

**Statement by the Honourable Carl B. Greenidge, Vice President and
Minister of Foreign Affairs in response to the recent public announcement
by H. E. President Nicolas Maduro on Diplomatic appointments**

In my statement to Parliament published on 10th June 2015, I made it clear that Guyana is ready, indeed, has always been ready to have discussions with Venezuela on bilateral matters. I wish to confirm that Guyana remains committed to that position. However, in relation to the search for a solution to Venezuela's contention of nullity of the 1899 Arbitral Award, we rely on the provisions of the Geneva Agreement which Guyana has scrupulously observed and on which the Secretary General of the United Nations is engaged. In fact, on August 29th last, we received in Georgetown a team from the United Nations. That team was sent by the UN Secretary General to solicit our views on the way forward and we expressed those views to the Secretary General.

As regards my statement in Florida, let me make it clear, Guyana has a right to speak on matters affecting it. Furthermore, I did not act on a sudden urge to visit the United States. I had a long-standing invitation to address Guyanese and interested persons in the USA on matters affecting Guyana and those of interest to the Caribbean. I was invited to Miami and what I said there differed in no way from what I said before, either in Miami or elsewhere, in defence of Guyana's rights or in respect of Guyana's position as regards the Venezuelan claim to Guyana's territory and Venezuela's actions. The latter has been amplified by the illegal action taken recently by President Maduro purporting to extend Venezuela's land and sea boundaries to include Guyana's maritime space. This is a legitimate matter of concern to Guyana and indeed other CARICOM States, as it should be, and to the International Community as a whole. Venezuela must recognize that such actions, along with its pursuit of its spurious claim despite the restrictions of the Geneva Agreement, are the bases for Guyana's response.

By his outbursts each time we speak in defence of our rights President Maduro comes perilously close to revealing a belief that uniquely, as a nation and as a people, we have no right, either to speak or to state our views on any matter affecting our well-being. On this aspect I say no more.

Guyana, of course, remains ready to have dialogue with Venezuela on matters affecting our bilateral relations and we see the exchanging of Ambassadors as being an important part of promoting such dialogue. Notwithstanding announced actions by President Maduro in this regard, we are prepared to carry on these discussions. Whatever actions Venezuela takes in relation to Ambassadors, we remain ready to adhere to the Geneva Agreement and we rely on the Secretary General to make his decision as to the means of settlement of the controversy as defined in the Geneva Agreement.

September 18, 2015
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
GEORGETOWN