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**The Government of Guyana Responses to the Questionnaire on Decriminalizing Poverty and Homelessness: September 15, 2023**

**Special Rapporteur on the decriminalization of poverty and homelessness; Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living; Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and Human Rights**

2023

**Question One: Laws or regulations that prohibit begging, eating, sleeping, or performing personal hygienic activities in certain public places (please kindly include the wording of these laws and specify whether they are effectively enforced):**

1. ‘Vagrancy’, ‘Roguery and Vagabondage’ and ‘Bathing in public insufficiently clothed’ are prohibited summary offences under the **Summary Jurisdiction (Offenses) Act (SJOA)** and each offence mandates either a nominal fine or a term of imprisonment of several months if the offender is found guilty.

However, these are not often enforced as courts and society recognise that many of these offenses are caused by mental health issues and alternatives can be provided such as shelters, psychiatric care and treatment.

The relevant provisions are quoted verbatim hereafter:

1. **Vagrancy:**

***Section 143.*** *Everyone who does any of the following acts shall be declared a vagrant or idle and disorderly person, and shall be liable to a fine of not less than seven thousand five hundred dollars nor more than fifteen thousand dollars or to imprisonment for four months, that is to say, everyone who—*

1. *being able, by labour or other lawful means, to maintain himself or herself, or his wife or child, or her child, where the wife or child is without other means of support, wilfully refuses or neglects to do so; or*
2. *wanders abroad, or places himself in any public way or public place, or intrudes in any private premises after being lawfully ordered to depart, and uses any solicitation, means, or device to induce the bestowal of alms upon him, or causes, procures, or encourages any other person to do so; or*
3. *sleeps, lodges, or loiters in or under any porch, verandah, gallery, outhouse, passage, gateway, dwelling- house, warehouse, store, shop, stable, or other building, or in or under any building wholly or in part unoccupied, or is found in or under any cart, carriage, or vessel, or in any logie or plantation building, or on or under any wharf, stelling, quay, jetty, bridge or other place, or in any canefield or provision ground, or on or in any dam or trench immediately adjoining thereto, without leave of the owner, occupier, or person for the time being in charge thereof, and has no visible means of subsistence or does not give a satisfactory account of himself.*
4. **Roguery and vagabondage:**

***Section 144****. Everyone who does or suffers any of the following acts or things shall be declared a rogue and vagabond, and shall be liable to a fine of not less than ten thousand dollars nor more than twenty thousand dollars or to imprisonment for ten months, that is to say, everyone who—*

1. *is convicted a second or any subsequent time of being a vagrant or idle and disorderly person; or*
2. *while being apprehended as a vagrant or idle and disorderly person, assaults or violently resists the police or rural constable or other person who is apprehending him, and is subsequently convicted of the offence for which he was being apprehended; or*
3. *procures or endeavours to procure alms or charitable contributions for himself or any other person, under any false or fraudulent pretence; or*
4. *is found in or under any porch, verandah, gallery, outhouse, passage, gateway, dwelling-house, warehouse, store, shop, stable, or other building, or in any yard, garden, or other enclosed place or land for any unlawful purpose, or, being found in any of those places, does not give a satisfactory account of himself; or*
5. *plays or bets by way of wagering or gaming in any street, road, highway or other open or public place, or in any open place to which the public have or are permitted to have access to or with any table, dice, cards or other instrument or means of such wagering or gaming at any game or pretended game of chance; or*
6. *has in his custody or possession any picklock, key, crowbar, jack, bit, or other implement, with intent unlawfully to break into any building, or is armed with or has upon him any gun, pistol, sword, knife, razor, bludgeon, or other deadly or dangerous weapon or instrument, with intent to commit any unlawful act; and the weapon or instrument shall, on the conviction of the offender, be forfeited; or*
7. *is convicted a second or any subsequent time of an offence against section 136(a) or section 141; or*
8. *is convicted a second or any subsequent time of an offence against section 159; or*
9. *being a suspected person or reputed thief, loiters or lurks about or frequents any river, canal, or navigable stream, or any market, warehouse, wharf, dock, or stelling, or loiters or lurks in or about or frequents any vessel, punt, boat, or other craft, with intent to commit any robbery, theft, or unlawful act, or is found in any of those places or in any vessel, boat, punt, or other craft aforesaid, and does not give a satisfactory account of himself; or*
10. *is convicted a second or any subsequent time of an offence against section 161; or*
11. *unlawfully sells, attempts to sell, or unlawfully acts as an agent for the sale of any lottery.*

***Section 144(2).*** *Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (l), where the court, having regard to the youth of the person convicted, his character, or his previous good behaviour, or such other considerations as may seem fit, is of opinion that it would be unduly harsh to declare such person a rogue and vagabond then the court may in its discretion refrain from declaring such person a rogue and vagabond.*

1. **Bathing in public insufficiently clothed:**

***Section 161****. Everyone who, not being sufficiently and decently clothed, bathes in the daytime in the sea, or in any river, creek, stream, trench, canal, or other place, near or within sight from any public way or public place shall be liable to a fine of not less than five thousand dollars nor more than ten thousand dollars.*

***This is also rarely enforced especially in the interior and riverine areas.***

1. **Various acts of indecency:**

***Section 162****. Everyone who, in any public way or public place, or in any house, yard, garden, or other place open to public view or within public hearing—*

*(a) uses any indecent or obscene gesture; or*

*(b) exposes his person in an indecent manner; or*

*(c) uses any indecent or obscene language; or*

*(d) sings any indecent or obscene song or ballad,*

*shall be liable to a fine of not less than seven thousand five hundred dollars nor more than fifteen thousand dollars.*

There is one case in court where a Member of Parliament exposed himself to the public while under the influence. This is more frequently invoked reference indecent language especially by persons under the influence of alcohol and family disputes.

1. **Apprehension of offender:**

***Section 164****. Any police or rural constable may arrest without warrant anyone whom he may find committing any offence against any of the last six preceding sections.*

1. These provisions are **not** stringently imposed by law enforcement since the Government of Guyana has generally adopted a more compassionate and rehabilitative approach to persons who find themselves unfortunately displaced from their homes and forced into vagrancy.
2. It is a point of note that homelessness may not only be the result of poverty, but as well of mental illness. The ***Mental Health Protection and Promotion Act 2022 (“the Mental Health Act”),*** which repeals and replaces the ***Mental Hospital Ordinance of 1930*,** was passed to combat this aspect of homelessness, and introduces several preventative and remedial measures to tackle the issue of mental health and its effect on the family/home structure.
3. For instance, ***the Mental Health Act*** contains specific provisions regarding the appropriate measures to be taken in respect of persons with suspected mental illnesses who have found themselves living in/wandering in the streets.

Under ***section 42 of the Mental Health Act****,* a police officer is permitted to take a person who is suspected of having a mental illness and is seen wandering in the streets, to a health facility for an assessment of their mental health to be performed:

***Section 42. (1)*** *A police officer shall, on being informed by a member of the public or on seeing a person suspected of having a mental illness wandering in a public place, convey such person to the nearest health facility for an assessment.*

***42.(2)*** *Where a police officer conveys a person to a health facility under this section, the police officer shall file a report and that report shall specify the reasons for conveying the person to the health facility.*

1. Moreover, ***the Mental Health Act*** delineates and codifies the rights of such persons to remain in their homes and communities as long as practicable regardless of their mental health status.

***Section 16 of the Act*** mandates that:

***16.(1)*** *A person with mental illness shall-*

*(a) have the right to live in, be part of, and not be segregated from the community; and*

*(b) not continue to remain in a mental health facility merely because the person does not have a family or is not accepted by his or her family or is homeless.*

***16.(2)*** *Every person with mental illness shall, in so far as practicable, be provided with care, treatment and rehabilitation services and community-based programs that improve the mental capacity of that person to develop to realise their potential and to facilitate the person’s integration into community life.*

***16.(3)*** *In the provision of mental health care, priority shall be given to providing a person with care and treatment within their community and family environment and the provision of mental health care in a hospital shall only be carried out when it provides greater therapeutic benefits than the rest of the interventions that can be carried out in the family, community or social environment.*

***16.(4)*** *Where it is not possible for a person with a mental illness to live with family or where the person with a mental illness has been abandoned by family, the Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry with responsibility for human services and social security shall provide appropriate support, including legal aid, to facilitate the person exercising their rights to the family home and living in the family home.*

***16.(5)*** *The Ministry shall within a reasonable period, provide support for or support the establishment of less restrictive community-based establishments including half-way homes and group homes for persons who no longer require treatment in a mental health facility.*

***16.(6)*** *Admission to a mental health facility shall not amount to segregation from the community.*

1. Additionally, ***section 17 of the Mental Health Act*** specifies that **no person shall be discriminated against because of their mental health status.**
2. The new law has therefore taken laudable steps to both ensure that homeless persons who are suffering from mental health challenges are given the appropriate treatment(s) they require and that they are provided the means to reintegrate into their homes and communities. This is a marked improvement from the previous legislation and has been met with enthusiastic commendation across the country.
3. An additional measure to combat homelessness was taken in June 2022, with the $5 million infrastructural upgrade of the Night Shelter, which is run by the Government of Guyana through the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security as a 24-hour place of refuge for vulnerable persons who are displaced. This shelter is now able to accommodate up to 120 displaced persons.

Further, the Government of Guyana has also taken tremendous steps to address the scourge of homelessness by undertaking a massive housing project through the Ministry of Housing and Water. This project has resulted thus far in the provision of over 24,000 allocations of low to middle-income homes and house lots to Guyanese across the country within the past three years. Notably 44% of the beneficiaries are females single parents. This is a noteworthy preventative measure that directly addresses the housing deficit across the country and allows each citizen an opportunity to own their own home, with low-income house lots starting from as little as GY$250,000.

Under the President’s Men on Mission Initiative which commenced in 2022 and involving over a thousand male volunteers of all ages across the country to be change agents in their society against poverty, domestic violence etc. MoM have assisted the indigent and poorest with building over 100 homes for them, free of cost.

**Question Two: Laws or regulations that allow the detention or imprisonment of individuals who are unable to pay the fines imposed for petty offences:**

1. ***Sections 36 and 38 of the Summary Jurisdiction (Procedure) Act (‘SJPA’), Chapter 10:02*** permit the imprisonment of persons convicted of summary offences, such as vagrancy or bathing in public, who fail to pay the fine(s) imposed.
2. Conversely, ***section 37 of the SJPA*** also grants Magistrates the discretion to impose a fine in lieu of mandatory imprisonment where they believe that the “*justice of the case will be better met by a fine than by imprisonment*”.

These provisions are set out below:

1. **Imprisonment in default of payment of penalty**

***Section 36.*** *Where by any written law the court is empowered to impose a penalty for a summary conviction offence, it may, in the absence of express provision to the contrary in the same or any other written law, order a defendant who is convicted of the offence, in default of payment of the sum of money adjudged to be paid by the order, either forthwith, or at the times specified in the order, as the case may be, to be imprisoned in accordance with the scale set forth in section 38.*

1. **Power to impose a fine in lieu of imprisonment:**

***Section 37.*** *Where a person is convicted of any summary conviction offence for which the court, under any enactment for the time being in force, has authority to impose imprisonment and has not authority to impose a fine, the court, notwithstanding any such Act or other enactment, may, if it thinks that the justice of the case will be better met by a fine than by imprisonment, impose on the offender a fine not exceeding eighty thousand dollars, and not being of such amount as will, under this Act, subject the offender in default of payment of the fine to any greater term of imprisonment than that to which he is liable under the Act or other enactment authorising the imprisonment as aforesaid.*

1. **Scale of imprisonment for nonpayment of money adjudged to be paid by order.**

***Section 38.*** *Subject in every case to the provisions of the written law on which the order is founded, the period of imprisonment, whether with or without hard labour, which is imposed by the court in respect of the non-payment of any sum of money adjudged to be paid by an order shall be that period which, in the opinion of the court, will satisfy the justice of the case, and be according to the following scale:*

*where the sum of money adjudged to be paid adjudged by an order – the period shall not exceed -*

*does not exceed $10,000 ...................................................twenty days;*

*exceeds $10,000 but does not exceed $15,000................forty-two days;*

*exceeds $15,000 but does not exceed $30,000 ...............twelve weeks;*

*exceeds $30,000 but does not exceed $50,000 ...............six months;*

*exceeds $50,000 but does not exceed $70,000 ...............ten months;*

*exceeds $70,000 .................................................................eighteen months*.

**Question Three: Information about attempts made or planned to decriminalize street vending, informal business activities, sex work, begging, eating, sleeping, or performing personal hygienic activities in public places.**

1. **The issue of street vending:**
2. Resolving the issue of street vending remains a complex problem. While the Government acknowledges that persons derive a valuable income from this activity, it is an unfortunate reality that street vendors often callously obstruct the free flow of persons through the streets by blocking paths and even the entrances to legitimate businesses with their makeshift stalls. The thrust of the government is to get them regularised and part of the formal market with training, relocation to better facilities etc.,
3. ***Sections 153(1) (vi) and (vii) of the SJOA*** strictly prohibit the placement of encumbrances such as goods and wares on a public pathway. These sections state as follows:

***Section 153. (1)*** *Every person who does any of the following acts shall, in each case, be liable to a fine of not less than seven thousand five hundred dollars nor more than fifteen thousand dollars –*

***(vi)*** *places or leaves any goods, wares, or merchandise, or any hogshead, cask, puncheon, barrel, basket, tub, pail, or bucket, or places or uses any standing- place, stool, bench, stall, or show- board, on any public way in any town, or places any blind, shade, covering, awning, or other projection over or along that way, unless the blind, shade, covering, awning, or other projection is six feet six inches in height at least in every part thereof from the ground; or*

***(vii)*** *places, hangs up, or otherwise exposes in any town any goods, wares, or merchandise, or other thing whatsoever so that they or it project or projects into or over any pubic way or beyond the line of any house, shop, or building, at which they or it are or is so exposed, so as to obstruct or incommode the passage of any person over or along any public way;*

1. As pointed out earlier, most street vendors are not properly registered. It is the Government’s position that vending must be done in a way that is compliant with the laws, particularly those which relate to the taxation and registration of businesses and, cannot be done in a manner that is detrimental to the public interest. In furtherance of this objective, the Government has on numerous occasions engaged vendors across the various regions, particularly those in Region Four (4), the most populous region, to determine a viable solution to this issue which will enable the regularization of street vending to make it legally compliant.
2. A massive infrastructural project commenced a year ago to rehabilitate and in some cased build new markets across the country to facilitate street vendors under better, cleaner and safer conditions.
3. The Government has, however, encountered difficulties in some of these attempts since the legal authority to address street vending falls within the ambit of the relevant Local Authorities such as the ten (10) Municipalities and eighty (80) Neighbourhood Democratic Councils.
4. **The issue of Prostitution/Sex Work:**

Currently, the act of prostitution/sex-work remains prohibited by ***section 166 of the SJOA*,** which states:

***Section 166****. Every person who—*

*(a) being a male person, knowingly lives wholly or in part on the earnings of prostitution; or*

*(b) being a male person, in any public place persistently solicits or importunes for immoral purposes; or*

*(c) loiters about, or importunes any person in, any street or other public place for the purpose of prostitution,*

*shall be liable, on summary conviction—*

1. *in the case of a first conviction, to a fine of not less than fifteen thousand dollars nor more than thirty thousand dollars or to imprisonment for eighteen months, and*
2. *in the case of a second or subsequent conviction, to imprisonment for three years, and if the offender is a male, he shall in addition, be liable to a whipping or flogging.*

**Question Four: Information concerning initiatives to change the response of law enforcement officials and of the criminal justice system from penalization, punishment, or detention, towards facilitating social inclusion of persons living in poverty or experiencing homelessness:**

1. It is noteworthy that all the laws referred to hereinbefore, commonly mandate the imposition of fines as opposed to imprisonment, although they were enacted at a time when the policy of the then Government of Guyana, and indeed that of most governments across the regional and international spheres, viewed incarceration as an effective deterrent to persons engaging in prohibited activities.
2. In the modern approach to criminal justice reform, this approach has been tailored to address the underlying social scourges and circumstances which trigger the commission of crimes by offenders. The current Government of Guyana has, through the GoG/IDB ***Support for the Criminal Justice System (SCJS) Programme*** of the **Ministry of Legal Affairs,** acknowledged the need to adequately address the deficiencies of past social policies and legislation governing the justice system by undertaking a massive overhaul of those defunct policies and laws.
3. The **SJOA** is one such law that is currently under review by the Law Reform Commission under the Ministry of Legal Affairs.
4. Further, to combat the overcrowding in the prison system due to the imprisonment of persons who are summarily convicted, the Government, through the GoG/IDB **Support for the Criminal Justice System (SCJS) Programme of the Ministry of Legal Affairs**, has embraced the approach of **restorative justice** for eligible offenders as well as victims. This approach will see the pursuit of alternative methods of punishment to imprisonment and requires the examination of the propagating factors behind the offender’s conduct and addressing those in an effort to prevent reoffending.
5. In furtherance of this objective, the ***Restorative Justice Act*** was passed by the National Assembly on the 7th November 2022 and now permits the referral of offenders, by the Director of Public Prosecutions or the Court, to a restorative justice program as an alternate to imprisonment. The passage of this Act therefore effectively serves as an interim relief measure for persons charged with minor, non-violent offences such as vagrancy, vending etc. whilst those laws are under review for amendment.
6. Additionally, the first ever **Restorative Justice Centre** in Guyana was launched on the 26th of April 2023, and is set to make a significant impact by allowing and emphasising the importance of community involvement and dialogue in the punishment and/or rehabilitation of offenders.

**Question Five: Measures and services available at national, regional, or municipal level to support people living in poverty and in situation of vulnerability from having to resort to begging, sleeping, washing, and performing other hygienic activities in public places in Guyana**

1. The Government of Guyana has instituted a range of measures and services available at the national, regional, or municipal levels to support people living in poverty and vulnerable situations from resorting to begging, sleeping, washing, and performing other hygienic activities in public places. These measures and services aim to provide essential resources and support to improve the quality of life of individuals living in poverty.
2. One such measure is the provision of access to free healthcare services which is extended to everyone in society. The Government of Guyana has implemented programs and initiatives to ensure that individuals living in poverty have *access to free healthcare services* through the public healthcare facilities across the country. The services provided at these facilities include free medical consultations, hospitalization, medication, and diagnostic tests.
3. Additionally, there are *social safety net programs* in place to provide financial assistance to those in need. These programs aim to alleviate the financial burden on individuals living in poverty, reducing the likelihood of those individuals resorting to begging or engaging in other desperate measures to meet basic needs. One such programme in place is the *Public Assistance* initiative that provides financial support to individuals or families who are unable to meet their basic needs. The programme, which is not means tested, currently benefits over 7,800 vulnerable people across Guyana; the programme has been expanded in 2023 to include 5000 children and adults with permanent disabilities.
4. Access to educational opportunities is also provided to support individuals in poverty and vulnerable situations. The Government has recognized the importance of education in breaking the cycle of poverty and has implemented measures to ensure access to education for all, regardless of socio-economic background. Education is free throughout all levels and scholarships are provided to encourage job seekers through the *Guyana Oline Academy of Learning (GOAL)*, an initiative of the Government of Guyana that began in 2021. In 2022, the *Get Ready for Opportunities to Work (GROW)* programme was added to the GOAL programme to provide opportunities for people who did not complete secondary school to obtain a GED or SCQF level 6 Certificate. Those who successfully completed the GROW programmes are able to enroll in post secondary programmes including Bachelors’ degree programmes at selected universities.

Table 1 below shows the regional breakdown of beneficiaries from the combined GOAL programmes since 2021, while Figure 1 shows the gender breakdown:

Table 1: Total number of scholarship recipients by region. Source: GOAL Secretariat

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Region** | **2021** | **2022** | **2023** | **Total** |
| 1 | 238 | 155 | 246 | 639 |
| 2 | 531 | 540 | 885 | 1956 |
| 3 | 875 | 1399 | 1111 | 3385 |
| 4 | 2767 | 3020 | 2988 | 8775 |
| 5 | 378 | 599 | 431 | 1408 |
| 6 | 510 | 852 | 877 | 2239 |
| 7 | 240 | 174 | 284 | 698 |
| 8 | 97 | 37 | 381 | 515 |
| 9 | 230 | 134 | 162 | 526 |
| 10 | 282 | 500 | 349 | 1131 |
| Not stated | 132 |  | 38 | 170 |
| **Total** | **6280** | **7410** | **7752** | **21442** |

Figure 1: Total scholarship recipients by gender. Source: GOAL Secretariat.

1. The Government also focuses heavily on sustainable livelihood programmes, which aim to empower vulnerable individuals through skills training and income generation opportunities. To this end, the Guyana Women Leadership Institute through the *Women’s Innovation and Investment Network (WIIN)* training programme was launched in May 2021 to provide free technical and vocational training for women and girls throughout Guyana’s ten administrative regions. This programme requires no entry perquisite and offers only accredited certification through ABMA-UK, UWI, UG-IDCE, CTVET and the National Accreditation Council. Training programmes are open to anyone of any age, are available online or in-person (hybrid training format) and targets persons who are unemployed, exposed to situations of family violence, earn under $70,000 and are exposed to other vulnerabilities. WIIN training is conducted in areas such as Childcare, Care for the Elderly, Garment Construction, Entrepreneurship, Design and Décor, Project Management, Home Management, Social Media Marketing and Graphics Design.
2. This programme has successfully trained 2,170 persons in 2021; 4,033 in 2022 and is targeting 6,000 persons in 2023 for upskilling. This training programme represents an investment of nearly $350M Guyana dollars in women’s academic and economic empowerment.
3. In addition, the business stimulus project saw over 3,000 women benefitting from direct financial support from the Government of Guyana through an empowerment fund over the past three (3) years. The first tranche of recipients received a cash grant of $50,000 GY, which was distributed in 2022, and was designed to help acquire an asset that would enable them to begin their business activities. The second tranche of recipients received $75,000 GY to help accelerate their business activities helping them to compete and grow their micro-enterprise. The second tranche was distributed in 2023 and enabled 225 women to successfully register their businesses.
4. Additionally, through the business incubator within the Guyana Women’s Leadership Institute, women have been guided on how to access capital from private financial institutions where they can acquire loans and grants to start a business. This opportunity also provided increased opportunities for access to funding and has led to the creation of 700 business plans in 2022 and the creation of 225 businesses which are now formally registered. Further, the target in 2023 is to train 3,000 women through the programme and facilitate the development of at least 1,500 business plans. Over the lifetime of the WIIN programme, 25% of those trained have been able to start a small business. This number is set to expand in 2023.
5. The Ministry of Human Services & Social Security offers *free accommodation to the vulnerable* and homeless where they can access a clean environment, clean water and sanitation, meals and sleeping accomodation. These state homes are located in the two most populous Administrative Regions No.4 & No. 6 respectively:-

* **The Night Shelter** specifically provides a safe space for homeless individuals to sleep and access basic amenities, ensuring that they are not forced to resort to sleeping in public places. They can also access free healthcare through collaborations with the Ministry of Health and also free technical- vocational skills through the Board of Industrial Training (BIT).
* **The Hugo Chavez Rehabilitation Centre** in Region 6 serves as a prime example of the government's commitment to strengthening social security systems and poverty alleviation as this centre houses homeless persons; it serves as a rehabilitation for persons struggling with substance abuse and persons living with mental illness. Free personal care is provided at the Centre for all individuals, including unlimited access to counselling and health care until they are ready to be reintegrated into society.
* **The Palms Geriatric home** is a centre that provides free care and support for elderly individuals ages 65 and over who are unable to live independently. The Palms Geriatric home ensures that elderly individuals can live with dignity and receive the necessary care they need as they age, by providing accommodation, healthcare, and social support.

1. The Difficult Circumstances Unit is an integral framework of the Ministry which was set up to provide vulnerable persons who are confronted by health expenses, funerals, loss of a breadwinner in the home, with free food supplies, building materials due to disasters, assistive aids, funerals, and other forms of assistance to meet their basic needs and help them to recover and go on their own again.This service remains accessible to people across Guyana.
2. In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture not only helps small farmers with seedlings, chickens and sheep, but it encourages the creation of shade houses managed by youth at the community level to assist in diversifying the cultivation of non-traditional produce. This programme is being expanded in 2023 and 2024 to create over a 100 shade houses across the country.
3. Specific training programmes are conducted for persons with disabilities through the Board of Industrial Training (Ministry of Labour) to assist them in getting employment and being able to function more independently. A new incubator training centre for persons with disabilities is almost completed in Administrative Region No. 6.
4. With the influx of almost 40,000 Venezuelans migrants fleeing from Venezuela over the last 5 years, the Government has adopted an humanitarian approach with access to health and education in the public sector free of costs across Guyana and a simplified registration system even if they entered illegally. A shelter has been built with land for over 300 Warraus ( indigenous ) from Venezuela, near our common borders, in order to reduce wandering and begging and place them in a safer place with less risk to them.

In conclusion Guyana still has come outdated laws which need to be reviewed but the Government in last three years has introduced new programmes and laws to address these issues.