

# Change

Official Newsletter of The Alliance For Change

Unlocking Guyana's Future

Alliance For Change



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## Other News:

The "AFC on the Move" TV programme resumed on Saturdays @ 4pm on Channel 9 and is being co-ordinated by Sixtus Edwards.

Party Leader Raphael Trotman and the General Secretary, Clayton Hall met with the striking nurses at Linden following the assault and robbery on two of their colleagues. Tangible support was provided for the protest action and this support continues.

On various occasions Leaders met with residents of Timehri whose homes were being bulldozed by the GDF and Ministry of Works. Thanks to the efforts of the leadership, the demolition was halted and the government has retreated for the time being. A Petition which calls for relief for these citizens is being worked on for widespread

## AFC Celebrates Heritage Month

In September the AFC hailed our Amerindian brothers and sisters and their outstanding contribution to Guyana's development. The First Peoples of Guyana are deserving of our praise and support, but more importantly, of our respect. Successive governments have pretended to take care of the needs of indigenous peoples, but the question as to whether they are better off today is the pertinent one. Two recent events sum up the lack of genuine development within these communities despite the boasting that goes with everything donated or constructed by the government. The first relates to the tragic death of little Tenesha DeSouza who drowned in the filth of a pit latrine at the Santa Rosa Primary School in Moruca. What was worse was the government's reaction, or lack of concern. Who would believe that in the year 2009 a child in Guyana would be using a pit latrine in a public school, and could fall into it, and drown before being rescued. Which Minister of the Government would send their child to a school in which their child had to use a pit latrine? The government's response is stinking and despicable. The Minister of Education had the temerity to say that pit latrines are good enough for our children.

The second incident, unfortunately another tragic one, concerns our youth once again and pertains to the death by fire of three young girls at Waramadong at the beginning of September. Again these girls were victims of the inept administration of the education system by the government. These young ladies were removed from their homes and placed in a dorm to live without electricity and so were forced to use candles and lamps to get by. It should be no surprise that a fire broke out in the dorm. The authorities should be held responsible. We have had enough of their lies, propaganda, and pretense. The Amerindian people are must demand respect, equal treatment and change. The AFC is the only party showing the interest in their welfare. Demand change and be the change.

The AFC made a promise to help with the acquisition and installation of flush toilets and the construction of a modern lavatory block at the school. On Friday, September, 26, 2008 the promise was kept.



AFC's General Secretary, Clayton Hall (second from right) hands over some of the items to chairperson of the Santa Rosa Primary School PTA, Mark Atkinson while AFC leader, Raphael Trotman (right) looks on with other parents.

Below is the full text of the AFC Heritage Month message:

### ALLIANCE FOR CHANGE EXTENDS HERITAGE MONTH GREETINGS TO OUR AMERINDAIN BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

The Alliance For Change joins with all Guyanese during September 2008 in celebrating the rich culture of Guyana's first people, as we observe Amerindian Heritage month under the theme, 'Inspiring our nation to move forward in Unity'.

circulation, and so too legal action to protect the rights of those affected is being considered. The residents accepted the suggestion of the AFC to hold a Prayer Service took place on Sunday, September 28, 2008.

## Upcoming Events:

Leadership Training Seminar on Saturday, October 4, 2008

2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Marlis Archer and Maxie Pereira Cycle Races on Sunday, October 5, 2008 @ the National Park

Community Outreach in West Coast Berbice on Sunday, October 12, 2008.

Thanksgiving Service to be held at the Good Hope Mission Baptist Church, 57 Good Hope, ECD on Sunday, October 19, 2008 @ 4 pm.

National Executive Meeting & Leadership Outreach in Region 6- Berbice on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2008

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*"Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending."*

Maria Robinson

Just a year ago on the 13 Sep 2007, the General Assembly of the United Nations overwhelmingly backed the protection for the human rights of indigenous peoples, adopting a landmark declaration that brought to an end nearly 25 years of contentious negotiations over the rights of native people to protect their lands and resources, and to maintain their unique cultures and traditions.

The AFC has however noted the recent requests from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Government of Guyana for information, which confirms the full rights of Guyana's indigenous peoples over their lands are being respected. The recent deaths of several young persons in hinterland communities inform us that the basic necessities such as access to education in a safe and secure environment are still being denied and that is an indictment not only on the government of the day, but on all Guyanese as we still have rivers to cross before we arrive at a place of true respect for all and unity of all.

The Party reiterates its full support of this UN Declaration on Indigenous Rights, that the time has come for all to recognize that the socio-economic development of Guyana's indigenous peoples and their communities cannot be achieved without their full participation in the decision making processes, and that their informed consent must first be sought where natural resources exploitation would have a direct affect on their immediate environment.

## RAMJATTAN "SKINS UP" GuySuCo

At a press conference held by the AFC on Friday September 12, 2008, AFC Chairman Khemraj Ramjattan exposed the humongous problems affecting the sugar industry in Guyana and the Government's failure to address them. "The ultimate sufferers are the workers he said". He told the media that problems abound at the new Skeldon Sugar Factory, with information available to the party suggesting that major component failures at the facility have occurred in test runs. He noted that information at hand also suggested that structural problems have been discovered which have caused the Guyana Sugar Corporation's administration to hastily commence repairs of the factory.

The party called for the revelation of the truth, saying that it was a Governmental responsibility. Since then the government has become busy by calling on GuySuCo management to clean up its act and also threatening to sanction the Chinese contracting firm that is building the Skeldon Sugar factory. As one commentator remarked *"Like the AFC is now the main opposition in Guyana because they all over the place."* Well done! The AFC, through its activists shall remain vigilant in ensuring that the workers' rights are not trampled on and that the Guyanese people know the whole truth and nothing but the truth about the massive corruption, waste and mismanagement taking place at GuYSuCo.

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## Regional Visits

Visits were made by the leadership to Regions 3, 5, 6, and 8 to meet with activists and supporters to receive updates of the party's work and to interact with, and update members and supporters of the progress in other Regions. For the month of August however, our outreach was targeted at the mining community of Mahadia in Region 8 where a visit was undertaken by Pastor and Mrs. Punalall who spearhead the Party's welfare effort. During the visit residents were given an opportunity to raise their numerous complaints and concerns. These ranged from the deplorable state of the roads, inadequate facilities at the health clinic including the scarcity of personnel, drugs and the absence of an ambulance. Other concerns surrounded the operations of members of the Guyana Police Force, the presence and impact of illegal miners from Brazil, and the high cost of, and inadequate and erratic supply of electricity. The executives undertook to raise these issues with the relevant agencies and authorities and to begin the work of addressing some of these concerns without governmental assistance.

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## Parliament

The recess of the National Assembly ends on October 10, 2008. The AFC team is gearing up to continue its forceful and effective presence. Questions for example on Carifesta spending and the unfolding global financial crisis will be presented. The team is also closely scrutinizing legislation (Interception of Communications Bill No. 19 of 2008) on wiretapping. So far, in our considered opinion, these powers seem to be dangerous weapons to place in the hands of a dictatorial government. We are likely to oppose the passage of this and similar bills. Members and Supporters are urged to send us their views, issues, and concern so that we may raise them in Parliament and Regionally.