Guyexpo is an occasion for celebrating our achievements - PM

September 28, 2012 By Editor

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Georgetown, GINA, September 27, 2012

Thousands came out this evening at the Sophia Exhibition Centre to witness the launch of Guyana’s renowned exposition and trade fair, Guyexpo 2012 held under the theme “Strengthening the traditional, Embracing the New”.

Patrons and exhibitors were mesmerised with the display of what promises to be the largest exposition ever, with cultural performances from the Chinese Association, the National Steel Orchestra and a collaborative dance troupe.

Prime Minister Samuel Hinds
Apart from the celebrations, former Ministers of Tourism were honoured for their stint in office during which they contributed significantly to the enhancement of Guyexpo, thereby laying the foundation for what it is today.

Those recognised were: Shree Chand (posthumously), Jeff Da Silva, Manzoor Nadir and Manniram Prashad.

Prime Minister Samuel Hinds, performing the duties of president said that Guyexpo offers an opportunity for one to learn about the goods and services that are being produced locally, along with the range, the diversity, the quality and the price.

Minister of Tourism Industry and Commerce (ag) Irfaan Ali

“It is an occasion where nearly all of us find some pleasant surprises…we did not know that our people could produce those goods with that quality and at good prices…Guyexpo is therefore an occasion for celebrating our achievements,” Hinds said.

He added that it is also an occasion that challenges and encourages persons to do even better, learning from each other, to compete in a friendly and productive way.
A section of those present for the opening ceremony of Guyexpo 2012

“Guyexpo from one year to another challenges us…we Guyanese over the last decades have been able to provide better for ourselves each year through our work…providing a greater amount of goods and services,” Mr Hinds said.

He believes that the growth of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), over the last 20 years is a valid overall indication of some of the successes of the achievements made.
Minister of Tourism Industry and Commerce (ag) Irfaan Ali and Prime Minister Samuel Hinds, performing the duties of president unveiling the 2012 Guyexpo plaque

“National GDP grew from US$321M in 1992 to US$2151 in 2011 and per capita GDP increased from US$454 per person in 1992 to US$2869 per person in 2011…a six to seven-fold increase in numbers…this is a significant improvement over the last 20 years,” Prime Minister Hinds asserted.

Further, Guyanese are better off today than they were in 1992, with the number of high rise buildings being constructed, not only in the capital but, also in hinterland locations and the improvement in the buildings, the increased number of motor vehicles, the steady increase in electricity demand for an increasing number of household appliances, all attest to the fact that Guyana is indeed materially better off today than years ago.

“Today we are celebrating production and creation of goods and services of a wide variety, of excellent quality and at good prices,” the Prime Minister explained.

Minister of Tourism Industry and Commerce (ag) Irfaan Ali said that the private sector is the engine of growth and it must be the bedrock on which economic advancement is made however, the government has an important role in facilitating that growth and ensuring the policy framework is there to stimulate it.
Prime Minister Samuel Hinds, performing the duties of president with staff of the Small Business Bureau in their booth

“At this moment I pay homage to the Honourable Minister of Finance Dr. Ashni Singh for creating a stable macro-economic framework for which all of us must be proud,” Ali asserted.

He explained that it is because of the stable macro-economic framework that the following bold statements can be made.

“If you are an investor looking to invest in the Caribbean and South America, Guyana is the place for your investment…if you are a local business person, a member of the local private sector and you have excess liquidity, the place to re-invest that excess liquidity is Guyana and you must do it now,” Ali stated.

He added that there was a time when there was a great belief that capital flight, the export of the country’s potential, when the hope of energising the economy and the entrepreneurial ability of Guyanese were almost non-existent, however, today, because of the strides made under the current administration, Guyana provides an excellent platform through which the Private Sector can grow and investments can flow to the country.

“Public-private partnerships have proven to be the greatest catalysts to economic development, economic growth and economic expansion…the policy direction of the government to work hand
in hand with the private sector through such partnerships is an excellent move to ensure that major initiative that speaks to the transformation of our country are implemented in a timely manner,” Ali said.

Further, the time for public and private entities to work without each other is long gone as the economic sector cannot be expanded, nor can the gains of the potential that exists be realised if businesses continue to grow in a family environment.

Co-Chairman of the Guyexpo Committee Deryck Cummings said that undoubtedly the public-private partnership policy that government has embarked upon laid a foundation for an expansion of the country’s economic wealth.

“The upgrade of our road network and the installation of our new communication arteries…improved access to information communication highway…industrial parks…are some of the dynamics that dictated how Guyexpo 2012 organisers proceeded to set a stage for a better improved plain for the patrons including the thousands of students who will visit the exhibition.”

The event will culminate on September 30 has over 400 exhibitors with a fair number from overseas including from Brazil, Barbados, United States, Canada, China, India, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Suriname, Grenada, and Trinidad and Tobago. It is expected to attract over 80,000 visitors.

**Guyexpo exposes local potential – President Ramotar - during visit on day two**

September 29, 2012 By Editor

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President Donald Ramotar compensated for his unavoidable absence from the opening of Guyana’s signature trade fair and exposition GuyExpo when he dropped in last evening for a walk about in the company of first lady Deolatchmee Ramotar.

Over 400 exhibitors among whom are participants from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), North and South America, and Asia, are participating in this year’s exposition held under the theme “Strengthening the traditional, Embracing the New”.
President Donald Ramotar checks out the exhibits in this booth

Minister of Tourism industry and Commerce (ag) Irfaan Ali and staff from the committee that organised this year’s GuyExpo escorted President Ramotar and the first lady on the tour of the well attended Sophia venue.

Eagerly awaiting exhibitors greeted the officials with smiles and wasted no time in proving relevant information on the range and types of products that they have on display for the next four nights.

A pictorial exhibition by the Guyana Prison Service (GPS) showcased its many achievements including programmes in sports, art and cultural activities that have been staged over the years. A Cadet Officer of the GPS was privileged to be the illustrator.
The National Commission on Disability constructed a national core house that demonstrates ways of making life easy for the differently-abled and those with special needs in Guyana. Secretary Tiffany Ward gave president Ramotar the demonstration.

Some of the reputable companies like Toolsie Persaud, Comfort Sleep, GuyAmerica Furniture and Kissoon Furniture Complex and, Melsha Furniture, had on display a range of home furnishings.

Private entrepreneurs like potter Kibwe Copeland and pioneers of the Environmentally Friendly Biodegradable Food Boxes were well represented.

President Ramotar shared his thoughts on this year’s exposition while extending greetings to Guyana during an interview broadcast live on the National Communications Network’s 100.1 Fresh set up at the venue.
Exhibitors take a photo opportunity with President Donald Ramotar and First Lady Deolatchmee Ramotar

During a brief interview with Broadcaster Michella Abraham-Alli, President Ramotar said “I think it is a very good exhibition… it’s quite different from the others. There is a lot of local displays… it really shows the potential that we have… I felt proud looking at many of our produce and those who haven’t had the chance to see it (the Exhibition), I want to urge them to come down and have a look,” President Ramotar said on the live broadcast.

Asked about the outlook for Guyana in the near future, in keeping with the theme President Ramotar made reference to initiatives to promote the Information Communication Technology sector and modernisation of the sugar, rice and bauxite sectors.

He touted Guyana as a destination for investment when asked to give a good reason why foreign investors should consider this country.
President Donald Ramotar checks out the agricultural products on display at this booth

“We have a lot of potential here, a lot of raw materials… we have minerals and natural resources. We have land; we have fresh water and good conditions for agriculture. In an era when it is very clear that the world is thinking seriously of food security, Guyana has the possibility of playing a major role,” President Ramotar said.

The First Lady also shared her thoughts on the exposition, proud of the fact that the range of furniture in Guyana is locally made. She recently returned with President Ramotar from the United Nations General Assembly where they shared a photo op with US President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama during a reception at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York.

GuyExpo will culminate on September 30 and is expected to attract an estimated 80,000 visitors.

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**Guyexpo business forum highlights successes, potential investment opportunities**

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Georgetown, GINA, September 28, 2012
As part of Guyexpo activities, the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce held a business forum at the Guyana International Conference Center (GICC) to facilitate working between the expo’s delegates.

The participants were given the opportunity to exchange cards and discuss potential partnerships.

Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce (ag) Irfaan Ali outlined several critical areas which have and will continue to bolster Guyana’s development thrust, one of which is the Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA) expansion which opens the doors to many unexplored markets.

At the head table are President, Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association, Mohindra Chand; President, Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Clinton Urling and Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce (ag) Irfaan Ali

The CJIA is currently in discussion with British Airways, Jet Blue, Virgin Atlantic, West Jet, Fly Jamaica, Copa and Air Canada, aimed at ensuring the right environment and investments are ready when the project is completed, so as to create the critical link among South America, Africa and Guyana.

This project presents a lot of scope for the aviation industry since flying through Guyana reduces in-flight hours to some countries including Africa.

Another important area is the diversification of the agricultural sector. Minister Ali pointed out that there are nine mega farms with foreign investors, and nine similar proposals are currently under review targeting selected crops such as spice and soya beans. These and other projects pave the way for continuation of Guyana’s developmental thrust long into the future.
The Minister recognized Guyana’s potential in oil and gas exploration and highlighted the successes of the tourism, infrastructure – expansion of road ways, roads and bridges and housing sectors.

Delegates at the Business Forum which facilitated networking between Guyanese and overseas investors

Minister Ali also included a video presentation on an estimated US $250M housing project that will unfold in Guyana in a few months. The first steps towards its realisation were taken following the recently concluded Building Expo. The project will link the East Bank and East Coast and it is hoped to be completed in five years.

Canadian High Commissioner, David Devine noted that Canada places emphasis on developing a viable and sustainable partnership with Guyana, and in this regard the Commission, in Guyana, is looking at expanding its commercial portfolio so as to bring synergies with the developmental thrust that Guyana is currently undergoing.

“We want to see the potential that exists in Guyana become reality to both our countries,” he said.

Mr Devine pointed out that the Commission is committed to aid the development of certain sectors, particularly extractive, tourism and other investments. Talks are going forward for the development of projects that will build on the work already started by the Tourism Ministry to promote Guyana.

The High Commissioner emphasised stated that the investment climate in Guyana is very encouraging to foreign investors and the recent economic growth projected for the remainder of 2012 being 3.8 percent indicates that Guyana will become even more attractive destination for foreign direct investment.
He indicated his satisfaction of EZJet offering direct flights to Canada since this allows for easy movement of people, goods and services between Guyana and Canada.

President, Georgetown Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Clinton Urling in his remarks noted that both government and private sector are sending a very strong message to businesses and countries around the globe that Guyana is not just open for business but that it can be one of the best places to succeed.

Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce (ag), Irfaan Ali exchanging cards with a potential investor

He outlined several reasons why investing in Guyana is a good decision. These include the fact that Guyana has had six consecutive years of economic growth, clear and robust economic blueprint for Guyana, robust and fair regulations, strong macro economic environment, strong financial sector, no currency controls, attractive investment incentives, affordable land and labour and free and open trade and economic policy.

Urling added that Guyexpo presents opportunities for investors to get a more detailed and comprehensive picture of what businesses and private sector companies are investing and what are the emerging opportunities available in Guyana.

The expo also exposes investors to the programmes and policies of the government that contribute to the favourable economic environment, and helps potential investors to network and establish business links with other businesses and individuals.
Urling emphasised that in order for Guyana to maintain and extend on its economic successes and build resilience to global economic shocks, it is absolutely critical that increasing exports and foreign direct investments be two core economic priorities.

Another goal, he added, has to be the commitment to diversification as opposed to concentration. Urling recognised successes in the agriculture and natural resources sectors however, for Guyana to succeed in the long – term and to reduce the exposure and vulnerability to economic shocks Guyana must expand its export portfolio to include trade in high value industry goods.

President, Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association, Mohindra Chand stated that Guyana is known for its abundant natural resources, with the manufacturing sector offering the best opportunities for growth and expansion. He noted that many small businesses are ready to explore new markets for their products however; they need institutional strengthening and general injection of international expertise and funding.

Chand highlighted that the ‘Made in Guyana’ label is now securing a foot hold in the Caribbean, Canada, United States of America, and European and Asian markets and stated that Guyana should be marketed like a product.

Mini-presentations were done by four leaders in the investment sector namely Vice-Chair, Suriname Manufacturers Association, Wilgo Bilkerdijk, Managing Director, Advertising and Marketing Services (St. Lucia), Lokesh Singh, Member-Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce of Florida, Kwhame Gittens and President, Canada-Caribbean Business Council, Bali Singh. The presentations zoomed in on Guyana’s export potentials to the Caribbean and further a-field and strengthening trade ties.