



**Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding for the
Management of the Importation of Mercury into the
Cooperative Republic of Guyana
MNR Annex, 55 Main Street, Georgetown
Friday, August 30, 2019,**

Mr. Newell Dennison, Commissioner of the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC); Dr. Vincent Adams, Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ms Trecia David-Garnath, Registrar, Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board (PTCCB); Ms Diane McDonald, Deputy Commissioner, Guyana Geology and Mines Commission; officers of the Ministry of Natural Resources, GGMC, PTCCB and EPA, other stakeholders, members of the media, good morning.

The determinant for who does the transition to a mercury free environment is not economics, it is national will power. The journey to a mercury free Guyana is a long but a necessary one. We started that journey in 2013, after we globally expressed our national acknowledgement of the dangers of mercury and made a commitment towards the elimination of its use by signing the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

In September 2017, at the inaugural Conference of Parties to the Minamata Convention, H.E. President David Granger, stood before the world's leaders and their representatives, in Geneva, Switzerland, and reaffirmed Guyana's commitment to mercury abatement and is taking formidable steps towards the reduction and elimination, **where feasible**, of the use of mercury by 2027 and, the implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

Today, the signing of this Memorandum of Understanding, is a testament to the institutionalisation of his political commitment and Guyana's adaptative actions towards addressing the use of mercury in the country. We are working assiduously on the completion of our National Action Plan (NAP) as per our obligation under the Convention. Through a participatory, multidisciplinary and multisectoral approach, we have also identified gaps in our efforts towards the holistic implementation of the Convention and in alignment with our Responsible Mining Initiative, and are working to close those gaps. One of those gaps is the area of data sharing, collection and closer collaboration between key stakeholders. This MOU is built on policy coherence and coordination through a cross government approach in addressing the multidimensional nature, use and adverse effects of mercury. By working collaboratively, we will create a platform to build synergies and leverage resources for the national implementation of the Minamata Convention and towards our Green State trajectory.

We are still on that pathway of making mercury history in Guyana. The government is steadfast and we continue to preserve and keep the momentum of creating a safe and clean environment and, to protect the lives and livelihoods of our people, by addressing the dangers of mercury use. We know that some have unfortunately taken a jaundiced view towards government's resolve to address the mercury scourge; believing that we want to end mining.

I wish to end therefore with the restatement of three fundamental truths -

1. Mining is very good for Guyana;
2. Mercury, used indiscriminately, is bad for Guyana; and
3. This government will work assiduously to reduce the incidence of mercury - without jeopardizing or diminishing the value and significance of mining and miners.

I thank you.