

Meeting 24

Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC)

Date: Monday, 8 March 2010

Venue: Office of the President

Time: 15:00 hrs

Attendance:

Name	Institution
His Excellency President Jagdeo	Office of the President
Minister Pauline Sukhai	Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
Shyam Nokta	Office of the President
Michael Brotherson	Office of the President
Edward Dreyfus	Office of the President
Shereeda Yusuf	Office of the President
Alfred King	Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports
Dindyal Permaul	Ministry of Agriculture
James Singh	Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC)
William Woolford	Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC)
Edward Shields	Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association (GGDMA)
Indarjit Ramdass	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Jocelyn Dow	International Institute for Environmental and Development (IIED)
Vanda Radzik	International Institute for Environmental and Development (IIED)
Hymawattie Lagan	Women's Affairs Bureau
Mimi Fernandes	Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous People (GOIP)
Ashton Simon	The National Amerindian Development Foundation (NADF)
Romel Simon	The National Amerindian Development Foundation (NADF)
Peter Persaud	The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana (TAAMOG)
Sydney Allicock	North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB)
David Singh	Conservation International (CI)
Joe Singh	Individual Capacity
David James	Individual Capacity

Absent/Excused

Dr. Roger Luncheon	Office of the President	Excused
Minister Robert Persaud	Ministry of Agriculture	Excused
Andrew Bishop	Office of the President	Excused
Hilbertus Cort	Forest Producers Association (FPA)	Excused
Gillian Burton	Guyana Trades Union Congress(GTUC)	Excused
Yvonne Pearson	National Toshihos Council	Excused
Pamela Mendonca	The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana	Excused
Lester Fleming	National Toshihos Council	Absent
Gerry Gouveia	Private Sector Commission	Absent
Carvil Duncan	Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana	Absent
Patrick Williams	World Wildlife Fund	Absent
Jean La Rose	Amerindian People's Association	Absent by Choice

Guests

Ambassador Torbjorn Holthe	Kingdom of Norway
Per Mogstad	Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Norway
Nina Due	Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Norway
Anne Kristin Martinsen	Norwegian Agency for Development Corporation - Norad
Turid Arnegaard	Norwegian Agency for Development Corporation – Norad
Ellen Bruzelius Backer	Ministry of Environment - Norway
Steven Grin	Office of President

1. Call to Order

His Excellency President Jagdeo opened the meeting.

2. Announcements and Correspondence

There was no correspondence or announcements.

3. Minutes of Meeting 23

The following corrections were identified:

- i. Page 3, Point 5.14 should read FSC certification rather than legality.
- ii. Page 3, Point 5.8 should be reworded.

The Minutes were verified as true and correct by Ms. Jocelyn Dow and seconded by Dr. Dindyal Permaul.

4. Matters Arising from Minutes

The Meeting agreed to subsume this item under Updates and Reports.

5. Meeting with the Norway Team

5.1 His Excellency welcomed the Norwegian Team to Guyana and invited the MSSC to introduce themselves.

5.2 Ambassador Torbjorn Holthe expressed his gratitude to the Government for the invitation to come to Guyana. Mr. Holthe stated that the visit is an opportunity for exchanging views and discussing matters of interest to both sides especially in relation to the MoU. Mr. Holthe said that the team is looking forward to the discussions of the meeting.

5.3 His Excellency informed the MSSC that he had earlier in the day met with the Norwegian team and related Guyana's concerns about the movement in completing the requirements of the MoU. The establishment of the GRIF in consonance with the World Bank's stipulation is a cause for concern given the aid type modalities that the Bank wants Guyana to adhere to, as was discussed at the last MSSC Meeting. His Excellency said that a decision on how to move forward and establish the GRIF in a way that addresses all concerns but does not compromise transparency of the process is needed. The President stressed the need for urgency in advancing with the model. H.E. stated that the model was presented to Guyanese and the funds that will be generated will be used for alternative activities such as the fibre optic cables, the hydroelectricity project and to have a grant fund. The biggest issue right now is to establish the GRIF. There are other issues that will arise but the discussion should start with the GRIF and then progress to other issues.

5.4 Ms. Jocelyn Dow stated her faith in the IIED report which she said represented an accurate account to events in her view. She said that in spite of outreach meetings by the mining sector there was still anxiety and concern about the LCDS and its impact on current ways of doing business. Therefore the longer it took for there to be a disbursement of cash to expedite and resolve some of the issues related to mining and forestry then the more that anxiety would grow. It was therefore a matter of urgency that the mechanism for disbursement be finalised. This GRIF was also a matter of concern since all Guyanese have an interest in how these monies would be spent and the criteria for same. Also it is important to remember that the last time there was a similar process, the GPAS, there was a similar process of consultations and commitments for the Guyana Protected Area System (GPAS) it in the end yielded nothing and one has to be careful that we do not provoke the same cynicism

- 5.5 His Excellency reiterated Guyana never received any money for GPAS. The \$5M allocated to the project never materialised.
- 5.6 Ms. Jocelyn Dow stated in an informal meeting she had with a member of the World Bank it was her understanding that the last meeting in Washington had found common ground and that the disbursement hurdles had been overcome. She pointed out that at the FCPF meeting in Washington that she attended there seemed to be concern about the appropriateness of World Bank disbursement mechanisms given their complex and slow procedures. Also given the large amount of monies that would flow from REDD and other such activities one could imagine how much jostling there was at the international level to be the prime agency responsible for its management.
- 5.7 His Excellency informed the Norwegians that the meeting is interactive and they need not speak through the Chair. Should the Norwegians have any comments they should state them freely.
- 5.8 Mr. Joe Singh reported that the GPAS Project took place five years ago. Guyana was allotted \$5M which never materialised. The World Bank had emissaries who attended the meeting. We did everything to meet the benchmark set by World Bank but then the entire process came to halt because of subjective reasons. These people are now seeing another project with many consultations and details, but then they might be disappointed.
- 5.9 His Excellency clarified that Mr. Singh was working with CI when the issue with GPAS occurred. The President stated that when Guyana was at impasse with the World Bank, CI provided impartial support for the project yet the World Bank financial support was not forthcoming. His Excellency said that it should not seem as though Guyana is only complaining however, it is only because of the track record with the World Bank that suspicions are raised. H.E. emphasised that not only the international community has concerns but so does Guyana and they need to be expressed too. The President noted that Guyanese have an interest seeing agreements bear fruit.
- 5.10 Ms. Ellen Bruzelius Backer said that Norway is just as keen as Guyana to see the model work.
- 5.11 His Excellency stated that Guyana has a real issue with the financial disbursement and the key thing is getting the money.
- 5.12 Ms. Vanda Radzik stated that there are national expectations for the implementation of the MoU which are high and imminent and that, generally, Guyanese feel that we have embarked on a historic agreement with Norway. Some communities are continuing their awareness outreach on the LCDS. Ms. Radzik said that she wanted to echo Ms. Dow that the Guyanese people need to see some increased movement on the LCDS and the activation of the large scale priority projects like the hydropower plant, the fibre optic cable being implemented and bringing tangible benefits to the people. Ms. Radzik said that it is already March and we need to begin delivery of services and benefits under the MOU. Ms. Radzik enquired if Guyana can seek an alternative or additional partner in order to expedite the establishment of the all-important GRIF.
- 5.13 Mr. Sydney Allicock said that he represented the North Rupununi which is located in the Interior. There are 16 communities in the North Rupununi. When the LCDS came out, the communities heard it was all about forests, which the Amerindians always took care of. Hence, support was given to the LCDS from the very beginning. The community was on positive side supporting the proper management of the forests since the forests were seen as life. Mr. Allicock opined that more money was expected from the Copenhagen meeting. Mr. Allicock said that with the tsunamis and earthquakes, it was expected that that people will come on board with climate change occurring and support the initiative.

Mr. Allicock said that for the "opt in" mechanism, he wants to see how Norway will come up with a plan to make it work and that Guyana will receive the \$250M. He stated that the legal aspect of the documents was always difficult for Amerindians to understand and that David James has been providing useful guidance on legal matters, a service which the Indigenous people welcome.

- 5.14 Ms. Jocelyn Dow said that it will be useful for the Norwegian team to state what road blocks they see and their perceptions of what is happening with the process as a whole and the disbursement of the first payment in particular.
- 5.15 Mr. Per Mogstad stated that Norway has already set aside the \$250M for Guyana and has committed to the MoU. When the GRIF is set up Norway will be in better position to see what is happening. With the monetary system in place, Norway will better see how the money will flow since how the funds will be used needs to be explained. Guyana is a poor country, not that Norway is a very rich country, but an institution needs to be used to channel the flow of the money. Funds from Norway need to follow certain rules. The World Bank was asked to put safeguards and certain conditions and these are concerns that had to be taken into account.
- 5.16 Ms. Jocelyn Dow said that while it is appreciated that safeguards are necessary and even desirable, the modalities of using the World Bank as the disbursement mechanism are clearly a problem. Ms. Dow asked if the World Bank is the only institution that qualifies as far as Norway is concerned or can the UNDP or IDB be also considered instead.
- 5.17 Mr. Per Mogstad stated that the funds are sealed off from the national budget where some money has already sent to Brazil. Other funds go through the UN System, the FAO, the EU, and others through the World Bank.
- 5.18 Ms. Jocelyn Dow enquired if there was a way for Guyana and Brazil to join together and use same institution that was set up for disbursement of funds in Brazil.. a kind of Amazonian disbursement mechanism
- 5.19 Mr. Edward Dreyfus stated that since the Bank in Brazil is acceptable by Norway and is acceptable worldwide and its process accepted, then wouldn't it be acceptable to substitute the World Bank and use that institution instead.
- 5.20 Ms. Ellen Bruzelius Backer said that the Amazonian fund is a different fund from the one granted to Guyana. The money is spent on different things and therefore is accounted in a different manner.
- 5.21 Ms. Jocelyn Dow asked the Norwegian team if they see an early resolution to this problem so that the process can move ahead.
- 5.22 Mr. Per Mogstad stated that it was not Norway that chose the World Bank and the UNDP is not a typical organisation like the World Bank to manage the funds. To engaged with the UNDP at this stage will require another year of discussions and will slow the process even further.
- 5.23 Ms. Jocelyn Dow asked **whether** another institution can be considered at a later time or was one irrevocably tied to the World Bank Ms. Dow noted that Guyana will have national elections next year and already one can foresee that the LCDS will fall victim to the more entrenched political process that occurs around an election. And certainly even without that those who believe that the LCDS is a worthy process would like to see it move ahead in a timely fashion. She said it was vital that tangible benefits accrue soon.or people would lose faith in it and there would be ample opportunity for those who felt negatively about it to point out that there were problems. was therefore of the utmost importance that the negotiated payment be made available to Guyana and not be mired in endless discussions.. Ms. Dow opined that Guyana needs tangible benefits for all the forest commitments made.
- 5.24 Vanda Radzik recommended that a roundtable discussion with the World Bank, the MSSC and Norway be held during the week so that the views of civil society and private sector parties MSSC representatives could be taken on board in the interest of finding a solution to setting up the GFIF as quickly as possible. She also mentioned that, in her experience, normally most agencies like World Bank, IDB, UNDP etc... tended to work slowly and this was the problem because the GRIF was intended to be an innovative and effective model to suit the LCDS.

5.25 Mr. Shyam Nokta stated that the Norwegian team and the Government will meet with the World Bank. However time permitting, Mr. Nokta said such meeting may be organised.

6. Updates and Reports

“Opt in” Mechanism for Amerindians

- 6.1 Mr. Shyam Nokta stated that the “opt in” mechanism for Amerindian communities is currently a draft concept paper and was circulated to the MSSC. A technical group consisting the OCC, EPA, GFC, GGMC and MoAA prepared the paper, which states the process, purpose and some key issues for considerations. Mr. Nokta invited the MSSC needs to review the paper first then have it finalised. Mr. Nokta enquired if the Committee over the next week could provide feedback. The meeting agreed.
- 6.2 Mr. David Singh enquired if the concept paper will be made available for the communities to review.
- 6.3 Mr. Shyam Nokta indicated that the “opt in” mechanism will need to be consulted with the communities. Mr. Nokta stated that the paper is a first draft and after the views of the MSSC is incorporated then the paper will be circulated.
- 6.4 Minister Sukhai stated that the NTC has been informed that they will need to examine the document and submit their feedback.
- 6.5 Dr. David Singh said that it is understandable that an open ended timeframe is used but it would be helpful if some timeline is specified for the feedback on the paper.
- 6.6 Ms. Vanda Radzik supported Dr. Singh that a timeframe should be specified so that when the paper is finalised the NTC can review the document.
- 6.7 Mr. Shyam Nokta said that the timeline for the MSSC to reviewing the document and submitting comments is one week and at the next MSSC meeting the paper with comments will be discussed.
- 6.8 Ms. Vanda Radzik asked if there was any objection that the I-NGOs can consult with their leaders on the paper for comments.
- 6.9 Mr. Shyam Nokta said that the MSSC should have the opportunity to finalise the document before it is circulated but the I-NGOs can consult with their organisations’ leaders.
- 6.10 Mr. Sydney Allicock stated that the NTC should be better involved with the interaction of various group of villages to get good feedback to see that the villagers truly understand the document.
- 6.11 Mr. Shyam Nokta said that the NTC is trying to organise themselves to do further consultations with villages, even a proportion of the elusive \$200,000 from the FCPF were to be allotted to the NTC to do outreach programmes with communities.
- 6.12 Minister Sukhai stated that the NTC has finalised their proposal and it is currently under review.
- 6.13 Mr. Joe Singh said that the NTC by definition represents the communities and the NTC should be empowered to make decisions on behalf of their constituencies. Mr. Joe Singh also stated that there should be a paper supplementing the concept paper – a paper on what is the REDD+ agreement, which needs to be define and what are the criteria in determining payments.

- 6.14 Mr. Shyam Nokta said there were some grey areas identified in the concept paper, which included the absence of a global REDD+ agreement. However, the basis of the concept paper is the LCDS and MoU with Norway.

CIFOR and FAO Reports

- 6.15 Mr. Shyam Nokta stated that the CIFOR and FAO reports deadline for comments from the MSSC has passed. Mr. Nokta said that Mr. Singh will send the comments to the OCC who will send the comments to the consultants on behalf of the MSSC.
- 6.16 Mr. James Singh said that this will be the second time that the comments will be sent to the consultants since the GFC had previously sent the comments and did not receive a favourable response.

REDD+ Governance Plan

- 6.17 Mr. Shyam Nokta reported that the REDD+ Governance Plan framework will be circulated to the MSSC and a number of agencies are making contributions to specific sections. The GFC has circulated to the MSSC, the National Forest Plan as part of their required section submission.
- 6.18 Mr. James Singh said that as part of the Plan, the GFC has led in the revision of the National Forest Policy of 1997 and the National Plan of 2000. Mr. Singh indicated that he circulated the documents to the MSSC and a Meeting will be held at end of March whereby Ms. Pradeepa Bholanath will meet with the MSSC and give a presentation on the documents. Mr. Singh said that comments will be welcomed so the MSSC should study and comment on the documents.

MRVS

- 6.19 Mr. James Singh informed the Meeting that the GFC has advertised two Bids for the MRVS. The deadline for the expressions of interest for the first Bid on GIS and Remote Sensing was January 29. The GFC has received 49 expressions of interest and 22 proposals. There are many grey areas: a certain provider submitted their bid late. The provider has promised support to Guyana for the LCDS but with the late submission a decision needs to be taken by the President, Norway and possibly the World Bank. For Bid 2 on Carbon Stock and Assessment, the GFC has received 43 expressions of interest and the deadline for proposals is the last week in March. There is a technical committee for the MRVS who will meet to review the bids. Mr. Singh said that the GFC is scheduled to complete the tasks in the timeline specified.

EU FLEGT

- 6.20 Mr. James Singh updated the Meeting that Mr. Gavin Agard, an officer from the GFC, Ms. Yvonne Pearson, Chair of the NTC, Mr. Khalawan from the FPA will be attending a workshop in Barbados held by the FAO. Following the workshop, a technical team will be visiting Guyana on 11th – 16th March and a non-technical team will visit from 17th – 19th March. The team has asked to meet with the MSSC on Wednesday March 17th at 15:30hrs at the Forestry Boardroom. Mr. Singh said that the MSSC should make special effort and attend the Meeting.
- 6.21 Mr. Peter Persaud enquired what the EU FLEGT is.
- 6.22 Mr. James Singh stated that Guyana needed to complete some specifications for the MoU but these were on the Government's agenda but was never accelerated but this dialogue started the work. The EU FLEGT deals with legality, governance and independent forest monitoring.
- 6.23 Ms. Ellen Bruzelius Backer informed the meeting that the EU FLEGT is an instrument the EU designed to set the legal standards for trading in timber. Several countries in Africa have signed on to the agreement.

6.24 Mr. Shyam Nokta encouraged the meeting to participate in the meeting.

LCDS

6.25 Mr. Shyam Nokta said that at the last Meeting Ms. Vanda Radzik suggested that the Drafting Committee be convened at least once more to review the finalised second draft before it is circulated. Mr. Nokta said that the OCC has put together a matrix of comments on the Second Draft of the LCDS. This matrix and comments made by Andrew Bishop will be presented to the Drafting Committee at their next meeting. The timeframe to complete the finalisation of the document is the last week in March but given the few comments received, this is achievable.

7 Any Other Business

Meeting among China, India, Brazil and South Africa

7.1 Mr. Joe Singh enquired if there was any feedback on the Meeting with China, India, Brazil and South Africa.

7.2 Mr. Shyam Nokta stated that the OCC has not received a formal communication on the outcome of the meeting with the five countries including China, Guyana and India. Only some general feedback was received and these views were reflected in the finalised draft that came out of Copenhagen Accord and in particular the Annex which contained these countries commitments.

Overall View of the LCDS/MoU Process

7.3 Mr. Sydney Allicock said that since the OCC has overseen the entire process of the LCDS and the MoU, if an update can be given on how the process is progressing.

7.4 Mr. Shyam Nokta reported that there were a number of things specified in the MoU that were completed in 2009 and a report prepared by the OCC will be presented to the MSSC and then be made public.

Acknowledgement

7.5 Ms. Jocelyn Dow congratulated Mr. Sydney Allicock for being the recipient for the Anthony N. Sagba Awards for Excellence 2010 (Public and Civic Contributions).

7.6 Mr. Joe Singh stated that he was a member of the selection panel and can now state that Mr. Allicock was one of three people in a group of 40-50 persons that were nominated by their respective countries for excellent contributions. Mr. Singh said Mr. Allicock received a medal and \$80,000 to further the work he is doing and expressed kudos to him.

There being no other business, the meeting closed.

End of Minutes

A number of key points were made and follow up action identified. This is summarised below.

Key Points	Follow Up
The MSSC should send comments for the "opt in" mechanism for Amerindian communities by next week	OCC to follow up
Comments on the CIFOR and FAO reports should be sent to the Consultants on behalf of MSSC	GFC to provide and OCC to follow up
REDD+ Governance Plan outline paper should be circulated to the MSSC	OCC to follow up

MSSC should familiarise themselves with the documents circulated by the GFC and attend meeting at end of April to give comments.	MSSC to follow up
MSSC members should meet with the Mission for the EU FLEGT on March 17 th at 15:30hrs at the Forestry Boardroom.	MSSC to follow up