UNITED NATIONS
GUYANA



2026 SDG ACCELERATION PATHWAYS FOR GUYANA

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Foreword

This document presents an executive summary of the 2025 Common Country Analysis (CCA) for Guyana, updated with more recent data available as of early 2026. The CCA is an interagency analytical and foresight exercise that provides an overview of the national development context and identifies priority SDG acceleration pathways across key economic, social and environmental dimensions. It draws primarily on national data and official statistics, complemented by international sources where gaps remain.

The summary is intended to inform policy dialogue and support the collective prioritisation of the UN in partnership with the Government of Guyana. It also informs the preparation of the next UN Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2027–2031.



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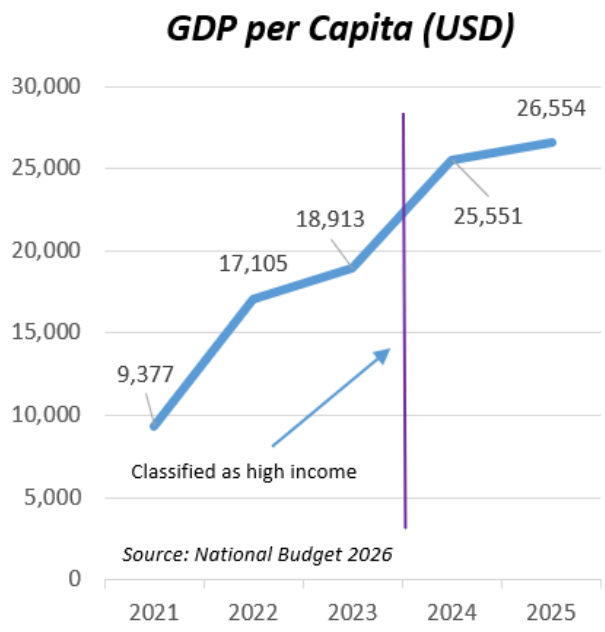
United Nations Resident Coordinator in Guyana

1. Development context and SDG progress

Guyana is at a defining moment in its development trajectory. The rapid expansion of offshore oil production has propelled the country to high-income status within a very short period, significantly easing the financial constraints that typically limit development progress. This transformation has created an unprecedented opportunity to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to finance national priorities at scale. The Government of Guyana (GoG) has moved decisively to leverage this opportunity through an ambitious programme of public investment, particularly in infrastructure and key social sectors, aimed at improving living standards and supporting long-term development.

Figure 1: GDP per capita (USD)



At the same time, rapid income growth has yet to translate fully into equivalent gains in human development. While headline economic indicators have advanced sharply, social outcomes typically evolve more gradually and depend on the ability to translate new resources into effective policies, capable institutions and inclusive services to promote social cohesion and inclusion, including for women, Indigenous peoples, hinterland communities and persons with disabilities. The task ahead is therefore to ensure that Guyana's new economic reality translates into broad-based and inclusive prosperity for all.

Nature and geography continue to shape Guyana's development pathway. The country's forests, ecosystems, rivers and natural resources underpin both its greatest development opportunities and its principal sources of vulnerability. Classified as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) due to its low-lying coastal geography and small population, Guyana is highly exposed to flooding, coastal erosion and climate variability. Its forests, covering more than 85 percent of the territory, provide globally significant ecosystem and climate services. With a population of around one million, concentrated largely along the coastal plain[1], the expansion of the oil and gas sector adds further complexity, underscoring the importance of balancing growth with long-term sustainability and resilience.

Guyana's development vision is anchored in the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) 2030, which sets out a pathway towards inclusive, climate-resilient and low-carbon growth, with a long-term objective of net zero emissions by 2050. The LCDS is integrated into national planning and budget processes and aligned with Agenda 2030 and Guyana's international environmental commitments. A distinctive feature of the strategy is the ambition to place a fair value on nature, including through carbon and biodiversity markets, with revenues already supporting community development, especially in remote and Amerindian communities.

International assessments indicate that Guyana has made steady progress towards the SDGs since the turn of the decade. In 2025, the country's SDG Index score stands at 66.3, up from 59.7 in 2020, with its global rank improving from 124th to

[1] 2022 Census Preliminary Report

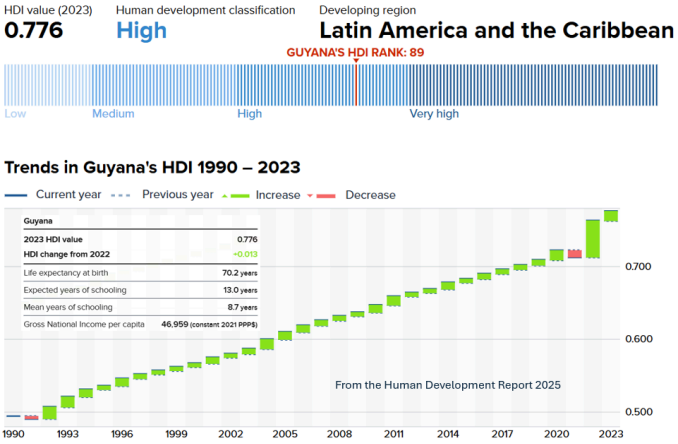
102nd.[2] Guyana is assessed as on track to achieving SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), with further improvements noted under SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). For other Goals, progress has been more gradual or data limitations constrain assessment.

Figure 2: SDG Dashboard and Trends



Human development has also advanced rapidly. Guyana's latest Human Development Index score stands at 0.776, placing the country firmly in the high human development category and representing one of the fastest improvements in the region since the turn of the decade. This progress has been driven by strong income growth associated with the rapid economic expansion, while improvements in health and education outcomes have progressed at a more gradual pace. Sustained investment in health, education and skills supported by effective institutions and inclusive service delivery, will therefore be essential to ensure that improvements in income are matched by commensurate advances across all dimensions of human development over time.

Figure 3: Trends in Guyana's HDI (1990-2023)



These trends point to a fundamental shift in Guyana's development challenge: from mobilizing sufficient resources to ensuring that rapidly expanding resources are translated into lasting improvements in people's lives. Sustaining progress will therefore depend increasingly on effective institutions, coordinated implementation and the capacity to manage the social, environmental and economic risks associated with rapid transformation.

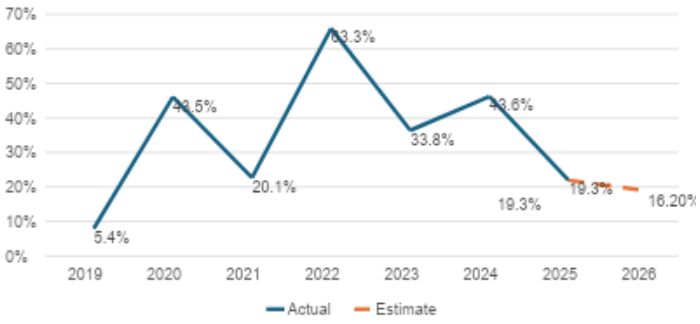
[2] Sustainable Development Report 2025, SDG Transformation Center

2. Economic Transformation

Guyana's economic transformation is unfolding at an unprecedented pace. The rapid expansion of oil production has driven exceptionally strong growth, with real GDP averaging almost 40 percent annually since 2021. Oil production now accounts for roughly three-quarters of GDP and around 88 percent of exports, fundamentally reshaping the economy and public finances. This transformation has created substantial fiscal space and enabled the Government to scale up investment in infrastructure and social sectors, laying the foundations for accelerated progress towards the SDGs; for example, the annual Public Sector Investment Program - essentially capital expenditures - has increased 800% from 2020 to 2025.[3]

Remarkably, this rapid expansion has so far been accompanied by relative macroeconomic stability. Inflation averaged below 3 percent in 2024-2025, monetary policy has remained accommodative, and the nominal exchange rate is broadly stable, reflecting prudent macroeconomic management in a context of rapid structural change.[4] These outcomes underscore the authorities' efforts to maintain stability while navigating a complex and fast-evolving economic environment.

Figure 4: GDP Growth[5]



Looking ahead, economic prospects remain exceptionally strong in the short and medium term. Oil production is projected to continue expanding, likely reaching close to two million barrels per day later this decade, while non-oil GDP is also expected to grow at robust rates, supported by construction, services, agriculture and mining.[6] In a global and regional context characterized by slower growth and heightened uncertainty, there is limited external support, with Guyana's outlook driven largely by domestic dynamics and expansion of oil production.[7] With growth all but guaranteed, economic management now shifts towards anticipating and managing the opportunities and risks associated with rapid economic transformation while promoting resilience, diversification and long-term sustainable development.

Managing oil-led growth in a way that supports economic diversification is a central element of the GoG's development strategy. While oil revenues provide the means to address long-standing development gaps, reliance on this resource heightens exposure to commodity price volatility and can affect competitiveness in non-oil sectors.[8] Recognizing this, the authorities have consistently emphasized the importance of strengthening the non-oil economy, including agriculture, manufacturing, services and value-added activities, a vision that is articulated in the LCDS.

[3] Budget 2026
[4] See for example IMF 2025, ECLAC 2025 and IDB 2025
[5] Budget 2026
[6] See for example Budget 2026 where production capacity is expected to reach 1.7 m.bpd by 2029.
[7] See for example ECLAC 2025 and IDB 2025
[8] The "Dutch Disease", whereby a booming natural resource sector reduces the competitiveness of other sectors, notably through exchange rate dynamics.

Figure 5: GDP contribution by sector 2025[9]

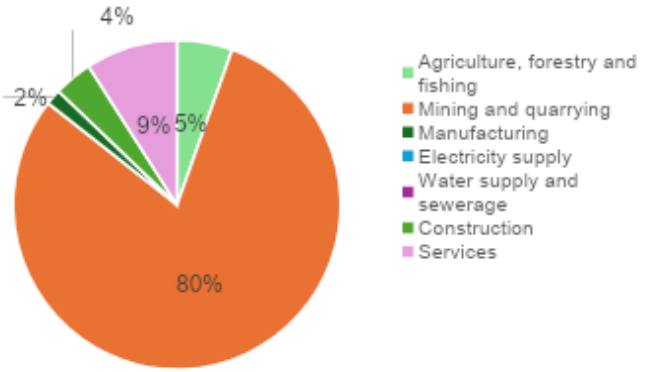
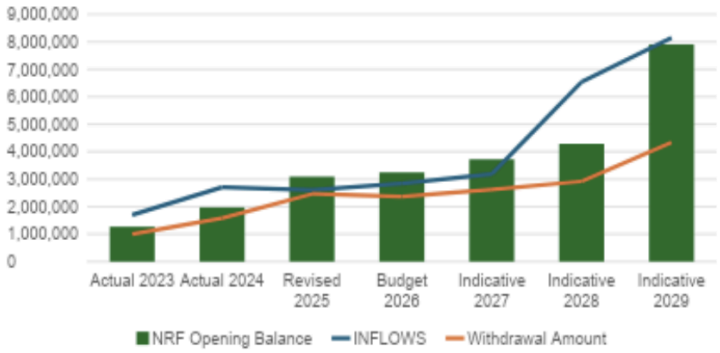


Figure 6: NRF operations (US$ thousands)[13]



Fiscal policy has been a key channel through which Guyana's economic transformation is being shaped. Public investment has expanded rapidly, with capital expenditure increasing more than nine-fold since 2020 and now accounting for just over half of total public spending.[10] Oil revenues are channelled into the Natural Resource Fund (NRF), from which the Government draws in line with pre-defined rules to finance public investments while retaining a portion of revenues as savings. The NRF has become a central pillar of the fiscal framework, supporting the scale-up of development spending while maintaining a balance of US$3.3 billion at end-2025, equivalent to around 12-13 percent of GDP, providing a considerable fiscal buffer against economic volatility.[11] More transparency around the Fund's long-term investment approach, including through a publicly available long-term investment strategy, would further strengthen the fiscal framework, although the investment mandate and purpose are outlined in the NRF Act.[12]

At the same time, sustaining this trajectory will require safeguarding the foundations of the public finance system. Domestic tax revenues, at around 20 percent of non-oil GDP in 2024, have not kept pace with rapid economic expansion, reflecting recent tax policy choices and the evolving structure of the economy.[14] Gradually strengthening the tax system will be important not only for fiscal sustainability, but also to support redistribution and equity, complementing public spending in advancing inclusive and equitable development. Recent tax cuts, while pro-poor, equally benefit higher income groups.

The private sector will be essential to driving economic diversification, raising productivity and sustaining growth beyond the extractive sector. Guyana's business community is increasingly well organized and the GoG has signalled its commitment to private sector development and collaboration, including through Public–Private Partnerships (PPPs) and reforms to strengthen corporate governance. At the same time, private firms continue to face constraints related to skills availability, access to finance and regulatory complexity, which disproportionately affects micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).[15] Addressing these constraints would strengthen the capacity of domestic firms to expand in non-oil sectors, integrate into emerging value chains and create higher productivity jobs over time.

Trade and regional integration offer additional pathways for economic diversification. Oil exports

[9] Guyana Bureau of Statistics
[10] Budget 2026 and RCO Budget Analysis 2026
[11] Budget 2026 and RCO calculations
[12] Guyana Natural Resource Fund Act (NRF) 2021

[13] Budget speech 2026 statistical appendix
[14] RCO calculations based on data from Budget 2026
[15] See for example *World Bank Regulatory Quality Index* and *Heritage Foundation Economic Freedom Index*.

account for around 88 percent of total export values, reflecting a highly concentrated export structure, even as Guyana trades with more than 130 destinations.[16] Progress in trade facilitation has reduced administrative delays, with around 96 percent of import and export licences now issued within 24 hours.[17] Guyana is also a strong advocate for deeper CARICOM cooperation, having taken a leadership role in initiatives such as the *25 by 2030* to reduce the region's food import bill. Further reductions in trade-related transaction costs, alongside investments in transport, logistics and border infrastructure, would strengthen regional value chains, support diversification and increase resilience to future shocks.

Figure 7: Export volume[18]

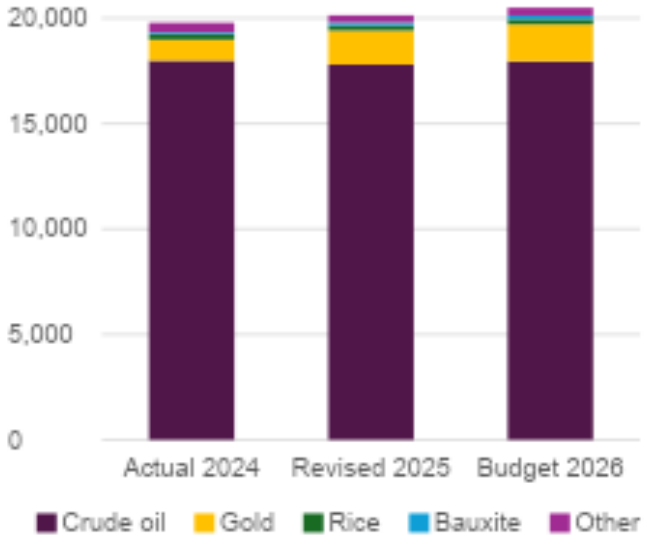
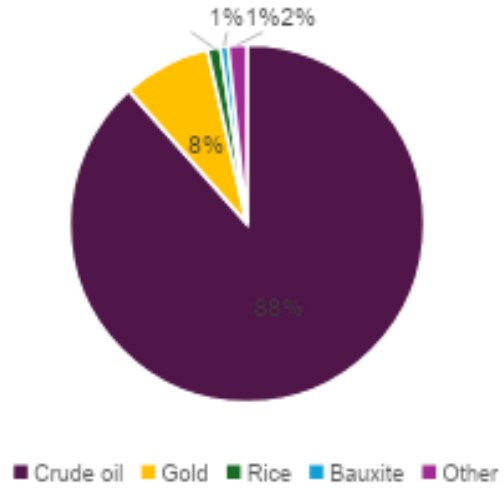


Figure 8: Export composition 2025[19]



The pace of economic transformation also places new demands on governance. As Guyana's economy becomes larger, more diversified and more interconnected, sustained progress will increasingly depend on the capacity of public institutions to coordinate across sectors, anticipate emerging risks, manage complex policy trade-offs and adapt implementation as new opportunities and challenges arise.

The rapid economic expansion underway is creating new opportunities for workers but labour market outcomes continue to reflect structural challenges. Labour force participation has risen to around 56 percent, while unemployment has declined sharply from 14.5 percent in 2021 to 6.8 percent in 2024, including a marked reduction in youth unemployment.[20] These trends reflect strong labour demand in the context of sustained economic growth.

[16] Budget 2026
[17] Budget 2026
[18] Budget Speech 2026 Statistical appendix
[19] Budget Speech 2026 Statistical appendix
[20] Guyana Labour Force Survey Q4 2024

Figure 9: Labour Force Participation (%)[21]

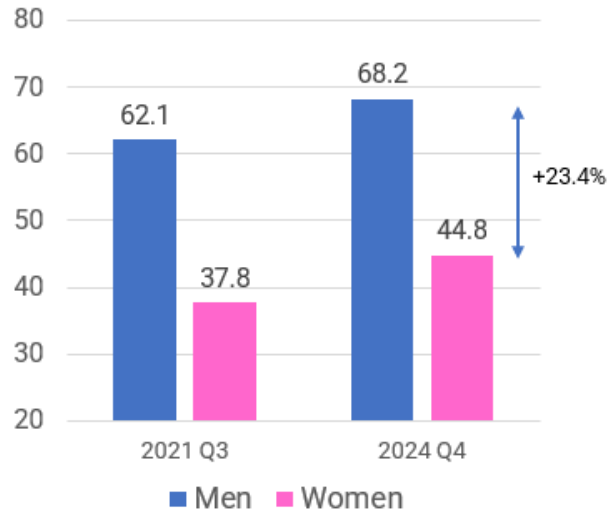
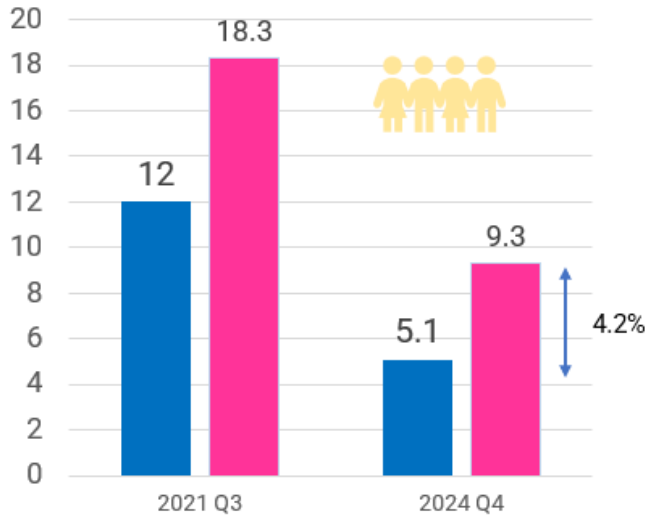


Figure 10: Unemployment (%)[22]



At the same time, participation rates remain below potential and informal employment continues to account for close to half of total employment. Gender disparities also remain pronounced: women's labour force participation (45 percent) remains significantly lower than that of men (68 percent) and women also face higher unemployment rates (9.3 percent compared to 5.3 percent for men). Furthermore, around one quarter of young people remain outside employment, education or training (NEET), with young women disproportionately affected.[23] Addressing these challenges will require deliberate and sustained policy efforts to expand women's access to employment opportunities and ensure that young women are not left behind in the country's ongoing economic transformation.

[21] Guyana Labour Force Survey Q4 2024
[22] Guyana Labour Force Survey Q4 2024
[23] Guyana Labour Force Survey Q4 2024

The following pathways highlight selected opportunities to further accelerate progress under the economic transformation.

Table 1: SDG Acceleration Pathways under the Economic Transformation.

Acceleration pathways	Focus areas and policy options
Developing a comprehensive public financial management strategy can help strengthen fiscal policy and promote more effective use of resources.	● Strengthen the medium-term fiscal framework to guide budget planning and public investment planning ● Experiment with innovative PFM tools such as SDG, green and/or gender-responsive budgeting ● Participate in international benchmarking initiatives to strengthen transparency and accountability (IBP)
Strengthening the tax system can safeguard fiscal sustainability and promote greater equity.	● Broaden personal income tax base, reduce reliance on indirect tax and rationalize tax expenditures to improve progressivity ● Strengthen tax administration and compliance to widen fiscal space and promote formalization
Developing clear sectoral strategies and value-chain approaches can accelerate economic diversification.	● Enhance sectoral strategies and roadmaps for agriculture, fisheries, manufacturing and services ● Promote value addition beyond primary production, including processing, packaging and high-productivity activities
Fostering a more competitive and credible private sector can unlock jobs, innovation and investment.	● Reduce bureaucratic barriers and improve access to finance, particularly for MSMEs ● Strengthen corporate governance frameworks ● Make strategic use of PPPs to mobilize capital and link domestic firms to global value chains
Investing in human capital to address skills gaps and labour market mismatches.	● Expand technical and vocational education and align training curricula with labour market needs ● Strengthen employment services and labour market intermediation to better match skills supply and demand ● Enhance labour market data to support evidence-based workforce planning
Leveraging regional integration and trade facilitation can support diversification.	● Further reduce trade-related transaction costs through improved customs procedures and logistics ● Strengthen regional value chains to expand non-oil exports and resilience to external shocks
Promoting gender equality in economic policy can make growth more inclusive	● Apply gender-responsive budgeting and tax policy to avoid reinforcing existing gender inequalities ● Expand support for women-led enterprises and women's participation in higher-value sectors ● Scale up investment in the care economy and other measures that reduce unpaid care burdens
Strengthening cross-government coordination and implementation capability can improve the management of rapid economic transformation	● Strengthen whole-of-government coordination for major investment programmes. ● Further enhance implementation monitoring and adaptive decision-making across ministries. ● Strengthen integrated risk analysis to anticipate and manage emerging economic and social risks
Strengthening data systems, transparency and accountability to support effective economic policymaking	● Establish regular publication of high-quality economic and social statistics aligned with international standards ● Reduce data lags that risk misalignment between policy and rapidly evolving economic realities

3. Human Capital and Social Development

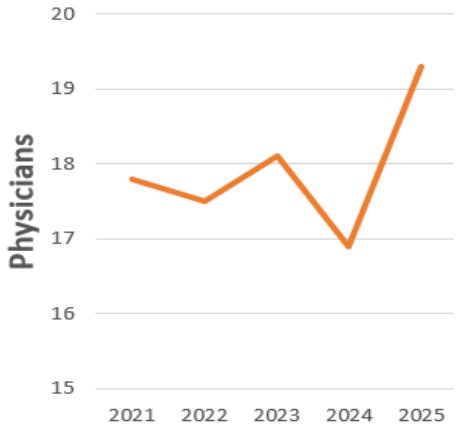
Health and well-being

Sustained public investment and health policy reforms have strengthened Guyana's health system and expanded access to care nationwide. Access to regional hospitals has increased, immunization coverage is near-universal and measures such as the removal of user fees and the introduction of health vouchers for basic diagnostics have reduced financial barriers to care. Investments in telemedicine, disease elimination initiatives and specialized services further reflect the GoG's commitment to advancing health coverage and improving health outcomes. Together, these investments have significantly improved service availability and laid the foundations for universal health coverage.

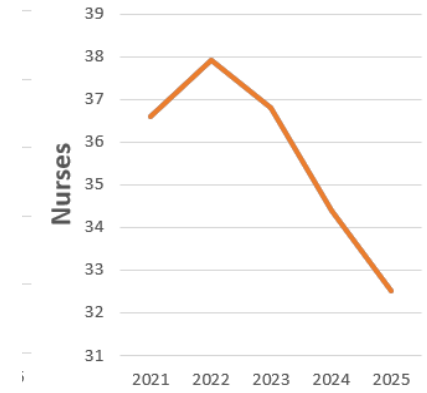
As Guyana's epidemiological profile evolves, non-communicable diseases have become a central health challenge. Cardiovascular disease, diabetes and chronic respiratory conditions are the leading causes of morbidity and mortality, affecting more than 3,700 per 100,000 people[24], while an estimated 40 percent of adults aged 30-79 live with hypertension.[25] Overweight and obesity prevalence exceeds 50 percent, with higher rates among women, underscoring the importance of strengthening prevention, early detection and lifestyle interventions and integrated public health approaches that address the underlying social determinants of health.[26]

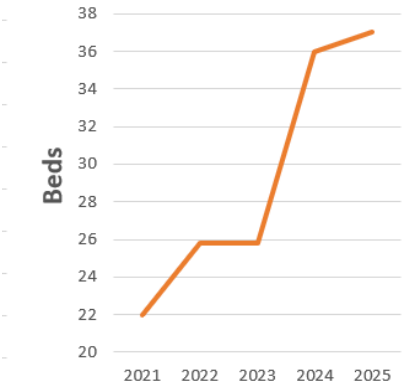
Maternal, child and adolescent health indicators reflect both progress and remaining challenges. Infant and under-five mortality have declined steadily since 2020, supported by sustained high immunization coverage. At the same time, maternal mortality remains slightly elevated at 78 per 100,000,[27] and high adolescent fertility continues to affect women's health and long-term human capital development, with around 20 percent of adolescent girls (aged 15–19) having begun childbearing,[28] more so in hinterland areas. **With expanded infrastructure and service coverage in place, policy focus is increasingly shifting towards strengthening equity and quality across regions**. Access to health centres is relatively high, reaching 88 percent of coastal and 70 percent of hinterland communities.[29] Recent years have also seen a notable increase in the number of physicians, as reflected in rising physician density, although staffing shortages persist across the system, particularly among nursing staff[30], more acutely in hinterland regions.[31] Continued attention to health workforce planning, deployment and retention will therefore be important to ensure that gains in staffing and infrastructure translate into more equitable access and service quality. These priorities are reflected in the recommendations under the UPR concerning the right and access to health.

Figure 11: Number of physicians, nurses and hospital beds per 10,000 population[32]



[24] Budget 2025
[25] WHO Guyana Hypertension Profiles 2023
[26] PAHO Core Health Indicators
[27] Budget 2026
[28] Budget 2026
[29] Budget 2025, defined as those with access to at least a "level 2" health facility
[30] Budget 2026
[31] Just under half of health departments across the country are fully staffed (Budget 2026).
[32] Budget 2026





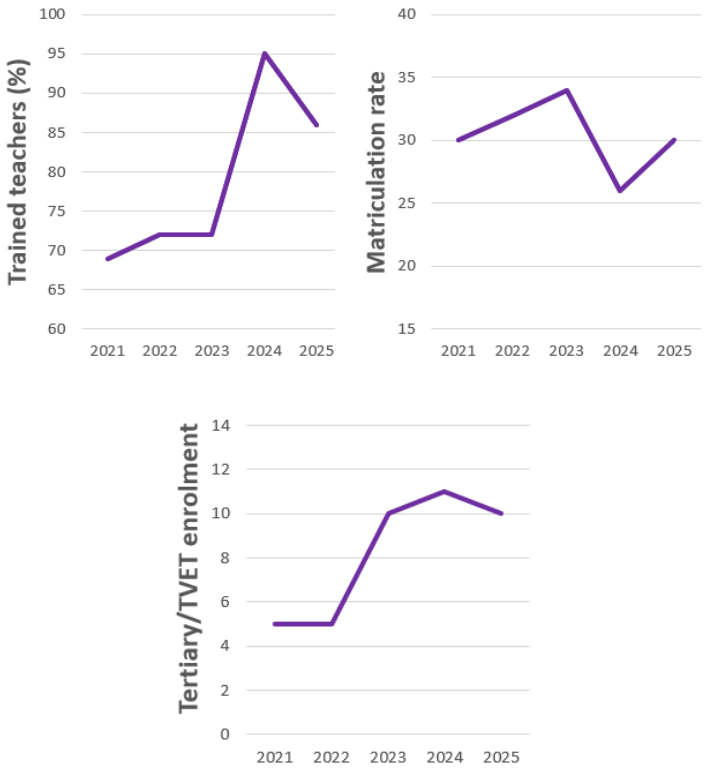
Education

The GoG has placed education at the centre of its development agenda, expanding access and strengthening the foundations of human capital formation. Near-universal access has been achieved at the primary level, school infrastructure has expanded nationwide and equity-enhancing measures have been introduced across the system. The abolition of tuition fees at the University of Guyana and the expansion of scholarship programmes - including GOAL - [33] have significantly expanded access to tertiary and technical education.

Learning outcomes are improving but remain below potential despite high enrolment levels. Mean years of schooling stand at 8.7 and expected years at 12.2, but learning-adjusted years are 6.8, underscoring that time spent in school does not yet fully translate into acquired skills.[34] Furthermore, national assessments indicate that 48 percent of students achieved at least 50 percent across all subjects at the National Grade Six Assessment, and 30 percent attained grades 1–3 in five or more CSEC subjects at the secondary level, including Mathematics and English.[35]

Secondary, tertiary and technical education are expanding rapidly, creating new pathways for skills development. Gross enrolment in tertiary and TVET programmes rose from about 5 percent in 2020 to 10 percent in 2025, supported by scholarships and tuition abolition.[36] At the same time, regional and gender disparities persist, with hinterland regions lagging behind and women underrepresented in technical fields, underscoring the importance of continued focus on teacher development, curriculum quality and skills relevance to support productivity and inclusive growth.

Figure 12: Proportion of trained teachers, matriculation rate and tertiary/TVET enrolment[37]



[33] GOAL - Guyana Online Academy of Learning
[34] World Bank and UNDP Human Development Report, 2025
[35] Budget 2026
[36] Budget 2026
[37] Budget 2026

Social Protection and Inclusion

The Government has significantly expanded social protection in recent years, using increased fiscal space to ease cost-of-living and support households across the life cycle. Measures include universal cash grants, education and newborn support, pensions, health vouchers, school feeding programmes and the abolition of tuition fees at tertiary level. These interventions have provided timely relief and contributed to social stability during a period of rapid economic transition.

As Guyana's transformation continues, there is scope to further strengthen the coherence and reach of the social protection system. Programmes remain somewhat fragmented across institutions and are not yet anchored in a unified national social protection strategy, complicating coordination and impact assessment. Strengthening coordination across these programmes would support a more integrated approach to reducing vulnerability across the life course. Informality remains high, with about half of workers in informal employment and limited coverage of contributory schemes among the self-employed.[38] Migrants and those who have fled from neighbouring countries generally have access to basic services such as health and education, though gaps remain in access to employment and formal social protection, with implications for inclusion and social cohesion. However, planned and ongoing expansion of the National Insurance Scheme offers a promising avenue to address some of these challenges.

Cross-cutting Enablers for Social Development and Cohesion

Progress on gender equality has accelerated alongside Guyana's economic transformation, supported by strengthened legal and policy frameworks. Reforms such as the Family Violence Act (2024), the Combatting of Trafficking in Persons Act (2023) and the Restorative Justice Act (2022), together with expanded access to social justice centres and survivor services, have reinforced protection and response systems. Guyana's impressive improvement in the *Global Gender Gap Index*, rising from 53rd place in 2021 to 31st in 2025, reflects these efforts.

At the same time, gender gaps persist in economic participation and labour markets. Women's labour force participation remains substantially lower than men's, at around 44 percent compared with 68 percent, and women are more concentrated in lower-paid sectors while underrepresented in technical and scientific fields.[39] Unequal care responsibilities and high adolescent fertility continue to constrain women's economic opportunities, underscoring the importance of investments in care services, skills development and targeted support. [40]

Figure 13: Guyana profile from the 2025 Global Gender Gap Report[41]



Governance reforms have advanced in parallel with rapid economic expansion, reflecting efforts to modernize institutions and strengthen compliance with regional and international standards. Recent initiatives include new data protection legislation, progress on open data reforms and improved

[38] ILO DWCP 2025-2030

[39] Labour Force Survey Q4 2024; ILO DWCP 2025-2030

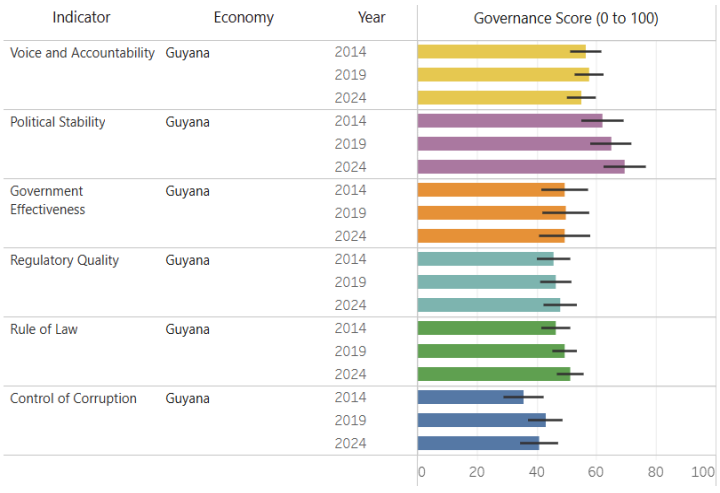
[40] See for example ECLAC 2025 on the potential impact of scaled-up care infrastructure investments on women's labor force participation in Guyana.

[41] Global Gender Gap Report 2025

performance under anti-money-laundering and counter-terrorism financing assessments, with a favourable evaluation under the CFATF Fourth Round Mutual Evaluation.[42] At the same time, the pace of economic change has placed pressure on institutional capacity, particularly in coordination, oversight, transparency and data availability, reinforcing the importance of continued investment in institutional systems, data, cross-government coordination and implementation capability to enable adaptive, evidence-informed decision-making. However, the recently expanded Ministry of Public Service, Government Efficiency and Implementation highlights the GoG's commitment to strengthen these elements.

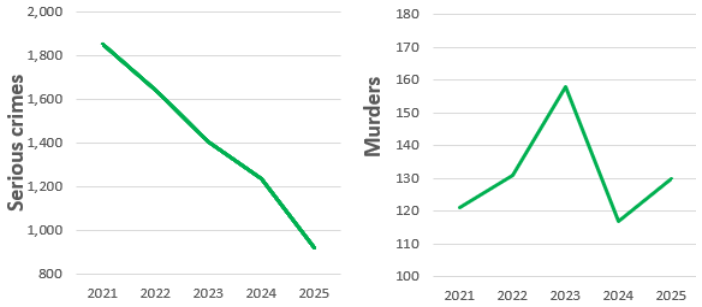
Accountability frameworks are evolving, but space for independent oversight remains limited. Civil society organisations face capacity constraints, and Guyana's ranking of 76th in the 2026 World Press Freedom Index points to ongoing concerns regarding independent journalism. Perceptions of corruption, while gradually improving, remain somewhat elevated, with Guyana ranking 84th out of 181 countries in the 2025 Corruption Perceptions Index,[43] highlighting opportunities to further strengthen transparency and accountability frameworks.

Figure 14: Guyana Worldwide Governance Indicators score[44]



Citizen security has improved in recent years, contributing positively to social cohesion. Reported serious crimes declined from 2,468 cases in 2020 to 940 in 2025, and homicides fell from 154 to 130 over the same period, reflecting good progress in law enforcement and prevention efforts.[45] Despite these gains, violence and road traffic fatalities remain high relative to regional benchmarks, particularly affecting young people, highlighting the importance of sustained investment in prevention through youth inclusion, community-based approaches and coordinated action across the health, education, justice, social protection and security sectors to address the underlying drivers of violence. Efforts by the Government are underway to improve road safety and traffic conditions, including through CCTV cameras and more.

Figure 15: Number of reported serious crimes and homicides[46]



Ethnic relations continue to shape Guyana's social and political landscape, with historical divisions influencing perceptions of equity and trust in institutions. Constitutional mechanisms such as the work of the Ethnic Relations Commission provide important platforms for dialogue and mediation. The 2025 General and Regional Elections were conducted in a peaceful and orderly manner, reflecting political stability and respect for democratic processes. There are also efforts to counter hate speech, misinformation and disinformation. Sustaining social solidarity amid rapid economic change will depend on inclusive governance, equitable access to opportunities and continued engagement across communities.

Indigenous peoples and hinterland communities remain central to Guyana's inclusive development agenda. Initiatives such as the Amerindian Land

[42] CFATF - Caribbean Financial Action Task Force
[43] Transparency International 2025
[44] World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators
[45] Budget 2026 and budget 2025
[46] Budget 2026

Titling Programme, revenue-sharing from carbon credit sales through Village Sustainability Plans, and investments in physical and digital connectivity have expanded opportunities, with internet access now reaching 100 percent of hinterland communities.[47] However, analysis of regional disparities is complicated by the limited availability of regionally disaggregated socioeconomic data. A full release of the 2022 Census will help to bridge current data gaps and better assess which groups are at risk of falling behind.

Migration is increasingly shaping Guyana's social and economic dynamics, reflecting both regional instability and domestic labour demand. Migrants contribute to key sectors such as construction, agriculture and services and government policy ensures access to health and education services regardless of status. Strengthening migration data, coordination and pathways to decent work will help support inclusion, manage pressures on services and reinforce social cohesion as Guyana continues to grow. These priorities demonstrate that investments in health, education, social protection, inclusive governance and citizen security are mutually reinforcing. Rather than functioning as separate policy domains, they collectively strengthen the protective factors, institutional resilience and social cohesion needed to manage rapid economic transformation and reduce future development risks.

[47] Budget 2026

The following table lays out potential pathways and supporting policies to accelerate progress under human capital and social cohesion.

Table 2: SDG Acceleration Pathways for Human Capital and Social

Acceleration pathways	Focus areas and policy options
Strengthening health workforce capacity can accelerate progress toward universal health coverage.	● Develop a long-term human resources for health strategy covering training, retention and deployment ● Strengthen local medical and nursing education, building on ongoing nursing programme reforms ● Enhance incentives to address staffing gaps, particularly in hinterland regions
Improving health sector governance and data systems can enhance service delivery and outcomes.	● Finalize and publish national health sector strategy to guide reforms ● Further strengthen disease surveillance and disaggregated health data for evidence-based planning
Improving learning quality can strengthen human capital formation and productivity.	● Strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy, including early remediation and support ● Expand continuous teacher professional development and teacher support, notably in hinterland areas
Aligning education and skills development with labour market needs can support economic transformation.	● Expand and strengthen TVET and tertiary education linked to emerging sectors in partnership with private sector ● Expand the use of labour market assessments and skills forecasting to inform sectoral strategies
Developing a coherent national social protection strategy can improve equity and resilience.	● Establish a unified social protection framework anchored in a whole-of-life approach ● Strengthen coordination across contributory and non-contributory programmes ● Improve registries and socioeconomic data to support targeting and monitoring ● Strengthen coordination across health, education, social protection and justice institutions to better identify and respond to emerging vulnerabilities
Promoting gender equality can accelerate inclusive growth and social development.	● Systematically integrate gender analysis into public policies and finances ● Expand investments in care infrastructure to uplift women's labour force participation ● Strengthen prevention and response to gender-based violence and adolescent pregnancy
Expanding inclusion for persons with disabilities and learners with special needs can reduce inequality.	● Expand assistive technologies and accessible learning ● Improve access to social protection and support services for people with disabilities
Investing in youth inclusion can reinforce long-term development and social development.	● Expand employment pathways for young people through skills training and apprenticeships ● Strengthen youth-focused inclusion initiatives in more crime-affected communities ● Further expand avenues for persons with disabilities and youth to participate in development planning
Strengthening governance and transparency can reinforce trust in public institutions.	● Further advance open data and timely publication of socioeconomic statistics ● Reduce delays in access-to-information processes ● Strategically invest in strengthening civil society

4. Green Transformation and Climate Resilience

Guyana's development pathway is closely shaped by its natural environment, which is both a major source of wealth and a key source of vulnerability. Forests cover more than 85 percent of the national territory and remain over 99 percent intact[48], placing the country among global leaders in forest and biodiversity conservation. Situated within the Guiana Shield and the wider Amazon Basin, Guyana's ecosystems provide globally significant biodiversity and climate services, reinforcing its role as a steward of global environmental public goods, while also heightening exposure to climate-related risks.

Climate change amplifies these risks, particularly along the low-lying coastal plain where around 87 percent of the population resides. Much of this area lies 1 to 1.5 metres below sea level and depends on engineered sea defences and mangroves for protection. These vulnerabilities are well established and have materialized in the past: The 2005 floods affected more than one third of the population and caused losses equivalent to 60 percent of GDP, while floods in 2021 and 2022 again disrupted livelihoods and infrastructure, particularly in rural and hinterland areas.[49]

National strategies reflect strong recognition of both opportunity and risk arising from this context. The LCDS 2030, the Nationally Determined Contributions[50] and the National Adaptation Plan integrate climate resilience, adaptation and disaster risk management into development planning. Concrete actions include investments in drainage and irrigation, mangrove restoration and the monetization of forest climate services. While progress is evident, implementation capacity across public institutions remains uneven. Internationally, Guyana has also positioned itself as a convener on nature-based development through initiatives such as the Global Biodiversity Alliance, reinforcing its leadership on conservation and biodiversity finance.

The energy transition is a central component of Guyana's green transformation and broader development agenda. Electricity access has expanded rapidly, with around 99 percent of the population now having reliable access, including approximately 93 percent in hinterland areas.[51] At the same time, the energy system remains heavily dependent on imported fossil fuels. Renewable energy still accounts for a relatively small share, at around 3 percent of total final energy consumption and 9 percent of electricity generation,[52] despite significant potential for hydropower, solar and wind. Electricity costs are among the highest in the region, negatively impacting lower income households and small business, although the Gas-to-Energy project currently underway is expected to materially lower energy costs.[53]

Guyana has also advanced a distinctive approach to valuing ecosystem services as part of its development financing model. Forests are estimated to store around 19.5 billion tons of CO_2 equivalent and remove approximately 154 million tons annually, while total ecosystem services are valued at US$40–54 billion per year. [54] Building on the Guyana–Norway REDD+ Partnership, Guyana became the first country to issue jurisdictional-scale REDD+ credits certified under ART-TREES v2 in 2022. This was followed by an agreement to sell 37.5 million credits over ten years, valued at a minimum of US$750 million, representing one of the largest transactions in the voluntary carbon market and reinforcing international confidence in Guyana's forest governance framework. Benefit-sharing is a defining feature of this model with 15 percent of proceeds earmarked for Amerindian communities.

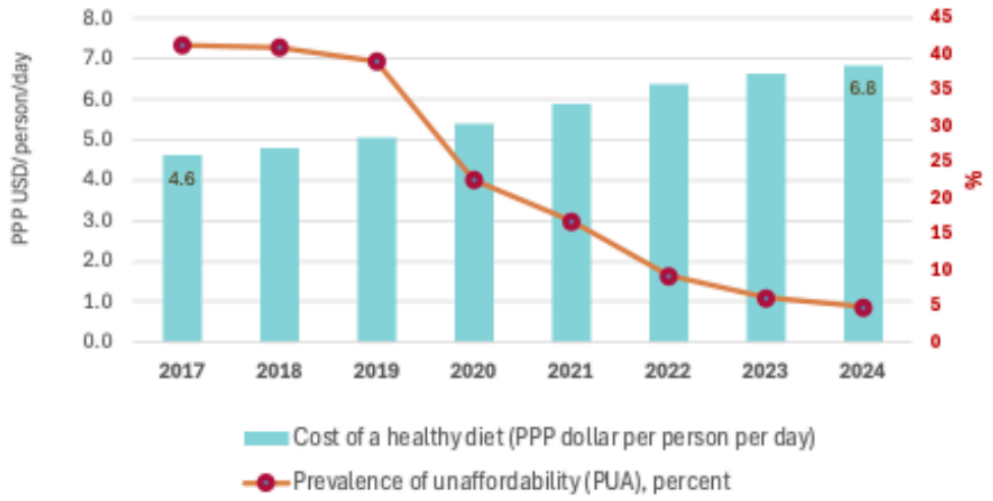
[48] LCDS 2030
[49] LCDS 2030
[50] The National Climate Change Policy and Action Plan 2020–2030

[51] Budget 2026
[52] Budget 2026
[53] By the GoG's own estimate, electricity costs will fall by 50% once the project is complete.
[54] LCDS 2030

Disaster risk management is being strengthened as climate hazards intensify. The Civil Defence Commission coordinates preparedness and response and Guyana is an early adopter of the global Early Warnings for All initiative, aiming for universal coverage by 2027. Policy frameworks are aligned with the Sendai Framework. As the system matures, there is scope to enact the draft Disaster Risk Management Bill and to strengthen the use of disaggregated risk and vulnerability data to support anticipatory decision-making, prevention-focused planning and resilient public investment.

Food systems and food security are a key policy priority and closely linked to resilience and the green transition. Domestic food production meets about 60 percent of national consumption,[55] and Guyana is among the few countries globally able to meet dietary needs across major food groups from domestic production.[56] The share of the population unable to afford a healthy diet declined from over 40 percent in 2017 to less than 5 percent in 2024, reflecting a significant and commendable improvement.[57] At the same time, the cost of a healthy diet remains well above the regional average, particularly affecting low-income households and communities in remote areas.[58] This underscores the importance of strengthening climate-resilient agriculture, supply chains and market connectivity as part of the broader green transformation.

Figure 16: Cost of a healthy diet in Guyana and prevalence of unaffordability[59]



[55] National School Feeding Policy and Plan of Action for Guyana Towards 2030
[56] Stehl et al. 2025
[57] The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2025
[58] The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2025
[59] FAO Statistics 2025

The table below highlights selected pathways and potential focus areas to accelerate SDG progress under the green transformation.

Table 3: SDG Acceleration Pathways under the Green Transformation

Acceleration pathways	Focus areas and policy options
Investing in coastal protection and climate-resilient infrastructure can help safeguard livelihoods and assets.	● Expand mangrove restoration, drainage/irrigation systems and coastal defences ● Improve vulnerability mapping and climate risk data to guide adaptation investments ● Further align technical adaptation measures with global best practice through Early Warnings for All
Scaling up renewable energy can reduce electricity costs and strengthen competitiveness.	● Scale up hydropower, solar and biomass generation to anchor a low-carbon future ● Expand renewable generation nationwide to narrow regional disparities in access and affordability
Expanding climate finance can mobilize resources and secure fair compensation for climate services.	● Build on voluntary carbon market leadership and diversify into biodiversity credits ● Prepare for participation in carbon compliance markets as frameworks evolve ● Strengthen governance safeguards and transparent benefit-sharing mechanisms
Strengthening disaster risk management systems can reduce disaster impacts and protect lives.	● Enact the Disaster Risk Management Bill to clarify mandates and funding mechanisms ● Expand early warning coverage under Early Warnings for All ● Mainstream gender, youth and persons with disabilities in DRR frameworks and policies ● Strengthen cross-sector coordination and integrated risk analysis to support anticipatory governance and resilient public investment
Curbing the high cost of healthy diets can strengthen food security and protect vulnerable households.	● Expand climate-resilient crop production ● Further improve food distribution and storage systems and reduce intra-regional trade barriers ● Finalize and enact the Food Security and Nutrition Bill
Promoting a just transition for workers can link human capital development with the green economy.	● Expand technical and vocational training in agri-tech, renewables and environmental services ● Upskill and reskill workers from oil and other traditional industries

SDG ACCELERATION PATHWAYS FOR GUYANA 2026

UNITED NATIONS GUYANA

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