

# **National Workshop on Debt Management Self-Assessment and Improvement**

**Cara Lodge  
Georgetown, Guyana  
September 19-23, 2016**

**19<sup>th</sup> September, 2016**

## **Speech by Hon. Winston D. Jordan, Minister of Finance, Guyana for the Opening Session of the National Workshop on Debt Management Self-Assessment and Improvement**

### **Salutations**

Hon. Jaipaul Sharma, Minister within the Ministry of Finance, Dr. Hector Butts, Finance Secretary, Ms. Sonya Roopnauth, Director of Budget, Bank of Guyana Representatives, Mr. Jaime Coronado Quintanilla, Coordinator of CEMLA'S Public Debt Management Capacity Building Programme (PDP), Mr. Juan Carlos Villanova and other PDP experts, Senior Government Officials, Special Invitees and Participants.

I am always pleased to be able to address issues pertaining to debt. The opening of this very important National Workshop on Debt Management Self-Assessment and Improvement is just another opportunity to do so. The robust and judicious management of our country's Public Expenditure, Financial Resources and Fiscal Framework has been given a deserved and prominent place in the APNU+AFC Government's strategic agenda for the development of Guyana, which aims to improve the lives of our people.

On behalf of the Government, I also wish to express gratitude to Mr. Coronado and his team for the long-standing support that CEMLA has given to Guyana in the areas of Debt Management, New Financing and Public Finance. Since 1999, CEMLA has played a pivotal role in helping Guyana to achieve a sustainable public debt, improve institutional arrangements and enhance the technical skills and capacities of local officials in effectively managing public debt operations, performing debt sustainability analyses (DSA) and developing public debt strategies, among other areas of assistance. I am sure that the current partnership with Jaime and CEMLA under the Government of Guyana-CEMLA Country Strategic Plan will enable us to reach even greater heights. The Government in its efforts to monitor debt sustainability and maximise its external assistance, looks forward to the continued cooperation and support from CEMLA, through the Public Debt Management Capacity Building Programme (PDP) and its donors, in particular Switzerland's State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, Economic Cooperation and Development (SECO).

Back in 2007, at the start of the World Bank Debt Management Performance Assessment (DeMPA) pilot phase, Guyana was among the first countries to be assessed, using the methodology developed at that time. Guyana scored mostly C's and D's on the various dimensions, which left much room for improvement. However, it was not until six (6) years later, in 2013, that a second assessment was done with the assistance of CEMLA, which showed a worsening of the performance under most of the indicators of the DeMPA. I do not intend to have a similar situation under my watch. This Workshop is timely, therefore, occurring just over one (1) year into the tenure of our Government.

The DeMPA tool provides a set of indicators for comprehensively assessing debt management performance in developing countries. It is firmly grounded in Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) methodology and it offers a “drill down” on debt management. I firmly believe that a modern debt management office should not have to rely solely on external reviews to guide its improvement. We need to master the use of self-assessment tools, such as the DeMPA, so that our debt management team can be more proactive in identifying and remedying weak areas in debt management operations and in the institutional framework for public debt management.

This Workshop brings together key stakeholders in the areas of debt management, budget, economic policy, treasury operations, audit, the Bank of Guyana and the Ministry of Legal Affairs. It is a representation of the Government’s commitment to maintaining a sustainable debt position, as we seek to fund our national programme for investment and social expenditures, so as to improve the economic and social welfare of all Guyanese.

The Workshop builds on the previous Sustainable Funding Strategy Workshop, which was conducted in December, 2015 and two (2) missions in April and June 2016 to prepare and update procedures manuals for debt management operations within CEMLA's PDP. These debt-related workshops and other interventions, such as the proposed introduction of a consolidated public debt law, reflect the seriousness with which this government pursues the issue of public debt, and our continuous efforts to improve the debt management in our country.

Guyana's collaboration with CEMLA, through its PDP, is geared at responding to the risks and vulnerabilities associated with public debt in the globalised financial system, as was clearly demonstrated by the international financial crisis of recent vintage. These associated vulnerabilities demonstrate the need for ongoing improvements in the analyses and management of financial liability. The primary aim of the PDP is to assist governments in maintaining public debt sustainability and improving macroeconomic management by helping them design and implement sound public debt and financing strategies.

With this in mind, I again want to thank Mr. Coronado and CEMLA for partnering with us to support this capacity building effort. This training is a part of the larger goal to have a cadre of officers that are familiar with the assessment and scoring methodology, as well as understanding the linkages between the debt performance indicators and the use of evidence-based data for assessing debt management in Guyana.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all a very productive training workshop. I look forward to receiving a report on the assessment as well as recommendations for the improvement of debt management in Guyana.

It is my distinct pleasure to now declare this National Workshop on Debt Management Self-Assessment and Improvement officially open.

Thank You!