

Georgetown, Guyana

## **President David Granger and Opposition Chief Whip Gail Teixeira to speak at the UG inaugural Diaspora Engagement Conference**

The University of Guyana (UG) will host the historic inaugural Diaspora Engagement Conference (DEC 2017) from July 23 to 28, 2017, at the Ramada Georgetown Princess Hotel, under the theme: **Dreaming Diaspora Engagement, Doing Diaspora Engagement**. The Conference is expected to attract over one hundred participants from within and outside Guyana.

His Excellency President David Granger will host the Welcome Reception on Sunday, July 23 and deliver the keynote address to declare the conference open on Monday, July 24, 2017, while the Opposition Chief Whip, Hon. Gail Teixeira, will deliver the luncheon address on Tuesday, July 25. Additionally, several government ministers, including those for Business, Public Telecommunications, Finance, and Public Health, have confirmed their participation. Video messages also will be coming from Baroness Valerie Amos, director of the School of Oriental and African Studies in the UK, and Ms Gina Miller, founding partner of Spencer Churchill Miller (SCM) Direct, of Brexit fame.

Additionally, Mr Glen Khan, Chairman of LAPARKAN; Mr David Lammy, British MP; and Mexican Ambassador to Guyana Mr Ivan Roberto Sierra Medel will speak at the conference, along with 40 other keynote speakers and presenters. The Indian High Commission will also share India's experience in engaging its Diaspora. Guyanese businessmen, academics, and civic leaders scheduled to speak and chair sessions at the conference will be coming from the United States of America, Nigeria, the British Virgin Islands, the United Kingdom, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Canada, and Russia. They will join local civic and business leaders, government officials, diplomats, and academics in discussions on the various panels, the ministerial roundtables, and the business dinner.

Hosted by the University of Guyana with planning input from local and Diaspora stakeholders, DEC 2017 is organised around two overarching pillars: human, social and entrepreneurship development, and Diaspora philanthropy, diplomacy, and educational engagement. It is expected to provide the platform for developing a diaspora engagement strategy to inform the work of the first Caribbean Diaspora Engagement Center. The launch of the Center is expected to be a major highlight of the six-day conference. According to UG's Vice-Chancellor Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith, "the conference will contribute to the development of a mechanism to effectively attract diaspora social and economic investment and engage the diaspora in educational and economic development."

Brain-child of the Vice-Chancellor, the conference has several components, including academic and policy conversations, community engagement, a Know Guyana Day where local and international attendees will have an opportunity to make day visits to various parts of the country, and the second meeting of UG's Education Resource Ambassadors. The academic conversations will focus on issues such as international and regional migration policies and experiences, cultural identity dynamics, financial transfers and remittances, role and contribution of hometown associations, diaspora trade and investments, and tourism.

The historic event will end on Friday, July 28 with two highlights. The first is the Investiture of Professor Ivelaw Lloyd Griffith as UG's Tenth Vice-Chancellor, the first time a UG Vice-Chancellor will be officially installed as Chief Executive and Chief Academic Officer. The second highlight will be a cultural extravaganza that will be free of cost to conference registrants. The extravaganza is being organised by London-based music icon Mr Keith Waite, and it will spotlight Guyana's rich cultural diversity at home and abroad. Performers will be coming from Ghana and the UK, and Mr Waite will be returning to Guyana to serve a second stint as Visiting Distinguished Artist-in-Residence at the University.

The period for submission of abstracts has ended. Registration, however, is still open, and can be done online at <http://diasporaconference.uog.edu.gy/>. Conference participants in Guyana can pay for their registration at Citizen's Bank locations and at the Bursary at the Turkeyen or the Tain campus. Persons registering now will catch the 'Early Bird' rate, which ends on July 1.

The university appreciates the sponsorship received so far from LAPARKAN, Movie Towne, the Ministry of the Presidency, Fly Jamaica, the Ramada Georgetown Princess Hotel, Caribbean Airlines, Roraima Airways, Metro, Republic Bank, GBTI, ENetworks, Slingshot, Go-Invest, the Ministries of Business and Public Telecommunications, E.C. Vieira Investments Ltd. Guyana, and the Guyana Tourism Authority.

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## **UG IN BRIEF**

With a current enrollment of some 8,000 students, The University of Guyana (UG) has graduated more than 20,000 students who have gone on to successful careers locally, regionally and internationally. The University is also a major contributor to the national economy and to business and industry. Established in 1963 on a part-time basis with shared space at Queens College, UG moved to its own campus at Turkeyen in 1970 and expanded in 2000 with the addition of the Tain Campus. It now offers more than 60 Under-graduate and Post-graduate Programmes including Engineering, Environmental Studies, Forestry, Urban Planning and Management, Tourism Studies, Education, Creative Arts, Economics, Law, Medicine, Optometry and Nursing. Several online programmes are available and The UG also offers extra-mural classes at four locations through its Institute of Distance and Continuing Education (IDCE). The UG also offers the opportunity for student engagement in debating, sports, and cultural, religious and professional activities.

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