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## Partisan or Bipartisan? Time For Change.

November 4<sup>th</sup> 2008, marked a historic day. It was where majority of Guyanese and people around the world awaited with nail biting anxiety to see who would be declared President –elect of one of the Superpowers- the United States of America.

Amid thunderous applause and tears of joy, the President –elect Barack H. Obama made his victory speech. In that speech, the President –Elect said; “And to those Americans whose support I have yet to earn -- I may not have won your vote, but I hear your voices, I need your help, and I will be your President too.”

The Government of Guyana should take pattern from the US election and the President – elect’s call for an all inclusive government. There are many examples throughout the country where it is evident that there is no bipartisanship of the government with any other community that is not supporting the present administration fully. One does not have to look far when a comparison is needed. Take Enmore, Haslington and Golden Grove Villages, for example; if one should take a scenic tour of Enmore; one will find paved roads, street lights, a police outpost, well maintained drains and many other such infrastructures. However, Haslington and Golden Grove; villages that do not support the present administration fully, are still awaiting paved roads and many of the same infrastructures that the residents of Enmore have been enjoying for a number of years now.

We are now living in a world that is forming a globalised community for all, where Leaders are calling for bipartisanship and all inclusive sharing and managing of resources to build a better world. President – elect Obama in his victory speech promised to be President to every American, whether they voted for him or not. This leads to a question that many Guyanese have asked themselves over and over, is the present administration doing enough for *everyone*? Do I have to be a supporter before my voice is heard? Can we have a bipartisan country, where one does not have to worry about offending the current administration?

It is the 21<sup>st</sup> century and it is about time we move pass partisan ruling for a more productive way of getting things done and growth for the country.

(By Fahzeela Mohamed, AFC Youth Leader)

## Other News:

On November 20, and 21 October, 12 Party Chairman Khemraj Ramjattan and General Secretary Clayton Hall respectively, made presentations on behalf of the party at the Joint Services Junior Officers’ Course at Eve Leary, Georgetown.

Executive Member and Member of Parliament, and members Gregory Rickford and Laurie Lewis, took time off from doing work for Rotary International to engage members and supporters in Regions 8 and 9 by sharing copies of the latest editions of the Key and the newsletter.

AFC parliamentary contingent, led by its “Chief Whip” Sheila Holder, forced the government to back down

## Successful Visit to Buzz Bee Dam, Craig, East Bank Demerara Undertaken

Members of the executive and activists of the party conducted a very successful walk about exercise in Craig, EBD on Saturday, November 7, 2008. Residents expressed gratitude and appreciation to the party for paying a visit to see first hand the multitude of problems besetting them. Foremost amongst which are the were able to poor drainage of farming lands in face of the government’s agricultural drive to encourage citizens and farmers to grow more. “How we can grow anything if the government is not even digging the canals and drains...we all fed up with the corruption, lies and mismanagement of the PPP” is how one frustrated resident put it to the visiting team. Plans are in place for a multi-pronged approach to bring some relief to the people in that and neighbouring communities.



Discussions with farmers at Craig

Members Days Sittings of the National Assembly. The AFC purposefully boycotted the last sitting of the Assembly to drive home the point that as elected representatives we cannot meet only to discuss and decide what the Government wants us to. Other important business has to be transacted.



AFC Leaders with US Ambassador Jones

Raphael Trotman & Commodore Ponds on board USS Kersage

**Upcoming Events:**

**A Special Meeting of the National Executive Committee and Friends of the AFC will be held on Saturday, November 29, 2008.**

**A leadership team will undertake a visit to Linden, Ituni, and Kwakwani on Nov. 5 and 6, 2008.**

**Annual Christmas Parties for needy children to be held in December.**

**AFC leader Raphael Trotman will again feed the homeless on Christmas Day in the Charlestown, Werk-en-Rust areas.**

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***“The wheel of change moves on, and those who were down go up and those who were up go down.”***

~Jawaharlal Nehru

The leadership of the AFC met with new US Ambassador John Jones on Monday, November, 17, 2008, and took the opportunity, in addition to welcoming him to Guyana, to stress that good governance is becoming an elusive concept in Guyana. Examples of disregard of the rule of law and the tendency of the regime to assume autocratic characteristics were cited to the Ambassador. Other issues regarding the shutting out of the AFC and GAP-ROAR from the Local Government Reform process, and the lack of political will and/or refusal to institute much needed governance reforms were also highlighted. In this regard, Guyana’s ability to access recourses from the Millennium Challenge Account was discussed. The party also took the opportunity to apprise the incoming Head of Mission of its ongoing programmes, and the political and economic outlook for 2009 and beyond. The Ambassador was urged to bring to the attention of the administration in Washington, D.C., the AFC’s strong belief that special attention should be paid to fostering better race relations in Guyana, providing assistance in harnessing the potential of the Guyana Diaspora in the United States, and ensuring that good governance and constitutional reform be treated as imperatives for improving US/Guyana relations.

**THE AFC PROPOSES AMELIORATING MEASURES TO OFFSET FINANCIAL CRISIS**

The AFC is firmly of the opinion that the worldwide financial crisis would definitely affect Guyana in more significant ways than the Government has stated and would wish Guyanese to believe. The AFC therefore calls on the Government to display honesty on this issue. Already Guyana is beginning to see signs of economic recession as remittances decline; the falling away of gold and diamond prices; the reduced world market demand and falling prices of Guyana’s primary export products such as rice, sugar, bauxite and timber products, and the marked decrease in spending power of the Guyanese working class.

**Proposals For Immediate Implementation**

Firstly, that the Value Added Tax be suspended, or reduced for a period of 12 months, or to be determined until the world’s financial crisis abates. In this regard, the AFC points the Government in the direction of the United Kingdom where it was recently announced that with immediate effect the VAT rate was being reduced from 17.5% to 15%, which is expected to place an extra of £10 per week into the hands of every UK citizen. A similar initiative is long overdue in Guyana because of empirical evidence which established that the Guyana VAT rate of 16% was inadvertently set too high; and secondly by the very fact that the tax has generated more revenue than anticipated and budgeted, thus creating an unexpected windfall. Most importantly, the people of Guyana will have some more disposable income and manufacturers, retailers, and those in the service industry will be buoyed by the increased spending capability. A caring government should be giving back to the people at this time. Secondly, the AFC reiterates its demand for a reduction of the GPL tariff on the basis of the reduced price of oil on the international market. After all, it was the Government’s argument that the cost of supplying electricity was increased because the cost of fuel and lubricants had risen astronomically. Could it be that the government has a plan to rob struggling citizens of hard-earned cash? We all want change.

**GAWU SUES RAMJATTAN...Strong Defence To Be Mounted**

Shamelessly, GAWU has instituted legal proceedings against Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, Chairman of the Alliance For Change, and Channel 8 (Berbice) owner, Tommy Rambarran. The libel action, **No. 519W of 2008**, seeks damages and an injunction and flows from statements made by Ramjattan on the very popular Dr. Ramaya’s Show **“Issues of the People”** to the effect that GAWU financially and otherwise is supportive of the PPP, and does nothing for the working class these days. The AFC Chairman is of the view that the entire purpose behind the litigation is to frighten Channel 8 to dissuade its owner from allowing the AFC to voice its opposition views and positions. It is a device to shut out the AFC from disseminating its perspective in Berbice at this time when Berbicians want to hear the AFC. The litigation will be vigorously defended, and a number of lawyers have already offered their services.