



CODE OF CONDUCT

FOR

POLITICAL PARTIES

CONTESTING THE

GENERAL & REGIONAL

ELECTIONS – 2015

*GECOM's Media Centre
(Returning Officer's Building)
73 High Street, Georgetown*

April 29, 2015



**CODE OF CONDUCT
FOR
POLITICAL PARTIES
CONTESTING THE 2015 GENERAL AND REGIONAL ELECTIONS**

The Leadership of the recognizes that peace and public order, freedom of political campaigning, and compliance with electoral laws and regulations are essential and of paramount importance to the conduct of free, fair and credible elections. In furtherance of these objectives, we, the leadership ofdeclare and affirm:

1. Our Party's belief in the sanctity of human life, and the abhorrence of taking human life. Our Party further denounces the violation of anyone, because of that person's political allegiance.
2. Our Party's opposition to and rejection of the use of violence and intimidation or plans of this nature by any of our Candidates, Agents, members or supporters as a means of expressing political support or furthering political objectives.
3. Our Party's denouncement of any procurement, possession or distribution of weapons or ammunition of any sort by our members or supporters for use in political activity.
4. Our Party's commitment to non-violent relations between its Candidates, Agents, members and supporters and those of other Political Parties.
5. Our Party's commitment to repudiate any action by our Candidates, Agents, members or supporters calculated to gratuitously ridicule, provoke, threaten or intimidate the members and supporters of any other Political Party.
6. Our Party's respect for the rights of each Political Party, its Candidates, Agents, members and supporters to express and demonstrate their political views and to conduct lawful, non-violent activities in support of their objectives.
7. That, within our Party, we will cultivate, support and accommodate Candidates who manifest the highest moral standards, and who have not been convicted of any serious crime, and whose values, beliefs, commitment and actions are in consonance with our Party's affirmations delineated above.
8. Our Party's commitment to adhere to strict standards of financial probity, accountability and transparency, and to submit in a timely manner to the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) a Declaration of Election Expenses.
9. Our Party's opposition to and rejection of any disrespect leveled at Media Houses and Media Practitioners, as well as the intimidation of media personnel and the using of media operatives as propaganda tools, while maintaining our Party's right to respond, in a factual manner, to any obvious and evident media transgressions.

In the belief that the manner in which an Election is conducted is crucial to the well-being of Guyana and to its functioning as a democracy, we, the leadership of which will be contesting the 2015 General and Regional Elections, will urge our Candidates, Agents, members and supporters to contribute positively to a political atmosphere in which our respective policies and programmes for Guyana's future development will be the dominant feature of our Party's campaigns. In this regard, we solemnly declare that:

I. LAWS, RULES AND PROCEDURES

- (i) Our Party will act in accordance with all existing laws, rules and procedures governing the election practices, including the laws pertaining to campaign financial accountability.
- (ii) Our Party's Candidates, Agents, members, supporters will avoid all illegal and corrupt practices.
- (iii) Our Party will insist that its Candidates, Agents, members and supporters avoid making speeches or statements that promote racial or ethnic tension by using stereotypes and other language to denigrate citizens or other groups through derogatory references to gender, race, class, ethnicity, language, religion, age, place of origin, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, political beliefs or affiliation.
- (iv) Our Party will ensure that slogans, posters, handbills and other forms of advertisements do not contain material offending public morality, decorum and decency via taunts, ridicule, innuendo or defamatory matter.
- (v) Our Party will urge its candidates and supporters to respect the rights of others and, in particular, the right to freedom of speech and the right to hold and express contrary views.
- (vi) Our Party will not countenance any of our Candidates, Agents, members and supporters making derogatory remarks relative to physical disadvantages (for example blindness, anatomical deformities, etc) which members of opposing Parties might be experiencing.
- (vii) Our Party pledges to ensure that its Candidates, Agents, members and supporters will behave peacefully and with decorum when gathering at rallies or marches.
- (viii) Our Party pledges to uphold the law dealing specifically with corrupt practices as enshrined in the Representation of the People Act, Chapter 1:03.

II. A PEACEFUL CAMPAIGN AND RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Our Party will contribute in every way to the goal of a peaceful election process. Further, our Party specifically undertakes to:

- i. Forbid the use of threats, harassment or tendency to violence that might cause disruption whether at political rallies or elsewhere, or any other form of intimidatory behaviour.
- ii. Forbid the use of abusive, slanderous or threatening language, or language which could incite people of one group to violence against any Candidate, Agent, member or supporter of any other group.
- iii. Forbid the publication of any pamphlet, poster, cartoon or any other material containing texts which could offend or incite people to cause public disorder.
- iv. Forbid our Party's Candidates, Agents, members or supporters from all acts of interference with rallies, meetings, gatherings or processions of other Political Parties, or from encouraging such acts by others.
- v. Forbid all actions aimed at defacing, besmirching, obscuring, destroying, damaging or altering any poster, notice or other campaign materials of other Political Parties.
- vi. Forbid all our Candidates, Agents, members or supporters from indulging in personal attacks and defamatory comments relative to opposing candidates and their families and which are calculated to cause immense personal embarrassment or indelible psychological scars.
- vii. Forbid all our Candidates, Agents, members and supporters from any act of direct or oblique intimidation of Media Personnel via the advocacy of banning or attempting to ban media representatives from political press conference, political rallies or meeting which are open to the general public. Further, our Party undertakes to oppose and reprimand any behaviour of our Candidates, Agents, members and supporters who are engaging in the subjection of any member or representative of the media to individual ridicule or censure in the execution of his/her official duties within the confines of the Law. Similarly, our Party forbids any of our Candidates, Agents, members and supporters from directly or indirectly threatening, coercing or otherwise subjecting to duress any media representative who practices his/her craft within the confines of the law.

III. RESPECT FOR THE INTEGRITY OF THE ELECTION PROCESS

- i. Our Party, together with our Candidates, Agents, members and supporters will cooperate with, and give support to, the Guyana Elections Commission, its officials and field officers in the proper execution of their functions and duties, and we will refrain from attacks, threats or against other improper treatment of these GECOM officials during our Party's electoral campaign. We further commit to bring to the attention of GECOM in the first instance any allegations made by our party with respect to elections management.
- ii. Our Party will ensure that our Candidates, Agents, members and supporters refrain from interfering in any way with the polling and counting proceedings, and avoid all attempts to spread false rumours about election activities.
- iii. Our Party will commit our Candidates, Agents, members and supporters not to cause damage in any way to any premise in which polling places are located or to remove, deface or damage any election materials.

- iv. Our Party pledges not to prevent access of any official Candidates of a Political Party to Polling Stations, nor to intimidate, nor to engender fear in such Party Personnel.
- v. Our Party pledges not to employ the use of State machinery/vehicles/equipment/personnel for the furtherance of our Party's interest.
- vi. Our Party pledges to ensure that no bribes whether monetary or compensatory are paid to prospective voters
- vii. Our Party pledges to refrain from coercing other Party Agents to join our Party with promises of substantive remuneration.

IV. COOPERATION WITH POLICE, MILITARY AND SECURITY AUTHORITIES

Our Party will show respect for, and give support to the law enforcement, military and security authorities in the proper discharge of their duties during the campaign, voting and declaration of results periods. Our Party is convinced that antagonistic behaviour by our candidates, agents, members and supporters towards these authorities must be avoided.

V. COMMITMENT TO IMPLEMENTATION

Our Party agrees that the effective implementation of this Code of Conduct by all Political Parties contesting the General and Regional Elections - 2015 will significantly enhance the prospects for a free and fair election, and we therefore pledge ourselves to abide by and act in accordance with the Code's spirit, intent and letter.

Our Party will commit its Candidates, Agents, members and supporters to respect the rights of others and in particular the right to freedom of speech and the right to hold and express contrary views.

Our Party pledges to uphold the freedoms enshrined in Article 146 (1) of the Constitution of Guyana: "Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of expression, that is to say, freedom to hold opinions without interference, freedom to receive ideas and information without interference, freedom to communicate ideas and information without interference and freedom from interference with his correspondence."

Accordingly, our Party will issue instructions to our candidates, agents, members and supporters directing them to observe this Code of Conduct; and we pledge to take such other steps as may be necessary to ensure that its principles and practices are widely disseminated and followed.

VI. NON-DISRUPTIVE TABULATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF VALID ELECTIONS RESULTS

Our Party will issue instructions to our Agents at the Polling Stations and District Offices directing them to observe the Rules of Procedure associated with tabulation and declaration of the elections results.

Upon the Declaration of the Official Results by the Guyana Elections Commission, our Party advocates that all Parties and candidates, agents, members and supporters must exhibit graciousness relative to the elections results; especially, we pledge that should our Party emerge victorious, our Party will demonstrate modesty and decorum and commit itself to govern in the all-encompassing interests of all Guyanese, in compliance with the Constitutional Oath of Office.

In case of an election petition, our Party commits to restraining the enthusiasm of its supporters while awaiting judicial review. Our Party further commits to accept the outcome of such a review. To guarantee a peaceful post-election environment, our Party would encourage judicial authorities to expediency in the resolution of election petitions.

VII. INTERACTION WITH THE GUYANA ELECTIONS COMMISSION (GECOM)

Our Party pledges to recognize the duties and functions of the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) relative to the resolution of any matters pertaining to this Code of Conduct. We therefore expect that if GECOM receives complaints, it will investigate the complaints immediately and take the necessary and appropriate steps to deal fairly with the complaints.

Together with GECOM, our Party will ensure that our acquiescence with this Code of Conduct will be given fullest publicity, and we will promote the attainment of the inherent objectives by means of public communication and information.

We, the undersigned, on behalf of our respective Political Parties, hereby subscribe to, embrace and affirm the provisions inherent in this Code of Conduct for Political Parties.

NAME OF PARTY	NAME OF PERSON(S) SIGNING	SIGNATURE	DESIGNATION	DATE
A PARTNERSHIP FOR NATIONAL UNITY+AFC (APNU+AFC)	DAVID GRANGER		PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE	
INDEPENDENT PARTY (I.P.)	MARK BENSCHOP		PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE	
HEALING THE NATION THEOCRACY PARTY (H.T.N.T.P.)	ALFRED PARK		REPRESENTATIVE OF LIST	
ORGANIZATION FOR THE VICTORY OF THE PEOPLE (O.V.P.)	GERALD PERREIRA		REPRESENTATIVE OF LIST	
NATIONAL INDEPENDENT PARTY (N.I.P.)	SAPHIER HUSAIN SUBEDAR		PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE	
PEOPLE'S PROGRESIVE PARTY/CIVIC (P.P.P./C)	DONALD RAMOTAR		PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE	
THE UNITED FORCE (T.U.F.)	MARISA NADIR		PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE	
UNITED REPUBLICAN PARTY (U.R.P.)	VISHNU BANDHU		PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE	