

Meeting 62

Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC)

Date: Thursday, 16th January 2014

Venue: Office of the President

Time: 10:00hrs

Attendance:

Name	Institution
His Excellency President Ramotar	Office of the President
Minister Leslie Ramsammy	Ministry of Agriculture
Minister Pauline Sukhai	Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
Shyam Nokta	Office of the President
Kapil Mohabir	Office of the President
Preeya Rampersaud	Office of the President
Shereeda Yusuf	Office of the President
Indarjit Ramdass	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Pradeepa Bholanath	Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC)
Ronald Webster	Private Sector Commission
Hymawattie Lagan	Women's Affairs Bureau
Paulette Bynoe	University of Guyana (UG)
Michael Williams	North Rupununi District Development Board (NRDDB)
Peter Persaud	The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana (TAAMOG)
Pamela English	The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana (TAAMOG)
George Norton	Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous People (GOIP)
Colin Klautky	Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous People (GOIP)
Rommel Simon	The National Amerindian Development Foundation (NADF)
Charles Hutchinson	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
David Singh	Conservation International (CI)
Joseph Singh	Individual Capacity
Annette Arjoon-Martins	Individual Capacity
David James	Individual Capacity
Raquel Thomas-Caesar	Individual Capacity

Absent/Excused

Former President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo	Individual Capacity	Excused
Minister Robert Persaud	Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment	Excused
Minister Ashni Singh	Ministry of Finance	Excused
Dr Roger Luncheon	Office of the President	Excused
Andrew Bishop	Office of the President	Excused
George Jervis	Ministry of Agriculture	Excused
Dane Gobin	Iwokrama International Centre	Excused
Ashton Simon	The National Amerindian Development Foundation	Excused
Yvonne Pearson	National Toshias Council	Excused
Derrick John	National Toshias Council	Excused
Carvil Duncan	Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana	Absent
Edward Shields	Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association	Absent
Rickford Veira	Guyana Geology and Mines Commission	Absent
Alfred King	Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports	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

Ms Preeya Rampersaud called the meeting to order.

2. Minutes of Meeting 61

2.1 There were no edits to Minutes 61.

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

3. Matters Arising from Minutes No. 61

FCPF Update

3.1 The IDB has approved the Technical Cooperation document for Guyana to commence receiving support under the readiness fund of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and this clears the way for the finalisation of the administrative agreement with the FCPF. The Designated National Agency to the IDB, Ministry of Finance is currently reviewing the document for signature. It is expected that work will commence within the first 6 months of 2014.

3.2 An enquiry was made whether the role of the NTC within the readiness framework is the same as outlined in the Project Proposal few years ago. In response, it was stated that the document circulated in 2012 was updated in the areas of MRVS, the process of the Opt-In Mechanism, and engagements for communications and outreach. However, the section regarding NTC involvement remains the same. A copy of the Technical Cooperation document approved by the IDB will be circulated to the members of the MSSC.

3.3 A MSSC member stated that an OAS Caucus was held recently and a consensus was reached between the OAS and Indigenous groups represented at the Caucus to refer to Indigenous NGOs as Indigenous Organisations. It was requested that future documents be updated to reflect Indigenous NGO as Indigenous Organisations.

3.4 Another MSSC member stated that if a formal decision was taken for Indigenous NGOs to be referred as Indigenous Organisations then a formal request should be made. The Indigenous groups should determine what they prefer to be called.

3.5 The point was raised regarding the NRDDDB and how it fits into this categorization since it is neither an Indigenous organisation nor representing a sector. It was replied that NRDDDB was probably considered to be a representative on the MSSC because it is a community based organisation with a different perspective.

MRVS Update

3.6 The independent third party verification for the Year 3 Interim Measures Report for the period January-December 2012 was completed. The independent accuracy assessment was conducted by University of Durham, UK. The peer review was delayed as a result of the recent holidays. The GFC is awaiting the report for final review but does not expect any issues.

GFC's 2013 Activities Assessment

3.7 The GFC is in discussions with Government of Norway regarding their 2013 assessment and the way forward. It was pointed out that the MRVS roadmap was developed three years ago and many elements were completed while some have changed. The process will continue from January to March 2014 and the MSSC will be updated accordingly.

4. Updates and Reports

The LCDS and its Projects

4.1 MSSC members were notified that the GRIF projects summary matrix was circulated via email.

Amerindian Land Titling (ALT)

- 4.2 A detailed workplan is being developed and a number of ministries and agencies are being consulted during this process.

Amerindian Development Fund (ADF)

- 4.3 A business training workshop was conducted on January 16, 2014. All 27 communities/villages have signed agreements to implement their CDPs and have received disbursements. Preparation of a full project document to fund the remaining 153 CDPs is on-going. It is expected that the second phase will benefit from the lessons learnt in Phase 1.

Micro and Small Enterprise Development (MSE)

- 4.4 To-date 141 persons were trained in basic business management skills under the MSE project. Loan applications are being processed through GBTI. The structure for the grant committee to review and approve grant applications is currently being finalised.

Cunha Canal Rehabilitation Project

- 4.5 The full project document and a World Bank Mission will be completed within the next few weeks.

Biodiversity Research Centre

- 4.6 The evaluation of the proposals was completed and a report was submitted to the World Bank for review and no objection of the recommended firm to conduct the feasibility study.

5. Remarks from His Excellency President Ramotar

New Year Greetings

- 5.1 New Year greetings were extended to MSSC members.

Extreme Weather Events

- 5.2 Members were updated that Guyana and the Caribbean have been experiencing the serious consequences of climate change. The recent rains in Georgetown were very heavy and intense. The recorded rainfall figures for Georgetown were the highest experienced in Guyana. Other Caribbean countries such as St Vincent, Dominica and Antigua have experienced extreme weather events.
- 5.3 Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves, incoming Chair of CARICOM, has committed to feature climate change prominently at the upcoming Heads of Government meeting to be held in February. Guyana is taking the lead to prepare a brief for the Heads proposing that the Region sign a Roadmap to 2015 in a number of areas such as:
- 5.3.1 Increasing the political momentum on climate change and High Level presence at key meetings and forums such as the UN Secretary General's Climate Change Summit in September and the UNFCCC COP meeting in Peru in December.
- 5.3.2 Examining the regional position, particularly the Liliendaal Declaration (2010) to see if it needs enhancing and whether it can guide Guyana's negotiators.
- 5.3.3 Ensuring that Guyana can easily benefit from available funding such as adaptation support. Each country needs to identify a portfolio of projects, which would help build climate resilience.
- 5.4 It was pointed out that the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) has commenced some work to prepare a portfolio of projects to build climate resilience. Representatives from the CCCCC were in Guyana last week and discussions were held as it regards increasing the momentum on climate action in the region. The CCCCC requested Guyana's assistance in recognition of the work and progress the country has made in this area of climate change and low carbon growth. President

Ramotar indicated that in support of the CCCCC's request he has appointed Shyam Nokta to serve on the Board of Governors of the CCCCC.

5.5 A number of priorities have been identified for 2014 at the national level and these are:

- 5.5.1 Improving and expanding infrastructure, in particular the sea and river defence and drainage and irrigation systems
- 5.5.2 Enhancing Guyana's forecasting abilities and response mechanisms
- 5.5.3 Building climate resilience in the social and productive sectors

5.6 Climate change and LCDS will be mainstreamed in various sectors within the economy based on a decision taken by Cabinet. The Office of the President, through the OCC, will be leading this effort.

5.7 Government will give priority to climate resilience and integrated water resources management in 2014. It will commence with the preparation of a climate resilience strategy which will include identifying a number of bankable projects for implementation.

5.8 Efforts to advance REDD+ and the implementation of the Guyana-Norway agreement will continue in 2014. As discussed in 2013, one of the priorities for Guyana is to expand the monitoring and enforcement capacity in the mining sector. It will also involve creating an aggressive programme of mining area reclamation and rehabilitation that will target small, medium and large-scale mining.

5.9 For this year, there would be renewed efforts in implementing GRIF projects and in improving the functioning of the GRIF mechanism.

5.10 The LCDS has suffered immensely at the Parliamentary level within the last two years leading to successive cuts to the LCDS projects. It is uncertain what will happen in 2014 but the Government is committed to doing all it can to ensure the LCDS and its projects can move forward.

6. Any Other Business

CCCCC Board

6.1 A member of the MSSC noted that the CCCCC recently completed a climate change project with six Caribbean countries examining how to build resilience to climate change. It would be beneficial for Guyana to be added to the list and it is exciting that Guyana is now on the Board of the CCCCC.

In response it was stated that there was a conversation with the Secretary General for CARICOM to take a leading role on climate change matters and Mr Shyam Nokta has been identified as the Office of the President's liaison on this.

Flooding

6.2 Enquiry was made regarding efforts to assess the vulnerability and assist those affected by flooding especially since crops were damaged. A strategy should be in place to address those impacted both on the coast and in the hinterland. It was replied that Regions 2, 3 and 4 experienced the most rainfall recently. The recent weather trends indicate that there is an increase in the intensity of rainfall but a decrease in annual precipitation. It was further noted that Georgetown has experienced more rainfall in 24 hours than in recorded history where approximately 130 mm was recorded in six hours. This is much more than the current infrastructure can accommodate and it has serious implications for drainage and irrigation as well as agriculture. A contributing factor to the flooding is that the eleven pumps available do not work simultaneously as is required. In addition, work has commenced to move squatters in South Georgetown in order to effectively address some drainage issues.

6.3 It was pointed out that the priority projects for 2014 not only deal with climate change resilience but also integrated water management. A member of the MSSC noted that integrated water management should be considered within the frame of the Water and Sewage Act (2002) especially since the Act states that the National Water Committee has responsibility to deal with water issues. The committee should be resuscitated as it is an important constitutional body. It was further noted that there is a draft

integrated water resources management plan that was prepared approximately two years ago and can provide a good basis to moving the initiative forward.

- 6.4 Mention was made that the Ministry of Public Works has been tasked to prepare a plan and programme to rehabilitate the infrastructure in the city. The document would outline the costs and timeframe of specific activities and it is expected that this plan will be completed within the next few weeks. A member of the MSSC noted that the Ministry of Public Works should work in collaboration with the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHPA) if they will be examining the flooding in Georgetown. Changes in hydrology will be an important factor as well as land use changes. The CHPA can provide guidance.
- 6.5 It was noted that while there was flooding in Region 4 and above normal rainfall in Regions 1 to 7, Region 9 has been experiencing drought-like conditions. This also affects the productive sectors. Hence, forecasting abilities need to be enhanced and climate change needs to be mainstreamed in all sectors of the economy. A member of the MSSC pointed out that the data available for climate modelling are not robust enough to assess risk. The Climate Modelling Group at University of West Indies Mona Campus has recorded data on climate and weather patterns. These findings can be useful for Guyana. It was replied that Guyana has contacts with the office and has already requested the available data.
- 6.6 Concern was raised by an MSSC member that a major problem contributing to floods is solid waste. It was stated that everyone is responsible and action needs to be taken to address the issue. Georgetown is a beautiful city but it is defaced with garbage. A clean environment affords a sense of pride. There should be an awareness plan starting with education in schools. Iwokrama has engaged with schools' environmental clubs to address proper disposal of solid waste. It is suggested that adults be fined for littering.
- 6.7 Enquiry was made on who is responsible for the proper maintenance of the pumps and sluices and whether a system can be devised to ensure the pumps and sluices are adequately maintained. It was noted that the municipalities are the responsible body for ensuring the proper functioning of the pumps and sluices and a lot of money was spent on equipment to address the issue. The legal implications of the Government intervening in the municipalities' duties need to be examined. A MSSC member stated that the real issue regarding the flooding is the ineffective Mayor and City Council as the responsible authority to keep the city and drains clean. Consideration could be given to have an interim management committee in charge of the City until there is formal election for a new Mayor and City Council. Another MSSC member asked the reason for not setting up an interim management committee particularly since more rainfall is expected and the strategy for addressing the city's flooding issue. It was replied that there is an established Parliamentary committee chaired by Minister Robert Persaud, which aims to address these issues.
- 6.8 MSSC members were updated that a second wave GRIF project is the Strengthening of the Hydro-meteorological Service Monitoring System. The Project Concept Note for this project is currently being developed.

7. Close

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

End of Minutes