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Real accountability and transparency does not exist in Guyana- Opposition MP

June 10, 2013 | By [KNews](#) | Filed Under [News](#)



AFC Member of
Parliament, Trevor
Williams

By Abena Rockcliffe

Four members of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) have returned home following a beneficial four-day training exercise spearheaded by Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC).

The training was held in Ottawa, Canada and was facilitated as a result of a request by the Speaker of the National Assembly, Raphael Trotman,

to the Canadian High Commissioner to Guyana, David Devine.

It allowed primarily for an examination on how to strengthen the process of estimating for annual budget.

The PAC is an arm of parliament that is mandated to review the report of the Auditor General and make relevant recommendations, while GOPAC is an international network of parliamentarians dedicated to good governance and combating corruption throughout the world.

It is an independent body which helps parliamentarians across the world to improve scrutiny of their budget estimate process with an aim of safeguarding taxpayers improving tax transparency.

Since its inception, GOPAC has provided information and analysis, established international benchmarks, and improved public awareness through a combination of global pressure and national action.

GOPAC Canada has provided both financial and organizational assistance to send the delegation of four Guyanese Members of Parliament (MP) to Canada.

The delegation included People Progressive Party/ Civic (PPP/C), MPs Bibi Shadick and Manzoor Nadir and two representatives from A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) and Alliance For Change (AFC)—Volda Lawrence and Trevor Williams respectively.

Ms. Sonia Maxwell, Clerk of Committees attached to the Economic Services Committee, also accompanied the delegation.

A participant's review

Williams who is a first time Member of Parliament, when contacted by Kaieteur News said that the team was privileged to witness, firsthand, a system that is subjected to real transparency and accountability.

On the trip, the four visited the Canadian National Assembly during one of its sittings. Williams said that the actual proceedings were not much different to Guyana's as the Opposition MPs were grilling the government. What he found different was in the responses given.

Williams said that the government provided all documents that the opposition requested "which is unlike what happens in Guyana."

"We were able to see some of the critical documents that they use in the review of the estimates process—it was good to see what transparency is all about."

The MP said that he and his colleagues also attended a sitting of the Senate Committee of Finance. The Senate Committee of Finance is one that deals mainly with the granting of supplementary allocations. It oversees legislation impacting the expenditure of state funds. In some jurisdictions, the Committee is responsible for balancing the State's operating and capital budgets.

Guyana, however, doesn't have a Senate Committee; instead when it comes to approving supplementary allocations, the National Assembly simply goes into a committee of Supply.

Williams said that the team also visited GOPAC global executive and GOPAC Canada. They also sat in on a PAC hearing where crown corporation- a state organization- went before the committee.

The Guyana PAC members had a chance to share experience as PAC members in their country.

Williams said that Canada has a well trained and professional team that is attached to parliament with the mandate to help MPs understand budget estimates in detail—a luxury that doesn't exist in Guyana.

He said that the resources given to MPs are given in a timely manner which strengthens the chance of having a good critical review of the estimates.

Williams opined that the trip was very informative and much can be used from it to strengthen Guyana's system in that regard.

Kaieteur News learnt that a Consultant attached to GOPAC Canada suggested that the four Members form a Sub-Committee of the Public Accounts Committee and submit a report containing recommendations following their visit.

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