



# Anniversary Message

Mr. Saisnarine Kowlessar - Chairman, Governing Board

I am honoured to be bringing special greetings to the management and staff of the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) and to the taxpaying public, on the 21st Anniversary of an organisation that continues to grow and play a significant role in this land of ours.

More importantly, as an oil producing nation that puts Guyana at the heights of an exciting time in history, the GRA is on the right track to support this sector with its functional Oil and Gas Unit, the implementation of the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCYDA) World, the special focus on Guyana's large taxpayers and the overhaul of its Information Technology (IT) infrastructure in 2021. I therefore charge the management and staff to take their responsibility towards themselves, their colleagues and the taxpaying public, seriously. We all have to play our part in ensuring that our role as tax officers is performed professionally and with integrity, that revenue is equitably collected and that the nation receives its fair share so that the country can meet its priority needs. Additionally, as Minister of Finance, Hon. Dr. Ashni Singh, has challenged recently, the GRA must strive to become the best tax administrator in the Caribbean region.

At the same time, we must not lose sight of the ominous time we are presently facing. The world is in the midst of an indefinite global health crisis that has affected thousands in the workforce. The GRA must explore all avenues to ensure its valuable human resources are protected. There must be full adherence to the COVID-19 office protocols.

As the newly appointed Chairman, I would like to extend my warmest felicitations and compliments to the Commissioner-General, Mr. Godfrey Statia, Management and Staff on the joyous occasion of reaching the mature age of twenty-one. I commend them for their sterling contributions and resilience over the years and I look forward to a meaningful and productive working relationship with the team in the future. May the GRA continue to grow in stature and in performance.

Congratulations on 21 years.

It was on this day, January 27, in the year 2000, that the GRA came into existence. Paving the way was the passage of the Revenue Authority Act of 1996, which established the parameters and detailed how the semi autonomous organisation should function.

I am proud to say that, after the Act was passed in the National Assembly, I as the successor to Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, the then Minister of Finance, brought the legislation to life by establishing the Authority and appointing the first Commissioner General, Mr. Edgar Heyligar. Thus I can confidently attest to knowledge of its mandate, structure and functions.

Through the years since its establishment, the Authority has grown to be a powerful and dynamic entity in tax administration and collection, and continues to contribute significantly to the growth and development of the nation. In this connection, I wish to salute the Management and Staff, many of whom have gone to the great beyond, for their dedication and commitment to improve revenue collection in our country.

The 21st Anniversary of the GRA should also be a time for reflection on its evolution, growth and development, the pitfalls and setbacks that were experienced during the journey and how the entity managed to navigate its way through those hurdles to come out successful. These experiences should be catalogued as a guide for the Authority as it continues the quest to carry out its main functions to **assess, charge, levy and collect all revenue due to the Government under such laws as the Minister may by order specify.**