**draft intervention to be delivered by the Hon. Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Dr. Vindhya Persaud, during session 4 of the Multistakeholder Forum on the rights of older persons**

**29 August 2022**

**Theme of session 4: *Towards strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons***

**Time limit: 2 minutes**

Thank you**, Chairperson,** and my appreciation to all panelists for the insightful views offered on this important topic.

The Government of Guyana is committed to inclusive growth and, consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is working to ensure that no person or group is left behind in our development thrust. This includes vulnerable groups such as older persons and we are committed to ensuring that those who have served our country over the years and are now advanced in their years enjoy a dignified existence, in accordance with international human rights norms and standards.

To this end, my government continues to develop and strengthen policies for the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons and I will briefly outline some of the measures we are implementing.

Recognizing that the wellbeing of older persons is closely tied to the levels of disposable income available to them, the Government of Guyana has been consistently increasing the Old Age Pension, at each budget cycle. Over the last two budget cycles, the old age pension which is accessed by persons over 65 years, without means testing increased by more than thirty-five percent (35%). There has been the implementation of direct delivery payments to pensioners who are shut-in or from remote areas, increase in payment locations including the direct bank deposits.

The Government continues to provide subsidies to older persons for critical utility services, including for water and electricity.

Provisions have also been made for exemptions from travel tax by older persons to facilitate ease of travel.

The Government of Guyana is keen to ensure that our older citizens in the care of the state enjoy secure housing and adequate care. Consequently, we are continuously upgrading our care homes both in terms of physical infrastructure and human resource capacity.

Finally, my government guarantees free healthcare for older persons and this group remains a priority when accessing health services at our institutions.

I thank you.