



Kingdom of the Netherlands

PRESS RELEASE

High-level Delegation visits Guyana to discuss issues related to the death penalty

A high-level delegation headed by Ms Navi Pillay, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and current Commissioner of the International Commission against the Death Penalty, Mr Ivan Šimonović, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, and Professor Marc Bossuyt, Emeritus President of the Constitutional Court of Belgium visited Guyana between 19 and 21 July 2016 to discuss issues related to the death penalty in the country.

On 20 July 2016, the delegates participated in a Judicial Colloquium on the Abolition of the Death Penalty that took place in Georgetown, Guyana. The participants held seminars with the judiciary of Guyana on a number of themes related to the abolition of the death penalty, including the experience of countries such as South Africa in abolishing the death penalty and the role of the United Nations in the abolition of the death penalty. The Honourable Chancellor of the Judiciary Justice Carl A. Singh also presented at the Colloquium.

The participants also had a number of high-level bilateral meetings with H.E. President David A. Granger, the Honourable Chancellor of the Judiciary Justice Carl Singh, the Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Basil Williams, the Honourable Minister of Public Security Khemraj Ramjattan, and members of the Opposition.

Following the visit to Guyana and the Judicial Colloquium, the participants have issued the following conclusions:

- ❖ Welcoming H.E. President David Granger's recent statement that he would not approve any executions during his term as President.

- ❖ Noting the sovereignty of the Government of Guyana in taking steps away from the death penalty;

- ❖ Recommending that Guyana support the resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly calling on States to establish a moratorium on the use of the death penalty, with a view to abolishing the practice;
- ❖ Recommending that Guyana formalise the *de facto* moratorium of the death penalty into a *de jure* moratorium;
- ❖ Recommending that Guyana abolish the death penalty.

The Judicial Colloquium was facilitated by the United Nations, the International Commission against the Death Penalty, the European Union Delegation to Guyana, and the Embassy of the Netherlands in Suriname.