Indian Diaspora Council
Shared heritage, aspirations and interests
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Press Statement

IDC COMMEMORATES 58th ANNIVERSARY of GUYANA'S INDEPENDENCE

The **Indian Diaspora Council International** (**IDC**) and its global partners congratulate the people occasion of the 58th anniversary as an independent nation when, it achieved independence from Great Britain on May 26, 1966. IDC extends warm greetings to all Guyanese in Guyana and abroad who take much pride in this milestone achievement.

Slaves from Africa were brought to work on the plantations of then British Guiana to produce sugar, rice, cocoa, spices and other agricultural products for consumption in Great Britain and Europe. The conditions were inhumane and torturous. Following the end of slavery in 1834 in all British colonies, shiploads of labor was imported under indenturedship from Portugal, China and predominantly from India which had ample supply of available labor. Cheap labor was a lucrative commodity for profit for the British plantation owners who organized and perpetuated extremely harsh and intolerable conditions on the plantation workers.

The 58th anniversary of Guyana's independence provides timely recognition of the enormous progress that Guyana has made since its independence towards improved quality of life, especially social, cultural, economic, education and political advances by its people. There is worldwide recognition of Guyana, its history, culture, traditions, and economic advances, despite decades of struggles to overcome hardships during and after colonialism. Guyana has shown its resilience and courage to forge a national identity and agenda of progress in democracy and mostly peaceful co-existence among its diverse ethnic groups.

CARICOM Statement: "Guyana, a land of rich heritage, diverse cultures and flourishing ecosystems, has had a remarkable journey since attaining its Independence. Indeed, Guyana has emerged as a leading and visionary voice on the international stage, tackling issues such as climate change, global peace and security, human rights, energy security, and inclusive development. Guyana has effectively led the charge on the critical area of regional food and nutrition security, for which it has lead responsibility in the CARICOM Quasi-Cabinet. Guyana's recent able chairmanship of the United Nations Security Council underscores the strength and impact of small states, such as those of CARICOM".

"Our ancestors came to Guyana partly by choice, many forced but they resolved and persevered under very difficult and harrowing conditions. That shared experience and that saga of shared history fostered an unusual kindred spirit of resolve, togetherness and kinship – a triumph over obstacles and difficulties with dreams and aspirations of a destiny intertwined by history and fate. We enthusiastically support preservation of Guyana's rich and diverse history, heritage and culture," noted IDC president Ashook Ramsaran who was born in Guyana.

As Guyana continues its transformation and adaptation as it has done for decades, the future bodes well for continued progress at all levels that is beneficial to all Guyanese in Guyana and abroad. Guyana's enduring vitality is a reflection of its people, always strong, energetic, progressive and vibrant.

We extend IDC's congratulations to the Government and people of Guyana on the commemoration of this 58th anniversary of that historic date. We also extend our continued best wishes to all Guyanese for continued peaceful and prosperous co-existence among other ethnic groups both in Guyana and other lands where they have subsequently settled.

"Guyana, officially the **Co-operative Republic of Guyana**, is inhabited by many indigenous groups, Guyana was settled by the Dutch before coming under British control in the late 18th century. It was governed as British Guiana, with a mostly plantation-style economy until the 1950s. It gained independence in 1966, and officially became a republic within the Commonwealth of Nations in 1970. The legacy of British rule is reflected in the country's political administration and diverse population, which includes Indian, African, Amerindian, and multiracial groups. The largest ethnic group is the Indo-Guyanese (also known as East Indians), the descendants of indentured laborers from India, who make up 43.5% of the population, according to the 2002 census. They are followed by the Afro-Guyanese, the descendants of slaves from Africa, who constitute 30.2%. Guyanese of mixed heritage make up 16.7%, while the indigenous peoples (known locally as Amerindians) make up 9.1%. *Wikipedia*

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Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC), established in 1997, is an international non-profit organization with global affiliates and membership in 21 countries with the objective to embrace, engage and enhance the shared heritage, aspirations and interests of persons of Indian origin with optimum inclusivity.