

International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations



*Rampe du Pont-Rouge, 8
CH-1213 Petit-Lancy (Switzerland)*

*TEL: + 41 22 793 22 33
FAX + 41 22 793 22 38*

To: Minister Noel Holder,
Minister of Agriculture,
Ministry of Agriculture,
Regent & Shiv Chanderpaul Drive
Georgetown, Guyana
Email: minofagriculture2015@gmail.com

Date: March 7, 2016
Ref: ro/sl/0050

Concerns: Closure of the Wales Sugar Estate, West Demerara

Dear Honorable Minister Holder,

The IUF is the global trade union federation representing workers throughout the food chain. The IUF is composed of 416 affiliated unions in 126 countries, including GAWU and NAACIE in Guyana.

The IUF has worked with our affiliates in Guyana for many years to try to improve the living and working conditions of workers in the sugar sector. It was therefore with shock and some disbelief that we received the news of the GuySuCo plans to close the Wales Sugar Estate at the end of 2016's second sugar crop, especially in the absence of a socio-economic study.

Sugar has historically played an important role in Guyana. It has been a crucial source of rural employment. Workers on the estate and the families who depend on them will surely be pushed into poverty by this cruel closure. The closure will bring to an end the employment of 1,700 workers at Wales Estate.

We therefore urge your government to:

- Immediately halt plans to close Wales Sugar estate;
- As a matter of urgency to enter into full and good faith negotiations with GAWU and NAACIE to find a just solution which will maintain the estate and ensure employment.

The IUF will be monitoring the situation closely and is fully prepared to take further action to assist workers in the Guyanese sugar industry to maintain decent employment in this crucial sector.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Clifton Grant', with a large, stylized 'C' and 'G' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ron Oswald
General Secretary

Clifton Grant
IUF Caribbean, Regional Secretary