

## **Funding from the LCDS could kickstart the economy**

September 2, 2009 | By Stabroek News | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

We note in your September 1, 2009 issue that President Jagdeo, together with other government officials will be meeting with members of the Guyana Arts and Crafts Producers Association to address issues that are challenging the industry.

It is true as reported that Guyana produces high quality products suitable for export, but oft-times it requires the helping hand of government to facilitate the leap from moving from the local market to exporting. This sector, like many others, has the potential to create many more jobs with value-added products. State intervention to facilitate the various initiatives outlined in your article will be of enormous value and benefit to this sector and by extension, the economy.

It is commendable that the President himself can be involved in leading the way to assist local producers. This is hands-on leadership that will definitely redound to the benefit of all parties.

In equal vein the President had earlier addressed a Multi Stakeholder Forum at the Convention Centre where he went to great lengths outlining his government's vision and commitment in pursuing a wide range of projects which have the potential of leapfrogging our economy. In his words we cannot be content with just evolutionary progress we have to be able to deliver revolutionary progress to meet the aspirations of citizens.

Funding realised from the visionary Low Carbon Development Strategy will kickstart this process.

Yours faithfully,

R. Bulkan

Precision Woodworking Limited

August 26th, 2009 | By Stabroek News | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

I have been following the online discussions on the LCDS and trying to learn as much as possible about the process involved in developing this strategy. I would like to commend Janette Bulkan for undertaking the recently concluded 10 part series for the Stabroek News, a great crash course which I have since uploaded for easier access at <http://www.jouvay.com/lcds/>. Given the public commitment to consultation and information dissemination, might I recommend to the LCDS office or the international organizations that help support it, to commit the relatively

minor resources necessary to transform the valuable data contained in this series into an educational resource for the country that can be broadcast and shared in various media.

As a regular visitor to the LCDS website, my own take is that although it is filled with reports from the various consultations, it offers little or nothing to acquaint the general public with the various issues about which we must make informed decisions.

I am also writing to request clarification on a few matters. Firstly, given the investment at this time in consultations with the Guyanese public, I would be grateful if someone could explain the proposed management structure for the LCDS, and in particular why it appears to include three bodies that are all directly linked to the government, instead of making space for non-governmental organizations/civil society to be centrally involved in ways that encourage citizen participation.

Secondly, I understand and fully applaud the importance of transparency that has been stressed throughout this process. To this end, over a week ago, I submitted an online request on the official LCDS website simply asking how much the McKinsey consultancy group was paid for work done on the LCDS report. To date there has been no response from the “LCDS Information Centre.” Last week Wednesday when I received e-mails about the LCDS consultation on capacity building, I e-mailed the contact persons from

The Consultancy Group on the flyer with my inquiry and was told that they would forward my question to the Office of Climate Change as they did not know the answer. Not knowing where else to go for answers to a question I am assuming is a legitimate one (given the emphasis on transparency noted above), today I finally submitted a request to the Clinton Foundation.

I would be most grateful if you could publish this letter, and if those with the answers can remind us precisely what the McKinsey group was contracted to do, let us know how much they were paid (perhaps this information has been published before, if so can we be directed to where we might find out), and what was delivered. I just went through every document on the LCDS website and if someone can show me the full McKinsey Report I would be grateful.

Finally, I would like to propose that the transparent submission forum discussed in the conceptual framework of the LCDS ([http://www.lcds.gov.gy/images/stories/Documents/conceptual\\_framework.pdf](http://www.lcds.gov.gy/images/stories/Documents/conceptual_framework.pdf)) be made available for feedback from those unable to attend public consultations currently underway. The minutes of the LCDS steering committee (is there a reason why the educational sector is not represented on this committee?) suggest that the LCDS information was translated into at least two, perhaps five different Amerindian languages. The LCDS consultation and awareness session reports indicate that Guyanese would like to understand the LCDS better and that these materials will be developed. Are these documents finished and if so, can they also be uploaded to the website? If they have not been completed, it seems unfair to have these sessions when people don't understand what is being proposed and are even being referred to the “McKinsey report” when asking such questions as to how the numbers were derived. We can end up with sessions that are less consultations and more information dissemination, which is not what has been publicly promised or supported.

Many Guyanese have worked tirelessly and with little or no recognition for the things being proposed by the LCDS that can protect our forested lands and forest communities. For example, to my knowledge WWF-Guianas was the only agency that actually invested in mercury monitoring equipment in the country over the last five years. Similarly, Conservation International-Guyana, is as far as I am aware the only agency that has invested in the training and equipping of Amerindian communities to start their own water quality monitoring programmes.

The recent government attention to environmental and capacity building issues because of the LCDS will hopefully see some more attention being paid to, and investment in local training programmes, facilities, and a formal and informal curriculum that truly complement our natural resources development needs.

Yours faithfully,

### **We need to convince the USA, China, India of the political importance of them supporting our LCDS**

August 19, 2009 | By knews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

I had promised in my last letter to the press that I will outline why India's position on climate change will contribute to our Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) failing at Copenhagen. However, before I proceed to that issue; there are a few more weakness of our LCDS I would like to highlight:

1. The G-20 must have the motivation and the willingness to compensate those whom are preserving their forest. Thus in this time of reducing global economic resources and the overwhelming demands from their home market for job and wealth creation programmes, there is very limited opportunity for Guyana to benefit from any serious financial flows. The US Government is right now spending billions of dollars increasing the efficiency of their cars and their industries with a view of stabilizing their carbon emission. How would Guyana respond if the US Government states they will complement these initiatives by planting millions of new trees at home and at the same time creating jobs for their citizens?
2. The UNFCCC and its REDD programme clearly have laudable ambitions, but this global economic crisis came at the wrong time, since it is constraining any action by the main polluters to support the work of the UNFCCC in helping many poor developing countries. What many of the G-20 countries have started to do is to use their economic stimulus package to scale up their own renewable energy production, increase their environmental protection programme to create new jobs and enhance their energy conservation at home. The G-20 countries are busy advancing their development plan with their own money (or in the case of the US, borrowed money). What are we doing in Guyana?
3. We do not need to convince the UK, the EU, Norway or Switzerland about the LCDS, since that is like speaking to the converted. We really need to convince the USA, China and India of the political importance of them supporting our LCDS. As Jagdish Bhagwati said, "If Copenhagen is not going to be a shipwreck, initiatives to bring the US back to sensible thinking is necessary". Have we done our part to make the USA aware of our plan? Have we highlighted

for the USA, India and China how the LCDS will help them politically and economically? Why have we not met Obama on a one to one basis and his Energy Secretary to discuss our LCDS and demonstrate how we can help each other?

4. Guyana will not see the flows it may be expecting from Copenhagen and this is because McKinsey needs to explain how it arrived at US\$580 million annual as the value of our forest. I know for a fact that there are many species and sizes of trees in our forest that have low economical value (not every tree in our forest is a greenheart tree). Thus, it would have been a very inexact science to value our forest without doing a comprehensive audit of the stock of commercially harvestable trees and there is no mention of this process being followed in the LCDS. Thus, this valuation and its associated quantum of financial compensation are questionable at minimum. Do we have the details of the comprehensive forest audit if the USA asks for a copy in its consideration of compensation? If the USA says it would want to do a sample test of the forest to certify this figure, will it stand up?

5. The LCDS states that if Guyana reaps its forest, it will have negative consequences for the world. So what? If the G-20 countries decide to plant trees by the millions, then it becomes irrelevant to the world what Guyana does with its forest. I hope it has become clear why this document is weak, since it is being positioned as if we have the political leverage to instruct the world. The most we can do is ask a Sir Shridat Ramphal calibre team to soften the political stance of the powerful and work for the best. Let us make it clear in our minds, Obama, Manmohan Singh or Hu Jintao would not lose any sleep if Guyana cut its forest down and we must stop deluding ourselves.

6. The powerful of the world will repair the environment but on their terms, to the benefit of their people and this is where I will raise India's position. The confrontation between China and India on one side and the USA on the other side over climate change initiatives is a disaster in the making for Copenhagen. India's Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh (a very close ally of Sonia Gandhi) stated, "India has been among the lowest emissions per capita, thus there is no need to face, actual reduce emissions". He further went on to state, that India will not "discuss signing up to any legally binding obligations to make absolute cuts in greenhouse gas emissions for at least 10 years".

These statements were made when Hillary Clinton visited India in July 2009. If India and China does not sign on, where is Copenhagen? Just another talk shop with more communiqués and platitudes.

I trust that analytical minds in Guyana can understand why it is concerning that; while we pretend to be global leader in climate change, other countries are spending their taxpayer money pursuing a long-term development plan (Even the USA is engaged in such a programme with borrowed money). Unfortunately, we are being set up as the poster child for the climate change lobby that will provide little to us at this point in time. However, this climate change initiative will contribute to us losing focus of our principal developmental agenda.

Advocacy against the grain by one of your own is most unnerving for any political class, especially if they are struggling to provide answers to the issues. My advocacy is not an attempt to be in the spot light or to undermine this document, but is being driven by a deep concern that we are continuing to lose valuable time running on the spot as a country as we allow ourselves to be distracted by what Copenhagen can or cannot give us.

All Guyanese should feel most disappointed as we continue not to deal (as a top priority) with the main obstacles to our development – social cohesion, hydropower, unchecked crime, jobs and wealth creation for the masses.

The fact of the matter is, we are losing ground as a country again and the PNC is not the cause this time around. Any soldier of righteousness must fight this backwardness today, just like how we fought the PNC in the past. I know the taste of power is sweet but at the end of the day, it is subservient to that higher calling of a politician - serving the working class.

Any member of the political class, who is busy exclusively looking after himself or herself at the expense of the people, must ask themselves, what are we going to tell the 'maker' when we arrive at the curly gate or when our soul is released from this material body? It is not too late to help the masses and get me out of the letter columns (so I could spend more time in my garden before the next winter dawn on us) since my only issue is to advocate for the provision of services to the poor and the powerless by the powerful political people.

Sasnarine Singh

## **We are being distracted from the real reasons by what Copenhagen can or cannot give us**

August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009 | By Stabroek News | Filed Under Letters

*Dear Editor,*

There are a few more weaknesses of our LCDS I would like to highlight:

1. The G-20 must have the motivation and the willingness to compensate those who are preserving their forest. Thus in this time of reducing global economic resources and the overwhelming demands from their home market for job and wealth creation programmes, there is very limited opportunity for Guyana to benefit from any serious financial flows. The US government is right now spending billions of dollars increasing the efficiency of their cars and their industries with a view to stabilizing their carbon emissions. How would Guyana respond if the US government states it will complement these initiatives by planting millions of new trees at home and at the same time creating jobs for their citizens?
2. The UNFCCC and its REDD programme clearly have laudable ambitions, but this global economic crisis came at the wrong time, since it is constraining any action by the main polluters to support the work of the UNFCCC in helping many poor developing countries. What many of the G-20 countries have started to do is to use their economic stimulus package to scale up their own renewable energy production, increase their environmental protection programme to create new jobs and enhance their energy conservation at home. The G-20 countries are busy advancing their development plan with their own money (or in the case of the US, borrowed money). What are we doing in Guyana?
3. We do not need to convince the UK, the EU, Norway or Switzerland about the LCDS since that is like speaking to the converted. We really need to convince the USA, China and India of the political importance of them supporting our LCDS. As Jagdish Bhagwati said, "If Copenhagen is not going to be a shipwreck, initiatives to bring the US back to sensible thinking are necessary." Have we done our part to make the USA aware of our plan? Have we highlighted for the USA, India and China how the LCDS will help them politically and economically? Why have we not met Obama on a one-to-one basis and his Energy Secretary to discuss our LCDS and demonstrate how we can help each other?

4. Guyana will not see the flows it may be expecting from Copenhagen, and this is because McKinsey needs to explain how it arrived at US\$580M annually as the value of our forest. I know for a fact that there are many species and sizes of trees in our forest that have low economic value (not every tree in our forest is a greenheart). Thus, it would have been a very inexact science to value our forest without doing a comprehensive audit of the stock of commercially harvestable trees, and there is no mention of this process being followed in the LCDS. Thus, this valuation and its associated quantum of financial compensation are questionable at minimum. Do we have the details of the comprehensive forest audit if the USA asks for a copy in their consideration of compensation? If the USA says it would want to do a sample test of the forest to certify this figure, will it stand up?

5. The LCDS states that if Guyana reaps its forest, it will have negative consequences for the world. So what? If the G-20 countries decide to plant trees by the millions, then it becomes irrelevant to the world what Guyana does with its forest. I hope it is becoming clear why this document is weak, since it is being positioned as if we have the political leverage to instruct the world. The most we can do is ask a Sir Shridath Ramphal calibre team to soften the political stance of the powerful and work for the best. Let us make it clear in our mind, Obama, Manmohan Singh or Hu Jintao would not lose any sleep if Guyana cut its forest down and we must stop deluding ourselves.

6. The powerful of the world will repair the environment but on their terms and to the benefit of their people, and this is where I will raise India's position. The confrontation between China and India on one side and the USA on the other side over climate change initiatives is a disaster in the making for Copenhagen. India's environment minister Jairam Ramesh (a very close ally of Sonia Gandhi) stated that India had been among the lowest emissions per capita, and thus there was no need to face an actual reduction in emissions. He further went on to state that India would not "discuss signing up to any legally binding obligations to make absolute cuts in greenhouse gas emissions for at least 10 years." These statements were made when Hillary Clinton visited India in July 2009. If India and China do not sign on, where is Copenhagen? Just another talk shop with more communiqués and platitudes.

I trust that analytical minds in Guyana can understand why it is a matter of concern that while we pretend to be a global leader in climate change, other countries are spending their taxpayer money pursuing a long-term development plan (even the USA is engaged in such a programme with borrowed money). Unfortunately, we are being set up as the poster child for the climate change lobby that will provide little to us at this point in time. However, this climate change initiative will contribute to us losing focus from our principal developmental agenda.

Advocacy against the grain by one of your own is most unnerving for any political class, especially if they are struggling to provide answers to the issues. My advocacy is not an attempt to be in the spotlight or to undermine this document, but is driven by a deep concern that we are continuing to lose valuable time running on the spot as a country, as we allow ourselves to be distracted by what Copenhagen can or cannot give us. All Guyanese should feel most disappointed as we continue not to deal (as a top priority) with the main obstacles to our development – social cohesion, hydropower, unchecked crime and job and wealth creation for the masses.

The fact of the matter is, we are losing ground as a country again and the PNC is not the cause this time around. Any soldier of righteousness must fight this backwardness today, just as we fought the PNC in the past. I know the taste of power is sweet but at the end of the day, it is

subservient to that higher calling of a politician – serving the working class. It is not too late to help the masses.

*Yours faithfully,  
Sasnarine Singh*

### **The LCDS is not about political parties**

August 18, 2009 | By Guyana Times | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

So confused. Mr Sasnarine Singh seems to be mired in confusion in his letter to the print media on August 13 titled “ Where is Guyana’s Franklin Delano Roosevelt?” First off, Todd Morgan is alive and well and living in Guyana.

But Singh, who probably fancies himself a potential Franklin Delano Roosevelt, chooses to stay in Manchester in the United Kingdom instead of being in his homeland where he can best make his contributions to national development.

And he has sunk into incoherent babbling.

First, he attacked Guyana’s draft Low Carbon Development Strategy ( LCDS) as a pipe dream, claiming it’s only good as a theoretical document for university students. Now he’s saying a top team should be assembled to lobby developed countries to make it fly. If he claims it’s no good, how can any top team help to make it fly? He has also shifted gears – from attacking the LCDS he has drifted to political excursions.

Mr Singh should really make up his mind about what’s on his mind and engage in meaningful discussions.

Why is he making a comparison between the LCDS and the National Development Strategy ( NDS)? The NDS has not been dumped.

And what is his alternative to the LCDS if it fails? He has not given any. He returns to his claim that the LCDS is all about “ personal aggrandisement” and “ selling one personality”, referring to President Bharrat Jagdeo’s efforts in lobbying the Guyana model.

The president has been in the forefront of the lobbying efforts by virtue of his office.

The recent North American Caribbean Teachers Association ( NACTA) poll testified to how very popular he is among Guyanese.

He is so popular that although the current Guyana Constitution prevents him from running for a third term as president, voters overwhelmingly prefer him to continue as head of government.

Mr Singh's reference to the PPP and the PNC is befuddling. The LCDS is not about political parties – it's a draft strategy that is visionary and projected to unfold in the long term, long after President Jagdeo would have left office. Mr Singh talks about “ my people” losing opportunity after opportunity.

So why does he not seize the opportunity and articulate his position on a better road ahead?

Regards, Todd Morgan

August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009 | By Stabroek News | Filed Under Letters

*Dear Editor,*

I refer to the many articles in the press by various government officials and others on global warming, LCDS and the impending sea level rise and its consequences on the coastal areas, and would like to enquire as to whether the new sea level has been established and what are the projected engineering sea levels to be used in the design format for present-day coastal structures.

An article in SN on August 17 by Dr B Ramcharran stated that the sea level in Guyana since 1950 had risen 1.7 feet, ie 510mm in accordance with a measurement by World Bank expert, Gerald Meier. The lawyer also recommended relocation of the population to higher ground. He did not provide info on costs, location, etc, for this operation.

The rise in sea levels will shorten the discharge window for sluices as well as reduce the hydraulic head between internal drains and sea and river sluices' outlets. In other words drainage time will be reduced resulting in longer periods of flooding during periods of heavy rainfall.

There will also be increased wave action on sea defence structures. It is imperative that a new sea level allowing for a projection for future increases be established and used for design purposes of coastal structures, including sluices, sea defences and embankments, etc.

The Hydraulics Division in collaboration with the University of Delft established the present sea level that I used for the design of the concrete sea walls and sluices during the 1960s and 1970s. Although the concrete walls are in good shape some 45 years later, I am very concerned about the battering the sea defences took in Better Hope/Plaisance last year, resulting in the destruction of the protective gabion baskets and displacement of the boulder slope, berm and coping. To date no repairs have been carried out.

If this is an indication of what is to come, I am indeed sorry for the people living on the East Coast of Demerara. The coastal areas have been neglected by the government for several years. I have not read anywhere what the new level is, or about the government intention to establish this revised level, only rhetoric about impending sea level rise and global warming. The

government to date has spent over US\$100M in the last few years in riprap sea defences, mostly in the riverain areas, and recently awarded sea defence contracts in the amount of some 14M euros for riprap sea defences for the East and West Berbice areas.

I have looked at the riprap built about 15 years ago and at present, and they all look the same to me – same toe and embankment levels, boulder sizes, etc. The outlet sea and river sluices also appear to copy the design used several years ago. I do not believe these new works are designed with any projection for sea level rise.

I would welcome a response from the relevant authorities.

*Yours faithfully,*

*Malcolm Alli*

August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009 | By Stabroek News | Filed Under Letters

*Dear Editor,*

Peter Persaud of TAAMOG (“The President gave responses to all the questions, concerns and recommendations aired at the regional consultations for LCDS’ SN, August 14) tells a different story from the formal records of these consultations as displayed on the LCDS website ([www.lcds.gov.gy](http://www.lcds.gov.gy)). Just taking the Annai meeting on June 19 as an example, at which Mr Persaud was present, and excluding the pro-forma “Support was expressed for the LCDS /Support for the LCDS was noted,” there were 18 points or questions raised by participants and answered by the President’s team. There were a further 68 points which were raised but for which the formal record indicates no response. Some of these latter points were duplicates – the same point raised by different participants – but still the number of unanswered points is quite different from the assertion of Mr Persaud, that “all of the questions, concerns, suggestions and recommendations raised were adequately answered and responded to in very simple language.”

The Office of Climate Change (OCC) is neither communicating the basis on which the LCDS is founded nor replying comprehensively to stakeholder questions. Why should any citizen make suggestions for improving the LCDS, via the black hole of the LCDS website which does not display such suggestions nor offer a debating forum, and when the OCC is silent? Stabroek News’ website offers an excellent example of an interactive website, on which anyone can post comments or read all the comments posted with regard to any news item, or letter or feature article. In addition, I am sure the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) would be happy to give the OCC guidance on how to run a debating forum.

Concerning the 15th Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at Copenhagen in December this year, Mr Persaud seems not to appreciate the nature of these mega-meetings. The draft negotiating text of 200 pages was debated at a technical meeting in Bonn in June 2009. A member of the OCC was present, and he will know

that in this text there was no mention of the LCDS. That text has to be distilled down to 30 pages for the Copenhagen meeting. There will be space for at most one page on Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD). It is misleading to imply that the LCDS, which has not been brought forward at technical working groups of the UNFCCC or to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), will suddenly have a significant role at Copenhagen. A few months before the Bali meeting of December 2007, Rashleigh Jackson, former Foreign Minister, had helpfully suggested that Guyana should “undertake a carefully structured and sustained diplomatic effort to attract support and to build solidarity alliances. I can think of approaches to Caricom, the Association of Caribbean States, Amazonian countries through ACTO, the RIO group...” (‘Guyana should build diplomatic support for its rainforest proposal’ SN, October 31, 2007). A few months later, I had suggested engagement with international technical groups (‘Guyana must take more active role in climate change arena – Bulkan’ SN, January 16, 2008.). Neither of these suggestions appears to have been taken up.

The OCC should be looking at the heavily square-bracketed UNFCCC text and using an open forum to debate how Guyana might profit by fitting into mainstream climate change negotiations instead of standing outside them. This is indeed a tremendous opportunity for a serious re-think about our medium-term and long-term development, but not through the sketchy paragraphs of the LCDS. Other commentators have pointed out that sea levels are going to rise by thermal expansion and the melting of glaciers and ice caps for decades ahead. Tipping unconsolidated riprap rock on the foreshore is pointless when the sea level will overwhelm the sea walls at or before the end of this century. This is a time to look again at the excellent work of the National Development Strategy of 1995-6 and to develop a realistic action plan which takes into account our greatly improved understanding of climate change over the last 13 years. Is the OCC up to this task?

*Yours faithfully,  
Janette Bulkan*

## **SO CONFUSED –**

August 16, 2009 | By Guyana Chronicle | Filed Under Letters

MR. SASENARINE Singh seems to be mired in confusion in his letter in the Kaieteur News edition of August 13 headed 'Where is Guyana's Franklin Delano Roosevelt?'

First off, Todd Morgan is alive and well and living in Guyana.

But Singh, who probably fancies himself a potential Franklin Delano Roosevelt, chooses to stay in Manchester in the United Kingdom instead of being in his homeland where he can best make his contributions to national development.

And he has sunk into incoherent babbling.

First, he attacked Guyana's draft Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) as a pipe dream, claiming it's only good as a theoretical document for university students.

Now he's saying a top team should be assembled to lobby developed countries to make it fly. If he claims it's no good, how can any top team help to make it fly?

He has also shifted gears – from attacking the LCDS he has drifted to political excursions.

Mr. Singh should really make up his mind about what's on his mind and engage in meaningful discussions.

Why is he making a comparison between the LCDS and the National Development Strategy (NDS)? The NDS has not been dumped.

And what is his alternative to the LCDS if it fails? He has not made any.

He returns to his claim that the LCDS is all about "personal aggrandizement" and "selling one personality", referring to President Bharrat Jagdeo's efforts in lobbying the Guyana model.

The President has been in the forefront of the lobbying efforts by virtue of his office and the recent North American Caribbean Teachers Association (NACTA) poll testified to how very popular he is among Guyanese. He is so popular that although the current Guyana Constitution precludes him for running for a third term as President, voters overwhelmingly prefer him to continue as head of government.

Mr. Singh's reference to the PPP and the PNC is befuddling.  
The LCDS is not about political parties – it's a draft strategy that is visionary and projected to unfold in the long term long after President Jagdeo would have left office.  
Mr. Singh talks about “my people” losing opportunity after opportunity.  
So why does he not seize the opportunity and articulate his position on a better road ahead?  
He really should get a grip on reality.

TODD MORGAN

### **Mr. Singh should make up his mind and engage in meaningful discussions**

August 16, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

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Mr. Sasanarine Singh seems to be mired in confusion in his letter in the Kaieteur News edition of August 13, headed, “Where is Guyana's Franklin Delano Roosevelt?”

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Todd Morgan

August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009 | By Stabroek News | Filed Under Letters

*Peter Persaud respond to Janet Bulkan August 14*

*Dear Editor,*

I wish to refer to a letter under the caption ‘The LDCS website is not complying with the process document for communications about LCDS’ by Janette Bulkan, in your issue of August 7.

Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) continues to be subjected to unfair and misleading comments by persons at present not living in Guyana. Instead of being on the ground to witness the massive outpouring of support for the LCDS, they prefer to write misleading letters to the press and elsewhere from their homes in countries in the developed world. Ms Bulkan stated that she was not in a position to submit suggestions for the improvement of the LCDS because, “The LCDS has completely failed to indicate in what format suggestions might be made.” This is a lame and unacceptable excuse. If Ms Bulkan was serious about contributing to the improvement of the LCDS, she would have contacted the Office of Climate Change simply by the telephone, e-mail or fax, in the same way she makes contact with the media houses in Guyana. But Ms Bulkan does not appear to be interested in the improvement of the LCDS. Nothing in this life is perfect, but with heart and soul harmoniously working together we can all strive for perfection. Ms Bulkan went on to say that “the OCC should be operating in a much more transparent manner and supplying much more information.” This misrepresentation was nailed by the World Bank Country Representative for Guyana, Mr Giorgio Valentini, who said that “the process is very well managed, well designed, very open and transparent.”

What more does Ms Bulkan want to hear? But like the ostrich which buries its head in the sand, Ms Bulkan will not face up to the truth.

In relation to the technical aspects of the LCDS, I am satisfied that the Office of Climate Change (OCC) has the technical capacity and expertise to deal with such matters. In the 5th and 6th paragraphs of the letter, Ms Bulkan stated that Guyana's LCDS is not recognized in international UNFCCC negotiations as well as the international institute for sustainable development leading up to the Copenhagen meeting in December 2009. [Ed note: Ms Bulkan did not say this; she referred to the fact that the President's draft LCDS "does not figure in 'The Little REDD Book,'" which was the reason for "the lack of attention to the LCDS numbers in the international UNFCCC negotiations." ] This again is misleading. The LCDS was the focus at lots of international meetings where it was given due consideration and it will again be presented at the Copenhagen meeting in December. Ms Bulkan seems thirsty for accurate information and it boggles the mind why she is not collaborating with the OCC and the GFC for such information about the LCDS and the REDD preparations before she writes her letters for public consumption.

Finally, Ms Bulkan states, "I would also be grateful if the OCC would ensure that all the questions raised and reported at the multi-stakeholder consultations and the succeeding 'awareness sessions' are fully answered. Too many of the questions are not being answered by the President's teams." This is not true and Ms Bulkan is again being misleading. I attended all the consultations in the regions in my capacity as a member of the Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana (TAAMOG) and member of the multi-stakeholder steering committee of the LCDS and I can attest to the fact that all of the questions, concerns, suggestions and recommendations raised were adequately answered and responded to in very simple language by the consultation team Ms Bulkan did not attend these consultations because she is not living in Guyana so her information here is definitely not credible. Further at the National Toshaos Council Meeting held at the International Convention Centre, President Jagdeo spent an entire day with the Toshaos explaining to them in very simple language what the LCDS is all about. Questions and concerns were raised and they were adequately answered and responded to by the President. At the meeting a wide cross-section of Guyanese society was invited, including a World Bank visiting team, foreign diplomats and members of the multi-stakeholder steering committee. What was pleasing to hear was that the Toshaos generally gave their support to the LCDS as they articulated their respective positions before the President.

*Yours faithfully,*  
*Peter Persaud*

## **Where is Guyana's Franklin Delano Roosevelt?**

August 13, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

It is most unfortunate that one Todd "the phantom" Morgan was so upset with my writings. I am glad that this letter was sent to Kaieteur News since it is now possible to trace the IP address and expose this phantom writer.

Until I verify authenticity of this phantom writer, there is no reason to respond to these unsubstantiated charged but the most I can offer at this time is – Thank you for your comments.

Let us me make a few issues clear for the reading public:

1. Did Guyana not have a development strategy called the NDS, and what was done with it after the father of the nation passed away? We dumped it?
2. What makes this LCDS any better than our NDS?
3. What is the strategic alternative when the LCDS fails in December? None in place!
4. Guyana is going to be the pin up child for now, for platitude after platitude from all the celebrities of the world who want to be associated with the Green Movement because we fully subscribe to the flavour of the day. However, did Prince Charles or the World Bank Country Representative or the Government of Switzerland offer the minimum US\$60 million to make this document implementable? Not a chance!
5. Without this sort of cash in the pot, this document remains a good theoretical teaching aid in a University.
6. To make this document fly, we must assemble a top team (e.g. Bayney Karran, Odeen Ishmael, Clive Thomas, Sir Shridat Ramphal) to lobby the ABC, BRIC and EU countries on what we are offering, what we want and how our vision synchronise with and will help their political and economic ambitions. Let us professionally position this document in front of the right people. Our ad-hoc advocacy of this document is most pathetic.

7. I shall offer India's public position for the Copenhagen initiatives in a subsequent letter but if any schoolchild reads India's position, they are sure to agree with my conclusions that this Strategy will not fly. All we have been doing is selling one personality with our LCDS and the fact remains that no one man is capable of positioning such a big issue competently. This is what I mean by personal aggrandisement since it appears as a one-man show and this makes this document very high risk because when this key man walks away, what insurance does Guyana have that we will have continuity? Is this another CARIFESTA where we pretend to be the Caribbean that we can pull off that short-term measure and then deprive ourselves of a Veladrome, which is a more long-term measure?

Again, I ask the reading public to note some positions that I have advocated for years and still consistently stuck to them like:

1. I still firmly believe that the PNC is a liability to Guyana and has offered Afro-Guyanese very poor leadership after Hoyte left the scene. Only weeks ago I re-emphasised these positions, but I did not see Todd "the phantom" Morgan commenting on that position?

2. I am of the firm belief that the PPP still have many good leaders who genuinely care about Guyana rather than themselves. Top of my list are people like Roger Luncheon, Donald Ramotar, Ralph Ramkarran, Robeson Benn, Moses Nagamotoo, Navin Chandarpal, Frank Anthony, Robert Persaud, and young Irfaan Ali and there are many others at the mid level and they must be recognised as such. However, they are all expected to hold their tongue until the time is right. However, I can clearly express my views that something is seriously wrong with the way Guyana is plotting its developmental course and someone must be held responsible for the subsequent misery this experiment will cost us.

3. I have the highest respect for people like Ravi Dev; Raphael Trotman and Prakash Ramjattan, since I think they are some of the most progressive thinkers Guyana has at home since the days of the Fenton Ramsohoye's. These are men ahead of their time and unfortunately the people may not be inclined to reward their intellectual fortitude deservedly because the people do not understand adequately what they represent in the quagmire of misinformation that exists in Guyana. That is why they have to join together and visit every home in every village and get their messages across that they are the alternative to the PPP and not the PNC and thus there is no need for racial fears anymore because they will join with the PPP in crushing the PNC. I always advocated that all Afro-Guyanese can comfortably find a home in either the AFC or the PPP. The fact remains that by just mentioning the words "vote PNC" or "vote for the Palm Tree" to certain people, and they will tell you, they prefer to eat salt and rice than to be ruled by the PNC. To be honest I feel this way too. I am not racist and I can easily vote for a Raphael Trotman or a Roger Luncheon or a Robeson Benn or a Clive Thomas with no racial fear and no concern about my rights being abused but substitute these Afro-Guyanese names with a Hamilton Green or a Robert Corbin and alarm bells start to ring like crazy. The first four Afro-Guyanese leaders represent a different value structure than the later two and that is the crux of the matter.

8. I have nothing personal against the President but am very disappointed that the realistic dreams and ambitions of Cheddi Jagan are not being given the attention they deserve such as:

- a. A social cohesion programme to help our people work out their issues since as a society we are going through some of our worst days as suspicion among our people abounds;
- b. A social programme that will help our youths prepare themselves for nation building rather than continue with the dismal situation where their only alternative is suicide, murder, robbery and crime at a pace like if there is no tomorrow;
- c. A crime prevention programme that is results oriented and not the status quo that currently

exist which demonstrates reckless irresponsibility at all levels in the power structure and security system as it continue to take its toll on innocent people whom are totally fed up but have no choice but to live through the fear and pray for the best. This is certainly not the way to live;

d. Delivering on our promise to the youths to support them with that Olympic Pool, that Synthetic Track, that Veladrome and those three Sports Complexes in Essequibo, Berbice and Linden.

e. Commence the paving of the Linden to Lethem Road. This will create new jobs and opportunities for our people.

f. My favourite, the Hydro Project. I lived through the PNC regime when we had to study for our GCE "A" levels with Kero Lamp, so why on earth 17 years after the dawn of the new era, children in Guyana are still studying without the support of GPL?

g. What happen to the completion of the MMA that will allow for better management of our water control system?

h. And the list goes on and on.

9. In Guyana today, it appears that financial planning at the highest level is well bedded in "ad-hoc" (tek a 25 million to catch the arsonist, a 50 million for 'Fineman', a 10 million for this and that and the other. It is almost like "Comedy Non Stop" in charge at the Treasury, there is no clear long-term developmental plan). I rest my case since Guyana is neither about those whom can afford generators and bodyguards nor those (like me) who have the flexibility to be out of Guyana at this point in time. The real Guyana is about the real people, who have no choice but to withstand the trails and tribulations of living in a blackout infested, crime sympathetic, opportunity deficient, and hopeless situation. It does not matter if you are black or brown because in a hopeless situation, hopelessness is going to be your companion regardless of the texture of your hair.

I know many people in all strata of the Guyanese society who understand and agree with my position but out of fear for themselves and their family, they are holding their peace. They are fearful of raw vindictiveness and Animal Farm measures from the Dark Forces. However, the future will offer them an opportunity to express themselves. I have held my peace for 10 years and enough is enough. I prefer to die, that to witness silently, situations where my people continue to lose opportunity after opportunity because some people with the authority to help them, chose instead to satisfy their personal aggrandisement rather than serve and protect their people. History is replete with these Stalins who brought nothing but misery and stagnation to their people and we must stand up and be counted or we run the risk of short-changing our future generation their true inheritance.

Where is our Franklin Delano Roosevelt? I hope we find him or her in 2011 since time is not on Guyana's side.

Sasendarine Singh

## **The OCC should show us the factual bases on which the LCDS is based**

August 11th, 2009 | By Stabroek News | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

Todd Morgan is so anxious that I should improve the President's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) that his letter to the editor of the Guyana Chronicle was printed twice, on Sunday August 9 and Monday August 10 ('Detractors of Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy'). He feels that it is not patriotic to point out some of the weaknesses in the Guyana Forestry Commission's (GFC) proposal to the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Fund or the President's LCDS. I suggest that, on the contrary, the poor quality work by the GFC and the Office of Climate Change (OCC) in the Office of the President do Guyana no credit in the competition for international funds, and that correcting these weaknesses is or should be an obligation for these well-staffed offices. Stakeholders in civil society might be able to supplement both sketchy documents provided that we can see the factual bases and the reasoning on which these government offerings are based. I have already requested that the bases for the LCDS be placed in the public domain (my letters 'Wish lists for LCDS' in KN, August 6, and 'The LCDS website is not complying with the process document for communications about LCDS' in SN, August 7) and the OCC has so far failed to respond.

In my series of 10 articles on carbon in the forests of Guyana which SN is publishing in feature columns, I am giving due credit to the GFC for laying out a plan to assess the dynamics of forest carbon. I am commenting in these columns on the uncertainty about the estimates, and on the reluctance of the GFC to use its wealth of data accumulated since 1908, as well as on the inconsistencies in the GFC proposals to the World Bank. More stringent comments have been made by the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) of the Forest Carbon Partnership Fund, and these are on the FCPF website -

<http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/fcp/Node/179> – (but nothing mentioned on the GFC’s own website). The World Bank’s country representative in Guyana does not seem to have read the TAP review (‘Guyana in climate change lead role’ in GC, August 9).

The President’s LCDS is a brief spending plan, lacking in usable detail, for an assumed income corresponding to an annual 10 per cent annuity of about US\$ 580 million, on a capital sum estimated from the deliberate deforestation of 90 per cent of the natural tropical forest after destructive logging and mining at an average rate of 4 per cent per year (630,000 ha/year) for 25 years. The deforestation would then be followed by commercial plantations. The McKinsey report used unpublished data to suggest that the hinterland of Guyana contains 2.2 million hectares (Mha) of Class 1 agricultural soils and 0.8 Mha of Class 2 hilly soils (of which 0.5 Mha are in the Rupununi and so presumably subject to Amerindian land claims).

These 3.0 Mha would be used for “rice, fruit production, and other agricultural efforts,” according to McKinsey. The other 12.1 Mha of land to be deliberately deforested would be used for “oil palm, softwood pulp or hardwood tree plantations.” No supporting evidence was provided to show that such schemes would be biologically feasible or financially profitable; there are no extant trials on these soils of modern agricultural varieties or forest plantation species, and the National Agricultural Research Institute has been conspicuously silent on the LCDS.

Both the President and the Minister of Agriculture have claimed repeatedly, and most recently in the address to the PPP members of the National Assembly (‘LCDS: an example of Guyana pursuing solutions,’ GC, August 9), that “there is considerable demand for the unallocated State forests by both local and foreign investors,” but the government has not responded to my request for publication of details; so much for the government’s respect for Article 13 in the Guyana Constitution.

The negotiations between the Roraima rice farmer Quarteiro and the government for a 50-year lease for commercial agriculture in the Rupununi have not been placed in the public domain (‘Guyanese President wants to support Brazilian’s project’ by Elissan Paula Rodrigues. *Folha de Boa Vista*, July 30, 2009; “‘Land concession good for 50 years, says Marcio Junqueira,” *Folha de Boa Vista*, July 30, 2009; and ‘Quartiero comes to an agreement with Guyana’ by Ribamar Rocha, *Folha de Boa Vista*, August 4, 2009). There has been no explanation of the interest in the unallocated State Forest not already declared by the GFC as inoperable, reserved for biodiversity and habitat conservation or subject to Amerindian claims. The remaining area is some 2.8 Mha (GFC 2008 data), very different from the 15.1 Mha which the LCDS proposes for deforestation. Exactly why there is the claimed interest is not explained, but Guyana being ‘a soft touch’ for

foreign direct investors, with no insistence on fulfilment of vaguely worded investment plans, acceptance of shady accounting and easy export of income, a low level of government supervision and easy evasion of laws and regulations, makes this country a target for crooks.

So as currently presented, the LCDS scenario looks very weak. The idea that foreign donors would be prepared to pay the Office of the President around US\$580 million per year not to sponsor this deforestation is just fantastical. Why does not Guyana use its membership of the 40-countries Coalition for Rainforest Nations to work up proposals which are more in the mainstream? Why also has the OCC put on the LCDS website the first version of The Little REDD Book (which summarises the variety of mainstream proposals) instead of the expanded second edition? That second edition was circulated at the Bonn meeting in June this year, at which a member of the OCC was present. The second edition can be downloaded from – [http://www.globalcanopy.org/themedia/file/PDFs/LRB\\_lowres/lrb\\_en.pdf](http://www.globalcanopy.org/themedia/file/PDFs/LRB_lowres/lrb_en.pdf)

Why also is the OCC not supporting the Amerindians who have sovereignty over the above-ground carbon in the forests on titled Amerindian Village Lands to develop their own projects for trading carbon and other global environmental benefits, as governments in Brazil and Indonesia are supporting their indigenous peoples?

In summary, before calling on civil society to do the OCC's work, the OCC needs to rationalize the LCDS and place in the public domain the factual bases for the calculation of the Economic Valuation to the Nation. After that, we can begin to question the McKinsey and presidential contentions that there are no trading markets at present for forest-based environmental services (wrong, there is a trading market for biodiversity) or for carbon (wrong, tropical forest-based carbon has been traded since 1993 on the voluntary market), and question why McKinsey used its own off-beat valuation system instead of the mainstream valuation methods of which the GFC at least will be aware; such as the FAO Forestry Paper number 127, 1995 "Valuing forests: context, issues and guidelines."

Yours faithfully,  
Janette Bulkan

## **Guyana has taken an advanced step by developing a LCDS**

August 11, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

I am a Peruvian graduate student specialising in environmental science. (I am writing to you from Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, where I am currently doing research).

Over the past year I have been looking at low-carbon strategies South American governments have been advocating. I have since seen that Guyana has taken a more advanced step by actually developing a “Low-Carbon Development Strategy” (LCDS) which is attracting attention in many of the Latin American countries.

On June 16, I had the opportunity to attend the main session of the Americas Symposium on Energy and Climate in Lima and was privileged to hear the presentation by your country’s representative at the forum on the LCDS.

That articulate presentation was made by your country’s Ambassador to Venezuela, Dr. Odeen Ishmael.

His speech received much attention and attracted wide discussion and there was some reportage in our media. I think it was significant that Ambassador Ishmael was there since he is well-known in diplomatic, political and academic circles in Latin America through his past activities at the OAS; also, his writings on South American issues are widely published in both English and Spanish in regional newspapers and online publications. Thus, he was probably the best messenger the Guyana government could have sent to this forum in Peru.

It is important that the LCDS should acquire wide understanding and support in South America – after all, Guyana is a member of UNASUR.

Therefore, I suggest that information in Spanish should be posted on the LCDS website which

my colleagues and I check regularly. So far, the only piece of available information in Spanish is Ambassador Ishmael's speech in Lima, the text of which I found on the Guyana News and Information site at Guyana.org. I am a bit surprised that this is not yet posted on the official LCDS site, but I do hope this will be done soon, so that more Latin Americans can acquire information of this innovative strategy promoted by your country.

Isabella Sanchez

### **Show us the factual bases on which the LCDS is founded**

August 11, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

Todd Morgan is so anxious that I should improve the President's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) that his letter to the Editor of the Guyana Chronicle was printed twice, on Sunday August 09 and Monday August 10 2009 ("Detractors of Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy").

He feels that it is not patriotic to point out some of the weaknesses in the Guyana Forestry Commission's (GFC) proposal to the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Fund or the President's LCDS.

I suggest that, on the contrary, the poor quality work by the GFC and the Office of Climate Change (OCC) in the Office of the President do Guyana no credit in the competition for international funds, and that correcting these weaknesses is or should be an obligation for these well staffed offices.

Stakeholders in civil society might be able to supplement both sketchy documents provided that we can see the factual bases and the reasoning on which these government offerings are based. I have already requested that the bases for the LCDS be placed in the public domain (my letters "Wish lists for LCDS" in Kaieteur News, August 06, and "The LCDS website is not complying with the process document for communications about LCDS" in SN, August 07 2009) and the OCC has so far failed to respond.

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I am commenting in these columns on the uncertainty about the estimates, and on the reluctance of the GFC to use its wealth of data accumulated since 1908, as well as on the inconsistencies in the GFC proposals to the World Bank. More stringent comments have been made by the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) of the Forest Carbon Partnership Fund, and these are on the FCPF website -

<http://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/fcp/Node/179> - (but nothing mentioned on the GFC's own website). The World Bank's country representative in Guyana does not seem to have read the TAP review ("Guyana in climate change lead role" in Guyana Chronicle, August 09, 2009). The President's LCDS is a brief spending plan, lacking in usable detail, for an assumed income corresponding to an annual 10 per cent annuity of about US\$580 million, on a capital sum estimated from the deliberate deforestation of 90 per cent of the natural tropical forest after destructive logging and mining at an average rate of 4 per cent per year (~630,000 ha/year) for 25 years.

The deforestation would then be followed by commercial plantations. The McKinsey report used unpublished data to suggest that the hinterland of Guyana contains 2.2 million hectares (Mha) of Class 1 agricultural soils and 0.8 Mha of Class 2 hilly soils (of which 0.5 Mha are in the Rupununi and so presumably subject to Amerindian land claims).

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would be prepared to pay the Office of the President around US\$580 million per year not to sponsor this deforestation is just fantastical.

Why does not Guyana use its membership of the 40-countries Coalition for Rainforest Nations to work up proposals which are more in the mainstream?

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In summary, before calling on civil society to do the OCC's work, the OCC needs to rationalise the LCDS and place in the public domain the factual bases for the calculation of the Economic Valuation to the Nation.

After that, we can begin to question the McKinsey and Presidential contentions that there are no trading markets at present for forest-based environmental services (wrong, there is a trading market for biodiversity) or for carbon (wrong, tropical forest-based carbon has been traded since 1993 on the voluntary market), and question why McKinsey used its own off-beat valuation system instead of the mainstream valuation methods of which the GFC at least will be aware; such as the FAO Forestry Paper number 127, 1995 "Valuing forests: context, issues and guidelines".

Janette Bulkan

## **The Core assumptions of the LCDS document are flawed**

August 8th, 2009 | By Stabroek News | Filed Under Letters

*Dear Editor,*

With reference to the letter from Mr Michael E. Brotherson, from the Office of the Climate Change Unit in the SN ('Errors of fact in letters on LCDS,' August 5) there are just a few points that I would like to clarify:

1. I must first thank him for highlighting the numbers recognised by the Climate Change Unit as per the size of our forest at 15.9 million hectares. However, even if one uses his numbers, Guyana will still have ca 0.4% of the world's standing forest. Thus, there is no material difference in the analysis and this leaves one to wonder if this is an attempt by Mr Brotherson to discredit my analysis by being economical with the facts.
2. My message remains very simple – the LCDS will not fly in its current form. It is sub-optimal to pursue a strategy that is subject to failure as a result of flawed assumptions.
3. I have for Mr Brotherson's information read that document again after his letter and remain even more convinced that the foundation and core assumptions of the document are severely flawed. As a result of this flawed document, the owners will fail come December and they must not, upon their return from Copenhagen, blame anyone but themselves for their failure. The G-15 countries are just not ready to compensate Guyana for its forest, and that is a fact.
4. The government can pull out all the theatrics to convince themselves and the local diplomatic community that they have held national consultations and that the majority of the people and the national parliament are fully signed on to this plan. However, theatrics will not work when the G-15 countries assemble in Copenhagen to meet with the rest of the world. These chaps will be

mercenary in defending their vested interest, and this is where Guyana will fail since there is too little money available at this point in time to encourage any significant flow south (save and except the flow from Norway).

5. The G-15 leaders are answerable to their respective people and they will be looking after their homes first before they will ever consider silly threats from Guyana to cut down its forest. Who cares if Guyana cuts down its forest; it is only 0.4% of the standing forest in the world. If Russia or Canada or Brazil harms their forest materially, then we have a crisis on our hands.

Now let us remove all the fluff from this document, break it down into nuts and bolts, and put a splash of reality into it:

- What does the Government of Guyana want? (Payments for our forest)
- What are they offering? (To preserve our standing forest in exchange for these payments)
- Which countries have committed real cash to date including the Carbon Trading Mechanism? (Norway which might be offering a few million US\$ in the near future)
- How are we going to get the world's main polluters to deliver what we want? (We will go to Copenhagen, present our LCDS, and then demand that the G-15 countries compensate us for preserving our forest. They will make declaration after declaration with minimal financial commitment since all of Obama's money is already earmarked for replanting his trees and to make his factories and cars more efficient – just ask Dr Steven Chu – Obama Energy Secretary)
- Are we going to get any real cash in the next 5 years? (small amounts)
- Do we have competitors for these funds (many, which will make our share of whatever pie is on offer less)

This LCDS document talks of many issues including:

- transition funds (which are not supported with any pot of funds at present)
- carbon market (which is right now under investigation in the UK because of VAT fraud fears)
- payments from partners (only Norway on board to date and the people with real cash, the G-15 countries are all ambiguous in their financial commitments)

Need I go on Mr Brotherson?

From where I stand, highlighting these issues is in no way intended to belittle the initiatives of the Government of Guyana. The principle of compensation for our standing forest is a commendable one, but in developing a project plan, you have to build it within the realities of the day and this is where this LCDS fails. It is a theoretical document with minimal realism. It can serve the nation best in a university classroom as teaching material on how not to construct a development strategy.

I wish them the best of luck, but practically this plan is the highway to nowhere and those who want to jump on that highway, be my guest. I am convinced that thousands of youths in Guyana have already made up their minds on the issue of which highway they do not want to be on and that is why they are fleeing Guyana from the front, side and back door.

*Yours faithfully,  
Sasnarine Singh*

## **Standing forest will help the bigger picture**

August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009 | By Guyana Times | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

One has to commend the president for his drive to promote Guyana's standing forests as an option to combating the effects of global warming and I am glad of this move. I don't believe that we in the developing countries understand just how severe the effects are and what implications this will have for us in a few years' time, especially since Guyana is in a precarious position, lying some six feet below sea level.

I don't believe that global warming will be stopped by one measure, but rather a combination of efforts.

Though there are debates on whether standing forests will make as much a difference, I do believe in the scientific fact that standing forests have proven to be of tremendous benefit not just to the atmosphere, but also to the environment and clearly, the preservation of forests should be one measure to combat global warming.

Many persons doubt the chances of the Low Carbon Development Strategy being successful; that, to be honest, I don't know myself.

But what I do know is people who dismiss the LCDS under the premise of it not being workable, or us being unable to sell it to the developed world have not understood the essence of it.

I have not, so far, been privy to the strategy or the consultations, but I can say that using standing forests in conjunction with other strategies is what President Jagdeo's focus should be and for critics of the proposal, they should know that this proposal is not the absolute or only way to mitigate the effects of global warming, but it will help a lot.

There are many misconceptions about the LCDS in Guyana and I would remind Mr Jagdeo's team that they need to dispel these misconceptions.

They are people bent on discrediting a measure that whilst it does not profess to be the only answer, will have a truly significant impact on the world.

Yours sincerely, Jailall Kemchand

### **The LCDS website is not complying with the process**

August 7th, 2009 | By Stabroek News | Filed Under Letters

*Dear Editor,*

In its partial reply ('Correcting errors of fact,' GC, August 3) the Office of Climate Change (OCC) in the Office of the President says that I "have not submitted any ideas or suggestions for the purpose of improving the Strategy." That is because the OCC or manager of the LCDS website is not complying with the process document for communications about LCDS. It should be possible for anyone to see what proposals are being made. In that way, people don't waste their time in duplicating suggestions, and the OCC does not waste time in replying to duplicates. There was a button on the website for "Responses" but that was never active and has now been removed. The LCDS has completely failed to indicate in what format suggestions might be made, whether they should be confined to the major headings on pages 20-29 of the LCDS draft of June 2009 – hydropower, drainage, fiber optic cables, fruits and vegetables, etc, – or if they can deal with more institutional and policy matters such as improving governance, supporting transparency, decreasing corruption, etc, without which donor funding supplied under REDD or LCDS is likely to be wasted relative to the official objectives.

The OCC needs to re-read the process document and remind itself what it is committed to in relation to Norwegian support for the LCDS process. The OCC should be operating in a much more transparent manner and supplying much more information.

The LCDS fails to indicate if proposals should be for the vast sums which are proposed in the draft LCDS without any public domain supporting documents; the OCC claims that these figures

“were the result of months of research, data gathering, and expert inputs from local and international expertise.” Then let us see the compilations resulting from these studies, not just one-paragraph pies in the sky.

Surely the OCC can appreciate that donor agencies are likely to need better justification for supporting investment in hydropower than a single paragraph? Or perhaps that is precisely why the government has failed to secure funding for the Amaila Falls hydropower dam?

Given that the President’s draft LCDS does not figure in ‘The Little REDD Book,’ which has compiled the major proposals for REDD during the period leading up to the COP15 climate change summit at Copenhagen (and which the OCC is required by the process document for communications about LCDS to put up on the website and has failed to do so), and thus the lack of attention to the LCDS numbers in the international UNFCCC negotiations, what is the motivation for anyone to make proposals for LCDS spending when there is no assurance of income?

I would be grateful if the OCC would list the technical meetings and working groups in the UNFCCC context where the Government of Guyana has made contributions but which curiously have escaped the attention of the highly professional reporters of the International Institute for Sustainable Development which compiles the Earth Negotiations Bulletins. Can the OCC explain why the draft LCDS does not figure in reports on the UNFCCC technical and working group discussions?

I would also be grateful if the OCC would ensure that all the questions raised and reported at the multi-stakeholder consultations and the succeeding “awareness sessions” are fully answered. Too many of the questions are not being answered by the President’s teams.

Finally, can the OCC say why the LCDS is not suggesting projects to test various modalities for operating REDD schemes, as Brazil and Indonesia are encouraging? Why is Guyana confined to one single, non-mainstream approach which has no resonance internationally?

Wouldn’t there be a greater chance of securing international funding if Guyana’s proposal were to try to conform to proposal guidelines elsewhere?

*Yours faithfully,*

*Janette Bulkan*

## **LCDS is a theoretical document with minimal realism**

August 7, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

With reference to the letter from Mr. Michael E. Brotherson, from the Office of the Climate Change Unit in the Kaieteur News (August 4, 2009) there are just a few points that I would like to clarify:

1. - I must first thank him for highlighting the numbers recognised by the Climate Change Unit as per the size of our forest at 15.9 million hectares. However, even if one uses his numbers, Guyana will still have c0.4% of the world's standing forest. Thus, there is no material difference in the analysis and this leaves one to wonder if this is an attempt by Mr. Brotherson to discredit my analysis by being economical with the analytical facts.
2. My message remains very simple – the LCDS will not fly in its current form. It is sub-optimal to pursue a strategy that is subject to failure as a result of flawed assumptions.
3. I have for Brotherson's information read that document again after his letter and remain even more convinced that the foundation and core assumptions of the document is severely flawed. As a result of this flawed document, the owners will fail come December and they must not, upon their return from Copenhagen, blame anyone but themselves for their failure. They must be men, not boys and take the responsibility for this failure squarely on their own shoulders. The G-15 countries are just not ready to compensate Guyana for its forest and that is a fact.
4. The Government can pull out all the theatrics out to convince themselves and the local diplomatic community that they have done national consultations and that the majority of the people and the national parliament are fully signed on to this plan. However, theatrics will not work when the G-15 countries assemble in Copenhagen to meet with the rest of the world. These chaps will be mercenary in defending their vested interest and this is where Guyana will

fail since there is too little money available at this point in time to encourage any significant flow south (save an except the flow from Norway).

5. The G-15 leaders are answerable to their respective people and they will be looking after their homes first before they will ever consider silly threats from Guyana to cut down its forest.

Who care if Guyana cut down its forest, it is only 0.4% of the standing forest in the world? If Russia or Canada or Brazil harms their forest materially, then we have a crisis on our hands.

Now let us remove all the fluff from this document, break it down into nuts and bolts, and put a splash of reality into it:

- What does the Government of Guyana want? (Payments for our forest)
- What are they offering? (To preserve our standing forest in exchange for these payments)
- Which countries have committed real cash to date including the Carbon Trading Mechanism (Norway whom might be offering a few million US\$ in the near future)
- How are we going to get the world's main polluters to deliver what we want? (We will go to Copenhagen, present our LCDS, and then demand that the G-15 countries compensate us for preserving our forest.

They will make declaration after declaration with minimal financial commitment since all of Obama's money is already earmarked for replanting his trees and to make his factories and cars more efficient – just ask Dr Steven Chu – Obama Energy Secretary)

- Are we going to get any real cash in the next 5 years (small amounts)
- Do we have competitors for these funds (many, which make our share of whatever pie on offer less)

This LCDS document talks of many issues including:

- transition funds (which is not supported with any pot of funds at present)
- carbon market (which is right now under investigation in the UK for VAT fraud fears)
- payments from partners (only Norway on board to date and the people with real cash, the G-15 countries are all ambiguous in their financial commitments to date) Need I go on Mr.

Brotherson?

From where I stand, highlighting these issues is in no way intended to belittle the initiatives of the Government of Guyana. The principle of compensation for our standing forest is a commendable one, but in developing a project plan, you have to build it within the realities of the day and this is where this LCDS fails. It is a theoretical document with minimal realism.

It can serve the nation best in a University classroom as teaching material on how not to construct a development strategy.

I wish them the best of luck but practically this plan is the highway to nowhere and those who want to jump on that highway, be my guest. I am convinced that thousands of youths in Guyana have already made their minds on the issue of which highway they do not want to be on and that is why they are fleeing Guyana from the front, side and back door.

Sasnarine Singh

Manchester, UK

## **Errors of fact in letters on LCDS**

August 6th, 2009 | By Stabroek News | Filed Under Letters

*Dear Editor,*

We, The Office of Climate Change, Office of the President, have taken notice of several letters on Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) in the letters column of Stabroek News. We welcome this level of interest and these comments in the main, but would like to offer a response on a number of errors of fact. We have chosen to address points that were raised in the letters by Mr Sasenarine Singh on July 30, 2009, and Ms Janette Bulkan, July 31, 2009, respectively.

Mr Singh needs to check the accuracy of the information he presents. For example, Guyana has approximately 13.8 million hectares of forests under state forest and approximately 2.1 million hectares as Amerindian titled lands, bringing this to a total of approximately 15.9 million hectares of forested land. Mr Singh then makes the point about the UN only having a budget of around US\$3B and this would not be able to provide the funds needed to compensate countries that have espoused avoided deforestation in the context of pursuing low carbon development. Mr Singh clearly has not understood what the LCDS is proposing and also what is being put forward in terms of the evolution of the carbon market and its inclusion of forest carbon. Mr Singh indicates that Guyana is too exposed to the imminent Copenhagen agreement. In this regard, we wish to note the following:

An adaptation fund has been approved in 2009, and other fund mechanisms are in the negotiating text on the table.

There is a carbon market which all agree will grow as the pressure for Annex 1 countries to mitigate grows.

Fund and market sources of revenue flows for REDD, sustainable forest management and standing forest are already in the negotiating text that is headed for COP 15 in December.

Many of the most powerful countries of the world have pledged support for REDD outside of the Copenhagen Agreement. This was clearly manifested in the G8 summit declaration which included a statement on the need to include forest conservation in a future climate agreement. It states, inter alia, "...support the development of positive incentives in particular for developing countries to promote emission reductions through actions to reduce deforestation and forest degradation..."

It is apposite, therefore, to note that while initially a fund approach could be the source of financial flows, the medium to long term objective, starting with a successor agreement to the present Kyoto Protocol, is to have a carbon market which includes forest carbon, and over time, this market can expand to include ecosystem services.

Mr Singh has recognised the leadership President Jagdeo has been taking on the issue of forests nationally and internationally and we want to assure him that Guyana is also working closely with other international partners and countries, including developed countries and countries with forests, to address the existing anomaly of the exclusion of forestry in the carbon markets at the UNFCCC Copenhagen Meeting.

Mr Singh's notion of the "high risk" nature of the LCDS is his opinion which he is free to express. The fact is, the Government of Guyana's intentions and those efforts of other Guyanese who are engaged in the process of the LCDS should not simply be discredited. There are many who welcome this strategy as a timely and worthy attempt to garner financial resources for the development of this country while reducing the prospects of a more resource depleting path and are entitled to their opinions of optimism too. Again, we wish to posit that Mr Singh considers garnering a better understanding of what Guyana is trying to do through the LCDS and how the international process is evolving so as to get a better picture of what Guyana, and other countries are working so hard to get as outcomes of the Copenhagen meeting.

Ms Bulkan has raised a number of issues on the LCDS consultation and awareness process and the ensuing reports as posted on the LCDS website. We would like to thank Ms Bulkan for her regular visits to the LCDS website which is being updated continuously with the reports from the consultations and awareness sessions. These reports are comprehensive and include the questions, comments and suggestions from participants and the responses from the consultations teams. A check of each of the reports would verify this fact. She refers to not enough details being given to the budgets and data identified in pages 20-29. Interestingly though, she concurs that the team comprising specialists from the McKinsey Group and the Government of Guyana

did not 'dream up' these figures which were the result of months of research, data gathering, and expert inputs from local and international expertise.

Ms Bulkan also questions Guyana's representation and participation at international climate change meetings. Ms Bulkan unfortunately is not privy to all the discussion spaces within the various negotiating points in the UN and elsewhere when the international community engages in the issues of climate change and therefore some of her statements lack that advantage. She has suggested, even accused us, of failing to do our work at that level. We would wish to assure your readership that Guyana is an active participant in these discussions at the technical level in the UNFCCC negotiations, and works closely with the Coalition for Rainforest Nations in and out of the UNFCCC meetings. Furthermore the Caricom states, at the highest level, have committed to joining our advocacy as demonstrated in the recent meeting of heads of government. The Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB) does not do verbatim reporting but highlights and discusses points that are pertinent to their understanding of events. What Ms Bulkan may not realize is that the reporting bulletins do not report on every single intervention made in plenary. Furthermore, these do not report the full content of technical discussions at the break out working group level, where many agreements are struck for plenary adoption.

While we recognize the scholarship of these letter writers, we regret that apart from their pessimistic view of the draft LCDS, they have not submitted to us any idea and suggestion for the purpose of improving the strategy.

We encourage constructive discussion on the LCDS and we urge that all queries, views, advice and any other input on the LCDS be made through our web site [www.lcds.gov.gy](http://www.lcds.gov.gy) or by contacting me at the Office of Climate Change.

*Yours faithfully,*  
*Michael E. Brotherson*

## **Wish lists for LCDS**

August 6, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

In its partial reply (“Correcting errors of fact”, Guyana Chronicle, August 03, 2009) the Office of Climate Change (OCC) in the Office of the President says that, I, “have not submitted any ideas or suggestions for the purpose of improving the Strategy”.

That is because the OCC or manager of the LCDS website is not complying with the process document for communications about LCDS. It should be possible for anyone to see what proposals are being made.

In that way, people don’t waste their time in duplicating suggestions, and the OCC does not waste time in replying to duplicates.

There was a button on the website for “Responses” but that was never active and has now been removed.

The LCDS has completely failed to indicate in what format suggestions might be made, whether they should be confined to the major headings on pages 20-29 of the LCDS draft of June 2009 – hydropower, drainage, fibre optic cables, fruits and vegetables, etc. – or if they can deal with more institutional and policy matters such as improving governance, supporting transparency, decreasing corruption, etc., without which donor funding supplied under REDD or LCDS is likely to be wasted relative to the official objectives.

The OCC needs to re-read the process document and remind itself what it is committed to in relation to Norwegian support for the LCDS process.

The OCC should be operating in a much more transparent manner and supplying much more information.

The LCDS fails to indicate if proposals should be for the vast sums which are proposed in the draft LCDS without any public domain supporting documents; the OCC claims that these figures “were the result of months of research, data gathering, and expert inputs from local and international expertise”.

Then let us see the compilations resulting from these studies, not just one-paragraph pies in the sky.

Surely the OCC can appreciate that donor agencies are likely to need better justification for supporting investment in hydropower than a single paragraph? Or perhaps that is precisely why the government has failed to secure funding for the Amelia Falls hydropower dam?

Given that the President’s draft LCDS does not figure in ‘The Little REDD Book’, which has compiled the major proposals for REDD during the period leading up to the COP15 climate change summit at Copenhagen (and which the OCC is required by the process document for communications about LCDS to put up on the website and has failed to do so), and thus the lack of attention to the LCDS numbers in the international UNFCCC negotiations, what is the motivation for anyone to make proposals for LCDS spend when there is no assurance of income? I would be grateful if the OCC would list the technical meetings and working groups in the UNFCCC context where the Government of Guyana has made contributions, but which curiously have escaped the attention of the highly professional reporters of the International Institute for Sustainable Development, which compiles the Earth Negotiations Bulletins. Can the OCC explain why the draft LCDS does not figure in reports on the UNFCCC technical and working group discussions?

I would also be grateful if the OCC would ensure that all the questions raised and reported at the multi-stakeholder consultations and the succeeding “awareness sessions” are fully answered.

Too many of the questions are not being answered by the President’s teams.

Finally, can the OCC say why the LCDS is not suggesting projects to test various modalities for operating REDD schemes, as Brazil and Indonesia are encouraging?

Why is Guyana confined to one single, non-mainstream approach which has no resonance internationally?

Wouldn’t there be a greater chance of securing international funding if Guyana’s proposal were to try to conform to proposal guidelines elsewhere?

Janette Bulkan

**Did not say the LCDS would adversely affect small and medium scale miners**

August 6th, 2009 | By Stabroek News | Filed Under Letters

*Dear Editor,*

I would like to correct a serious mistake made by your reporter in an article in SN of your Sunday, August 2, edition, under the heading ‘Mercury in mining will have to go – Jagdeo.’

In no part of my speech or in a presentation document did I say that the President’s LCDS would have disastrous effects on the financial and social aspects of the small and medium-scale mining industry, as reported in the second paragraph of your article.

In my speech and the document I read on July 29, I stated that 90% of miners will go out of mining, should the GGMC (which entity had nothing to do with the President’s LCDS) implement a condition in a mining regulation, which was told to me and being told to miners by the Commissioner, and which states that miners would eventually have to stop mining, carry out an exploration programme, and get economic assay results, before they would be allowed to continue to mine and cut down any trees.

90% of the 260,000 ounces of gold sold to the Guyana Gold Board and valued at over US\$215M in 2008 was produced on medium scale permit areas, which operations will be affected if the impending new proposed condition for mining, is made law. This would mean that only 10% of miners would eventually continue to survive in mining, and they would have the financial capability of performing this difficult, costly and time-consuming operation. The majority of miners will find it difficult and probably not feasible, to purchase the special drill, finance the exploration cost, pay their instalments to banks and machinery financing firms like Macorp and General Equipment Ltd, take care of their families during this shut-down period, when no money is coming to them, from gold production and sales.

All miners who wish to remain in mining would have to import/purchase a special costly Saprolite Recovery Drill, and drill in difficult alluvial conditions, where the drill will encounter in these old alluvial river beds, all sizes of floating granite boulders, and hundreds of pieces of wood from dead trees. These drilling conditions would be a nightmare, and it would be almost impossible to recover a proper gold sample which would qualify them to be given permission to mine.

I said with 90% of miners going out of mining, this would have disastrous effects on the financial and social aspects of the small and medium-scale mining industry and beyond. There are many reasons, the most important ones are shown below:

- a) Miners are already in debt, having purchased costly mining equipment, including hydraulic excavators which cost as much as \$40M, some miners having mortgaged their properties/houses to get the financing.
- b) In 2008 the miners' workers, which number in the thousands from all over the towns and villages, the majority being Amerindians, were paid by miners over \$10B, based on 20% earnings in legally recorded gold sales of \$50B; they sent home this money to their wives, sisters, mothers and fathers.

With the shut-down of 90 % of mining operations, this money would no longer be available to the workers and their families, so you could imagine what would happen. With this massive increase in unemployment, there will be a great increase in poverty, crime and social degradation.

WWW-Guyanas project FG-64 Suriname: "Most people found closing the Gold Mines not an option. They predicted an increase in Poverty, Crime, and Social Problems."

There will not only be a tremendous financial loss to miners and their workers, but also a loss to other organizations, some of which are: the GGMC, which took in from miners \$3B in 2008;

GGB, which made a profit of \$245M in 2008; foreign exchange earnings which saw nearly \$250M from gold and diamonds in 2008; IRD, which collected \$1B from the miners in 2008;

service organizations like Interior Aircraft Services, which will suffer a tremendous drop in revenue and could in some cases go bankrupt, especially those which had just purchased additional aircraft.

At that meeting with the President at Hotel Tower, on July 29, I took the opportunity to appeal to him on behalf of the small and medium-scale miners, for the following three conditions:

Firstly, to stop the GGMC from implementing the condition that will stop all miners from mining until they did exploration, and proved economic assay results;

Secondly to allow the continued use of mercury, until such time that an economic alternative gold recovery system is found, because gold miners are using retorts when burning gold amalgam in the gold separation process, as retorts save the fumes from being inhaled by them, and the mercury is recovered and reused again, saving a lot of money in the process. Mercury is still the safest and most efficient amalgam gold recovery process to use. For educational and safety purposes, I will try to have an article published on the source and uses of mercury. You will be shocked at where mercury is found.

Thirdly, I also asked President Jagdeo to exempt, not a specific area, but a total acreage of between 5% and 7% of the forested area, from his area in his LCDS, for miners to continue to mine under the existing conditions. It is interesting to note that since alluvial mining commenced many years ago, only an area of a little over 1% of the forested area has so far been mined, while 50% of that 1 % has seen complete forest regeneration, which shows the slow pace at which miners are mining.

Over US\$1B in gold and diamonds have been produced by the small and medium-scale miners over the last couple of years, and more importantly, this was done over a small area. A fantastic performance by them.

The purpose of the said meeting on July 29 was advertised by the GGDMA, as

- i) for the President to explain the low Carbon Development Strategy, and listen to the concerns of all stakeholders in the industry;
- ii) to discuss the way forward for mining in Guyana, and listen to the miners on matters that affect the growth of the mining industry, as well as recommendations that will ensure its continued growth, and maintain its position as a major contributor to Guyana's economy.

Although President Jagdeo embarrassed me, and I felt very hurt, by stopping me from speaking, I was touched a second before that happened, when the entire mining audience loudly applauded what I had said, and unfortunately for me that applause helped to contribute to my having to be stopped from speaking, as I realized that the President did not want any serious mining negatives at that meeting, which could appear to reflect negatively on his LCDS programme, although what I said had absolutely nothing to do with the LCDS, a programme which I am backing 100 per cent.

We appeal to President Jagdeo to get the GGMC to delay any condition that would make it financially impossible for the majority of our small and medium-scale miners to survive.

*Yours faithfully,  
Patrick Pereira*

*Editor's note*

*We agree that Mr Pereira did not say that the LCDS of itself would have disastrous effects on mining and apologise to him for any inconvenience caused. However his input was made in the context of the LCDS.*

*At the meeting Mr Pereira said that miners had a "fear" and questioned whether it was a "co-incident" that the GGMC was enforcing the regulation that would put 90% of miners out of business at the same time as the LCDS was being promoted. He went on to say that should the government and the GGMC proceed with enforcing the regulation, there would be "disastrous" effects on the financial and social aspect of the small and medium-scale mining industry, and beyond.*

## **Correcting LCDS misconceptions**

August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009 | By Guyana Times | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

We at the Office of Climate Change, Office of the President, have taken notice of several letters on Guyanas Low Carbon Development Strategy ( LCDS) in the letters column of Stabroek News. We welcome this level of interest and these comments in the main, but would like to offer a response on a number of errors of fact. We have chosen to address points that were raised in the letters by Sasenarine Singh on July 30, and Janette Bulkan July 31 respectively.

Singh needs to check the accuracy of the information he presents. For example, Guyana has approximately 13.8 million hectares of forests under state forest and approximately 2.1 million hectares as Amerindian titled lands, bringing this to approximately 15.9 million hectares of forested land.

Singh makes the point about the UN only having a budget of around US\$ 3 billion and this would not be able to provide the funds needed to compensate countries that have espoused avoided deforestation in the context of pursuing low carbon development. Singh clearly has not understood what the LCDS is proposing and also what is being put forward in terms of the evolution of the carbon market and its inclusion of forest carbon. Singh indicated that Guyana is too exposed to the imminent Copenhagen agreement. In this regard, we wish to note the

following: • An adaptation fund has been approved in 2009, and other fund mechanisms are in the negotiating text on the table.

- There is a carbon market which, all agree, will grow as the pressure for Annex 1 countries to mitigate grows.

- Fund and market sources of revenue flows for REDD, sustainable forest management and standing forest are already in the negotiating text that is headed for COP 15 in December.

- Many of the most powerful countries of the world have pledged support for REDD outside of the Copenhagen Agreement.

This was clearly manifested in the G8 Summit Declaration which included a statement on the need to include forest conservation in a future climate agreement.

It states inter alia, "... support the development of positive incentives in particular for developing countries to promote emission reductions through actions to reduce deforestation and forest degradation..." It is apposite, therefore, to note that while initially a fund approach could be the source of financial flows, the medium- to long- term objective, starting with a successor agreement to the present Kyoto Protocol, is to have a carbon market which includes forest carbon, and over time, this market can expand to include ecosystem services.

Singh has recognised the leadership President Bharat Jagdeo has been taking on the issue of forests nationally and internationally, and we want to assure him that Guyana is also working closely with other international partners and countries, including developed countries and countries with forests, to address the existing anomaly of the exclusion of forestry in the carbon markets at the UNFCCC Copenhagen Meeting.

Singh's notion of the "high risk" nature of the LCDS is his opinion which he is free to express. The fact is, the government of Guyana's intentions and those efforts of other Guyanese who are engaged in the process of the LCDS should not simply be discredited.

There are many who welcome this strategy as a timely and worthy attempt to garner financial resources for the development of this country while reducing the prospects of a more resource-depleting path; they are entitled to their opinions of optimism, too. Again, we wish to posit that Singh should consider garnering a better understanding of what Guyana is trying to do through the LCDS and how the international process is evolving, so as to get a better picture of what Guyana and other countries are working

so hard to get, as outcomes of the Copenhagen meeting.

Bulkan has raised a number of issues on the LCDS consultation and awareness process and the ensuing reports as posted on the LCDS website. We would like to thank Bulkan for her regular visits to the LCDS website which is being updated continuously with the reports from the consultations and awareness sessions.

These reports are comprehensive and include the questions, comments and suggestions from participants and the responses from the consultation teams.

A check of each of the reports would verify this fact. She refers to not enough details being given on the budgets and data identified in pages 20- 29. Interestingly though, she concurs that the team comprising specialists from the McKinsey Group and the government of Guyana did not dream up these figures which were the result of months of research, data gathering, and expert inputs from local and international expertise.

Bulkan also questions Guyana's representation and participation at international climate change meetings.

Bulkan, unfortunately, is not privy to all the discussion spaces within the various negotiating points in the UN and elsewhere when the international community engages on the issues of climate change and therefore some of her statements lack that advantage.

She has suggested, even accused us, of failing to do our work at that level. We wish to assure readers that Guyana is an active participant in these discussions at the technical level in the UNFCCC negotiations, and works closely with the Coalition for Rainforest Nations in and out of the UNFCCC meetings.

Furthermore, the Caricom states, at the highest level, have committed to joining our advocacy as demonstrated in the recent meeting of heads of government. The Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB) does not do verbatim reporting, but highlights and discusses points that are pertinent to their understanding of events. What Bulkan may not realise is that the reporting bulletins do not report on every single intervention made in plenary.

Furthermore, these do not report the full content of technical discussions at the break out working group level, where many agreements are struck for plenary adoption.

While we recognise the scholarship of these letter writers, we regret that apart from their pessimistic view of the draft LCDS, they have not submitted to us any idea or suggestion for the purpose of improving the strategy.

We encourage constructive discussion on the LCDS and we urge that all queries, views, advice and any other input on the LCDS be made through our web site: [www.lcds.gov.gy](http://www.lcds.gov.gy) or by contacting the undersigned.

Michael E Brotherson, Office of Climate Change Office of the President

## **Guyana cannot benefit from the LCDS in its current form**

August 3, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

In July 2006, at a stakeholders' meeting at the Hotel Tower on the Hydro Power Project, President Jagdeo said he was very excited that Guyana was going to have a hydropower facility by 2010.

I was too and still am, but it appears that he has lost his enthusiasm on this issue and the new flavour of the day is the LCDS.

Well I put my views on record today; the LCDS is all about personal aggrandisement and people securing a job for themselves after 2011, since Guyana cannot benefit from the LCDS in its current form.

In our haste to position ourselves globally without a proper foundation, we have expended too much good money poorly constructing a proposal that just would not fly in its current form. This is like socialism, it's a great idea but if poorly implemented by people with poor ideological foundation and constantly being distracted by corruption, it is a disaster.

The President stated that in 2004, 25% of our GDP went on petroleum purchases (one of the main purchaser was GPL).

With a hydropower dam, the oil traders in the market would not have the benefit of determining the cost of our power supply.

The financial instability that is associated with the oil market is something Guyana can neither tolerate nor afford.

Thus, our failure to build a commercial hydropower station to replace the generators of GPL is most unfortunate for our people. We have had enough time to understand this dilemma and do something about it.

The President said that this investment would be a springboard for investments and developments in the value added sector. I could not have agreed with him more.

However, true to form, all that was said by the President was words, more words, and no substance behind it. This is a very dangerous precedence.

Future leaders will always refer to this current Presidency when they want to excuse poor delivery, like how we always refer to Burnham when we want to excuse abuse of democratic credentials – like not holding Local Government Elections on time.

Many dates for financial closure came and went and still we have not financially closed the deal (originally set to close in August 2007 in the boom times) and the date to turn on the turbine was suppose to have been December 15, 2010.

It is tremendously sad that Guyana would have lost another five years as we saddle ourselves with fuel power generators, which will break down again and again.

All Guyana should forever remember December 15, 2010 since this was the date when a country with so much raw potential would have been able to rid ourselves of the clear and present danger to our wellbeing called black outs.

However, this hydropower project represents more than an end to black outs, it represents a people ready to converting their potential into real development.

Want some more word with no action? I quote President Jagdeo again

“Guyana would build the hydro project no matter what.”

Those words will have dire consequences to his legacy. When that statement was made by the President in January 2008, he shifted the date of completion to December 15, 2011.

If there in any project the inheritors of power can do that will have an overwhelming positive impact on Cheddi Jagan’s people (the working class, it does matter if you are black or brown), it is to commit to and build this hydro-power project even if we have to defy the IMF and issue a country financial guarantee to the financiers.

Sasenarine Singh

## **Transparency, equity and objectivity are features of good governance**

August 1, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

DEAR EDITOR,

The Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) has issued a partial response to the first of my ten columns in Stabroek News on carbon in the forests of Guyana (“LCDS has been presented at numerous international meetings and is under serious consideration” SN Letters, July 29, 2009, and “GFC corrects inaccuracies on LCDS” GC Letters, July 29, 2009). As so often, the GFC fails to get its facts in order before responding.

In my first article, I said that the LCDS website “is still under development at the time of writing and it is not possible to read about the feedback from the government’s traditional outreach meetings with some Amerindian communities in the hinterland”. That is still the case, some weeks after submission of my series of articles to the Editor of Stabroek News. The LCDS web manager is only slowly putting up the partial records of these meetings.

Feedback on the hinterland consultations is supposed to entail provision of answers to questions, not just recording of the questions. In other words, a multi-stakeholder process is intended to be a multi-way and iterative process, not the usual “we come, we speak, you listen, we go”.

As of today (July 29), the LCDS website displays records for all the 13 hinterland meetings. The GFC claims that the LCDS website reports of these meetings are verbatim. That word means that the records are exact, word-for-word. They clearly are not. They are summaries of questions posed by participants, and these summaries have been challenged for their inaccuracies; see letters in Stabroek News on June 30 and Kaieteur News on 01 July.

There are also notable differences between the website reports and the newspaper accounts; see for example the reports on the Port Mourant meeting in Guyana Chronicle on July 13 and on the Linden meeting in Stabroek News on July 25.

If the President's team of presenters did not include a shorthand recorder or record the meeting on audio tape it is not surprising that the accounts are only partial summaries. But it is absurd to claim that they are verbatim.

There are two more serious points. The first is that the President's team did not answer all the questions from the participants, and that the repeated assurances that questions would be answered have not been implemented. At least, the LCDS website button for Responses is inactive. The second point is that several reasonable and entirely predictable questions were raised repeatedly at the meetings but the President's team appears to have made no attempt to amend its standard presentation to address these points, or to amend its website page on Frequently Asked Questions.

I note also that there are no reports on the LCDS website of the following presentations and Question/Answer sessions by the President's team (in date order of the Guyana Chronicle accounts, some presentations were reported also by Stabroek News and Kaieteur News):

June 08, Launch of the LCDS by the President at the International Conference Centre. The report of the question and answer session has been removed from the LCDS website. Why?

June 18, University of Guyana.

June 24, National Communications Network.

June 30, Guyana Gold and Diamond Miners' Association with Guyana Geology and Mines Commission.

July 04, Private Sector Commission.

July 15, Forest Products Association.

July 22, Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, and Women's Affairs Bureau.

July 24, Senior Media Operatives.

July 25, Guyana Defence Force.

July 28, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

The failure to put up accounts of these presentations on the website appears to be contrary to the agreement with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) which is monitoring the consultation process for the Government of Norway.

I stand by my statement that the LCDS document "Transforming Guyana's economy while combating climate change" speculates on the spending of unprecedented amounts of external funds for climate change adaptation.

Looking at pages 20-29 of the President's document, the amount of space given to each budget item just doesn't match the magnitude of the sums:

Hydropower, US\$ 400-600 million, 1 paragraph.

Drainage, irrigation and roads for the Canje Basin and Intermediate Savannas, US\$ 300-500 million, 1 paragraph.

Fibre Optic Cables / Technology Park, US\$ 10-30 million, 1 paragraph.

Fruits and Vegetables, US\$ 80-100 million, 2 paragraphs.

Aquaculture, US\$ 135-175 million, 4 paragraphs.

Sustainable forestry and wood processing, no budget, 7 paragraphs.

Call centres, eco-tourism, bio-ethanol, no budget, 3 paragraphs.

Sea defence and mitigation of flooding in the coastal plain, more than US\$1 billion, 9 paragraphs.

There are no references to supporting documents in the public domain to show how these ideas and budgets have been derived. It is unclear how the President's team expects serious citizen stakeholder responses when there is so little to work on. I don't want to suggest that the team has dreamed up these ideas from their hammocks, but please engage stakeholders in a more serious manner.

I have tried to track the presentation of the LCDS at "numerous international meetings" as Tasreef Khan of the GFC claims. Using the reputable Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB) from the International Institute for Sustainable Development ("A neutral, authoritative and up-to-the-minute record of ongoing multilateral negotiations on environment and sustainable development"), I could only find two mentions:

14th meeting of the Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Poznan meeting, December 11, 2008 -

<http://www.iisd.ca/climate/cop14/enbots/dec11.html> - Valuing Opportunity Costs for Mitigation in High Forest Cover, Low Deforestation Rate Countries, Presented by Guyana; and the 17th meeting of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development in New York on May 13, 2009 - ENB volume 5 number 279 on May 14 - CSD Highlights -

<http://www.iisd.ca/vol05/enb05279e.html>.

The point apparently not grasped by the GFC is that these brief presentations in Ministerial segments of such meetings are not where the negotiations take place. If Guyana wants serious consideration of the LCDS then it has to participate in the technical committees which draft the papers and negotiate the budgets for the agendas of meetings such as the COP 15 climate summit meeting at Copenhagen in December this year.

Just appearing for the conference itself is not how international negotiation processes work.

I recognize that the GFC is engaged with the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Fund (FCPF) but is the Office of Climate Change in the Office of the President similarly engaging with the technical committees of the UNFCCC or with the Coalition for Rainforest Nations of which Guyana is a member? If so, why do we hear no information? Why also does the GFC not publish on the FCPF negotiations, or even mention it on its website?

I am of course pleased to hear that the GFC is collaborating with other government agencies and the Forest Products Association on technical improvements, and that the GFC is seriously enforcing the forest legislation, rules and guidelines; but why is progress not reported in public? And I do not mean the unverifiable claims made by the GFC in the tropical timber market reports circulated by the International Tropical Timber Organization.

For example - when is the GFC going to publish the strategic plan for rationalized allocation of forest area in the State Forests? When is the GFC going to make compliance with the Code of Practice on Timber Harvesting (2002) obligatory and equally for all the holders of long-term and supposedly sustainable Timber Sales Agreements, remembering that the Code includes provisions for reduced impact logging?

When will the field monitoring by the extra 50-60 rangers whose recruitment was announced by the Minister for Forestry in December 2006 result in a court case in which the alleged offences by holders of logging concessions are openly prosecuted?

Where are the “many independent reviews” published, which confirm that the GFC implementation of its guidelines is comparable to internationally accepted best practices? Why are such reviews not published openly in Guyana?

I mention these points because transparency, equity and objectivity are features of good governance expected in the World Bank’s Forest Carbon Partnership Fund (FCPF), and the GFC has already been notified by the Technical Advisory Panel of the FCPF that it, the GFC, needs to improve.

Janette Bulkan

## **Government should have committed to the Hydropower project**

August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 | By Stabroek News | Filed Under Letters

*Dear Editor,*

In July 2006, at a stakeholder meeting at the Hotel Tower on the hydropower project, President Jagdeo said he was very excited that Guyana was going to have a hydropower facility by 2010. I was too, and still am, but it appears that he has lost his enthusiasm on this issue and the new flavour of the day is the LCDS. Guyana cannot benefit from the LCDS in its current form. In our haste to position ourselves globally without a proper foundation, we have expended too much good money poorly constructing a proposal that just would not fly in its current form. This is like socialism, it is a great idea but if poorly implemented by people with a poor ideological foundation and constantly being distracted by corruption, it is a disaster.

The President stated that in 2004, 25% of our GDP went on petroleum purchases (one of the main purchasers was GPL). With a hydropower dam, the oil traders in the market would not have the benefit of determining the cost of our power supply. The financial instability that is

associated with the oil market is something Guyana can neither tolerate nor afford. Thus, our failure to build a commercial hydropower station to replace the generators of GPL is most unfortunate for our people. We have had enough time to understand this dilemma and do something about it.

The President said that this investment would be a springboard for investments and developments in the value added sector. I could not have agreed with him more. However, true to form, all that was said by the President was words, more words, with no substance behind it.

Many dates for financial closure came and went and still we have not financially closed the deal (originally set to close in August 2007 in the boom times) and the date to turn on the turbine was supposed to have been December 15, 2010. It is tremendously sad that Guyana would have lost another 5 years as we saddle ourselves with fuel power generators, which will break down again and again. All Guyana should forever remember December 15, 2010 since this was the date when a country with so much raw potential would have been able to rid ourselves of the clear and present danger to our wellbeing called blackouts. However, this hydropower project represents more than an end to blackouts, it represents a people ready to convert their potential into real development.

Want some more word with no action? I quote President Jagdeo again: "Guyana would build the hydro project no matter what." When that statement was made by the President in January 2008, he shifted the date of completion to December 15, 2011. If there is any project the inheritors of power can do that will have an overwhelmingly positive impact on Cheddi Jagan's people (the working class of all races), it is to commit to and build this hydropower project, even if we have to defy the IMF and issue a country financial guarantee to the financiers.

*Yours faithfully,  
Sasnarine Singh*

## **LCDS consultations in the Regions were well attended**

August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 | By Stabroek News | Filed Under Letters

*Dear Editor,*

With reference to Business Page under the caption ‘A review of the low carbon development strategy Part 2’ in your issue of July 26, Mr Ram stated that there were “captive audiences” at the recently held LCDS consultations and that “the average attendance... [was] generously, less than 20.”

I attended all the LCDS consultations held in Regions 1,2,6,7,8,9 and 10 in my capacity as a member of the Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana (TAAMOG) and member of the multi-stakeholder steering committee of the LCDS . The LCDS consultations team comprised two ministers of the government; climate change technical officers; Amerindian NGOS; Mr David James, attorney-at-law and member of the multi-stakeholder steering committee on the LCDS; and two members of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) who

were monitoring the consultations process. There were also officials from the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (MOAA).

The LCDS consultations were massively attended and the venues were all packed to capacity and unable to accommodate all the participants who opted to stand inside and outside the venues to listen to the presentations by members of the consultation team. The consultations in all the regions were very interactive and were held in a very cordial atmosphere. Participants raised questions, concerns, suggestions and recommendations, which were all adequately answered and recorded. I must state that the presentations were given in extremely simple language.

The LCDS consultations held at Kamarang, Kato and Aishalton were brilliantly translated into the Akawaio, Patamona and Wapichan languages by Amerindian translators, to provide for effective understanding of the LCDS.

There was a positive response to the LCDS consultations in all the regions where they were held, and in view of the attendance Mr Ram's description of "captive audiences" is misinformation.

At all the LCDS consultations there was no pressure or correction in accepting the LCDS; in fact there was general agreement in principle with the strategy. But while some concerns, suggestions and recommendations were raised, this was the objective of the LCDS consultations in the finalization of the strategy document. The mathematical formula used by Mr Ram to determine the attendance at the LCDS consultations seems outdated and has proved to be misleading. As a social commentator, Mr Ram should be responsible so that the people of Guyana and those in the outside world could be better informed.

*Yours faithfully,*  
*Peter Persaud*  
*TAAMOG*

## **Putting LCDS in perspective**

August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 | By Stabroek News | Filed Under Letters

*Dear Editor,*

With reference to a letter 'LCDS will not fly in its current form' (SN July 30), I must thank the writer for putting the LCDS in such a clear perspective.

It provides much more information than all the government ads. Certainly much more should have been done by the government, via the print media, to sensitize Guyanese about this issue. Secondly, the comments and ideas displayed are so practical and rational that it highlights the fallacies and improprieties of the LCDS. After all, how great an impact can Guyana make with us having just 0.4% of the world's forests. Indeed we have to pick sense from nonsense here.

Apparently, it all boils down to what monetary returns Guyana can look forward to, as opposed to, or in contrast to, whatsoever so little we as a nation can actually do to reduce carbon in our

already clean atmosphere. This strategy may be more appropriate for those industrialized countries whose emissions are indeed worthy of notice.

*Yours faithfully,*

*M.S. Baksh*

**Look after our own interest rather than pretend to be environmental ‘czars and czarinas’**

July 31, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

After reading the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) document I am satisfied that, this idea will not fly in its current form. Sizeable financial transfers are required from the top polluters and this position does not reconcile with their current national priorities.

My congratulation goes out to McKinsey & Company for a well-written document.

However, in order to make this very academic and theoretical document workable, the designers should have fleshed out an implementation strategy to assess a way forward if Copenhagen does not provide the required funding?

NAME OF COUNTRY	SIZE OF FOREST (MILLION OF HECTARES)	AMOUNT TO BE OFF-SET (US\$ MILLION)
USA	64	220
China	175	612
Japan	25	87
Germany	11	38
India	76	266
Sub-total	351	1,223
Russia	1178	4,123
Canada	400	1,400
Brazil	230	805
Australia	165	577
Other G-15 Countries (with sizable forest)	872	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2159</b>	<b>9,000</b>

As a background to understanding where Guyana sits in the world; here are some stats:

1. The world has nearly four billion hectares of standing forest (close to 30% of the total land mass);
2. Guyana has approximately 17.2 million hectares of standing forest (both commercially exploitable and non-exploitable);
3. This equates to Guyana having 0.4% of the world forest;
4. If we use the worst case scenarios, as spelt out in the LCDS, Guyana can expect US\$60 million a year from the polluters of the world;
5. If this is extrapolated to better understand the minimum expenditure required from the major polluters, it add up to US\$14 billion a year;
6. However, we must understand that the G-15 countries of the world have a sizeable share of the world's forests (as shown below), which can result in only US\$5 billion, being payable to the third world "environmental vacuum cleaners" like Guyana with their generally pristine forest;
7. The UN budget is US\$3 billion and history has exposed that most of the main polluters of the world are always in arrears with their financial commitment to this organisation;
8. Pick sense from nonsense people; if the biggest polluters are always struggling to pay US\$3 billion to a leading global body, why would they be in a hurry to pay US\$5 billion to selected members of the third world?
9. Failure to address this big "if" will condemn this idea to failure. The USA will just not support funding their share of US\$5 billion to third world countries, when they can do with that money themselves at this point in time of their history (recession and all).

It makes better strategic sense for the top polluters to create jobs at home by ramping up their own tree-planting programmes and taking measure to reduce their carbon emission rather write blank cheques for Guyana. The dynamics of the world's politics today is – "look after your vested interest" (e.g. assess what Obama has done for his steel industry with his recovery programme at the expense of lower cost steel operators in other countries).

For me, Guyana should have been looking after its own vested interest rather that pretending to be the environmental "czars and czarinas" (paraphrased from Prakash Ramjattan) of the world. I call again for us to get to know the top investment bankers of the world to flesh out and possibly funds in the most cost effective manner, some of our big projects.

If we do a value for money audit on all the global escapades done while pursuing a low carbon strategy, we will uncover hundred of millions of dollars already expended on the LCDS. If Copenhagen fails, what would the taxpayers get for the money spent on LCDS? Would it not have been more economically sensible and feasible to have spent this money on other projects that would have been more beneficial to Guyanese?

Case in point, we could have invested in building the social cohesion institutions in the villages

and wards of Guyana or we could have retrained and created jobs for the army of unemployed youths.

From this bottom up approach, we would have been able to better design and implement public policy that would have arrested crime, drug trafficking, wide spread distrust among the people, unemployment, corruption, hopelessness, suicide, alcoholism, and the infamous philosophy of some people called “mo fiya, slow fiya”. There would have been no need to unleash state terror on alleged suspects in the first place because people would have no time with any \$300,000 pay-off from power drunk politicians to burn buildings. In the end who benefits? The taxpayers!

In conclusion, my observation is that Guyana is too exposed to the Copenhagen meeting and there is inadequate mitigants in place if Copenhagen says no. If this strategy fails, (we will know in December) I trust the relevant decision makers will take full responsibility for the failure and accept the ensuing consequences rather than deflect the blame to the blameless. If this high-risk strategy succeeds, I will be the first in line to apologise. We will wait and see!

Sasenarine Singh

### **Ms. Janet Bulkan’s assertion is totally incorrect**

July 30, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

The Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) wishes to correct some serious inaccuracies contained in an article by Janet Bulkan captioned, “Carbon in the forests in Guyana”, in the Monday July 27, 2009 edition of the SN.

Firstly, Ms. Bulkan assertion that, “it is not possible to read about the feedback from the Government’s traditional outreach meeting with some Amerindian Communities in the hinterland” is totally incorrect.

The verbatim reports of these consultations have been posted on the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) website ([www.lcds.gov.gy](http://www.lcds.gov.gy)) and are available for public scrutiny as part of the

transparent process that the Government has committed to.

In contrast to the misrepresentation by Bulkan, the LCDS does not speculate on how to spend unprecedented amounts of monies for climate change adaptation.

Careful reading of the document shows that the draft document states that if the financial incentives are provided, then these incentives can go to support a range of low carbon economic opportunities, as well as adaptation activities.

It was also made very clear in the consultations that there were no guarantees that the financial incentives would materialise. It was also stated in the LCDS draft document, that it was not expected that Guyana will get the sum of US\$580 million immediately. It is expected that the incentives and other payments would meet this sum by 2020.

Contrary to Janette Bulkan's misinformation, the LCDS is a document that has been presented at numerous international meetings and is under serious consideration.

It will also be presented at Copenhagen in December 2009. It is really unacceptable that Janette Bulkan is seeking to downplay such a visionary development based strategy, which seeks only to catalyze the positive development of Guyana. Janette Bulkan also misses the point that the LCDS is a development strategy for Guyana.

The basic principles of seeking incentives for sustainably managed forests and Reducing Emissions from deforestation and forest degradation are spelt out in the document; this is a common position shared by all of the countries that are members of the Coalition for Rain Forest Nations.

This is contrary to the position stated by Ms Bulkan that there is "isolation from mainstream discussion on climate change".

The statement that the LCDS does not even consider a population shift is very ill conceived.

The LCDS clearly identifies some of the Low Carbon economic opportunities in the intermediate savannahs, Rupununi Savannahs etc.

Obviously, these economic alternatives can only be feasible if there is some movement of population over time.

Let us now look at the statement made on the "forest carbon budget".

Ms. Bulkan may not be aware, but the GFC is already doing much of this work with the support of international NGO's. A simple phone call or email to the GFC could have provided this clarification.

Also, if she had contacted the GFC, she would have been advised that the GFC, Forest Products Association (FPA), Guyana Geology & Mines Commission (GGMC) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are currently collaborating in most of the areas that she mentions e.g., reforestation of degraded areas especially mined out areas, Silvicultural studies – both pre and post harvest, developing a forest fire management strategy for Guyana, providing training in Reduced Impact Logging (RIL) for stakeholders inclusive of communities.

Contrary to Ms. Bulkan's public misinformation, the GFC wishes to assure her and the general public that the GFC is seriously enforcing the forest legislation, rules and guidelines for sustainable forest management.

This can be attested to by many independent reviews of both our guidelines and their implementation which have all shown that they are comparable to internationally accepted pest practices.

T. Khan  
Forest Monitoring Division Guyana Forestry Commission

**LCDS well drafted with feedback available**

July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009 | By Guyana Times | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

The Guyana Forestry Commission ( GFC) wishes to correct some serious inaccuracies contained in an article by Janet Bulkan captioned “ Carbon in the forests in Guyana” in the Monday, July 27, 2009 edition of the Stabroek News.

Firstly, Bulkan's assertion that “ it is not possible to read about the feedback from the government’s traditional outreach meeting with some Amerindian communities in the

hinterland” is totally incorrect. The verbatim reports of these consultations have been posted on the Low Carbon Development Strategy ( LCDS) website ( [www.lcds.gov.gy](http://www.lcds.gov.gy)) and are available for public scrutiny as part of the transparent process that the government has committed to.

In contrast to the misrepresentation by Bulkan, the LCDS does not speculate on how to spend unprecedented amounts of money for climate change adaptation.

Careful reading of the document shows that the draft document states that if the financial incentives are provided, then these incentives can go to support a range of low- carbon economic opportunities, as well as adaptation activities.

It was also made very clear in the consultations that there were no guarantees that the financial incentives would materialise.

It was also stated in the LCDS draft document, that it was not expected that Guyana will get the sum of US\$ 580 million immediately.

It is expected that the incentives and other payments would meet this sum by 2020.

Contrary to Janette Bulkan’s misinformation, the LCDS is a document that has been presented at numerous international meetings and is under serious consideration.

It will also be presented at Copenhagen in December 2009. It is really unacceptable that Bulkan is seeking to downplay such a visionary development based strategy which seeks only to catalyse the positive development of Guyana. Bulkan also misses the point that the LCDS is a development strategy for Guyana. The basic principles of seeking incentives for sustainably managed forests and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation are spelt out in the document; this is a common position shared by all of the countries that are members of the Coalition for Rain Forest Nations. This is contrary to the position stated by Bulkan that there is “ isolation from mainstream discussion on climate change”. The statement that the LCDS does not even consider a population shift is very ill- conceived. The LCDS clearly identifies some of the low- carbon economic opportunities in the intermediate savannahs, Rupununi savannahs etc. Obviously, these economic alternatives can only be feasible if there is some movement of population over time.

Let us now look at the statement made on the “ forest carbon budget”. Bulkan may not be aware, but the GFC is already doing much of this work with the support of international NGOs. A simple phone call or email to the GFC could have provided this clarification.

Also, if she had contacted the GFC, she would have been advised that the GFC, Forest Products Association ( FPA), Guyana Geology & Mines Commission ( GGMC) and Environmental Protection Agency ( EPA) are currently collaborating in most of the areas that she mentions eg, reforestation of degraded areas especially mined out areas, silvicultural studies – both pre and post harvest, developing a forest fire management strategy for Guyana, providing training in Reduced Impact Logging ( RIL) for stakeholders inclusive of communities.

Contrary to Bulkan’s public misinformation, the GFC wishes to assure her and the general public that the GFC is seriously enforcing the forest legislation, rules and guidelines for sustainable forest management.

This can be attested to by many independent reviews of both our guidelines and their implementation which have all shown that they are comparable to internationally accepted best practices.

With regards,

T Khan Forest Monitoring Division Guyana Forestry Commission

**We must stop operating like boy scouts when it comes to the nation's future**

July 27, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

Our leaders are running on the spot shouting from the top of their voices about REDD and low carbon initiatives wasting good money again; yet the one project that can make a difference in the lives of the Guyanese people in this area is silently being positioned for parking with the

lame excuse that the global economic crisis is having an adverse impact on the “construction momentum”. What utter rubbish!

The Marriot Hotel failed because we engaged a kangaroo investor. Fullstop! Even up to today, new hotels are being built all over the world, but Banks are focused on reputation more than returns at this point in time. It all comes down to the investor’s management team, their track record of real investments in the past in similar sectors and who knows who. The reality is that very few people with real money know Guyana. When an investor spend his money on a project in a third world country he want to go there and play golf or fish or do some cross country safari, and at the same time have a look at his investments. The best publicity Guyana has secured to date is Jim Jones. Who want to play golf in Jim Jones’ country? The only way to let people know Guyana is not a Jim Jones kind of country, but one ripe with potential to be unleashed; is to invite them.

The best investment Guyana can make at this point in time is to invite the top five CEOs of the top five investment banks to see Guyana and understand Guyana (not in a boardroom) but in a scenic atmosphere conducive to building relationships. In the real world business is about relationships, trust, deliverables, pioneering ideas.

A fishing expedition at the back of the Abary to do some real sports and at the same time talk business with people of the like of the Beharrys, Gafoors, the Brian Tiwaris, the Courtney Bennis, the Yesu Persauds, the Clifford Reis, the Kissoons, along with key Government technicians like Winston Brassington, and Robert Persaud would be a idea worth its weight in gold. There are two very good ranches there (the Kisson ranch and the Ramphal’s ranch) that are conducive to a relaxed environment to build some real relationships with some well connected people. You do not build a relationship with a business leader at a Conference since they have their defence brain switched on; you really build a business relationship in creative activity like golf, fishing etc.

There is no better person that Sir Shridat Ramphal to take charge of this initiative. Only then can we have some hope for a Hydropower Project, a Linden to Lethem Road, a Deep Water Harbour, the completion of the MMA, and the conclusion of the Ethanol plant and Distillery in Berbice. I am not only advocating commercial debt, but with the richest Banks on your side, all the doors to the Governments in India, China, Brazil, Russia, Japan and Germany, USA, Canada, UK will be opened.

These private Bankers have the keys to these doors. The top five global investment Banks are – JP Morgan (USA), Deutsche Bank (German), Barclays (UK), Merrill Lynch (USA) and Nomura (Japan) so I trust Sir Shridat will be put on that plane for this all important mission.

Uganda, the land of Idi Amin (that former repulsive dictator) has been able to rebuild its reputation and position its image globally. This has allowed them to

secure the financial backing of Absa Capital along with its global affiliate Barclays Capital to arrange the commercial debt facility for a US\$867 million hydropower project in that country. Uganda knew a South African called Anand Naidoo, Uganda knew, Sithe Global, which is majority owned by the New-York based Blackstone group, (the same company Flip Motilall

knows) and yet they have done a deal and we have not. It is our image; it is our reputation, chaps. Our hydro-project did not fail for want of efforts (I was advised that Flip Motilall rapped at every door he knew, but too few people knew Guyana and thus was not willing to back us financially). Simple!

Not solving our social cohesion issues is also not helping either. Read the latest international press coverage on Guyana gave the impression that all is not well:

AP quoted in the Taiwanese Press “.... The Government of Guyana offered a US\$125,000 reward for information that leads to the arrests of those who set fire to the wooden building that house the Ministry of Health....”

What made Uganda better than us? Nothing! They had to wash away the Idi Amin reputation and only then could they have sealed the financing for the Hydro Project, so why can't we? What did they do that we are failing to do?

The Ugandan Government made getting the hydro-project their No.1 priority. They assembled their best team ever; drawing on well known global names, who knew Uganda to help. Revolutionary ideas require revolutionary leadership and revolutionary decisions. We must stop operating like boy scouts when it come to the nations future. We must stop being distracted with our personal aggrandizements and focus on the big ticket needs of Guyana. Regardless of what the IMF says, the development interest of our people is paramount and the Government of Guyana must get up and get out there and talk to the Naidoos of the world and make this deal happen.

Flip Motilal is not a Government and thus even with his sterling efforts; he will not command the audience that a top notch Government delegation will. It is most disgusting to continually read in the newspaper the same old story over and over, 10 years after we have committed firmly to a hydro-electricity project:

“GPL break down in Berbice, GPL having generation shortfall, GPL has announce load shedding”.

I do not understand why more people in Guyana are not stark raving mad at the decision makers for this mediocrity and have not brought the required pressure to bear so that real change in attitudes can be achieved at the highest level. It irks me when I am reading that come 2010, Uganda will have a 250 MW hydro power station up and running and they thought about this project after Guyana. Where there is a will, there is a way! Common people “free yourself from mental slavery” (Brother Bob). Think big!

Sasnarine Singh

## **Officials could lessen carbon emission by reducing their flights**

July 24, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

I opened my telephone bill yesterday (22-07-09) and was startled to find enclosed therewith a letter dated 25th June, 2009 on the letterhead of the Office of the President and signed by His Excellency.

Reading the letter, I was relieved that it had nothing to do with the calls I was making, but had everything to do with His Excellency's so-called "Low Carbon Development Strategy".

I wish to quote two sentences from the second paragraph which struck me:

“The earth’s surface has been warming rapidly over the last century, mainly due to the amount of carbon dioxide that has been emitted into the air from the use of fossil fuels. Unless urgent action is taken the consequences will be catastrophic”.

It was not that the sentences were stating the obvious, which was incredulous, but it was that it was coming from the jet-setting leader of a government, whose Ministers and petit demagogues drive around Guyana in the most expensive, fuel inefficient, gas-guzzling and polluting vehicles available on the market.

This is in addition to their frequent trips out of Guyana on aircraft which contribute significantly to the pollution of the atmosphere.

Surely Mr. Jagdeo and his merry band should lead by example. How about them traveling abroad less and using e-mails and video conferencing more, and driving smaller more fuel efficient or even hybrid cars.

One recalls the castigation of the CEO’s of the three large automakers in the USA got from Congress, when they turned up to beg for money in their private corporate jets. On the next occasion they drove hybrid vehicles.

But better still, I would look forward to seeing Mr. Jagdeo and his confederates riding bicycles to work or in keeping with the kind of economy over which Mr. Jagdeo presides, the implementation of the use of donkey carts as the preferred means of transportation for all those Government Ministers and officials and their friends and family, who at present go around in their Toyota Land Cruisers, Range Rovers, Hummers, BMWs etc.

And what about the paper on which Mr. Jagdeo’s letter was written? Is he capable of conceiving of the amount of trees that were cut down to make that paper?

These are the very people who we are now hearing mouthing platitudes and mantras about some nebulous low carbon development strategy.

Perhaps an introspective look at their lifestyles may focus their minds upon their hypocrisy. But don’t hold your breath!

Bibi K. Nandram

## **The struggle against climate change demands that all of us become involved**

July 23, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

Over the past few decades, deforestation has received great currency and critical attention in international politics. In fact, it has become an emotive and divisive issue among different stakeholders and the general public.

Notwithstanding, it continues unabated despite numerous efforts to reduce it.

This is unfortunate because the value of the forest is enormous to the sustainability of this earth upon which we, all, depend for our very survival.

Therefore, government's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) is the right way to go. But understanding local cultures and accessing the knowledge of local people are the keys to unlocking the vast potentials of this strategy.

We, at the Environmental Community Health Organisation (ECHO), believe that the forest should be protected and preserved for the sake of the environment.

This is why we are happy with government's LCDS. For us it is an appropriate response to the global challenge of climate change.

As we see it, forests are living oceans with enormous and indispensable utility for the environment and all that dwell therein.

More than that, they carry spiritual, cultural and economic values for those who inhabit them as well as those who benefit from them in direct and indirect ways.

In addition, to storing carbon, forests are essential for biodiversity. This is crucial for mitigation as well as adaptation to climate change. But the importance of biodiversity in the fight against climate change is too often not properly acknowledged or recognised.

What is clear is that ignoring biodiversity could have the same degree of devastating impacts on the habitability of the planet as climate change.

Nowhere does this become clearer than with the world's forests, which host more biodiversity and store more carbon than almost any other land-ecosystem. Therefore, forests are vital to the preservation of the earth.

However, we are aware that the debate on how to hammer out an international regime remains a contentious issue for many reasons, including the fact that forests are not considered as a global good and the question of sovereignty.

We are aware, too, that, there are a few disadvantages including precise measurement of emissions, compensation to those, who are making the effort to avoid deforestation, and probably a negative impact on innovation to do more for climate change, particularly in the area of energy efficiency.

Standing forests could crowd out innovations to push towards greater energy efficiency, by manufacturers and regulatory bodies, particularly in developed countries.

Still, the LCDS remains an effective way of fighting climate change. We would argue that even if the details of how individual countries involved would be compensated take some time to work out the low carbon development strategy remains a brilliant response to fighting this unprecedented phenomenon.

In the wider sense, low carbon is really about environmental stewardship – a call we continue to make to all those, corporations as well as individuals, who are concerned about the environment.

Environmental stewardship demands environmental awareness, knowledge, empowerment and action. These are necessary for the success of any environmental strategy or project.

In this regard, the on-going consultations, by the special team engaged with this process, have great utility not only to local people and corporations, but also to the strategy itself.

We are following these consultations with a view of making a submission at the appropriate time.

Notwithstanding, it is very true that, the reception of environmental communications and their

effectiveness in delivering change in people's attitudes and values is seriously contingent on many elements including local social and cultural contexts in which people live. Therefore, the consultations should be concerned with accessing, acknowledging and building on citizens' local knowledge to inform the strategy and the policies and processes necessary to implement and sustain it.

Our understanding is that, these consultation sessions are aimed at raising public awareness and simultaneously benefiting from the knowledge of the people in their local communities. This reciprocal influence would no doubt shape the final document on this strategy.

Whatever shape the final document takes it should account for the various cultures of local corporations and communities. This is a serious point because people interpret their environment through cultural biases.

They react and interact with objects in the environment based on affordances or use-values. It is clear then that, in order to get by - in to the strategy it must take into account their meanings and realities of the forest and the general surroundings of the people who inhabit it and indeed of all Guyanese. It must account for the way people actually make meaning, the way corporations operate, and how that process can be used to advance the strategy.

Low carbon would have one meaning to the people in regions 1, 2, 3 or 4 and quite another to the citizens of regions 5, 7, 9 or 10. Again, it would have a totally different meaning to corporations and businesses and to the way they develop their corporate strategies. These suggest that the consultations must fit the particular cultures of the various regions and corporations. Otherwise, there are likely to be gaps between the strategy itself and the understanding of ordinary people, who will benefit from it. Again, the strategy could encourage the transformative change necessary in the business sector that would stimulate a higher level of corporate social responsibility. Corporate social responsibility speaks to the problems that arise when a corporation casts its long shadow on the social scene and of the ethical principles that should govern the relationships between that corporation and the environment in which it operates. However, while there is good movement on that front, we are concerned that there appears to be a lack of environmental alertness in other areas. For example, the situation as it relates to solid waste management and litter continues to be a source of problem to local communities. In the rural areas as well as in the city people are still dumping rubbish wherever, whenever.

It appears as though the challenge of climate change has not yet dawn on some of our citizens. Perhaps, it is because we do not experience natural environmental disasters, like cyclones, hurricanes, and earthquakes. But we should have learnt some lessons from the floods of 2005. Also, we are becoming increasingly worried with e-waste. Derelict computers and allied equipment, discarded cell phones, microwaves, and an assortment of batteries are dumped in offices, or just left until a decision can be made with what to do with them. These and the various components are likely to find their way to landfill sites and into the environment. Many of these equipment are made of toxic chemicals and materials which eventually leach into the environment and affect the health of neighbouring communities. It is time to begin working on precise guidelines for environmentally sound management of e-waste.

All in all the low carbon development strategy is about carbon finance and preserving our forest. However, the struggle against climate change demands that all of us become involved and do our bit in the local community in which we live.

Royston King  
Executive Director  
ECHO

**Stop the misinformation and narrow-mindedness now**

July 14, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

DEAR EDITOR,

Over 85 % of Guyana is covered with tropical forests; though we have been utilising this resource for centuries, the maximum export revenue to Guyana from forest utilisation has been just over US\$60 million.

Now that the Government of Guyana (GoG) has come up with a visionary strategy to get significant financial incentives for this resource while keeping it intact, one would expect all

Guyanese to embrace and support this strategy wholeheartedly.

This is especially so since it was publicly stated that these financial incentives will be channeled to support the urgent development of low carbon economic opportunities for all Guyanese.

Unfortunately, it seems that no matter what positive steps are taken by the GoG to further stimulate national development and economic growth, there are always the irrational few who have to be critical even when there is no justification for same.

They do this in their futile, infantile and feeble attempts to promote a narrow agenda aimed at misinformation and sowing the seeds of discord.

In this context, I refer to two letters that were in the Friday July 10, 2009 and Saturday July 11, 2009 editions of the SN.

These articles captioned: “Developing a low carbon strategy should wait till after the Copenhagen meeting” – by Michael Maxwell; and “The Low Carbon Development Strategy uses a simplistic formula” - by Kofi Dalrymple, are letters that are not based on facts but on baseless assumptions.

They are also clearly written by persons who pretend to be informed on the issues, but who really have no clue as to what goes on in the international negotiating arena.

For example, the Government in December 2008 presented a document on Guyana’s Avoided Deforestation Initiative.

That public document gives in great detail, the economic analysis that Maxwell is asking for. Mr. Maxwell should also be alerted to the fact that this analysis was done by a world-renowned firm working in collaboration with the GoG. The annex of the LCDS document also includes part of the economic analysis which was clearly not read by Maxwell or Dalrymple. Maxwell is right when he states that there are likely to be radical changes to the existing Kyoto framework.

Would Maxwell like to know why? These changes are likely because of countries like Guyana voicing their concerns that any new agreement must include standing forests and avoided deforestation.

That is why Guyana has pioneered this model to show the international community at Copenhagen that there are models which are workable and which present a win-win situation.

As such, Guyana cannot wait until the Copenhagen discussions are finished before presenting our LCDS model - we have to continue maintaining the momentum – already we have several major countries like the USA, UK and Norway which are supportive of the LCDS; international organisations such as the World Bank have also hailed this LCDS as a visionary strategy which is workable. Guyana therefore needs to continue active promotion of this strategy at Copenhagen.

It has also been made public that this is a draft strategy for discussion and after an initial period of three months, the document would be refined for Copenhagen.

For both Mr. Maxwell’s and Mr Dalrymple’s benefit, it was made absolutely clear that there will be no loss of sovereignty; neither has the GoG entered into any agreement with any country at this stage.

This will only come about after the consultation process when all Guyanese would have had the opportunity to comment on the strategy.

It was also made clear that financial incentives will have to be linked to meeting agreed benchmarks, and that a Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system had to be in place.

Maxwell accuses the Minister and the Government of being myopic - I suggest that Maxwell is blind not to see the vision that is being put forward for the positive development of the country through the LCDS.

Contrary to what Maxwell tries to imply, this document was arrived at through a thorough analysis and strategic planning process. Detractors like Maxwell will, however, never have anything good to say about any strategy that has the development of Guyana as its objective. Dalrymple in his tirade misses the point totally that tropical forests are Guyana's greatest asset in terms of Natural Resources.

The GoG has consistently maintained that the people of Guyana are our greatest asset. If Dalrymple had read the LCDS document carefully or attended any of the consultations, he would have known that the financial incentive mechanisms are yet to be worked out, inclusive of the benefit flows.

The GoG has committed to transparency in this respect, but maybe that is something that is very distant to the principles of Dalrymple.

Dalrymple asserts that the strategy does not deal with oil - I wonder which document Mr. Dalrymple has been reading, since page 5 of the LCDS's Frequently Asked Questions makes it clear that Guyana will continue to look for oil resources for the export market.

Mr. Dalrymple, like Mr. Maxwell, misses the point that this vision is intended to take Guyana down a Low carbon development path.

Guyana has no intention of becoming a major contributor to carbon emissions, and that is why the LCDS targets the urgent movement to low carbon economic opportunities and the development of Hydropower.

For the sake of both gentlemen let me also assure you that Guyana has technical experts who attend all the international climate-related meetings globally.

These experts are supported in country by several committees such as the National Climate Committee, the Climate Unit etc.

Guyana contributes meaningfully at these climate change and climate-related meetings and we are also integral members of several international groups.

It is thus very disturbing that Mr. Dalrymple can make such a ridiculous statement that Guyana accepts the findings reached by outside groups without careful and critical examination.

This statement shows his total ignorance of what takes place at these international meetings.

I urge Mr. Dalrymple to do proper research before writing on a subject where he is clearly out of synch.

If he had read the LCDS document thoroughly, along with a previous document on Guyana's Avoided Deforestation Initiative, then he would not be still asking for clarification on issues such as a "economically rational development path"; those issues would have been crystal clear to him.

The issue of risks associated with the strategy was also clearly articulated.

It was made pellucid that if the international community did not provide the kind of financial incentives required to support the low carbon economic alternative opportunities, then the LCDS

simply would not work.

At this time, we can only hope that the global community would see the benefits to all and provide their support.

These financial incentives will also be used to invest in communities and human capital, contrary to what Dalrymple asserts that the LCDS does not focus on the intellectual development of young people.

China and India are sovereign nations and they have national circumstances that have to be taken into account.

Guyana still hopes that both of these nations along with all others would come to an agreeable solution in terms of carbon emission reductions by 2050.

However, what both Maxwell and Dalrymple need to realise is that Guyana has chosen to embark on this strategy because not only is it achievable, but it has the potential to bring in significant financial incentives to Guyana whilst maintaining the forests intact.

Our unique mix of conditions and low population pressure, along with a stable political and social environment provide us with the enabling environment to make it work.

What we need now is for all Guyanese to support this initiative.

I therefore request both of these gentlemen to read the documentation thoroughly.

If they need further clarification or if they have any additional contribution to improve the document, I invite them to send same to the Climate Unit of the Office of the President or to the relevant website.

Stop the misinformation and narrow-mindedness now. The future of Guyana is at stake here.

Erica Smith

## **Climate change is perhaps the most frequently used buzz-phrase**

July 10, 2009 | By Guyana Chronicle | Filed Under Letters

CLIMATE Change is perhaps the most frequently used buzz-phrase on the planet. It sits on the tongues of the laypeople and experts alike. But does anyone really have an understanding of what it denotes; can anyone really appreciate the magnitude of its reach?

Climate Change refers to any long-term variation in the statistics of the elements of climate over periods ranging from decades to millions of years. The elements of climate include rainfall, atmospheric pressure, temperature, humidity and wind, among other meteorological realities.

The term climate usually contrasts with weather; the former refers to a long-term change – one decade and beyond, while the latter refers to change ranging from one day up to less than a decade. The alteration of the modern climate may be appreciated by tracing the manifestation of elements of the climate over decades.

An associate phrase of Climate Change is ‘Global Warming’. The two, though often used as thus, are not synonymous. Climate Change is more generic in nature. It encompasses a wide range of manifestations of meteorological elements. Global Warming, however, refers specifically to the increase in the average temperature of the Earth’s near-surface air and oceans since the mid-20th century, and its projected continuation.

Factors that can shape or change climate are referred to as ‘climate forcings’. Climate forcings such as volcanic eruptions, orbital variations and plate tectonics are natural and outside of the control or cause-and-effect command of mankind. However, other climate forcings such as CO<sub>2</sub> emissions resulting from industrial activities and the use of ozone-hazardous chemicals can be controlled.

The release of CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide) and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere results in depletion of the ozone layer. The ozone layer is a film-like deposit in the earth’s atmosphere which contains high concentrations of ozone (O<sub>3</sub>). The ozone layer absorbs approximately 93-99% of the high frequency ultraviolet light (or rays) of the sun – radiation which can potentially threaten life on the planet.

Within this context, states must choose between pursuing economic activities which contribute to the rapid disintegration of the earth and pursuing economic activities that are environmentally friendly.

The Low Carbon Development Strategy launched by Guyana’s President Bharrat Jagdeo takes into account the various manifestations of a rapidly changing global environment; how this change may affect coastal states such as Guyana - whose coast is below sea-level; and how continued national development can be achieved by investment in areas that potentially can yield high profits while being low in carbon emission. Some of these areas include forestry resources, fruits and vegetables and aquaculture.

Almost 80% of Guyana’s territory is covered by pristine rainforests. Traditionally, sections of the forests have been used for timber production. Commensurate with an increasing demand for timber and its bi-products is the proliferation of forestry activities, some of which are illegal and not in the interest of sustainable development and environmental protection. In light of this fact, the Government has drafted an approach to utilising the forest in a manner that promotes economic development in an environmentally sustainable way, contingent upon international ethics and laws.

People involved in logging and mining will not be required to cease their operations. Instead, they will be required to conduct such economic activities in compliance with international environmental best practices. In addition, they will be required to observe regulations pertaining to where logging is permitted versus where forest is preserved for carbon sequestration. Further, investment in fruits and vegetables is not only potentially high in profits, but it addresses concerns regarding food security.

The aquaculture sector is dynamic. Not only does a heightened focus on marine products promise to promote employment and economic advancement generally, but it can affect the tourism sector in a positive way.

Guyana proposes to preserve a large percentage of its forest for the purpose of carbon sequestration (or absorption) at an annual cost of US\$580 million. Should Guyana succeed in its

bid to secure acceptance of the final LCDS proposal at the Climate Conference in Copenhagen in December of this year, it would be equivalent to the Government's establishment of a new sector – the outcome of a visionary and ambitious national development thrust. It will demonstrate how BIG small states can prove, and Guyana will certainly rise to better international acclaim and recognition.

This little space does not allow for adequate discourse on all of the thoughts that went into the drafting of the LCDS document and what benefits are imminent upon the execution of such a strategy. The nationwide consultations seek to bring the strategy home to residents all across Guyana. The document can also be accessed at [www.lcds.gov.gy](http://www.lcds.gov.gy). All concerned are encouraged to read and understand the document, and provide feedback. The Government has decided to engage the participation of the citizenry because this strategy is of national importance, and the people of Guyana must, therefore, have a hand in its shaping.

So what is your opinion? Is Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy really a neo-economic thrust and a solution to Climate Change?

GUY SCHOLARI

## **Minister responds to misinformation, deliberate manipulation of facts on LCDS**

July 8, 2009 | By Guyana Chronicle | Filed Under Letters

GUYANESE of all walks of life are actively participating in the on-going consultations on the draft Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS).

A healthy feature is that many are seeking to learn more about the draft strategy, and many others have and are making constructive inputs, even if these are preliminary.

And yes, there are some persons who have different perspectives on the LCDS. This is a healthy, reassuring feature of our democracy.

Public debate and discourse on the LCDS can only lead to an enhanced understanding and the full appreciation of this Strategy in its national and international contexts.

What I find disingenuous are attempts by a few to mislead the public on the content and intent of the Strategy.

For example, I wish to refer to misleading letters by Eric Phillips in the Stabroek News of June 15, 2009 entitled "The Low Carbon Development Strategy is a new form of mendicancy", and in the Stabroek News of June 29, 2009

captioned: "The Low Carbon Development Strategy is about the air we breathe".

This last missive was also carried in the June 29, 2009 Kaieteur News under the heading: "LCDS is about privatizing the air we breathe".

It is most unfortunate that whilst the great majority of persons at the National, Regional and International Communities are praising Guyana's visionary LCDS, these few individuals clearly unfamiliar with elements of the LCDS are openly critical, rather than seek clarification to reduce their unfamiliarity with the subject matter.

To ensure that the public does not become confused by the misinformation peddled and to improve those individuals knowledge on the subject, the following facts are presented:

\* The LCDS was quoted by these letter writers as saying that for almost every year over the past two decades, Guyana experienced positive growth.

The letter by Mr. Phillips has not proven that to be incorrect. In actuality, he concurs with this assertion quoting the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy for Guyana 2002 which states that there was positive growth, however some years the growth was of a smaller rate than others.

It is evident, that Mr. Phillips in an effort to present a

certain unfavorable situation, quoted the report of 2002. He neglected to refer to the World Bank's latest release of May 2009 on the World Bank's new Country Assistance Strategy for Guyana 2009 to 2012 where it commends Guyana for excellent macro economic performance.

The following was taken from the World Bank's website:

"Guyana has made significant progress in laying the foundations for macroeconomic stability and higher pro-poor growth...the Bank's Executive Directors commended Guyana for its macroeconomic performance over the past decade and recognized the progress made in improving fiscal discipline.

They emphasized the importance of accelerated broad-based and shared growth in order to mitigate the development challenges of high poverty and inequality. They also underlined the importance of Guyana's economic diversification through private sector development, and stressed the need to have the International Finance Corporation, the arm of the World Bank Group that

supports the private sector, actively involved in the country."

\*\* The LCDS makes it abundantly clear that areas already allocated for sustainable forestry utilization will continue to be harvested, but in accordance with environmental best practices and sustainable forest management guidelines.

Any assertion that none of Guyana's rain forest will be disturbed is not factual.

\*\* The claim is made that there is no pressure on Guyana's Forests that would lead to increased deforestation. Examples are cited of other countries where there has been widespread conversion of forests but pronounces that

Guyana's rainforests will remain as they currently are for the next fifty (50) years.

This is where the authors unknowingly is praising a Government that has taken a conscious policy to ensure the sustainable management of Guyana's forest resources even in the face of numerous requests by multinational investors who want to convert natural forest lands into oil palm plantations and other activities.

Further enquiries with the Guyana Forestry Commission would show the numerous requests that come in on a weekly basis for access to unallocated State Forest not only for conversion to oil palm plantations, but for other similar lucrative ventures.

The Government, however, has stated categorically that utilization of the State Forest must comply with SFM guidelines, and further, that there will be no conversion of natural State Forests for plantation type forest or for agriculture.

This policy also is aimed at protection of our rich and varied biodiversity and other environmental services that our natural forests provide.

\*\* Then there is the ludicrous claim that the LCDS will compromise the sovereignty of Guyana. How can anyone arrive at this conclusion? The LCDS will allow for utilization of forests on already allocated State Forest. It will allow for the development of non-forested areas for a host of Low Carbon economic opportunities such as agriculture in the Canjie Basin and Rupununi Savannahs; aquaculture development in other areas, to name a few.

The Forests that Guyana will get financial incentives for will have to meet some agreed conditions to ensure that they actually contribute to Climate Change mitigation activities. There must be a monitoring, review and

verification mechanism. Some of our existing economic activities have to undergo a type of external review before we are permitted to export.

The financial rewards to be obtained will be much more than what traditional logging activities will bring to Guyana. This does not translate into loss of sovereignty; rather it provides a win-win situation for Guyana and the global community. The Forest is and will forever be the patrimony of all Guyanese.

\*\* The writer then misses the whole point of the strategy when he tries to include issues such as who owns the air we breathe, water resources, etc.

The LCDS is based on protecting and maintaining our forests in an effort to reduce global carbon emissions and at the same time attract resources for our country to grow and develop.

It does not focus on environmental services. Then the author forgets the point that Guyana is already protecting and maintaining our forests resources - so why not seek to get financial incentives from this to develop the other Low Carbon economic opportunities? This is not in any way going to compromise the ownership of any of the services the forest provides for Guyana - we simply have to meet agreed bench marks for forest protection and maintenance, most of which we are already meeting.

Several countries are named and the writer asks the question as to why they are not supportive of Guyana's LCDS. He is totally incorrect. Several of these countries actually are in full support of the LCDS but because of their internal country situation, including the tremendous population and investment pressure for new lands for agriculture and other economic ventures, they have been constantly converting natural forest into other land use options.

Some are however, seriously looking to adopt elements of the LCDS that they would be able to implement.

The assumption that Brazil should therefore receive twenty one and a half times what Guyana expects to receive is therefore seriously flawed - payments are made when agreed benchmarks are attained; not on the volume of the forest resources possessed by the country.

The writer is not familiar with the current international negotiations that are occurring on this issue if he did, he would be aware of the fact that countries have been able to argue successfully that national circumstances must be taken into account and no one strategy can meet every country's expectations.

Guyana and the countries mentioned have common views on many of the current issues, but because of the need to take national circumstances into account, there are some areas where more discussion is needed.

Once again, the writer is also very mistaken that Canopy Capital has purchased the rights to environmental services. This is untrue since what Canopy Capital is actually doing is a valuation of the environmental services that are provided by the Iwokrama Rainforest, an area which was dedicated to the international community during the PNC Government. (I must state, a most commendable decision.) This will then help Guyana to go to the next stage of seeking compensation for the environmental services that the forests provide.

In a weak attempt to discredit this visionary LCDS, there is the claim of lack of public discussion on the LCDS. This is most alarming and shows that the writers definitely have an anti-Guyana agenda. The public media has on a daily basis been providing regular information to the general public.

There is a through consultative process which began with the National Launch by the President of Guyana on June 8th 2009 at the National Convention Centre.

This is now being followed up by regional consultations which are targeting approximately 142 communities between now and the end of July.

There is no mention of the multi-stakeholder steering committee is managing this process; this committee has representatives chosen by the indigenous groups, members of civil society including labour, business, youth, women,

Conservation International, World Wildlife Fund and representatives from the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED) - this is an independent UK group that was chosen by Norway to be part of the consultation process, in response to an invitation by Guyana to Norway.

The writers are also conveniently forgetting that this phase of consultation will result in the feedback being used to upgrade the current LCDS document to make it a truly national strategy. Perhaps, I would hasten to conclude that the letters were a clever ploy to try to sensationalize the issue since the attack on the LCDS cannot stand alone.

One can only hope that we will see less misinformation and deliberate manipulation of facts and more effort to understand and contribute to this timely vision for Guyana's development- the LCDS.

ROBERT M. PERSAUD, MBA, MP  
Minister of Agriculture

## **Will there be a global food crisis because of LCDS**

July 6, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

Guyana's global mendicancy unashamedly marches on two simultaneous fronts. First there was the launching of the Low Carbon Development Strategy on June 8. Then on June 11, Navin Chandarpal, Special Envoy for the President on Environment and Sustainable Development of

Guyana was in Toronto to engage international discourse on the New Global Human Order (NGHO) initiative.

That Mr. Chandernal is linked to both initiatives shows how well orchestrated this con game is. Like the Low Carbon Development Strategy, the New Global Human Order is about Guyana and other developing countries getting free cash from the West. The argument in the NGHO is that the Developed World should obtain US\$1.5 trillion from a “peace dividend” and that this money should be transferred to developing countries to help to fight social causes and poverty.

Before I move on to the topic at hand, the Low Carbon Development Strategy...the PPP’s dishonesty needs to be highlighted.

Years ago, the PPP travelled around the World proclaiming that President Jagan’s New Global Human Order was new. However, as Norman Girvan has pointed out: “a content analysis of the statements related to the New Global Human Order suggests that it is more in the nature of a package, whose elements are drawn from a variety of sources than a distinctly new initiative.

There is little, if anything, that is new. The proposals advanced by Dr Jagan in November 1994 and in the Georgetown Declaration of 1996 are, in the main, borrowed explicitly from existing documents and initiatives, particularly the UNDP’s Human Development Reports and the World Social Summit.

Now, the PPP, President Jagdeo and their McKinsey friends are not only blatantly lying about at least 15 things in the Low Carbon Development Strategy document, there is another lie being perpetuated on the internet. In a 3 December 2008 article by REDD-Monitor, entitled “Canopy Capital’s Iwokrama, Guyana, project “shrouded in secrecy”, indigenous residents not consulted”.....the following statement can be found:

“The Iwokrama scheme was originally set up in 1996, at a time when Guyana’s President Cheddi Jagan was keen to prop up his country’s flagging international credibility. It was established as a visionary and self-sustaining new scheme to balance conservation with sustainable rainforest use”.

Why would someone take away President Desmond Hoyte’s 1989 Initiative and give it to President Jagan in 1996? Simple. From the PPP’s racism prism, President Jagdeo is just carrying on President Jagan’s vision.

Now back to the mendicancy and the “clear and present danger” of the Low Carbon Development Strategy. If there is to be a national consultation, then real issues need to be discussed. Not the lies and false dawns that are in the document.

In my previous two letters, I touched on three critical issues.

The first real issue was the many lies in the document itself: economic growth rate, literacy, financial transparency etc.

The second issue was the unashamed and visionless mendicancy in the document which argues Guyana should receive US\$584 million per year into perpetuity for its 15 million hectares of unused forests. This would imply, of course, Brazil would have to receive approximately US\$22 billion per year and the other nine countries with larger forests than Guyana, an equally obscene amount of money,

The third issue was the issue of sovereignty, which the President claims would be unaffected although VAT was imposed by the IMF and the countries have been living with tons of conditionalities for decades and decades.

The fourth issue was that fundamental to the establishment of a carbon credit market was the privatization of the “air we

breathe” and ultimately the “water’ contained in the forests. Only property and its equivalents are traded on markets.

The fifth issue was why Guyana didn’t follow Brazil’s model of setting up a Fund to preserve the forests without establishing carbon credit trading. Brazil plans to establish a voluntary fund into which developed countries, companies, and other entities pay to reduce emissions from deforestation. With complete control over how the funds are spent and no allocation of conventional carbon credits to contributors, the initiative maintains Brazil’s sovereignty over the Amazon and gives it an unprecedented financial incentive to preserve the region’s forest cover.

What Brazil does is crucial, since it is home to more than 60 percent of the Amazon and accounts for nearly half of global tropical forest loss annually.

In strength, Guyana could have joined the Forestry eight of countries and have a better negotiating position.

The sixth issue raised centered around the chicanery and corruption involved in Low Carbon credit deals in places like Guyana, Papua New Guinea, Aceh etc. In Guyana’s case, 1423 square miles have been obtained by a company named Canopy Capital.

This company and its legal advisers admit that the deal was not adequately discussed with the implicated communities, but just discussed and agreed with the Board of Iwokrama, which has one community representative.

However, the community of Fairview that has titled lands within the Reserve was not consulted directly and communities that use the reserve and have never surrendered their ancestral ownership over the area were not directly involved.

Asked about why the deal had been shrouded in secrecy, Canopy Capital and Iwokrama advise that for reasons of ‘commercial confidentiality’ it was not possible to broadcast the issue before the deal was done and for this reason also the agreement remains confidential.

It is good to see leaders in the Amerindian community such as Tony and Ron James, Dave Lewis, Gavin Winter and Sydney Allicock have raised land ownership issues and asked how the strategy would respect Amerindian rights as protected under international norms that are still not adequately safeguarded under the 2006 Amerindian Act and other national laws. Questions about the Amaila Falls hydropower project on the Kuribrong River have also been raised.

In this letter, I want to raise a few more questions which I will write about in the near future.

Question # 1: Forest deforestation accounts for 17% of the problem of global warming. Why aren't we hearing about the remaining 83% of this problem and why is this 83% a priority for those so focused on an LCDS strategy? Methane (rice growing emits this), nitrous oxides, fluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride are all greenhouse gases along with carbon dioxide.

Question # 2: The burning of fossil fuels accounts for over 30 % of the problem. Why aren't developed countries interested in using less power and therefore reducing their standard of wasteful living to save the planet that they have environmentally destroyed?

China has already said it will continue to burn its billions of tons of coal and will not allow its economic growth be held hostage by oil cartels.

Question # 4: Why have Brazil's forests been devastated?

Question # 5: Will there be a global food crisis because of LCDS. To quote from the internet and "Rainforest facts":

"As the demand in the Western world for cheap meat increases, more and more rainforests are destroyed to provide grazing land for animals. In Brazil alone, there are an estimated 220 million head of cattle, 20 million goats, 60 million pigs, and 700 million chickens. Most of Central and Latin America's tropical and temperate rainforests have been lost to cattle operations to meet the world demand". Seems like a massive global food shortage far beyond that of biodiesels is on the near horizon.

The paper industry in developed countries is also another source of deforestation. The website continues:

"In addition to being logged for exportation, rainforest wood stays in developing countries for fuel wood and charcoal. One single steel plant in Brazil making steel for Japanese cars needs millions of tons of wood each year to produce charcoal that can be used in the manufacture of steel. Then, there is the paper industry.

One pulpwood project in the Brazilian Amazon consists of a Japanese power plant and pulp mill. To set up this single plant operation, 5,600 square miles of Amazon rainforest were burned to the ground and replanted with pulpwood trees.

This single manufacturing plant consumes 2,000 tons of surrounding rainforest wood every day to produce 55 megawatts of electricity to run the plant. The plant, which has been in operation

since 1978, produces more than 750 tons of pulp for paper every 24 hours, worth approximately \$500,000, and has built 2,800 miles of roads through the Amazon rainforest to be used by its 700 vehicles.

In addition to this pulp mill, the world's biggest pulp mill is the Aracruz mill in Brazil. Its two units produce one million tons of pulp a year, harvesting the rainforest to keep the plant in business and displacing thousands of indigenous tribes.

Where does all this pulp go? Aracruz's biggest customers are the United States, Belgium, Great Britain, and Japan. More and more rainforest is destroyed to meet the demands of the developed world's paper industry, which requires a staggering 200 million tons of wood each year simply to make paper. If the present rate continues, it is estimated that the paper industry alone will consume four billion tons of wood annually by the year 2020"

Does this deforestation or carbon emissions belong to Brazil or Japan and the West? In the LCDS scheme, they belong to Brazil.

Finally, Question # 7: There are now calls for a moratorium on mining because of LCDS. Can you imagine what would happen to the global financial architecture which is underpinned by gold if there is a moratorium on gold mining?

Eric Phillips

## **LCDS article did not properly reflect what took place**

July 1, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

DEAR EDITOR,

We write to communicate concerns about your article, "Guyana's Low Carbon Strategy outreach gathers momentum" published on June 28, 2009.

As Amerindian leaders and elders who were present at the said "consultations", we strongly feel that your article does not properly reflect what took place during the recent meetings in Region

9.

While it is true that positive statements were expressed about the need to protect the forest and fight climate change, numerous participants voiced concerns over specific proposals in the President's draft Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), which are not mentioned in your report.

In particular, participants raised our outstanding land issues and asked how the strategy would respect our rights as protected under international norms that are still not adequately safeguarded under the 2006 Amerindian Act and other national laws.

Many people called for full respect for our traditional farming and activities on our traditional lands [both titled and untitled] while others highlighted the need to address land claims upfront before implementation of forest conservation schemes.

Several individuals also conveyed serious concerns about LCDS proposals to support large-scale rice and soya bean farming in fragile savannah ecosystems.

We call on the Kaieteur News to ensure that further reporting provide a balanced perspective of issues raised and views expressed by rights holders and citizens in future low carbon news stories. May we also respectfully recommend that in the future the Kaieteur News not rely solely on the Government reports for information but also on the public views on the LCDS.

Tony James, Aishalton Village. Ron James, Aishalton Village. Dave Lewis, South Central Rupununi. Sydney Allicock, North Rupununi. Gavin Winter, Aishalton Village

## **LCDS is about privatising the air we breathe**

June 29, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

The lack of public discussion about Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) underpins the stark reality that Opposition politicians and Civil Society do not fully understand the "clear and present danger" facing Guyana and the developing world.

Most are afraid to speak out in this society because of extrajudicial killings, political and commercial victimization and cowardice.

Low Carbon Development is about the “air we breathe”. Falsely camouflaged as an issue about carbon and green development, it is really about who will own “the air we breathe”.

Tom Goldtooth, Executive Director of the Indigenous Environmental Network has made the following complaint.

“What’s happening is that in this whole market system is that it’s put a market value on traditional people and traditional teachings - those things that we hold sacred to our people. This is evil at its worst. They’re trading air that is sacred. We’re looking at some spiritually profound values that people of industrial society really have a difficult time grasping. So when we talk about commodities – whether it’s the sacredness of trees, and especially air now – is in order to trade CO<sub>2</sub>, in order to trade greenhouse gases — this is air — they have to define it as a property. It’s a property. Someone has to own the air in order to trade it. Very fundamental. So, the question is: who owns the air then?

Yes indeed. Someone has to own the air we breathe in order to trade it as a property. This is a very dangerous global precedence that will lead to scarcity, wars, civil conflicts and the burning down of forests as a new form of terrorism. Once we move down this “slippery slope” of making air a property, then water will be the next property to be owned and traded as a global commodity. Countries, from which the source of water begins, will claim they own the water passing through other countries. This is already happening in Africa. Science in Africa Magazine recently had an article that stated:

“In recent years, however, the use of the Nile’s waters for development has become something of a bone of contention among the 10 countries that share its basin - Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan and Egypt. The contention partly arises from two agreements signed during the colonial era - the 1929 Nile Water Agreement and the 1959 Agreement for the Full utilisation of the Nile - that gave Egypt and Sudan extensive rights over the river’s use. The upstream countries, including the East African countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, have expressed concern over the long-standing arrangements, arguing the treaties have served to give Egypt unfair control over the use of the river’s waters. None of the colonial treaties involved all the (affected) countries and therefore, did not deal equitably with the interests of the upstream countries, they say.”

But let us return to the “privatization of global air” by the re-colonization minded Developed World. Having destroyed the atmosphere, and having threatened life on Mother Earth, these countries are proposing a new re-colonization scheme and Guyana is the staking horse in this global crime against developing countries.

How does one own air? The use of the term “low carbon” is a camouflage for the truth. It is air that is being traded. The developing world is being re-colonized through a high tech lynching financial technique call Reducing

Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD). The United Nations is protecting its masters.

Why is Guyana being used as a stalking horse? Guyana has a government which will do anything for the West to save its skin from criminal prosecution and jail. This government and its President will do anything to remain in power. Roger Khan’s plea bargain was the final piece of the puzzle. Now, the President and his men are totally compromised and could be charged for extrajudicial killings and ethnic cleansing

Eight tropical countries contain 80% of the world's remaining forest cover. They call themselves the Forestry Eight.

Guyana is not one of them. As a matter of fact, the countries with the largest forests in numerical size are: Brazil, Congo (Zaire), Peru, Indonesia, Colombia, Papua New Guinea, Venezuela, Bolivia, Mexico, Suriname and then Guyana.

Guyana's Merchant Banker friends at McKinsey & Company are making the argument Guyana should be paid US\$580 million per year for its forests. This payment will be forever and ever. If this is true, then what will the World have to pay?

Brazil has 1.3 million square miles of forest. Guyana has about 60,000 square miles.

This means Brazil should receive, in the thinking of Guyana's geniuses, twenty one and a half times what Guyana receives from the West or approximately US\$15.53 billion dollars per year forever and ever.

Brazil has rejected this proposal. Instead, Brazil favours a different approach, outlined at the last climate change talks in Poland.

Brazil plans to establish a voluntary fund into which developed countries, companies, and other entities pay to reduce emissions from deforestation. With complete control over how the funds are spent and no allocation of conventional carbon credits to contributors, this strategy maintains Brazil's sovereignty over the Amazon and gives it an unprecedented financial incentive to preserve the region's forest cover. What Brazil does is crucial, since it is home to more than 60 percent of the Amazon and accounts for nearly half of global tropical forest loss annually.

Guyana's role in this global re-colonization process is to create a price point (US\$580 million per year) which will then be used by International bankers and fraudsters to create a market for the owning and selling "the air we breathe". What is more frightening is that private companies and not governments will be responsible for the trading of carbon credits. Madoff and Stanford will look like angels.

President Jagdeo talks about preserving Guyana's sovereignty, while receiving a free US\$580 million (over half a billion) per year. Has he lost what precious little commonsense he has? Why didn't Guyana join Brazil in a joint strategy with the Forestry Eight group of countries to control their own economic destiny and sovereignty?

Finally, once the re-colonization of air (and therefore the developing world) is completed, the Developed World will effectively have colonized "water" which is the source of life and a very scarce commodity that Developing countries do not have.

Why? If Brazil were to be trapped in REDD or LCDS, its 15 % of the world's fresh water would be captive to monitoring and foreign control. As a recent journal stated:

"Today the Amazon River is the most voluminous river on Earth, 11 times the volume of the Mississippi, and drains an area equivalent in size to the United States. During the high water season, the river's mouth may be 300 miles wide and every day up to 500 billion cubic feet of water (5,787,037 cubic feet/sec) flow into the Atlantic.

For reference, the Amazon's daily freshwater discharge into the Atlantic is enough to supply New York City's freshwater needs for nine years.

The force of the current — from sheer water volume alone - causes Amazon River water to continue flowing 125 miles out to sea before mixing with Atlantic salt water. Early sailors could drink freshwater out of the ocean before sighting the South American continent".

Finally, President Jagdeo needs to be more transparent about the Trojan horse private deal that currently exists in Guyana's forests.

In March 2008, a private equity firm, Canopy Capital, purchased the rights to environmental services generated by a 1,432-square-mile rain forest reserve in Guyana. Canopy's website states "Canopy Capital has created an investment template for first-movers in an emerging market for Ecosystem Services.

These include rainfall generation, moderation of extreme weather, carbon storage and biodiversity maintenance.

I wonder what rainfall generation is. It seems we now have new Gods!

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However, the community of Fairview that has titled lands within the Reserve was not consulted directly and communities that use the reserve and have never surrendered their ancestral ownership over the area were not directly involved.

Asked about why the deal had been shrouded in secrecy, Canopy Capital and Iwokrama advise that for reasons of 'commercial confidentiality' it was not possible to broadcast the issue before the deal was done and for this reason also the agreement remains confidential.

Sounds familiar? The capital market hounds are sharpening their teeth.

Anthony Limbrick, Chief Investment Officer of the New Zealand-based firm Pure Carbon recently told Reuters, that his firm has a Fund to trade in the European carbon market and will have an initial capacity of \$US20 million. He said the fund will aim to grow as the carbon market evolves, but is also ready to exploit the possibility of a slump in the segment. At a recent hedge fund conference, Limbrick said:

"We think there's a 30 percent chance the market collapses. That could create a 'fat tail' (a very rare event with major consequences) for us to make money".

For those who are being consulted and bombarded by slick ads on Channel 11, the reality is Guyana is being used as a stalking horse to create new slaves and indentured servants. First it was sugar, and the west got richer and richer. Now, it is the sacred air we breathe

President Jagdeo states Guyana does not have to give up any of its sovereignty with his LCDS approach. Yet, the IMF has held Guyana's sovereignty for decades. Who is he kidding?

Now he is playing three-card monte with our sovereignty in a new move by the West to re-colonize those countries that have precious forests. Oil has been replaced by air. Soon it will be water.

By being a stalking horse in the quest to privatize "the air we breathe", President Jagdeo is exhibiting a special type of lunacy or self survival. He is trying to move Guyana from a High C economy (cocaine) to a Low C economy (carbon). Both are crimes against humanity.

Eric Phillips

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June 29, 2009 | By KNews | Filed Under Letters

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Eric Phillips

**We need competent people to manage the affairs of the nation**

June 25, 2009 | By knews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

The new carbon credit strategy by the President is an applaudable one. Will the developed world buy into it? How much will it cost? How long will it take to get implemented and become a viable alternative to harvesting the forests?

I am all for saving the forest. However, one remembers Dr. Cheddi Jagan's quest to get the world to buy into the idea of a new global human order. The idea itself was not revolutionary but the point is that it is now dead with Dr. Jagan gone. The developed world will not give us billions of dollars for us to reach a point where we can compete against them and the products they produce. By the time this initiative is implemented, the developed world would have adjusted their emissions output to meet the requisite level. Failing this they will resort to recolonisation to supposedly save the forests and the earth to protect the human species.

What we have to do is, instead of misusing the funds that belong to the people that is in the nation's coffers, as reported by the Auditor General, we have to develop our industrial sector to create wealth. We have to be able to manufacture the value added products for export. We can only do this by clean, stable, abundant and cheap energy. The same for water. These are two key ingredients that every administration in this country seems incapable of fixing.

What we need are competent people to manage the affairs of the nation. We need people who have proven themselves in their respective careers and give those persons to manage the country's affairs. Not career politicians.

We can only achieve this by placing democracy back in the hands of the people. We can accomplish this by democratically electing a council from an urban and rural combination. The council can then hire a country manager, with the council members being barred from ever holding any other public office. No perks or glory to be associated with the council.

The council can fire the country manager at anytime and the new manager can retain or fire the 'secretaries', who will be heading the various government ministries. This will take care of the race factor, greed, glory, corruption as well as the cry for power sharing. Power instead will literally be in the hands of the people. Something like this can work. Anything is better than the successive failed governments we are forced to endure.

What this country needs right now is less government functionaries and more competent persons who can do the work. For this, we need a system of management that will ensure the money is not squandered, but used to elevate the country.

Ganesh Singh

**Low Carbon Development Strategy highly unlikely**

June 25, 2009 | By knews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

The development of a Low Carbon Strategy by Guyana is commendable, but the success of this strategy seems to be highly unlikely.

The industrialised world seems to be more focused on policy intervention to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Both developing and developed countries are concerned about the deadly effects of climate change and support efforts to mitigate the harsh effects of climate change, but their actions to do so are different.

Developed countries are more focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while developing nations are focused on establishing strategies to combat climate change, which involves battling poverty and contributing to their development and growth, which seems to be secondary for developed countries.

Presently, Beijing is pressuring China to commit to hard numbers on greenhouse gas emission, while the United States is urging China to focus on renewable energy. The United States also prefers to focus on reducing greenhouse emissions through regulating industries, rather than financing standing forests for carbon credits. The US is attempting to bring together industry leaders to form working groups to share best practices to reduce greenhouse emissions. In Bali, the US pushed issues like sustainable forestry, and improved access to clean technologies. The lesser developed countries are hesitant to commit to finance standing forests because proceeds can be used for their own domestic development rather than throw it towards the development of other developing nations.

There is also debate among the industrialised countries on establishing a ceiling on greenhouse gas output and to focus on low carbon growth. The investment in renewable energy, creating fervor for wind and solar power, seems to be priority in these countries. Attention is given to the 'green stimulus measures' which lay the groundwork for the promotion of development, fostering long-term economic growth using clean, innovative, resource efficient, low carbon technologies and infrastructure.

Japan stated that any new agreed framework must include all major emitting countries, if there is to be any success in ridding the world of greenhouse gas emissions. Japan presented a three-point proposal: (1) all major emitters must participate in the new framework for global reduction of emissions; (2) the framework must be flexible and diverse, taking into account the circumstances of each country; and (3) it must ensure compatibility between environmental protection and economic growth by utilising energy-saving devices and new technologies.

The Copenhagen agreement expected in December will succeed the 1997 Kyoto Protocol; the Copenhagen agreement would require 37 industrial nations to cut their emissions by a total of 5 percent from 1990 levels; but the Copenhagen discussions place limited priority on developing nations, including Guyana.

It appears therefore that since Guyana is not likely to benefit from any carbon revenues, then the Government needs to urgently fast track other income-generating avenues to improve Guyana's development.

R. Budram

**The fight to finance standing forests**

June 23rd , 2009 | By Guyana Chronicle | Filed Under Letters

CHINA is one of the world's largest carbon dioxide emitters because of its heavy industrialisation and urbanisation. China is more focused on a cumulative emission budget over the 21st century, the low carbon economy characterized by low energy consumption and low emissions are becoming more popular in China.

Global talks about climate change are difficult to advance because developed countries are yet to decide on how they will finance developing countries equipped with standing forests. The European Union (EU) is unable to reach a consensus because developed countries, especially the United States, are yet to decide on their own position on financing rainforest countries for their standing forests.

The EU also wants the more developing countries to commit to meaningful mitigation actions before making financial pledges. However, at this time, negotiations regarding the assignment of rainforests countries to take action on climate change mitigation will require concrete figures on financing from the industrialized nations.

The decision on financing rainforests to reduce emissions is in stalemate because of the unresolved issues relating to climate finance. The developed countries need to decide how they can deliver funding before making financing commitments. Europe's poorer countries including Poland, Bulgaria and Hungary expressed fears that EU negotiators would commit them to providing more finance for the developing world during international negotiations than they could afford in the current economic situation. These countries prefer to utilise their funds for their domestic development, instead of using it to help developing countries.

Since the EU's call for the development of low carbon development strategies by developing countries to outline mitigation actions, Guyana developed its strategy called, "Transforming Guyana's Economy While Combating Climate Change." This approach is based on the proposal for the generation of money through an international carbon credit mechanism, but the unresolved issues pose a major problem towards this strategy. However, three problems are identified by this strategy: 1) the need for the developed world to value standing forests, 2) agreement by leaders from the developed world to include payments for forestry climate services within the global carbon markets, and 3) predictability of for forest payments by developed countries.

Deforestation accounts for roughly a fifth of all greenhouse gas emissions. As we all should know, protecting forests will reduce carbon emissions, leading to poverty reduction and the preservation of biodiversity. Tropical forests act as a 'lung', producing a large amount of oxygen everyday. They store and absorb carbon dioxide from the air, and release fresh and clean oxygen. These trees are important, in order to ensure that the earth's temperature remains stable. It, therefore, is necessary that the Kyoto protocol provides for incentives for the preservation of rainforests, and so, it is critical to revise that Protocol at Copenhagen this year.

We must laud the efforts of President Jagdeo, to craft a Low-carbon Development Strategy called 'Transforming Guyana's Economy While Combating Climate Change,' addressing avoided deforestation; and how developing countries can contribute and earn revenues for the sustainable development of their economies.

However, global cooperation is necessary to manage Climate Change. And so, the fight to persuade leaders worldwide to invest in the idea of financing standing forests to aid in the alleviation of Climate Change continues.

MARISSA LOWDEN

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Marissa Lowden

**LCDS - a proposal in its pilot stage**

June 21st , 2009 | By Guyana Chronicle | Filed Under Letters

ONCE again I'm placed in the position of writing in defense of the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS).

Just when you think that Guyanese are beginning to understand what the LCDS is all about, what it seeks to accomplish, and most importantly, who stands to benefit, Kaieteur News' 'Peeping Tom' decides to state that "President Jagdeo should be wary of the environmental lobby."

I am certain that if any other country had proposed this very scheme, Guyanese would have been impressed and in full support of the same. The President's LCDS has not received so much critique outside of Guyana as it has in Guyana itself.

Are Guyanese aware of who will be the beneficiaries if this scheme became a reality?

The LCDS document was made public and readily available since June 8, and now, almost two weeks later, people are still have serious reservations of what the proposal really entails.

A lot of points that were raised in this 'Peeping Tom' article were already clarified time and time again by various LCDS post-launch consultations that are currently being held throughout the country.

I would like to urge the Guyanese public to make themselves more educated on the LCDS by contacting the LCDS team at the Office of the President, before attempting to post negative views that will implicate the functions of the actual Low Carbon Development Strategy.

D DYALSINGH

**President Jagdeo should be wary of the environmental lobby**

June 20, 2009 | By knews | Filed Under Features / Columnists, Peeping Tom

In a previous column, I had suggested that the fate of President Jagdeo's Low Carbon Development Strategy depended on the outcome of this December's meeting in Copenhagen. The President is hoping at that meeting, an agreement can be reached that would allow countries to be compensated for avoided deforestation or in other words, Guyana will be paid for not cutting down its forests.

The environmental argument is that if countries can be compensated for regenerative activities, then countries that instead keep their forest cover intact should also be assisted. The President of Guyana is therefore hoping that avoided deforestation would qualify for money under the post Copenhagen agreement. He is hoping for too much. He is not seeing what is behind this pushing for avoided deforestation.

It is being argued that some 17 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions are caused by deforestation. But is this true? And has this figure been verified? If it is true that 17 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions are caused by deforestation, there is still reason to ask from where the other 83 per cent is originating? How much is being caused by industry? How much is being caused by the military establishment? How much is being caused by motor vehicles?

If there is a need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, then the entire pie needs to be revealed and cuts made to all the major contributors, because while forestry may or may not contribute a fairly sizeable chunk to greenhouse gas emissions, forestry activities also contribute by far a greater share to what is known as carbon sequestration of the replacing of carbon in the environment and the conversion of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, into oxygen.

Forestry activities also contribute a great deal to the development of poor countries and despite the fact that in the felling of trees, greenhouse gases may be emitted, in the vast majority of cases, the countries that are tearing down their forests in the name of development, still do not pollute the environment as much as the industrial countries.

There is therefore a greater responsibility on the part of industrialized countries to reduce emission levels, rather than unethically asking poor countries such as Guyana, to defer development in lieu of some vague compensation plan and in the interest of saving humanity.

The attack on deforestation also has an economic and trade dimension. President Jagdeo should recall that when his government first came to power, the World Bank and other lending agencies caused a number of major investments in the forestry sector to disappear by their insistence of environmental standards.

Guyana lost major investments in the forestry sector, since there were four major timber companies from Singapore and Malaysia who were interested in not just chopping down our forests, but also in establishing businesses within Guyana. These investments fizzed away because the concessions could not be granted due to Guyana not having an adequate environmental-monitoring capacity.

It had long been suspected that the real reason why the environmental argument was used against Guyana, was because of the need of the West to protect their timber industry from the competition that was being provided by countries such as Malaysia and Singapore. The environmental argument was being used to stifle the growth of the timber industry by the Asian Tigers.

A few years ago, oil prices began to rise astronomically. In fact, it reached US\$140 per barrel, prompting renewed interest in countries such as Brazil for ethanol production. Brazil produces cheaper ethanol than the United States, which has imposed a tariff on imports of ethanol so as to protect its domestic industry. There has also been renewed interest in other bio-fuels caused by

the rise in global fuel prices.

The production of these bio-fuels, including ethanol, requires increased deforestation and therefore the pro-environmental lobby that is calling for reduce deforestation is harming the expansion of the bio-fuel industry. Some may even wish to say that there is link between the need to stifle the ethanol market outside of the West, and this sudden interest by environmentalists in calling for avoided deforestation.

Whether or not there is such a link, it cannot be deemphasized that avoided deforestation will work against countries seeking to expand their ethanol production, so as to offset the high cost of fuel imports.

Some politicians do not see the land that is being cleared for the cultivation of crops for conversion to bio-fuels as constituting forests. For example, they do not see the thinly forested hilly sand and clay area as constituting forests. However, the global definition of forest covers these lands that are used for the production of bio-fuels and therefore, President Bharrat Jagdeo may be shooting himself in the foot, when on the one hand he is advocating for avoided deforestation, while on the other hand his government is also interested in the cultivation of food for conversion to bio-fuels.

The President has to be careful that he is not being manipulated by the powerful environmental lobby, because in pushing for avoided deforestation, he may be serving the interests of those who are not only keen on curbing the expansion of ethanol production outside of the United States, but also harnessing the expansion forestry related by Asian companies which are out-competing the West.

**An awesome job!**

June 19, 2009 | By kNews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,  
Guyana Rocks!

Last evening (6-17-2009) I literally jumped out of my seat and the only words that to mind was “What the .....?”

This is with reference to the broadcast advertisement of the “Low Carbon Development Strategy.”

I do possess a gift in identifying “Advertisement with Class,” this one nailed it for me and it was very regal in production and it has earned 5 stars.

The entire Tourism Fraternity of Guyana should now pool all their resources together, create a generic Tourism Advertisement of Guyana similar to the one mentioned; simple use it as the marketing tool at International Trade Fairs and sell Guyana like Israel and Columbia do it with 30 seconds ad space via American television.

The production team and the person/s responsible for the concept did an amazing and awesome job and I am just spellbound up to now.

Very importantly, copies should now be made available to the Guyanese representative to the Miss Universe Pageant 2009 in The Bahamas and it would just be an ideal and superb gift to those who doesn't know that Guyana exists.

Don't you all agree?

T. Pemberton

Mr. Phillips should carefully rationalise the issues before attempting to pick holes

June 18, 2009 | By knews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

I refer to Mr. Eric Phillips letter in the Kaieteur News on June 16, 2009, with the title “A three-card game with Norway as the captive bettor”.

Mr. Eric Phillips in his vain posturing for political office has started campaigning for the upcoming elections in 2011. His usual nitpicking has begun.

In his letter, he labeled the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) of Guyana as a new form of mendicancy. And recall the opposition’s pathetic trend of labeling the acquisition of debt relief for the development of the economy as a form of mendicancy.

If these people are against debt relief and grants to propel growth and development, then I would think that they probably have a better plan.

Let these politically ambitious persons, especially Eric Phillips, present his strategic plan, in order to eradicate what he conceives to be ‘mendicancy’.

When there was extremely limited funding available for social services in 1992, and the Government subsequently secured debt relief for providing the needed services, why would he and his confederates classify the process of that funding as ‘mendicancy’?

Mr. Phillips needs to ‘wake up’ and ‘smell the coffee’, and realise that any developing country needs funding for development. Government needs to spend more to achieve sustainable growth; and so not out of choice, it has to engage in deficit spending when there is a paucity of requisite revenues.

And year after year, the Government has attempted to reduce deficit financing.

If Mr. Phillips has a better plan, then the time is now to present his proposals against the existing context of limited funding for development, the international credit crunch, and the slowdown in the global economy.

Even though Government managed to achieve an enormous amount of debt relief, the need for borrowing loans will persist.

The achievement of debt relief will benefit developing countries since it left them at a position where they are at low levels of debt, and makes it easier for securing additional borrowing which is necessary to continue growth.

These new additional capital acquired through new loans will augment the productive capability of developing countries.

As a developing country, the paucity of resources is an ever-present menace. And so, the need to secure appropriate resources always becomes a mandatory exercise.

The alternative in the absence of short-tem funds is an inadequate provision of services to the people of this country.

If the Government does not secure grants and loans, especially in the short term, then how would it be able to build schools, roads and bridges, rehabilitate sea and river defences, improve the health sector, sustain the housing and water sector, improve the institutional environment, expand the electricity supply and distribution, build up a thriving agriculture sector, extend assistance for vulnerable groups and other targeted interventions, and perk up our business environment?

During the PNC era, the formal enrollment of students to secondary schools was only 33%.

Today, with the help of the ‘infamous debt relief’, the enrollment of students to secondary schools is now 69%. Last year, \$18.5 billion was allocated to the education sector.

This year over \$20.4 billion was allocated to the education sector with \$3.6 billion for capital projects and \$16.8 billion for operational current expenditure.

Today, with the assistance of grants and debt relief, Government is able to strengthen policies and institutions and collaborate with the international community to sustain economic growth and development in Guyana.

It, therefore, is sheer ignorance and damn sinful to label any government’s efforts to ‘seeking-out’ funds, even if those funds happen to be loans and grants.

My advice to this Eric Phillips is that a man thirsty for political power should carefully rationalise the issues before attempting to pick holes next time.

By doing this, Mr. Phillips would provide service to Guyana; his fickleness hurts Guyana.

Elizabeth Daly

**T. Khemraj is falling into a trap**

June 18, 2009 | By knews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

I refer to Mr. Tarron Khemraj's letter in the SN on June 16, 2009.

The global economy does not value the capacity of forests for consumption of greenhouse gases and this is one problem which Government is striving to rectify. This is why Government is making an effort to persuade developed countries to acknowledge the importance of standing forests and the vital role they play in the ecosystem to store greenhouse gases.

The Low-Carbon Development Strategy needs the support of leaders, especially from the developed countries to support the inclusion of payments for standing forests in the United Nations Climate Change Conference (UNCCC) and its Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD).

Recently, the G20 Summit held discussions on the global response to Climate Change and so the need to develop partnerships with the world's leading economies is necessary to push the Low-Carbon Development Strategy.

Rainforests countries are skeptical to commit to REDD because the predictability of forests payments are uncertain. These are all challenges which the Low-carbon Development Strategy is working to overcome.

Mr. Khemraj's presents his proposals, which he claims, will foster national development, as competing with combating climate change. I want to make it clear that he is falling into a trap, because he is viewing Climate Change as being competing against Guyana's national strategies. His conceptualization of Climate Change and proposal of development strategies is wrong. Instead, combating Climate Change should be seen as complementing Guyana's national development strategies.

Mr. Khemraj needs to step out of his old box of thinking and inhale the fresh unpolluted air in the forests.

Kimberly James

**Low Carbon development strategy could be of tremendous benefit**

June 17, 2009 | By Guyana Chronicle | Filed Under Letters

GUYANA's Low Carbon Development Strategy has been launched with much hope and anticipation in light of the potential that this initiative holds for Guyana.

I attended the launching since the issue of climate change and environmental damage has gained my interest over time, and was most elated to see the huge turnout that gathered to witness the launching. I felt they all shared my sentiments that it is something of tremendous benefit for Guyana if the desired results are obtained.

However, the PNC could not accept this fact, so in true PNC form they are now attempting to douse people's enthusiasm and optimism with their pessimism by saying that they expect no genuine consultations on the strategy.

Whether or not the PNCR wants to accept the strategy for its potential should have no impact on its success. Guyanese have already heard about the strategy and its benefits to both Guyana and the world since the Jagdeo Initiative on Deforestation was launched last December.

Consultations on the LCDS have begun and Guyanese are not depending on the PNCR to represent them at these consultations, since they have been known to corrupt everything.

Instead the approach that President Jagdeo has chosen is the best one that would allow all Guyanese the opportunity to voice their concerns and recommendations about the strategy. The onus is on the population to educate themselves about every aspect of the strategy so as to be able to meaningfully participate and contribute at these consultations.

I think the LCDS is a great idea that warrants acceptance and support, since it has been appropriately designed to deal with the contemporary climate change issues, while ensuring that the country's development is not stagnated.

L. DANIELS

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**A three-card monte game with Norway as the captive bettor**

June 16, 2009 | By knews | Filed Under Letters

Dear Editor,

I have read the Low Carbon Development Strategy on GINA's website and read the text of Presentation at the Conference Centre. The document is beautifully written with numerous fancy graphs.

It is a magnificent masquerade of fiction. The President's speech is as usual, full of hype and promise, empty on fact, empty on vision. It is a three-card monte game with Norway as the captive bettor. I do not speak Norwegian but most of us are aware of the Latin words "caveat emptor" or buyer beware.

The document itself entitled "A Low-Carbon Development Strategy...Transforming Guyana's Economy While Combating Climate Change" is 50% fiction, 50% creative mendicancy. Using gross misrepresentations, false assumptions and unadulterated economic illiteracy, it makes the following proposition to Norway and the Developed World:

"Pay the PPP Guyana Government an annual annuity payment of US\$580 million per year and for this obscene amount of free money, the PPP Guyana government will ensure that none of Guyana's 15 million hectare rainforest will be disturbed because if we were to disturb this pristine forest suitable for timber extraction, post harvest agriculture and significant mineral deposits then the deforestation that would accompany this development path would reduce the critical environmental services that Guyana's forests would provide to the world — such as biodiversity, water regulation and carbon sequestration. Conservative valuations of the Economic Value to the World suggest that left standing, they can contribute, US\$40 billion to the global economy every year".

First the lies that frame this beautifully piece of economic fiction, which was written by paid economic mercenaries disguised as consultants for groups of speculators with such names as Canopy inc. and governments who are desperate to protect their own civilization. Make no bones about this. Norway has to be worried about global warming and will do anything such as promising Brazil US\$1 billion to ensure it reduces deforestation. Norway is deadly afraid of the Arctic or Polar ice next to it, that is melting 50 years faster than expected and which would devastate its way of life, even its existence.

On page 6 of the document, the following statements are made:

"Guyana has experienced positive growth in almost every year over the past two decades – growth rates in 2006, 2007 and 2008 were 5.1%, 5.8% and 3.1% respectively (growth in 2008 was 5.9% if sugar was excluded).

From the World Bank website, the following information is available in Guyana's Country report. Note well, the past two decades will cover from 1989 to 2008

"1991-97 marked a period of impressive economic performance in Guyana. Rooted in a comprehensive programme of market-oriented reforms and liberalization, average growth reached 7 percent and inflation declined rapidly to single digits, while fiscal and external imbalances were drastically reduced. But by 1998, the initial gains of reform and stabilization seemed exhausted.

The economy was also plagued by weak private sector activity, "brain drain," sizeable fiscal and

external imbalances, and setbacks in structural reforms. While financial stability was broadly maintained, growth averaged a meagre ¼ percent from 1998 to 2005”.

Enough said. The reason the government is peddling these barefaced lies is in its argument. Namely, Guyana is growing rapidly. Guyana has great management and stewardship of its economy. Guyana is ready for explosive growth and this will cause deforestation to the detriment of the world. Hence pay us to not go do this explosive growth in our economy so that we can fight global warming and climate change.

On page 5 of this dream document, the following can be found etch in stone:

“Guyana has transitioned to a multi-party democracy”.

What are the facts?

Guyana is a divided nation and a one-party state where the Opposition cannot even change a comma in the National Budget. Where is this fictitious multi-party democracy the government is taking about? Surely the Norwegians would have read the McDougall Report. Surely, the Caribbean and the World knows Guyana is in reality an elected dictatorship.

On page 7 of the document, there is the statement: “a young, educated and English speaking workforce”.

Can anyone believe this statement? We have the highest degree of illiteracy in Latin America and the Caribbean except for perhaps Haiti. Eighty three percent of our tertiary graduates migrate and English is a foreign language to most Guyanese at home.

The truth is well known. Guyana does not have the development framework, educated workforce, investment capital, non monetary resources, technology, management or visionary government to grow 6 % per year much less the 15-20 % growth rate necessary in our rainforests to really make an impact through deforestation on the global climate change architecture.

The reality is that without being given a single cent, Guyana’s rainforests will remain what they are today and what they were 50 years ago for the next 50 years.

Why would a Norway or any other country give Guyana Billions for something they will enjoy free anyhow?

What would the typical Guyanese say if the USA or China or India told us to pay for either using the “air we breathe” from them or for receiving rain that was created over their countries.

What if some other country tells us we have to pay for the water that is in our Oceans because it started in the Amazon Basin? Get my drift.

Reality is different.

Since 1970, Brazil has lost 232,000 square miles of Amazon rainforest. Guyana’s total size is 83,000 square miles or 1/3 of Brazil’s loss since the 1970s. Brazil is 3,287,597 square miles. Guyana is 83,000 square miles. Venezuela is 353,841 square miles. Guyana has 15 million hectares or 150,000 square kilometres of rainforest (1 sq kilometre equals 100 hectares). Brazil loses rainforest because of several reasons: land clearance for huge cattle farms, poor subsistence cultivators, and commercial exploitation of forest resources, commercial farming and inappropriate government policies.

This plan will allow 80% of our country to be out of our control. Our sovereignty will be compromised.

The Amerindian community, which is left out of this strategy but can join at their own will, has 14% of Guyana.

This implies over 90% of our lands and most of our water will be unavailable for national development.

This implies less than 10% of Guyana will be available for most Guyanese to live and earn a living.

Much of this land is under sea level and with climate change; the disaster awaiting the East Coast will be upon us. Strangely, this report is conspicuously silent on moving the capital inland, a reality even the blind can see.

Moreso, there is a global food shortage that will only worsen with climate change.

Guyana has the potential to meet some of these massive needs. Food production to meet the world's needs would imply some type of deforestation.

Is this trade-off appropriate? Food and employment versus begging for carbon credit funds. Instead of creating jobs, instilling national pride, reducing crime and promoting entrepreneurship and private initiative, this government wants to have a command and control communist economy where the private sector and all other organisations are beholden to it for their survival.

Is this the market-based economy the document boasts Guyana has achieved? By destroying UNAMCO and other private initiatives and ensuring friends have lands, is this government really committed to legitimate private enterprise.

One of the key issues with Norway providing money to Guyana will be compliance.

We have already seen the Guyana government and President Jagdeo at work in many different ways.

The CLICO, NBS, NIS financial crime is slowly moving on the front pages but the damage it has caused will rock Guyana for decades.

Why would any country trust Guyana with funds for climate change? Don't they know about the Constitutional illegality of the Consolidated Fund?

Meanwhile, there are serious security implications to this proposed Low Carbon Development Strategy. At one level, the government may be using this as a buffer against Venezuela's claims of 2/3 of Guyana. Venezuela is not so stupid as to invade Guyana for the West would surely enjoy this opportunity to attack them.

The other more serious issue is historic in nature. This is because the PPP burnt sugar fields in their fight against the PNC.

Now, in situation of total dependency for carbon credit funds (US\$ 540/year) others can burn our forests as a type of economic warfare, citing ongoing injustices they are daily faced with in Guyana.

Guyana is a modern political tragedy. Now we are cementing our reputation as a country with tremendous resources and a modern economic tragedy.

The government is bent on a new form of begging. From debt relief to HIV/AIDS begging, we are now promoting 'climate change' begging. We are again entrusting our total future to the whims and conditionalities of other nations.

No longer will we be able to control or even plan our economic and therefore political destinies. It highlights the lack of vision and barren economic minds ruling us.

Guyana is blessed with abundant sources of water, land, oil, an educated but expatriate workforce. Visionary leadership could make Guyana one of the most prosperous nations on earth. Instead we have a cock-eyed plan that enslaves Guyana to the whims of a few countries and a PPP government in power but out of office.

This plan is not even worth the paper it is written on. Let us get back to democratic governance and implement our National Development strategy.

Water is a scare resource and will become even scarier with climate change.

Food will become the most important element of global survival. And we are whistling in the dark with an ill conceived and creative way of becoming the poster boy for global mendicancy.

This is truly a magnificent masquerade of alarming and dangerous consequences.

Then again, the PPP have started their 2011 campaign armed now with Channel 28, non-nationalist propagandists and a tongue wagging kleptocracy.

Climate change has replaced drug smuggling and money laundering as our new development currency. Good Luck Norway. Good Luck Guyana.

**Eric Phillips**