

Meeting 26

Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC)

Date: Tuesday, 13 April 2010
Venue: Office of the President
Time: 14:00 hrs

Attendance:

Name	Institution
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)
Indarjit Ramdass	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
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)
Pamela Mendonca	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

His Excellency President Jagdeo	Office of the President	Excused
Dr. Roger Luncheon	Office of the President	Excused
Minister Robert Persaud	Ministry of Agriculture	Excused
Andrew Bishop	Office of the President	Excused
Steven Grin	Office of the President	Excused
Edward Shields	Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association	Excused
Jocelyn Dow	IIED	Excused
Vanda Radzik	IIED	Excused
Hilbertus Cort	Forest Producers Association	Excused
Carvil Duncan	Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana	Excused
Yvonne Pearson	National Toshihaos Council	Excused
Hymawattie Lagan	Women's Affairs Bureau	Excused
Patrick Williams	World Wildlife Fund	Excused
Lester Fleming	National Toshihaos Council	Absent
Gillian Burton	Guyana Trade Union Congress	Absent
Gerry Gouveia	Private Sector Commission	Absent
Jean La Rose	Amerindian People's Association	Absent by Choice

1. Call to Order

Mr. Nokta opened the meeting.

2. Announcements and Correspondence

2.1 Mr. Nokta informed that Minister Persaud, Mr. Andrew Bishop, Mr. Steven Grin, Mr. Edward Shields, Ms. Yvonne Pearson, Ms. Jocelyn Dow, Ms. Vanda Radzik, Mr. Hilbertus Cort and Dr. Patrick Williams have been excused from the Meeting.

2.2. There was no correspondence.

3. Minutes of Meeting 25

The following corrections were identified:

- i. Points 5.4, 6.20 should be reworded
- ii. Point 5.10 should be “needed” not “need”
- iii. Point 6.3 should be “NGOs” not “NGO’s”
- iv. Point 7.4 should have a comma after the word Africa.

Motion to adopt the Minutes was moved by Mr. Joe Singh and seconded by Mr. Peter Persaud.

4. Matters Arising from Minutes

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

5. Updates and Reports

International Scene

5.1 Mr. Nokta informed the meeting that there have been several reports in the media on the outcome of the first meeting of the UN Secretary General High Level Advisory Group on Climate Change Financing, in which President Jagdeo participated. Mr. Nokta noted that during that meeting, President Jagdeo, inter alia, drew attention to need for the Group to urgently move on with its mandate. Mr. Nokta said that the domestic agendas of key actors like the US and the UK have taken prominence and these developments may have implications on how climate change is treated in the international scene. He said that while there has been a lot of uncertainty, momentum nonetheless is slowly building. In relation to the AWG Bonn Meeting, Mr. Nokta informed that Mr. Bishop indicated that the text is being proposed for discussions at the SBSTA meeting scheduled for end May or early June 2010. He was of the view that while there is movement towards a legally binding agreement in Mexico in December 2010 this is not realistic given the sloth of the process.

Payments from Norway

5.2 Mr. Nokta said that the GRIF is still receiving attention from the Governments of Guyana and Norway and the World Bank. A model type financing mechanism is being negotiated that will be accepted by all three parties. There have been several challenges with the World Bank but there have been positive signs in the last few weeks that the Bank recognises Guyana’s concerns on the modalities for GRIF. The next few weeks will be critical for the establishment of GRIF.

5.3 Mr. James Singh enquired if Guyana has met all obligations for the GRIF. Mr. Singh indicated that in a Meeting with a Norwegian from the Rainforest Foundation, he was informed that Guyana still had one outstanding issue perhaps relating to Independent Forest Management (IFM). Mr. Nokta replied that as far as the requirements of the MoU and Joint Concept Note stipulate for 2009 Guyana has met its obligations of the agreement. Mr. Nokta requested that this matter be further discussed as it is a substantive agenda item.

The APA

- 5.4 Mr. Nokta stated that there have been several press releases since the last MSSC Meeting on the APA and matters related.
- 5.5 Mr. Joe Singh indicated that NCN called him asking for comment on the LCDS, which he declined because he was not sure of the nature of the request. Mr. Singh stated that in the last MSSC Minutes it was agreed that there be a press briefing by the MSSC in order to update the public on the LCDS process and related issues. Mr. Singh stated that it is a better option to have a united front than to approach the matter separately.
- 5.6 Minister Sukhai stated that at last Meeting there were still doubts about the APA's intention. However, recently the APA has written to Norway and copied the letter to other international bodies.
- 5.7 Mr. Joe Singh stated that the enquiry from NCN had no mention of the APA. He indicated that the content of the letter is not known and enquired what the points of discord were.
- 5.8 Mr. Sydney Allicock stated that relating to Point 5.7 in Minutes, there were a number of ideas to address the issue but the NRDDDB agreed that the NTC will take a lead on the matter. If there are many responses from various individuals then the APA will be given more mileage than is necessary.
- 5.9 Mr. Peter Persaud enquired if the letter the APA has written to Norway can be circulated to the MSSC. Minister Sukhai replied the letter will be forwarded to the OCC who will circulate to the MSSC.
- 5.10 Mr. Michael Brotherson indicated that the NTC Chair Ms. Pearson and Minister Sukhai were on a television interview addressing issues raised in the media. Minister Sukhai added that responses in the interview were directed to questions asked relating to Amerindian issues.
- 5.11 Mr. Nokta stated that the comments for a unified approach are noted. Mr. Nokta indicated the MSSC press conference could be scheduled and will be put for President's consideration.
- 5.12 Mr. Joe Singh stated that the Press Conference he was referring to was on the update of the progress of the LCDS and that in relation to the APA's actions, Minister Sukhai is aptly handling the situation. Dr. David Singh supported Mr. Singh's statement regarding the press conference. Dr. Singh stated that for the past three months there has not been the same level of public focus on the LCDS and this development should be noted.

6. "Opt In" Mechanism for Amerindians

- 6.1 Mr. Nokta indicated that the OCC has received comments from some members of the MSSC on the concept paper on the "Opting in" Mechanism. These comments were compiled in a matrix which was circulated to the MSSC. Mr. Nokta urged the MSSC members to send their feedback on the paper.
- 6.2 Mr. Joe Singh stated that there was one correction in his comment for the document. The word "diagnostic" should be changed to "diagrammatic".
- 6.3 Dr. David Singh enquired if there is a timeframe for the implementation of the "opt in" mechanism. Mr. Nokta replied that over the next few weeks the MSSC would review the document as some members were still interested in providing comments and thereafter the document would benefit from wider stakeholder review and input including the NTC as well as village-level inputs.
- 6.4 Mr. Peter Persaud stated that in the "opt in" mechanism Concept Paper, Section 3, the third bulletin point should be "toshao" not "Ministry of Amerindian Affairs."

CIFOR and FAO Reports

- 6.5 Mr. Nokta stated that the MSSC has reviewed the draft CIFOR and FAO reports and comments have been sent to the consultants.
- 6.6 Mr. James Singh stated that there was an article in Stabroek News, which reproduced the draft. Mr. Singh asked if a response should be given to the inaccuracies reported in relation to the draft reports. He pointed out that the public will respond to the article with these inaccuracies and a response should be made to state that the report is only a draft and comments have been sent to the authors to correct the errors.

REDD+ Governance Plan

- 6.7 Mr. Nokta informed the meeting that the Plan is currently being developed with respective agencies making submissions on sections allocated to them. Mr. James Singh informed that the National Forest Plan and the National Forest Policy Statement were circulated to the MSSC for comments. These reports will be discussed at a session at the GFC on 21st April with two facilitators one from the University of Guyana and a freelancer. The key areas of the documents will be addressed in details.

MRVS

- 6.8 Mr. James Singh stated that Bids 1 and 2 are currently being reviewed. Bid 1 evaluation assessment is almost finished and Bid 2 will be starting soon. Bid 1 will be awarded during the month of May 2010. It is a little behind schedule but the process is progressing nicely. Dr. David Singh stated that in Minutes of last Meeting Point 6.17, for recognition sake, it should be stated that Bid 2 was partially funded by the German Government and CI has assisted in this regard.

EU FLEGT

- 6.9 Mr. James Singh informed the meeting that Ambassador P.I. Gomes is in contact with Minister Persaud regarding matters of EU FLEGT. Another workshop is being planned for September to determine if Guyana should go forward and sign on to FLEGT.

LCDS

- 6.10 Mr. Nokta informed that the Drafting Committee met and reviewed the comments for the LCDS. The comments had been circulated to the MSSC. The comments were issues relating to clarification rather than seeking to change any substantive issue in the document.
- 6.11 Mr. Nokta indicated that the LCDS will be revised based on the Copenhagen outcome and developments to date including progress on the Norway MoU.
- 6.12 Mr. Sydney Allicock enquired if there was an Amerindian representative on the Drafting Committee. Mr. Nokta replied that the rep for the indigenous NGOs on the MSSC is Mr. Ashton Simon.

Progress on MoU with Norway

- 6.13 Mr. Nokta stated that the Annual Progress Report 2009, which is a requirement for the MoU had been prepared and circulated to the MSSC and is now on the LCDS web site. The report provides updates to February 2010.
- 6.14 Mr. Nokta indicated that the Government is working with Norway through public tender to recruit and independent entity to verify progress made to date on the MoU implementation and to review the Annual Progress Report 2009.
- 6.15 Mr. James Singh indicated that this clarifies the issue he had raised earlier and that it was not an issue of IFM.

7 Any Other Business

Picketing

- 7.1 Minister Sukhai stated that the picketing exercise conducted while the APA had their workshop highlighted that the NTC does not approve APA's writing Norway and asking the Government of Guyana to put on hold programmes and projects that will positively impact the country as a whole. The NTC believes not only the Amerindians will be deprived but the entire country. Minister Sukhai indicated she was present at the exercise as an ex officio member as a special request from the NTC.

Information Dissemination

- 7.2 Mr. Sydney Allicock stated that there should be a weekly press release to inform the public on important matters relating to climate change and work done by the Government. Mr. Nokta replied that it is a good suggestion and informed the meeting that presently the OCC has an ongoing series of articles in the Chronicle relating to climate change.
- 7.3 Mr. David James enquired why the Guyana Chronicle and not Stabroek News or Kaieteur News was chosen to carry the articles. Mr. Nokta stated that the Guyana Chronicle has offered to place the articles free of charge and the other newspapers can be asked to do likewise.
- 7.4 Dr. David Singh stated that Mr. Allicock's suggestion was good because it will be a proactive approach to matters that may arise. The public will be informed about the issues being dealt with thereby limiting misconceptions on certain issues.
- 7.5 Mr. Joe Singh enquired what the role of Guyanese Embassies/Missions is relating to information dissemination internationally. Mr. Nokta replied that the OCC has good interaction with the foreign missions and information is sent to them on regular basis.

Amalia Falls

- 7.6 Mr. Edward Dreyfus stated that the Amalia Falls hydropower project will be developed simultaneously with the work of the LCDS. The over US\$600M Amalia Falls project, besides allowing Guyana's electricity generation to switch from fossil fuel-burning to clean hydro power, will impact the environment hence a major environmental study will be done in relation to financing the project. While no population resettlement will be involved the project will impact at least one indigenous peoples' community. Some portion of the forests will need to be cleared for the access road, transmission line, and reservoir. Since the hydro project could draw public attention it should be treated publicly in terms of coordination with the LCDS.
- 7.7 Mr. Nokta stated that Mr. Dreyfus can keep the MSSC posted on matters relating to the Amalia Falls project. There is certainly a clear link between the project and the LCDS. He also pointed out that the MRVS would be able to offer national coverage including the Amalia Project and its carbon footprint.
- 7.8 Mr. Joe Singh stated that Mr. Dreyfus made a good point that public relation is needed. He raised the question about which agency should be responsible for such activities. Mr. Nokta indicated that the institutional role and responsibilities lie with several agencies and with NICIL performing the coordinating and lead role. Mr. James Singh stated that public relation is important and the GFC has already started the process as it regards forest issues. There was a meeting with the stakeholders who voiced their concerns. These concerns will be sent to the developer. Another meeting will be held at the GFC to address other issues by the MoAA, EPA and GGMC on Monday 19th April at 15:00hrs.

Conservation International (CI)

- 7.9 Dr. David Singh stated that CI and Iwokrama had a training session last year on climate change, and the manual was revised based on participation of those who attended for the session is being edited. CI is expected to print 2,000 copies and these will be sent, along with two other

documents, to the MSSC when finished. It will also be used in several other workshops across the regions.

- 7.10 Mr. Nokta indicated that the manual will be a good addition to the toolkit for climate change and it will be useful to have instruments to raise the level of awareness of climate change, REDD and the LCDS. It is important that we coordinate the efforts of the MSSC to raise awareness.

Karanambu Trust

- 7.11 Mr. Joe Singh stated that the Karanambu Trust is being established to manage the Paramambo holdings. The family has asked a number of persons to assist in designing a structure of the proposal of the management in the context of the LCDS, which incorporates the savannahs, wetlands and biodiversity.

MoAA Consultations

- 7.12 Minister Sukhai informed that it was agreed at the last MSSC meeting that a team comprising the OCC, MoAA, NGOs, and IIED monitors will go to communities whose Toshao, according to press reports, had indicated that communities were against "Opting In". The idea is to meet with villages and make sure the decisions were consensus ones. The team will be going to Region 9 on April 14 for two days. Minister Sukhai stated that she is inviting one Amerindian NGO and any other member of the MSSC to go to the consultation. Minister Sukhai further indicated on April 16 that a team will be visiting Akawini, where the GFC is already having a workshop at 10:00hrs so the team can piggyback on the attendance of that workshop.
- 7.13 Mr. David James stated that it should not be taken that the statement made by the APA means that the Toshao were against the LCDS. Mr. James stated that he has spoken to the Toshao and did not get the impression the Toshao were against the LCDS. Mr. James said that the consultation should be an exercise for information dissemination to these communities. He further indicated that there is no television, radio stations or newspapers in these communities.
- 7.15 Minister Sukhai said that the consultations' objective is not solely to visit the communities whose Toshao signed on to the APA's statement, but it is also for information sharing on the LCDS process and hence, a representative from the OCC will be in the team.
- 7.16 Dr. David Singh stated that he does not see the NTC included in the consultation schedule. Dr. Singh informed the meeting that the village council is the village authority and not the Toshao. As such, the Toshao cannot act outside the mandate provided by the Council. Minister Sukhai replied that the NTC is included in the team.
- 7.17 Mr. Ashton Simon stated that he does not understand the criteria for the places chosen for the consultations. Some of the other areas should be selected to widen the scope. Minister Sukhai replied that the consultations were a result from the last MSSC meeting where it was discussed that those communities where Toshao as reported had indicated they do not want to be part of LCDS should be visited to confirm that this is indeed a village decision.

Millennium Development Goals

- 7.18 Mr. Sydney Allicock enquired how the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) fits with the LCDS. Mr. Nokta replied that the MDG has broad objectives and the LCDS fits in Goal No.7 on environmental sustainability.
- 7.19 Mr. Joe Singh stated that as a representative on the national committee for MDGs this is an important issue to examine and the LCDS would fit into several of the MDG goals.

There being no other business, the meeting closed.

End of Minutes

A key point was made and follow up action identified. This is summarised below.

Key Points	Follow Up
Letter from the APA to Norway should be circulated to the MSSC	MoAA and OCC to follow up