

Meeting 63

Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC)

Date: Wednesday, 19th February 2014

Venue: Office of the President

Time: 10:05hrs

Attendance:

Name	Institution
His Excellency President Ramotar	Office of the President
Minister Pauline Sukhai	Ministry of Amerindian Affairs
Shyam Nokta	Office of the President
Andrew Bishop	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)
Hymawattie Lagan	Women's Affairs Bureau
Paulette Bynoe	University of Guyana (UG)
Yvonne Pearson	National Toshias Council (NTC)
Peter Persaud	The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana (TAAMOG)
George Norton	Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous People (GOIP)
Colin Klautky	Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous People (GOIP)
Ashton Simon	The National Amerindian Development Foundation (NADF)
Charles Hutchinson	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
Dane Gobin	Iwokrama International Centre
Joseph Singh	Individual Capacity
Annette Arjoon-Martins	Individual Capacity

Absent/Excused

Former President Dr Bharrat Jagdeo	Individual Capacity	Excused
Minister Leslie Ramsammy	Ministry of Agriculture	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
Alfred King	Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports	Excused
Kapil Mohabir	Office of the President	Excused
David James	Individual Capacity	Excused
Rommel Simon	The National Amerindian Development Foundation	Excused
David Singh	Conservation International	Excused
Raquel Thomas-Caesar	Individual Capacity	Excused
Pamela English	The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana	Excused
Derrick John	National Toshias Council	Excused
Ronald Webster	Private Sector Commission	Excused
Carvil Duncan	Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana	Absent
Michael Williams	North Rupununi District Development Board	Absent
George Jervis	Ministry of Agriculture	Absent
Edward Shields	Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners Association	Absent
Rickford Veira	Guyana Geology and Mines Commission	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. Announcements and Correspondence

2.1 Excuses were received from former President Dr Jagdeo, Dr Roger Luncheon, Minister Robert Persaud, Minister Leslie Ramsammy, Minister Ashni Singh, Mr Ronald Webster, Dr. Raquel Thomas-Caesar, Dr David Singh, Mr Alfred King, Mr Kapil Mohabir, Mr Derrick John, Mr Rommel Simon and Mr David James.

2.2 There was no correspondence.

3. Minutes of Meeting 62

3.1 Edits were made to Points 3.3; 5.3.1; 5.3.2; 5.3.3; 5.4; 5.6; 5.8; 5.10; 6.3; 6.4 and 6.5.

Motion to adopt the Minutes was moved by Mr Peter Persaud and seconded by Dr Paulette Bynoe.

4. Matters Arising from Minutes No. 63

The LCDS and its Projects

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

Parliamentary Committee

4.2 A member of the MSSC asked about the status of the Parliamentary Committee, chaired by Minister Persaud, to address the issue of flooding in the city.

In response, it was stated that the Government is committed to cleaning the city. GYD 56 million was provided to clean the city especially for the Mashramani celebrations. In addition, Central Government erected a pump in South Georgetown and which considerably aided drainage in the city as there was no issue of flooding during the last heavy rainfall. Additionally, the main canal in this area is being cleared and squatters in the area were asked to move and given house lots. Further, the Minister of Public Works has been working on a plan to address the flooding issue in the city. It is expected that the plan will be implemented in phases depending on the costs attached.

MRVS Update

4.3 It was noted that the GFC received a revised version of the draft Verification Report for the year 3 MRVS. A new observation was raised by DNV which required feedback by the GFC. This was provided and the GFC is awaiting the final draft of the DNV Verification Report. It was hoped that the process will be completed in the coming few weeks.

Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF)

4.4 The GFC has been informed that the Project Agreement was signed between the IDB and the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance is the designated Government authority for all project agreements with the IDB. This step marks the initiation of the formal project arrangement between Government of Guyana with the IDB for the FCPF programme of work. The next step in the process is to involve the IDB and Ministry of Finance, working together with the GFC to advance next implementation arrangements through the Commission. As is the case for standard IDB project, there are several administrative requirements that need to be completed first, including the development of the Annual Operational Plan and the setting up of a Project Bank Account. These along with other administrative arrangements will need to be completed in the coming months. The NTC is identified as one of the groups to receive direct financial support for institutional strengthening with an aim to increase capability in participating in matters on REDD+ and the FCPF.

EU FLEGT

- 4.5 The GFC is continuing to advance work on the EU FLEGT Roadmap, the guiding framework in the development and negotiation process for the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA). This work is being coordinated at the level of the National Technical Working Group. The main focus has been the development of the draft definition of legality, which forms an important component of the VPA, and to do this via stakeholder engagement. So far, a number of outreach sessions were held and GFC will continue to advance these in the coming months. Additionally, work is continuing on the two initial technical studies as part of the process: the Impact Study of EU FLEGT on Guyana, and the Communication Strategy.
- 4.6 In response to a recent call for project proposals by the EU through the local office, the GFC was informed that applications were submitted by the Forest Products Association (FPA) and the Amerindian People Association. This funding window was directed to civil society organizations. The GFC was informed that the APA was the only applicant that was successful, following the EU evaluation process.
- 4.7 The GFC noted the EU evaluation process as being the primary source of selection and expressed that from a technical perspective, the FPA's involvement in a project of this scale would have had tremendous benefits as a large percentage of forested lands are allocated to forest concessions. A direct resource allocation to an association body of this type would have allowed increased efforts at the forest concessionaire level to discuss, and offer inputs on various areas of the process, including the definition of legality.
- 4.8 Concern was raised regarding the APA receiving funds from the EU especially in light of the misleading information the organisation has been providing on LCDS and REDD+. Suggestion was made for the GFC to receive the funding and disbursed funds to I-NGOs who will submit reports to them.

Response was given that the GFC was given the opportunity by the EU to review ToRs for the Call for Proposal, and has integrated within the modalities of the implementation of project, the requirement to follow the EU FLEGT Roadmap and the programme of work being implemented by the National Technical Working Group. This was adopted by the EU and this requirement has formed a part of the requirement for Project Funding. The GFC has met with the Indigenous Organization and has expressed a need to work together and in synergy with the national framework established for EU FLEGT activities in Guyana. Additionally, the APA could be invited to update the GFC on progress and plans for activity implementation with the support received.

- 4.9 Suggestion was made for the Guyana EU Office work closely with the APA and the GFC to ensure that the messages being communicated are consistent and to avoid any distortion of messages.

The GFC also agreed to formally write to the EU to express this request of the MSSC, and any other project party directly engaged by the EU on FLGET activities in Guyana and to execute such activities on EU FLEGT in synergy with the national efforts and to regularly update the NTWG on plans and progress.

5. Remarks from His Excellency President Ramotar and Discussions

Extreme Weather and Climate Change

- 5.1 Reference was made to the serious weather events in North America, United Kingdom and other parts of the world. Reference was also made to the US Secretary of the State, John Kerry's statement that the US Administration will be playing an increased role in the fight against climate change and it was noted that many developing countries have been sceptical with these statements from the US but the US is extremely influential.
- 5.2 A member of the MSSC noted that in the US Senator John Kerry's address to students in Jakarta, he stated that climate change is real and "perhaps the world's most fearsome weapon of mass destruction". Although, Mr Kerry's speech warned that man-made climate change could threaten their entire way of life, the message given is contradictory to the actions of the US. It was noted that on one

hand, the US has been vocal in their commitment to the fight against climate change, and on the other hand however, when a country decides to take action support is not given. For example, instructing the IDB to vote against hydrodams larger than 20 megawatts.

5.3 There are several upcoming high levels meetings on climate change during this year. There is a UN General Assembly meeting in September 2014 on climate change. Also, the incoming Chair of CARICOM, Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves, has committed to feature climate change prominently at the upcoming Heads of Government meeting on March 10-11, 2014. Guyana is taking the lead to prepare a brief for the Heads of Government and to propose that the Region sign on to a Roadmap to 2015.

5.4 Guyana was one of the first countries that assisted Caribbean countries such as St Vincent, Dominica and Antigua during their natural disasters recently. Further, the Ministry of Housing and Water has been asked to work with these countries to help rebuild the houses that were destroyed from the devastating weather events.

Hope Canal Bridge Opening

5.5 On Saturday, 15 February, the Hope Canal Bridge was officially opened to vehicular traffic. It is expected that the East Demerara Water Conservancy's (EDWC), Hope Canal Project will boost food security and foster other developments for Guyana. The engineers for the project indicated that the project will be completed by June as work is progressing as scheduled.

Freshwater Harvesting and Distribution

5.6 It was noted that the option of expanding the EDWC to harvest rainwater as a commodity is being explored. It was also pointed out that there is a huge potential for the commercialisation of freshwater, for example, Suriname is currently exploring this.

5.7 A MSSC member stated that based on topography the EDWC cannot be expanded and other sites such as the Mahaica, Mahaicony, Abary (MMA) could be examined instead.

5.8 Another MSSC member responded that water use/water management policy is being drafted by GoG to examine the feasibility of exporting freshwater. Consideration will be taken for EDWC's structural integrity and its ability to be expanded.

2014 Priority Areas

5.9 Priority will be given in 2014 to building climate resilience in the social and productive sectors. Work has commenced on the preparation of a Climate Resilience Strategy and Action Plan. Bankable projects will be identified and financing of these will also be explored.

5.10 An Integrated Water Resources Management Strategy is also a priority area under the LCDS Update and some work had previously been done in this area.

Reclamation Efforts

5.11 Efforts regarding expanding monitoring of the mining operations as stipulated within Guyana's REDD+ framework, the LCDS and by extension the Guyana-Norway Partnership are on-going. The GoG is committed to ensure that the process of mine rehabilitation and reclamation is implemented in the following manner:

5.11.1 GGMC will assist small-scaled miners with rehabilitation efforts.

5.11.2 GGMC will supply the planting materials to medium-scaled miners for replanting.

5.11.3 Large-scaled miners are responsible for all rehabilitation efforts.

Species Type to be used for Reclamation Efforts

5.12 The type of species to be used for reclamation of mined out areas need to be examined to ensure that the best viable and commercially valuable species are selected. It was noted that in Indonesia, teak trees are planted, which are used to create high-value furniture pieces. If these species are conducive to Guyana's environment, they could be used in the reclamation process.

- 5.13 A member of the MSSC stated that there is an impressive teak nursery in Trinidad and Guyana can optimise the opportunity to learn from a nearby source.
- 5.14 It was also suggested that the use of pine trees for reclamation efforts should be explored.
- 5.15 A MSSC member indicated that the Crabwood species could also be examined since the species has multiple uses.
- 5.16 Another MSSC member suggested that a Guyanese team should be sent to Sri Lanka to learn of the local methods of using the materials from coconut trees to make beams for houses. Also, many persons are using bamboos to make floors for houses, which is cheaper than Green Heart floor boards. It would be useful to explore the viability of planting bamboo on a commercial scale.
- 5.17 It was noted that exploring the options of various high value trees will be considered by the GoG. However, technical expertise and foreign investors will be needed. There is a problem with availability of labour in Guyana particularly as it relates to the agricultural sector. By diversifying to these high value ventures, it is expected that new opportunities will be created and persons will be interested to capitalise on these new ventures.

6. Updates and Reports

Guyana-Norway Agreement

- 6.1 A MSSC Member noted that the Guyana-Norway Agreement is expected to end in 2015. Given that the Green Climate Fund (GCF) will not be established or functioning by 2015, the financial arrangements to receive payments for Guyana's forests will need to be examined. Enquiry was made on whether the Guyana-Norway Agreement will be extended or if other partners are being explored.

Response was given that although Guyana has not formally discussed the extension of the Guyana-Norway Agreement, there is keen interest by both parties for a second commitment period extending beyond 2015. This could be an issue raised at the next opportunity of the two Heads of States meeting and which could likely be at the UN Heads of Government in September 2014.

With respect to other partnerships, Guyana has to take into consideration the financial circumstances of other countries especially given the current situation in Europe. The US and Europe have recognised that climate change is a threat but there has been a call from their own national stakeholders to cut overseas assistance to developing countries and focus on domestic adaptation efforts. The Annex I countries and their support to developing countries need to be re-examined. Although, the US has committed to fight climate change, they have advocated that developing countries, particularly India and China need to undertake much more in terms of setting targets,

In addition, Guyana is exploring funding from multi-national institutions and the private sector.

7. Any Other Business

- 7.1 There was no other business.

8. Close

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 11:25 h.

End of Minutes

The following follow-up action was identified.

Key Points	Follow Up
GFC to contact EU Office re the APA project's implementation	GFC to follow up