

# **Address of His Excellency Brigadier David Granger, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana**

*'Year of national renaissance'*

Guyanese,

The New Year – 2016 – is a time for renewal. This is a time for reform. This is a time for a national renaissance. The prospects are bright. The portents are propitious. This New Year is a time to chart our course for the next five years to 2020 and beyond.

The New Year – 2016 – is a special year for Guyana. It is an opportunity to hasten our economic recovery, to strengthen our social integration and to deepen our mutual, cultural understanding.

We, the Guyanese people, shall commemorate the Golden Jubilee of our Independence on 26<sup>th</sup> May. This 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our nation's Independence – our *'quincuagenary'* – is a time for determination, decision-making and decisive action.

Guyana became independent fifty years ago. The new nation was born under a state of emergency. The acrid odour of civil conflict, ethnic insecurity and political disunity hung like a pall over the land. We subsisted in a dependent colonial economy. We languished as a small, servile satrapy ruled over by a colonial governor. We became independent, nevertheless, and we struggled dauntlessly to:

- build a nation that had been damaged by disunity and division and to promote peace and national unity;
- build our national university, our multilateral schools, our airport, bridges and highways and repair roads and sea defences;
- build national institutions, create a credible Foreign Service, introduce our Ombudsman and our own Court of Appeal and erect municipalities and other institutions;
- build international alliances, secure our territory from external aggression and to take our place in the international community;
- build the first secondary schools in the hinterland, build huge housing schemes and expand public education, health, communications and transportation services.

We are proud of our achievements over the past fifty years. We shall be prouder if we use this special year of our *'national renaissance'* to remove the remaining obstacles that still keep us disunited, underdeveloped and insecure.

We, the Guyanese people, chose to change the country's political culture when we elected a multi-party coalition in 2015. It is now time for a *'national renaissance.'* It is time for a new beginning. It is time to redouble our efforts to banish crime, disease, ignorance and poverty.

We aspire to strengthen national unity, expand national infrastructure, fortify national institutions, ensure national security and extend public services:

- **National Unity:** We shall reinforce national unity. We can be one nation only if all sections of our population feel that they share in our country's development. We must, in 2016, dispel hatred among individuals and groups. We must move forward as a united nation, constantly reaffirming our national motto – *'One people, One nation, One destiny.'*
- **National Infrastructure:** We shall extend our physical infrastructure in order to foster integration and promote development. We shall, at the same time, provide greater access to the resources of the hinterland which can be exploited for the benefit of all of our people. National infrastructure will provide the means to integrate the coastland with the hinterland.
- **National Institutions:** We shall fortify our national institutions which promote a sense of national identity and ensure a stable legal and constitutional environment. We shall defend the integrity and independence of our National Assembly, the judiciary and the autonomous agencies.

We shall equip the enforcement arms of the state with the resources to enable them to serve our citizens and safeguard our independence. We shall ensure that local government elections are conducted this year to empower our people to better administer their communities. We shall respect and preserve our national symbols and monuments, assert our identity and celebrate our achievements.

- **National Security:** We shall continue to reinforce national security in order to protect the country's patrimony in the face of threats from our neighbours to the east and west. We must also secure our citizens from the threat of national and transnational crime, violence and chaos.
- **Public Services:** We shall continue to work to ensure public trust by improving and extending education, health, sanitation, water supply, electricity services, affordable housing, social protection to the vulnerable and decent working conditions to everyone. Public services must also include having happy households in safe communities with adequate facilities for recreation.

The New Year – 2016 – will bring us closer to the goal of realising our mission.

Our mission is to remake Guyana as the most beautiful, bountiful and greenest country in the Caribbean.

Our mission is to enable our citizens to enjoy the good life which they deserve as citizens of an independent state.

Our mission is to ensure that the promise of Independence, won fifty years ago, is fulfilled.

Guyanese,

We urge you to join us in realising the objectives of this programme. We encourage you to join us in ensuring that 2016 will be Guyana's glorious year of 'national renaissance.'

Let us resolve, together, to grasp the opportunities that this year provides for us - to enjoy a 'national renaissance,' to recapture the spirit of Independence and to secure a good life for generations to come.

I wish you a happy New Year and pray that God will bless Guyana.