

A Fair Deal for Guyana – A Fair Deal for the Planet
Twitter: @fairdealguyana
Citizens Letter

His Excellency Irfaan Ali
President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana
Office of the President
Shiv Chanderpal Drive
Bourda
Georgetown

Via email to: presidentguyana10@gmail.com

Dear President Ali,

Climate Change and COP 26

The Government of Guyana will be participating in the Conference of Parties (COP 26) to be held in Glasgow from 31st October to 12th November 2021. The role of COP26 is to tackle climate change.

COP 26 takes place at a critical time. The Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned of the dire consequences of climate change. Your government has already wisely accepted the science of climate change. On 29th October 2020, Vice President Jagdeo in an address at the Group of 77 and China virtual Ministerial Level Meeting stated that

“We are not here to prove the science of climate change. That has been proven and accepted. We are not here to debate the outcome, or the impact, of climate change because most people in this room and across the world have been witnessing and experiencing this first hand...through hurricanes, rising sea levels, droughts and a whole host of other activities.”¹

At that same meeting you warned that,

“Guyana as a net carbon sink, is 'particularly vulnerable' to climate change because of its geography and historical settlement patterns...”²

Earlier this year you declared the flooding in Guyana to be a national disaster.³

Yet despite Guyana’s vulnerability and the great importance of COP 26, your government has not consulted the citizens of Guyana in meaningful ways. Your government has not consulted us in our communities. We are deeply disappointed by this failure.

We respectfully remind you that the Guyanese people are a sovereign nation. Article 9 of our Constitution states that

“Sovereignty belongs to the people who exercise it through their representatives and the democratic organs established by or under this Constitution.”

We also respectfully draw your attention to Article 13 of our Constitution which says that the principal objective of the political system is to establish an inclusionary democracy. The political system is

¹ <https://www.minfor.gov.gy/other-speeches/vp-jagdeo-frames-the-discourse-of-the-g77-flagship-event/>

² <https://www.minfor.gov.gy/other-speeches/he-dr-irfaan-ali-opening-remarks-on-the-g77-flagship-event/>

³ <https://thecaribbeannewsnow.com/guyana-declares-flooding-a-national-disaster/>

supposed to provide citizens with opportunities to take part in the decision-making processes of the State, particularly when that decision making affects our well-being.

As the Head of State, you are the servant of the people of Guyana. It is your duty to listen to us. It is also your duty to act in the best interests of all the people of Guyana based on equality and fairness.

Freedom and democracy depend on citizens who are willing to uphold the Constitution and to demand action and accountability from government. In exercise of our constitutional rights and freedoms we set out below our demands in relation to COP26. We respectfully request that your government adopts our demands as Guyana's official negotiating position.

1. The Secretary General of the United Nations has described the IPCC report as a 'Code Red'⁴ for humanity and said that

"The evidence is irrefutable: greenhouse gas emissions are choking our planet & placing billions of people in danger. Global heating is affecting every region on Earth, with many of the changes becoming irreversible. We must act decisively now to avert a climate catastrophe."

States are gathering at COP26 to agree on actions to cut greenhouse gas emissions in order to keep global warming below 1.5°C as set out in the Paris Agreement. Guyana is a signatory to the Paris Agreement.

In light of the grave danger to life on earth we demand that all States take urgent action to cut their greenhouse gas emissions.

2. We note that the industrialised States have fuelled their economies and created their wealth by burning fossil fuels – coal, oil and gas – which have emitted massive amounts of greenhouse gases and resulted in climate change. Climate justice requires these States to undo the harm they have inflicted on the earth.

We demand that the industrialised countries undo the damage to the earth's climate system by removing their historic greenhouse gas emissions from the atmosphere.

3. We note that Guyana is a carbon sink. Guyana's forests extract more greenhouse gas from the atmosphere than the people of Guyana emit. These forests are making the world safer for all humans. Our forests have removed greenhouse gas from time immemorial and have made a unique historic contribution to mitigating climate change. These forests belong to the State. The State is not the government. The State consists of the people of Guyana. As Guyanese citizens we cherish our country, our forests and one another.

We demand that the people of Guyana are paid for the greenhouse gas that our forests are removing. As the owners of the forests, we demand that the payments are made to the people of Guyana, not to the government.

In light of our unique historic contribution to mitigating climate change, we demand payment at the rate of US\$80 per ton. We reserve the right to increase our price in the future.

⁴ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/08/1097362>

4. We note that under the State Lands Act and the Amerindian Act 2006, Amerindian communities own land under absolute, unconditional titles. These Amerindian lands include all of the forests located on those lands that are held under these Amerindian land titles.

We demand that payments which relate to forests on Amerindian lands must be made direct to the Amerindian titleholders and not to the government or any NGO or other person or group.

Yours sincerely,

Aaeshah Alli
Aakifah Alli
Abbey-Jaye Skeete
Adrian Robeiro
Adriana Chappelle
Akram Sabree
Alfred Bhulai
Alissa Trotz
Ameena Khan
Andrea Gilbert
Andrew Campbell
Andrew McIntosh
Andy Spencer
Anita Shervington
ANNA ILES
Anne Braithwaite
Antonio De Baez
Ashma John
AshwynJohn
Ayla Kenyon
Basilina Bettencourt
Bibi Sugrim
Brian Massay
Britney Bettencourt
Bruce-Malcolm Nobrega
Camille John
Carl Rodney
Cedric Stephens
Celina Kishna
Charlene Wilkinson
Charles Harley
Charles Martin
Clifton Walters
Colin Mc Calmont
Colin Waithe
Danielle Wilson
Danuta Radzik
Debbie Blair
Deochan Narine
Desmond Shahoud
Diane Fraser

Donald Rodney
Dr. Jerry Jailall
Duane de Freitas
Elton McRae
Eon Headecker
Eve Drayton Hill
Finella Martin
Frederick Collins
Gabriel Cunje
Gerald Perreira
Hannah Andries
Hansa Persaud
Haresh Sahadeo
Heralall Persaud
Isabella Boston
Ivlaw Maxwell
Jamal Edinboro
Jamal Bacchus
James Francis
Jason Harley
Jean Martin
Jeremy Simmons
Jerri Dias
Jessica George-Joseph
Joanne Williams
Joel Thompson
John David
Jones Richards
Joseph chin
Josephine Whitehead
Joshua Cholmondeley
Joy Austin
Kairon Griffith
Karen De Souza
Karly Ford
Kayla de Freitas
Kevin Burkett
Khadija Perreira
Kid James
Kimace Benjamin
Krista Melville
Leah Cho - Yee
Leila Doobay
Leon Prescott
Leroy Ignacio
Lindsay Lee-Bing
Loreen McLeod
Lorraine Vandeyar
Madeleine Jaundoo
Malini Cunje
Marcellus Perreira

Marcus Stewart
Margaret Yhap
Marie Persaud
Mark Chatarpal
Mark Jacobs
Mark Westmaas
Marvin Massiah
Mary-Peter Ngui
Maya De Freitas
Melinda Janki
Meliyah Khan
Michael Lee
Michael Wilson
Michelle Asantewa
Moufousa John
Muhammad Perreira
Myrtle Peterkin
Nelsonia Persaud - Budhram
Osmond Kaitano
Patrick Johnson
Peacilla Fredericks
Penelope Howell
QuadadDe Freitas
Ramlakhan Singh
Ramon Gaskin
Rasheed Dey
Rayram Ramdeholl
Reana Griffith
Rishee Thakur
Rita Audrey Nichols
Robert Fraser
Roderick Westmaas
Roland Richards
Romola Lucas
Ronald Burch-Smith
Rosalind Dolphin
Rose Dagoo
Ryan McKay
Sandra Defreitas
Sandra Clarke
Selrahc Belfield
Shamar Jack
Shaneeza Persaud
Sharada Ford
Shareef Mohammed
Silver Perry
Simone Mangal
Sinikka Henry
Susan Conliffe
Swatantra Anand Goolsarran
Tafawa Ntune

Tiffini Ann Thomas
Toshana Dublin
Tracy Marshall
Trevor James
Troy Thomas
Tyriq Scott
Vanda Radzik
Vanessa Lee
Virona Rogers
Wanetta Lamwatt
Xanthea Singh
Yewande James