

## Meeting 50 Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC)

**Date:** Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2013

**Venue:** Office of the President

**Time:** 10:35hrs

### Attendance:

Name	Institution
His Excellency President Ramotar	
Minister Robert Persaud	Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment
Minister Pauline Sukhai	Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
Shyam Nokta	Office of the President
Andrew Bishop	Office of the President
Shereeda Yusuf	Office of the President
Indarjit Ramdass	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Nasheta Dewnath	Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC)
Janice Bollers	Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC)
Edward Shields	Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association (GGDMA)
Carvil Duncan	Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana (FITUG)
Yvonne Pearson	National Toshias Council (NTC)
Derrick John	National Toshias Council (NTC)
Michael Williams	North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB)
Peter Persaud	The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana (TAAMOG)
Pamela Mendonca	The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana (TAAMOG)
Ashton Simon	The National Amerindian Development Foundation (NADF)
Rommel Simon	The National Amerindian Development Foundation (NADF)
Colin Klautky	Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous People (GOIP)
George Norton	Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous People (GOIP)
Paulette Bynoe	University of Guyana (UG)
David Singh	Conservation International (CI)
Charles Hutchinson	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
Dane Gobin	Iwokrama International Centre
Joe Singh	Individual Capacity
David James	Individual Capacity
Raquel Thomas-Caesar	Individual Capacity
Annette Arjoon-Martins	Individual Capacity

### Absent/Excused

Former President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo	Individual Capacity	Excused
Dr. Roger Luncheon	Office of the President	Excused
Minister Ashni Singh	Ministry of Finance	Excused
Minister Leslie Ramsammy	Ministry of Agriculture	Excused
Kapil Mohabir	Office of the President	Excused
Alfred King	Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports	Excused
James Singh	Guyana Forestry Commission	Excused
Pradeepa Bholanath	Guyana Forestry Commission	Excused
Rickford Vieira	Guyana Geology and Mines Commission	Excused
Ronald Webster	Private Sector Commission	Excused
Hymawattie Lagan	Women's Affairs Bureau	Excused
George Jervis	Ministry of Agriculture	Absent
Hilbertus Cort	Forest Producers Association	Absent
Gillian Burton	Guyana Trades Union Congress	Absent
Jean La Rose	Amerindian People's Association	Absent by Choice

### Invitee

Nikolaus Oudkerk	Office of the President
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## **1. Call to Order**

Mr. Shyam Nokta called the meeting to order.

## **2. Announcements and Correspondence**

- 2.1 Mr. Shyam Nokta welcomed MSSC members to the first meeting of 2013 and expressed hope that the New Year will intensify efforts made by the MSSC.
- 2.2 Excuses were received from Minister Singh, Minister Ramsammy, Mr. Mohabir, Mr. Vieira, Ms. Lagan, Mr. Webster, Mr. Singh and Ms. Bholanath.
- 2.3 Condolences were extended to Mr. Dane Gobin for the loss of his father.
- 2.4 There was no correspondence.

## **3. Remarks by His Excellency President Ramotar**

- 3.1 His Excellency expressed best wishes to MSSC members for the New Year and welcomed the new members of the MSSC: Mr. Dane Gobin, Dr. Raquel Thomas-Caesar and Ms. Annette Arjoon-Martins to the committee.
- 3.2 His Excellency indicated that 2012 ended on a positive note as Guyana received the third payment from Norway bringing the total contribution to date to approximately USD 115 million. The President expressed thanks to all persons involved in ensuring Guyana received this payment including the OCC, PMO and members of the MSSC.

It was indicated that this latest contribution by Norway is testimony that Guyana's LCDS is gaining traction as a model for green growth and the Guyana-Norway agreement is a working model through which Guyana continues to gain valuable experiences and lessons. More importantly the financing will serve as a catalyst to the implementation of projects under the LCDS.

- 3.3 The meeting was informed that the first wave of LCDS Projects is moving to implementation namely Amaila Falls Hydropower, Amerindian Development Fund (ADF) and Institutional Strengthening. Other projects such as the Amerindian Land Titling (ALT), Micro and Small Enterprise for Vulnerable Groups and Cunha Canal are also progressing. The Matrix circulated to the MSSC provides the current status on these projects.
- 3.4 It was stated that work is continuing on the preparation of an LCDS Addendum, which will include a second wave of LCDS Projects based on what was identified within the LCDS document. This new wave of projects is expected to place emphasis on the area of adaptation on climate change, which was expected from Fast Start Financing from the Copenhagen Accord but was not materialised. Further, emphasis will be placed on new and emerging growth sectors that can promote Guyana's effort at green growth and in so doing diversify the economy while reducing pressures on the forests. Ideally the LCDS Addendum was expected to be completed last year and benefit from the outcome of the Conference of Parties meeting in Qatar. However, the reports from Qatar were not encouraging as Mr Andrew Bishop updated the meeting at the previous MSSC meeting.
- 3.5 The meeting was informed that the 2013 priorities include:
  - 3.5.1 The second wave of the LCDS Projects under the Addendum will be prepared and the current projects in the pipeline will move forward efficiently particularly with regards to the GRIF and its functioning.
  - 3.5.2 Enhance efforts for awareness and on-the-ground engagements with members of the MSSC. In the past, financing was a big constraint which included the 2012 budget cuts.
  - 3.5.3 Work will continue to build the efforts at land use planning and forest governance, EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (EU FLEGT) and the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI). Also, Guyana will continue to be engaged at the international level through the UNFCCC process and to seek out bilateral and other partners to lend greater support to the LCDS and other climate initiatives.

#### **4. Minutes of Meeting 49**

4.1 Edits were made to Points 3.1.3; 6.5 and 7.4.

Motion to adopt the Minutes was moved by Mr. Peter Persaud and seconded by Mr. Colin Klautky.

#### **5. Matters Arising from Minutes**

##### **Information Dissemination**

5.1 The meeting was informed that as part of information dissemination, the OCC had circulated the draft LCDS Stakeholder Awareness and Engagement Plan 2013 to the MSSC for which comments have been received. It was suggested that other members send their comments/feedback so that the plan can be amended and implemented. It was noted that to assist this process, Dr Bynoe has offered to assist the OCC to refine the plan and coordinate the execution of the plan given her expertise. It is hoped that other members who have experience in this area assist in the plan's implementation in a timely manner both individually and institutionally. It was also stated that the OCC will be recruiting a Public Education and Communication Specialist who will be the focal point in helping to coordinate the Plan's execution. In the meantime Ms Gitanjali Chandarpal from the OCC will work with Dr Bynoe to revise the Plan.

##### **LCDS Projects**

5.2 It was reported that the monthly update matrix provided by the Project Management Office (PMO) on the LCDS projects was circulated to the MSSC. It was stated at the last MSSC meeting that a request was made for special briefing sessions with the MSSC be scheduled to provide details on pertinent LCDS matters such as LCDS projects, climate change, global warming, international updates *et al.* It was suggested that this half-day briefing session start in the second week in February 2013.

##### **Conservation International – Guyana (CI-Guyana)**

5.3 Clarification was requested for Point 7.4 of Minutes 49. It was reported that Conservation International – Guyana is working with a German consulting group, Projekt Consult, and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to prepare an issue paper on mining in relation to the LCDS. CI-Guyana is doing this in consultation with the mining association and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE). It was stated that CI-Guyana met with the Administrative Coordinator of the Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association (GGDMA), Mr Colin Sparman. The next steps include having the first draft that was just prepared presented to major stakeholders, such as MNRE and the mining association to capture comments. When agreement is made on the paper, there will be a wider stakeholder consultation on 31 January 2013 to review this draft. It was indicated that Mr Sparman is a staff member of GGDMA but does not have the capacity to represent GGDMA; only GGDMA's management committee can do this.

#### **6. Updates and Reports**

##### **Proliferation of Garbage**

6.1 MSSC members expressed their concerns that the garbage issue in Georgetown and other parts of Guyana is unsightly and hazardous to health. It was suggested that there be an intervention to address the garbage problems and possibly prevent a cholera outbreak. It was replied that Cabinet had discussions on the issue to explore possible solutions. It was pointed out that the EPA was asked to write the Mayor and City Council (M&CC) indicating that there is an environmental risk and they risk being sanctioned for negligence. It was stated that the establishment of an Interim Management Committee (IMC) to address the management of the city should be considered and in the meantime the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) should set up a workforce. It was also pointed out that the lack of resources and the political situation are hindrances to resolving the issue.

6.2 Suggestion was made for His Excellency President Ramotar to chair a meeting with relevant representatives from various entities such as the private sector, MoLG, MNRE, NGOs, National Toshiacs Council (NTC) and the media to highlight the current situation with the garbage in the country. This will also ensure priority is given to the issue and prevent a "flash in the pan" approach to rectifying the issue.

- 6.3 It was suggested that the health sector be included in the meeting since there is increased risk of vector borne diseases. Regions 1, 7, 8 and 9 have a malaria endemic and it was suggested that, as a possible source, funds from the GRIF be used to support the eradication of the disease. It was replied that impregnated mosquitoes nets are being distributed to mining communities to prevent the spread of the disease. It was reported that a meeting was held with Ministry of Health (MoH), GFC and GGDMA last Friday on distributing the nets into the mining areas and not in the villages.
- 6.4 When the MoLG requests assistance from the private sector for clean-up activities, the private sector is usually reluctant to assist because these activities are not sustainable. It was stated that there are no consequences for people who litter and Ms. Arjoon-Martins suggested that she be made an environmental warden for the east coast from Turkeyen to Kingston and which can allow her to enforce rules and regulations on perpetrators.
- 6.5 It was suggested that the Government should address the volume of plastic bags and styrofoam boxes and cups that are being used and improperly disposed. It was replied that there is an environmental tax that has been tabled by Minister Ashni Singh in Parliament last week to have the Guyana Revenue Authority Customs Unit amend the environmental tax that applies only to imported plastic bottles to be applied to all plastic items. There is also proposal for stamp duty on styrofoam containers when an alternative material is identified.

### **EU FLEGT and EITI**

- 6.6 The meeting was informed that the GFC is continuing work on the EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (EU FLEGT). Additionally, work is continuing on the implementation of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI). It was stated that MNRE and EITI signed an MoU in 2012 and in 2013 it is expected that this MoU will be implemented. MNRE is setting up a Steering Committee (SC) for EITI and an invitation was sent to the MSSC to identify three representatives to be on the SC. It was stated that any member wanting to be on this committee should inform the OCC.

## **7. Any Other Business**

### **Congratulations**

- 7.1 Congratulations were extended to the Government, OCC, PMO, GFC, GGMC and other related agencies on their hard work in securing the third payment of funds for Guyana.

### **Indigenous Organisations**

- 7.2 It was suggested that the Indigenous organisations not be called "Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)". It was relayed that this is a proposal by the Indigenous representative at the Organisation of American States and the sentiment is shared with the Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous People (GOIP).

### **Overtopping of Seawall**

- 7.3 It was reported that the recent overtopping of the seawall has generated a lot of media coverage and has stimulated conversation on climate change. It was suggested there be a quick session on the technical explanations why the event occurred since the information from Guyana Hydrometeorological Office (Hydromet) indicated that there was a 3.0-3.3m rise in water. It was stated that this level of water rise alone should not cause the high degree of overtopping that occurred: it is likely that there was some offshore disturbance. It was indicated that MNRE has been in contact with the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management in Trinidad that confirmed there was some offshore disturbance. It was suggested that Hydromet liaise with the Trinidadian office or the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre in Belize to have the explanation for the overtopping.

## **LCDS Public Service Announcements (PSAs)**

- 7.4 It was suggested that the OCC create new PSAs for the LCDS and remove the current PSAs being broadcasted in media as they contain outdated information.

## **Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)**

- 7.5 It was reported that ESIA's are required by law for large-scale resource extraction but not for small-medium scale ventures. It was observed that in certain areas where these small and medium scale ventures have taken place there is much destruction, possibly even more to the environment than large scale ventures. It was suggested that these small- medium scale ventures conduct ESIA's and if they are not able to pay for it, the government has a responsibility to have it done. If not on the actual operations but on the area where these ventures are taking place. It was replied that an ESIA is a useful tool to assess the potential impact to the environment and address them accordingly. Although, this is not the first time the suggestion has been made, it is difficult to implement given the current legislation. It was indicated that the current EPA Act Section 4 that deals with ESIA needs to be reviewed and redrafted. In 2006, Dr Mark Bynoe and Dr Paulette Bynoe authored a paper on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in Guyana, which may address the issue and provide a more specialised approach. It was suggested that training be done on SEAs since it is critical for almost all sectors such as mining, forestry land use planning and large scale agriculture.
- 7.6 It was stated that MNRE has aligned various sectors relating to integrated land use planning and management, which should facilitate better coordination to complete the requirements under the JCN.
- 7.7 The meeting was informed that a CIDA funded study conducted by Gencab recommended the GGMC establish an environmental department that is headed by a highly qualified environmental specialist and adopt the 2005 environmental regulations. It was stated that it is not the lack of rules or regulations that are the problem but rather the lack of enforcement of these. The mining industry is now following the theme "mining with the environment in mind". There is an environmental office within the mining association in conjunction with the GGMC that offers a free service to miners. Before a miner starts operation, a bond and reclamation fees need to be put forth. However, whether these fees are properly utilised is left to question.

## **Map of Guyana**

- 7.8 It was suggested that a map be created showing overlays of mining and forestry concessions; large-scale agriculture; titled lands et al, which would illustrate what Guyana will look like within the next few years. It was indicated that the Guyana Lands and Survey Commission (GL&SC) is currently developing a map that shows various overlays including those mentioned and others such as protected areas and should be completed soon.

## **8. Close**

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 11:45 hrs.

## **End of Minutes**

A number of key points were made and follow up action identified. These are summarised below.

<b>Key Points</b>	<b>Follow Up</b>
Half-day briefing sessions with the MSSC on LCDS and other issues to begin in second week in February 2013	OCC to follow up
New LCDS PSAs to be developed and the old ones removed from media	OCC to follow up
MSSC members to be identified to participate in EITI SC	MSSC to follow up