrangements will not be undertaken in an *ad hoc* manner, but will be based on a carefully conceived plan, which matches qualifications and experience to job availability, which provides an affordable package of emoluments, and which in general encourages the expatriate Guyanese to want to help the country.

30.II.7.8 It might still be necessary, however, even with these approaches, for us to utilise non-Guyanese in the implementation of the Strategy. We must therefore budget for these non-nationals just as we will have budgeted for the employment of both resident and non-residential Guyanese citizens. In other words, we must not be reluctant to employ foreigners if our situation demands it.

30.II.7.9 There is another dimension to the human resources aspect of strategy implementation. If the roads are built, if we penetrate our interior, if there is a splurge of economic activity throughout the length and breadth of Guyana as we have strategised, there would be a shortage of personnel both to work in the offices, factories and fields, and to buy the products of our efforts. It will be a circular problem, embracing the need for both producers and local consumers.

30.II.7.10 There will therefore be phased immigration into Guyana. A multi-political, multi-ethnic team of demographers, economists, specialists in agriculture and industry, and so on, will be established. The approach in this matter, as in all others, will be inclusive. The team's task will be to assess the future demand for additional persons in the country, over a specified period, and make recommendations for meeting the demand. The team will not formulate policies and strategies for mass immigration. The number of immigrants, the phasing of their entry into the country, and the places in which they would be encouraged to locate, will be based on objective, rational assessments, in which the multi-cultural, and multi-racial composition of our country will have been taken into account.

30.II.8 Monitoring

30.II.8.1 A National Development Commission will be established. This Commission will comprise a small number of Commissioners, wholly drawn from Civil Society, who will be supported by a number of consultants and a secretariat. The main tasks of the Commission will be continuously to update the National Development Strategy, and to monitor its implementation.

30.II.8.2 In order effectively to undertake these duties, and to ensure the timely exchange of information between the Commission and the Government, legal links will be established between the Commission and Government's own oversight committee.

30.II.8.3 The Commission will be required to report annually to Parliament on the status of the implementation of the National Development Strategy.