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PPP-Civic targets corruption, misconduct in public office

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PPP General Secretary Clement Rohee, Prime Ministerial candidate Elisabeth Harper and Presidential Candidate Donald Ramotar with copies of the manifesto that was launched at the Marriott Hotel.

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Amid ongoing concerns in sections of the society about apparent rampant corruption, the People’s Progressive Party Civic (PPPC) on Saturday unveiled its elections manifesto, promising to root out that scourge through a number of measures.

“...Continuing the fight against corruption at all levels of Government and society by instituting mechanisms for greater transparency and accountability,” is one of the several promises in the 64-page document titled “Our Vision- Guyana Version 2.0” that was unveiled at the Guyana Marriott Hotel.

Grappling with indiscretions by persons such as the Attorney General Ani Nandlall in a recorded

conversations, President Ramotar's utterances about the slapping of heckler in the Rupununi and more recently Health Minister Dr. Bheri Ramsaran's comments to a female rights activist; the PPP also promised to publish a Cabinet Code of Conduct and the crafting of Codes of Conduct for public officials at all levels.

The anti-corruption mechanisms being proposed in the manifesto include a Special Investigation of Corruption body with powers to probe corruption and prosecute crimes of corruption, a confidential complaints mechanism to encourage people to report incidences of corruption and a Public Procurement Commission with the requisite Parliamentary support whilst retaining Cabinet's "no objection".

The ruling party is also pledging to strengthen laws and regulations that deal with bribery of public



President Donald Ramotar addressing attendees at the launch of the PPP Civic's manifesto at the Marriott Hotel.

officers and officials as well as adapt international best practices to tackle corruption in both the public and private sectors. "...Reviewing existing legal options and the enforcement of anti-corruption mechanisms, especially as it relates to public sector agencies," adds the party.

In a country where there are weekly gun crimes, mostly robberies, the PPP is offering to properly resource the security services to guarantee internal security and protect

Guyana's internal security.

If the PPPC wins a sixth straight term on May 11, 2015, the Donald Ramotar-led administration intends to improve the safety and security of tourists and Guyanese.

"The first duty of any government is to keep people safe. Our law enforcement agencies are entrusted with the crucial responsibility of maintaining law and public order, which forms one of the central pillars of our democracy. We will continue to help make our streets safer and our borders more secure," states the party which has been in power since 1992.

Specific plans include providing resources and support for a professional Army while expanding its Reserves, the establishment of a Special Crimes Unit to tackle illegal drugs and rape, child/sexual abuse and domestic violence.

Against the background of a United States-funded Latin American Public Opinion Poll (LAPOP) that found that Guyana has the lowest police response time in the Caribbean, the PPPC promised to set up a National Emergency Centre (911 System) that can be accessed 24-hours daily and reduce the

average Police Response Times to 15 – 30 minutes.

The PPP's strategy to tackle organised crime, including drug trafficking, include the collaboration with external partners to control organized crime by using special agencies such as the National Intelligence Committee (NIC), Special Organized Crime Unit (SOCU) and Customs and Anti-Narcotics Unit (CANU)

According to the manifesto, there will be a more targeted approach to eliminate the trafficking/sale/consumption of illegal drugs and to strengthen Guyana's security network to prevent trans-shipments and the expansion of the of technology for intelligence gathering, investigations and data/case management. A PPPC-led administration also intends to strengthen monitoring and legislative reforms to tackle robberies, burglaries, piracy, hijacking, trafficking of persons and abduction.

Plans are also in train to establish a targeted policing programme to secure and boost confidence in critical sectors such as Tourism, Agriculture, Mining, Construction, Commerce and Transport, according to the document.

Should the PPPC win the upcoming polls against the opposition coalition A Partnership for National Unity+ Alliance For Change (APNU+ AFC), which is also focusing heavily on security in its manifesto, it promises to ensure police officers work closely with the Ministry of Education to reduce school violence, or drug abuse and the influence of criminal gangs in our schools.

The incumbent administration hopes to pass a series of laws and strengthen the "State apparatus and its law enforcement agencies and capacity to effectively and successfully wage war against crime and criminals; thereby, creating a safe and secure environment in which every Guyanese can aspire and indeed, realize his or her potential, while at the same time, making our nation a safe and secure destination for local and foreign investments."

The PPPC's plans also include clearing up the backlog of court cases and partnering with the judiciary to ensure that there are more frequent sittings of the Magistrate's Court in the rural communities and in particular, the hinterland communities. "In this regard, new court houses which are being built in these areas are being done with residential facilities for Magistrates to encourage longer stints in the hinterland communities," states the manifesto.

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