

Statement Delivered by the
Honourable Joseph Hamilton M.P., Minister of
Labour of Guyana, M.P., during the 3rd Session of the
Permanent Forum on Peoples of African Descent
Thematic Discussion – “Ensuring Equal Access to
Educational Opportunities regardless of Race, Colour,
or national origin”

April 17, 2024

Thank you, Chair,

Access to education is an inherent right of every individual. However, in ensuring that this right is respected and promoted, we must ensure that changing realities do not negatively affect access to and the delivery of the quality of education.

Chair, the right to development provided for in Article 17 of the Draft Declaration is a policy priority for the Government of Guyana and we continue to provide free education from nursery to secondary levels. We have already attained universal primary education and aim to attain universal secondary education by 2026. Most notably, every school child, whether attending a public or private school, receives an annual voucher of USD\$200. We are moving incrementally towards free tertiary education at the University of Guyana.

In a changing world, and more so, in Guyana’s rapidly expanding and diversifying economy, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is of even greater importance than before.

Our Government has invested significant resources to these programmes which will benefit our youthful population and facilitate the closure of the skills gap in our job market. This commitment is shared through a variety of programmes across different sectors aimed at empowering all Guyanese.

Chair, I shall share a few of these with you; all offered at no cost to the participants.

The Greater Guyana Initiative (GGI) Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) programme, was conceptualised to develop the local workforce and entrepreneurship in order to promote sustainable economic diversification in Guyana.

This programme is open to all Guyanese and approximately 48% of students enrolled in TVET institutions are women. They have registered for and are participating in the non-traditional technical areas such as general construction, and heavy-duty equipment operation.

Under the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) which aimed to offer 20,000 tertiary level scholarships by 2025, has since its launch in 2021 already reached its target of approximately 20,000 scholarships to Guyanese from every Region. Over 60% of the participants are female. GOAL offers a broad range of courses from post-secondary, pre-university foundation courses to undergraduate degrees and Doctoral levels.

Chair, the Women's Innovation and Investment Network (WIIN), was launched in 2022; to date over 8000 women have benefitted from training for self-employment opportunities.

In closing I would like to reiterate the Government of Guyana's commitment towards its transformative development agenda of leaving "no one behind" with a highly skilled competitive and diverse workforce to meet the global demands of a changing world.

Thank you.