

# A Fresh Approach

by Janet Jagan

Home Affairs Minister Clement Rohee set a fresh and long needed position on the capacity and ability of Guyanese to manage their own affairs. Too often have Guyanese relied on the so-called expertise and ability of others to do what we can do ourselves.

Well worth quoting are his words published recently in relation to a national report of the Task Force for Combating Trafficking in Persons (TIPS) – “Too often, we have external agencies of the donor community compiling reports on various phenomenon in our country, as if we Guyanese do not have the capacity and objectivity to compile such reports on our own.”

The Task Force was established in February last year to carry out effective

public education and other measures to prevent TIPS. It is apparent that this is a result of a report published by a US agency which incorrectly stated that TIPS was a serious and growing prob-

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lem in Guyana. Clement Rohee said further: - “The decision to develop our own report was based on a recognition that there were gaps and inadequacies in external reports of this phenomenon in Guyana. Thus, the task force set out to develop its own factual and well re-

searched report.”

The Minister, who is Chairman of the Commission, said that the investigation indicates in “no uncertain terms” that trafficking in persons is not a major prob-

lem in Guyana and that the assessment by the US agency did not duly recognize the efforts of the Guyana Government and civil society in responding to the issue locally.

The section of the media which can be described as hostile to the PPP/

C has a pattern of grabbing such reports from overseas agencies which, from time to time, issue reports on aspects of Guyana which are frequently false, malicious or just produced by persons or groups that know little about Guyana, pick up bits and pieces of information that are not researched, put them together and issue so-called reports. Many of these reports that we see in the print media are lacking in well researched information and use instead gossip, rumours, etc. This leads to wrong conclusions, as in the case of TIPS, which is not a big problem in Guyana. If there is any trafficking of persons in Guyana, it is on a small scale and is immediately exposed by the government and or civil society. It is true that in some countries, it is a big problem as in Europe and England where tens of thousands of women and girl children are brought into the



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sex trade and kept in what is close to slavery.

Guyana has been plagued by reports which make out that our country is over-run by corruption, giving us a high number on the list of such countries, all based on hearsay, gossip and pull-outs from the hostile print media, not even referring to the countries which are really adversely affected by corruption with state leaders before the courts and all that follows.

Besides, it is time that donor countries wake up

to the reality that the days of colonialism and neo-colonialism are over. The developing countries must not be treated as being so backward that they require the advice of developed countries on how to govern, how to hold elections, how to run their affairs. Yes, high tech assistance where it is absent, is welcome, but if we look around us, we see a lot of interference by world agencies and donor countries in our affairs, pushing government and civil organizations to do as they do. Frequently what is good for one country is not necessarily good for another. Most agencies lack representatives who really know or care and prepare reports that are frequently useless, costly and end up in the dust heap.

Minister Rohee's frank approach should shake the dust off those who find it easier to go the old way!