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<b>PRESS RELEASE</b>
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**Citizens' Charter for Responsive Government**

The new Government is pleased to announce today, on the day marking the first month in office, its commitment with the electorate to make its machinery more responsive to the concerns of ordinary people.

It is not acceptable to the Government that members of the public, businesses or associations should have to wait an inordinately long time for a response from Ministers to their correspondence. In the past, the uncertainty created by these delays has meant that ordinary people found that their lives went on hold pending a reply from a Minister. Business plans have also frequently had to be put on ice as businessmen have waited months on end for the Government to take a decision.

The first undertaking of the new Citizens' Charter for responsive Government is that everyone will receive confirmation of receipt of their letter or document within 14 days.

The second undertaking is that a definitive response will be sent within 21 days thereafter; with provision for an extension of time as required.

If the person is not satisfied with the response from Government, and writes back on the same issue, the same criteria will apply again, which is 14 days for an acknowledgement and 21 days thereafter for a substantive response.

Following this process, representations can be made to the Ombudsman if the citizen remains dissatisfied or if the letters are not replied to in a timely manner.

This pledge, as promised, will take effect within 30 days of the election of a GSLP/Liberal Government. It will apply to relevant correspondence received on or after 9<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

This is being circulated in an internal bulletin to all Government departments.

Commenting on the matter, the Chief Minister Fabian Picardo said:

"Our aim is to set specific deadlines by which the Government must reply to correspondence from the public, be it ordinary citizens, businesses or associations. It is

obvious that a change of this magnitude may require some fine tuning in the future but we are determined to make it work. Government is about people and people must have the right to ensure that they are treated in a prompt and proper manner in their dealings with Ministers.”