



## PRESS STATEMENT

From: The Office of the Commissioner-General  
To: All Media Houses  
Date: February 13, 2009  
Topic: **No one is exempt from the payment of Tax except the Law provides**

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I wish to refer to a letter which appeared in the Stabroek Newspaper on Saturday February 7<sup>th</sup> 2009 captioned "Punitive taxes, lax penalty system breeds corruption"

Part of the content of this letter is personal and defamatory and can have unintended and unfortunate consequences.

I would like to reiterate what was publicly expressed in an interview by your newspaper with the Commissioner-General, and published on page 15 of your February 4, 2009 edition.

"The Commissioner-General rejected the views articulated by the task force that the revenue body used deliberate tactics to frustrate the investigation, adding that the GRA cooperated to the extent required". The other issues in the letter are grossly misleading, and have already been dealt with.


I wish to emphasize that you have an obligation to restrain your letter writers from making unfounded statements about the GRA; since it appears that there is an agenda to publish only negative news about the GRA whether real or imagine.

While TRIPS is a sophisticated modern software that is designed to cater for the valuation and classification of all goods, and like other software it is not perfect.

The TRIPS is also designed with Risk Profiling techniques so it covers certain functions of the Customs Officers. It means therefore that certain corrupt practices that were perpetrated with high level of frequency in the past will be suppressed. TRIPS will therefore level the playing field and everyone will pay their share of taxes.

This phenomenon will cause some taxpayers who were previously bent on fraudulent activities to be disgruntled and may even be frustrated in their efforts to corrupt the system, and it would inevitably lead to delays experienced by them when attempting to do so.

The GRA remains committed to its mandate of revenue collection and protection as it relates to the various laws it administers.



The system will promote greater levels of efficiency for persons who will comply and those bent on corrupt practices will suffer.

The law only work against those who fail to comply with it, and will appear punitive to those who allow the amounts they owe to accumulate. Business must be accountable for the VAT they collect, the taxes they deduct from employees and must themselves honour the law that requires them to pay as they earn. The GRA does not make the laws, it administers them. However, an analysis of its various tax policies has revealed that in some instances there needs to be stiffer penalties.

Notwithstanding, the need for harsher penalties in some instances the GRA will continue to work with businesses in an effort to promote voluntary compliance. Deep or wide there is room in the net for more persons. No one is exempt except by the expressed provision of the law.

