



GUYANA FOOTBALL FEDERATION INC.

Affiliated to FIFA, CONCACAF and CFU

PRESS STATEMENT

15th September, Georgetown:

The following is a statement from the Executive Committee of the Guyana Football Federation (GFF) on the construction of the FIFA Forward Programme

GFF'S NATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE TO BECOME REALITY SOON (FIFA FORWARD PROGRAMME)

OVERVIEW:

Construction of the FIFA Forward Programme, which will be known as the National Training Centre, is scheduled to commence in September month end at Providence, East Bank Demerara.

This follows the confirmation of the lease of the land earmarked for the facility and subsequent approval by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) in June 2017.

This will be the first and major state-of-the-art football facility, which will seek to among others, produce consistent levels of highly competitive and exciting football that is a force to be reckoned with regionally and on the international scene. The facility will cater for football development among both males and females and will be the focal point for football activity at all levels of the game.

Construction of the artificial turf will be done by Greenfields, a manufacturer of artificial turf, in phases and is scheduled to be completed in January month end in 2018. Following this, the accompanying amenities will be constructed.

CHALLENGES:

- **NO LEGAL AUTHORITY FOR LAND LEASE PROVIDED**

When the Wayne Forde-led Executive Committee took stewardship of the Guyana Football Federation (GFF) following the Normalization Committee (NC), it was the general feeling that that the groundwork to activate the construction of the centre was established. However, this was far from reality. It was discovered that the lease for the land identified had no legal standing and in fact, necessitated several rounds of negotiation by the GFF and the involvement of the Honorable Minister of Communities on May 16, 2017 to finalize. This resulted in crucial delays which affected the commencement of the project since the final approval from FIFA was dependent on confirmation of all related documents.

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- **BUDGET MANAGEMENT AND QUALIFIED AUDIT**

It is no secret that the NC under Clinton Urling, during their relatively short tenure, received FIFA funding totaling almost (US\$1M) which enabled them to discharge their mandate. It is also no secret that following a FIFA audit of the 2015 accounts which was conducted by Price WaterhouseCoopers (PwC) following the departure of the NC, countless red flags were raised. This resulted in FIFA formally informing the Wayne Forde-Led Executive Committee on October 10, 2016 of the decision of the FIFA Audit and Compliance Committee to “block funding to the Football Federation of Guyana.”

The effect of the decision of the Audit and Compliance Committee meant that the Wayne Forde-led Executive Committee had no access to the necessary funds to finance their operations and to support the development needs of the Players, Officials and Members of the GFF. Additionally, this also meant that the GFF was unable to access and benefit from the increase FORWARD funding programme.

To date, this situation has had an extremely negative effect on the operations of the GFF which has severely affected the institution’s relationship with its members and suppliers.

Over the past months, the Executive Committee has undertaken a complete overhaul of the institution’s financial operation, resulting in major systems and personnel changes. Consequently, the GFF has been approved for “conditional funding” targeting essential operations and preapproved projects and programmes.

However, the Executive Committee is working assiduously to streamline every aspect of its Finance operation and internal procedures in order to meet and exceed the conditions laid out by FIFA’s Audit and Compliance Committee.

THE WAY FORWARD:

Notwithstanding, the GFF will proceed with the construction of this historic project which will be the first of nine all-weather facilities to be constructed in each Regional Member Association (RMA) and will also serve as a training facility for all teams as necessary. The venue will be equipped with female amenities to encourage greater female participation and will also house the headquarters of the GFF.

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The GFF takes the opportunity to thank its stakeholders for their patience and reassure them that football will be the winner. All stakeholders will be continuously updated relative to the progress of the construction.

Finally, the Executive Committee of the GFF recognizes the important role played by the NC during a very turbulent period in Guyana's Football history and once again express our appreciation on behalf of the fraternity. We wish each member of the NC every success in their future endeavor.

In an invited comment, President of the Guyana Football Federation (GFF), Wayne Forde, said "It is our solemn goal to truly restore the integrity and reputation of football in Guyana and across the globe."

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