

# MP reaches out to Guyanese community

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A small group of Canadian Guyanese in Toronto met with Conservative MP Russ Hiebert to share their views about the needs and opportunities of ethnic communities in Canada.

"We had a very useful, thoughtful discussion on the contributions and concerns of Guyanese-Canadians," said Hiebert, who was part of a delegation that visited Guyana in January this year.

He said he was impressed with Guyana's beauty, "its great potential particularly in the area of tourism.... we visited a number of different sites in the country..."

Hiebert is the Canadian Chair of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and during the visit to Guyana, meetings were held with political leaders and parliamentarians to discuss various ways that the Guyanese Parliament and the democratic system could be strengthened, and what Canada could do to assist Guyana in that area.

"What the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association does is it tries to pair countries -- those with experience with those that are developing, so we talked about ways we could help Guyana," he told The Camera shortly after meeting the group at the office of Finance Minister Jim Flaherty .

Hiebert said the delegation of Canadian Guyanese wanted to discuss issues such as opportunities for businesses to contract with the federal government and the assessment of foreign credentials.

"Our government recognizes the importance of ensuring that Canadians of Guyanese heritage have every opportunity to contribute to Canadian society as citizens, while at the same time remaining proud of their heritage.... I look forward to developing this relationship further."

The meeting was moderated by prominent community leader and lawyer, Mark Persaud, who said he was delighted that Hiebert had asked to convene the roundtable "to solicit input about the needs of the community."

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