

January 7, 2019

STATEMENT BY GFF'S PRESIDENT WAYNE FORDE
**Investigation Into Allegations Of Sexual Harassment Of Female Referees Within The
Guyana Football Federation**

First, I want to thank all parties involved for their patience in giving the Board of Inquiry time to properly conduct its investigation into certain allegations, and for affording the Executive Committee the space to consider the findings proffered and to make appropriate decisions. It is vital to respect due process in sensitive matters that may have legal, professional and personal ramifications for all those involved.

This is the first time that an investigation of this kind and scale has taken place in Guyana's football. There has been a significant amount of institutional learning during this difficult process. I can assure our football Fraternity and the general public that the Guyana Football Federation is now better equipped to handle issues of this nature.

The Guyana Football Federation wishes to reiterate its unwavering support for all women and girls in the sport, and we remain committed to their empowerment and development. The Federation will not condone any form of sexual harassment, abuse, inappropriate behaviour or discrimination within the football fraternity, past or present. We know that this problem has plagued football for many years – but, we are taking a formidable stand against it.

In recent times, the world has become much more aware of the pervasiveness of sexual harassment against women. The extent to which this has impacted on equal participation of women in everyday life may never be fully accounted for.

Let me be very clear to our entire fraternity: Sexual harassment, abuse, inappropriate behaviour and discrimination of any kind have no place in football whatsoever. While football cannot fix society's problems, under my leadership, the GFF will do everything it can to improve the football environment and protect the integrity of the women and girls in the sport.

I would like to thank the members of the Board of Inquiry, led by Dr. Karen Pilgrim, for their professionalism, commitment and hard work in this sensitive matter. The Executive Committee has accepted the findings and recommendations of the Board of Inquiry. GFF Third Vice President, Thandi McAllister, will oversee the implementation of these recommendations.

We will take steps necessary to support the healing of those affected, and to do what we can to urgently rebuild trust in our fraternity.

In this regard, Head of Referees, Stanley Lancaster, has been dismissed from his position with immediate effect. Referees Assessor, Roy McArthur, has been provisionally suspended,

pending the outcome of disciplinary proceedings by the GFF Disciplinary Committee, under the newly-approved Disciplinary Code.

I encourage members of the media and our other stakeholders to continue to play their part by holding us to account for our progress in this area.

Going forward, the GFF is committed to investigating all reports of abuse, harassment or discrimination.

This GFF leadership is determined to bring the culture of football into the 21st century so that women and girls always feel safe, welcome, respected and equal in all aspects of the sport - from administration to the field of play.

Thank you

Wayne Forde (Mr.)
President – Guyana Football Federation