



Press Release

20th January, 2023, GEORGETOWN – With reference to an article published in Kaieteur News on January, 20, 2023 titled “GECOM Chair goes it alone ...unilaterally creates, makes appointment to new temporary post”, it is of crucial importance to note the following: -

On November 9, 2022, the Chief Election Officer (CEO) wrote a Memo to Justice of Appeal (Ret'd) Claudette Singh, Chairman of the Commission requesting approval for the secondment of Mr. Aneal Giddings, IT Manager to the Operations Department of the Commission's Secretariat to assist with the day-to-day implementation and evaluation of the statutory and administrative tasks delineated in the Workplan for the conduct of Local Government Elections (LGEs).

In justifying his request, the CEO noted that, unlike the conduct of General and Regional Elections, which takes place in a disaggregated manner in ten (10) different Electoral Districts, the LGEs will be conducted in eighty (80) Local Authority Areas (LAAs) comprising ten (10) Municipalities and seventy (70) Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs).

The CEO further pointed out that considering (i) the multiplicity of sequential and simultaneous tasks required to be implemented at Operations level for the LGEs, and (ii) the position of Deputy Chief Elections Officer (DCEO) being vacant, **it is of vital importance for a Senior Manager who is *au fait* with operations management relative to the conduct of elections** to be assigned the responsibility of assisting him (CEO) with ensuring that all of the required tasks are efficiently and effectively implemented in accordance with the timelines set out in the workplan for the LGEs.

In this regard, the Chairman approved the request with the understanding that Mr. Giddings would be referred to as 'Operations Coordinator' within the Operations Department of the Commission's Secretariat since he would be responsible to carry out responsibilities that would normally fall within the list of duties of DCEO.

The Chairman gave her approval for the secondment of Mr. Giddings with the full knowledge that she (i) was not creating any new position, (ii) was not making an appointment, and (iii) was aware that there is precedence of staff having been seconded, and in one case even appointed, without the knowledge and approval of the Commission. Further, the Chairman's approval of the requested secondment was based on the understanding that this would be a temporary arrangement until a suitable candidate is appointed to the position of DCEO. Meanwhile, Mr. Giddings is still employed in the substantive position of IT Manager.

With regard to the filling of the vacancy of DCEO, the entire matter of filling of all existing vacancies were placed numerous times on the Agenda of Statutory Meetings of the Commission. However, this topic was always deferred due to the need for the Commission to focus its attention on more pressing matters associated with preparations for the conduct of Local Government elections. Needless to say, the filling of vacancies is again in focus. Accordingly, Mr. Giddings secondment will come to an end upon the appointment of a DCEO.
