



TRANSCRIPTION

Guyana a test case for REDD

18th November 2009 – 3pm to 5pm

Global witness' meeting with President Jagdeo to explore ambitious plan to stop deforestation

Present on the panel:

President Jagdeo of Guyana

Charmian Gooch, *Director, Global Witness*

Toshao Yvonne Pearson, *Chairperson of the National Toshias Council of Guyana*

Dr Rosalind Reeve, *Forest Campaign Manager at Global Witness*

Duncan Macqueen, *Leader of consultant observer team, IIED*

Moderated by Jo Andrews

Introduction to Global witness, the event and the moderator, Jo Andrews, Coordinator of Ariadne, EU Human Rights Funders Network:

Video played.

Charmian Gooch:

Hello I'm Charmian Gooch, one of three founders of Global Witness. Welcome and thank you all very much for coming today. I would also like to thank president Jagdeo for making the effort and being very willing to come and take part in this discussion and the question and answer session and also to a whole group of speakers as well.

I'd also like to thank the law firm Lawrence Graham who have very kindly and generously thrown open their doors to us. This isn't our office, we're just borrowing it for an hour or two.

So in the last 15 years, Global Witness has done a lot of work on forests and illegal logging and natural resource corruption alongside other work that we've been doing on conflict resources. We see REDD as potentially one of the best ways to prevent deforestation and degradation, if it is done right and done well and probably disastrous if not done right.

Our interest on this focuses on three areas really, which are forest management, rights of forest dependent peoples and good governance, and today and going forward our question is can Guyana deal with these very real challenges to ensure that REDD is actually going to save its forests and to deliver?

For that reason this event especially the second part is very focused on questions and answers. We really need this to help us all understand more about some of the challenges that REDD in Guyana face on this. It's very much a front running initiative, it's likely to be one of the first to get off the ground, and is such of course going to be under a lot of scrutiny, not just from NGOs but from everybody else. It's going to carry the burden of being the groundbreaker on this. This event is very timely for a number of reasons, the signing last week between Norway and Guyana of the MOU the Memorandum of Understanding. Also the IIED have just concluded their review and report, and I'm going to have to read this bit completely, on the Low Carbon Development Strategy consultation process in Guyana. Duncan Macqueen from IIED is here today and he is going to talk a bit more about this. It's also more timely because Copenhagen is just over two and a half short weeks away. It does look like REDD has some chance even if the rest of Copenhagen looks like a bit of a failure at the moment. In a minute or two I'm going to hand over to Jo Andrews, she's the former senior ITN senior political correspondent and is now head of Ariadne, which is the European Human Rights Funders Network. She's going to introduce the speakers and moderate the session. There's going to be about an hour for questions perhaps slightly less but we're going to do our best to really maximize the time on questions because this is so important and such a good opportunity to really hear more about REDD and ask some of those difficult questions about its strengths and its weaknesses.

The importance of this means that we've tried really hard to give an opportunity to Guyanese people working on this issue who can't be here and aren't here and so we've actually had about 20 very detailed long questions emailed through. We've had to inevitably reduce those down to a handful of questions. We asked Global Witness staff to ask those questions on behalf of those people who will of course be identified for each question.

We're also going to be filming this there's a camera here and we are going to be putting this up on our website for anyone to have a look at. By about we hope 9pm this evening and we're also taking a transcription and as soon as humanly possible we will be putting that up on the website too. I'd like to hand over to Jo.

Jo Andrews:

Thank you very much Charmian, I thought it was worth reminding ourselves before I introduced everybody on the panel what's at stake here. Guyana lies at the heart of the Guiana Shield and it's one of only four intact rainforests to remain on the face of the planet.

Eighty-five per cent of the country is forested that's 18 million hectares and Guyana is as Charmian said is on the brink to becoming the first country in the world to sign a REDD agreement. It's already signed a bilateral agreement with Norway, which will see it become the recipient of up to \$250m in compensation for lost development opportunities from potential deforestation over the next 10 years. President Jagdeo is here to explain to us how that's going to work and to open himself unusually for democratically elected presidents to the scrutiny and questions of this audience. Beside him is Toshao Yvonne Pearson. She is the elected Chair of Guyana's National Toshaos Council of Guyana, which is made up of the country's indigenous leaders and I think I'm right in saying she comes from the Arawak Clan.

On my other side I have Dr Rosalind Reeve who's the Forest Campaign Manager at Global Witness and at the end Duncan Macqueen, leader of consultant observer team, that took part in monitoring the process of consultation that was involved in drawing up the Low Carbon Development Strategy. He's from IIED.

The format of this is that I'm going to ask each of the four people here starting with President Jagdeo to actually present to you for a maximum of 10 minutes and nobody here will mind if it's slightly shorter, on their view of how this will work. After that we'll throw it open to questions, forgive me if I identify you by your clothing or something else because I don't know all of your names. President Jagdeo can I handover to you.

President Jagdeo: Presentation on governance and transparency in Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy

(Would you like me to speak from here? *Jo Andrews:* You can speak from wherever you like)

Thank you very much, first of all I'd like to thank Global Witness for arranging this event. I thought that people from the NGO community often don't get the chance to put vigorous questions to the heads of state and to put us on the hot seat, so I offered Global Witness to do this and I am thankful that you are here. I am going to be short because I'm hoping that I can be much more pointed in my answers to questions that you may have. I don't want to make a speech that you may not be particularly interested in. I'm asked to speak about governance and transparency.

Before I speak about the forests let me just spend a minute telling you a bit about my country. We gained independence from the UK in 1966, and since that time until 1992 we didn't have any democratic elections. It was only in 1992 after the involvement of President Carter particularly that we saw a return to democracy. In that period we lost a significant part of our population, the best minds, they migrated to the US in particular and Canada. We ran up one of the highest per capita debt in the world, we lived above our means for a very long time. So by the time we got into office in 1992 we were using 94% of revenue to service debt, 20% of revenue to pay wages and salaries in the public service. So when you pay debts, wages and salaries, that was 114% of revenue. I've seen the power of NGOs – and I must digress a bit here. In the late 1990s I came here, I went to Birmingham with Anne Pettifor and some others when they started the Jubilee movement and I saw how the power of the NGOs made a big difference in getting multilateral debt relief on the agenda of the G7 at that time.

And so we got quite a bit written off, we paid back \$1.5bn in the first 14 years of our structural adjustment policies, we paid back more in debt servicing than we received in loans and grants from abroad. We practically financed our structural adjustment programme.

Today our debts stopped now, it's reduced from 750% of GDP to about 45% of GDP. We're using 4% of revenue to service debt down from 94%. We didn't have audited statements of the country since we're talking about governance and transparency. For 10 years prior to the assumption of office, every single year from 1992, we've had audited accounts for the country tables in the national assembly. We recently had constitutional reform; we strengthened those provisions, now the audit office reports directly to a committee chaired by the opposition in the national assembly. There are many other governance features there but I don't want to spend time on those including five constitutional commissions that is called the Rights Commission; indigenous People, Rights of Children, Gender, Human Rights and Ethnic Relations, because of our peculiarities. Very few constitutions in the world have constitutional commissions enshrined in them that have powers of sanction over their executive. But that's for another moment.

In my interaction over the past several years on the whole issue of REDD, first of all I made this offer to work with Tony Blair, to say that we were prepared to deploy an entire rainforest if the right incentive could be found deployed in service of climate change. We didn't get much of a response and I raised it with the current government, they were pretty lukewarm and I hope I'm not saying anything politically incorrect because it's the truth. More recently we found a really good partner with Norway. But we thought that we are preserving the rainforest and growing our country. That is ensuring our people prosper, do not have to compete with each other. That they can be compatible and they can be restructured into a single strategy for the country, hence our Low Carbon Development Strategy.

I am going to jump straight to the agreement with Norway. But before I do this, I've met two groups of people since the last three years, particularly from the NGO community; those who recognize the importance of rainforests as part of the solution to climate change. Who recognize that it's going to be difficult to get a REDD agreement in place but who are prepared to work for that agreement. And then there's another group who can only find everything wrong with REDD and why it can't work.

The most common things that keep coming up is will the money be well spent? Can the country really deliver the promises, will this be real? Will they not take our money and cut down the trees? Will some corrupt government run off with the money? These are questions that have been out there and that are real questions with real concerns. So in our agreement with Norway, I think we have sought to answer all of these concerns.

First of all we have a national scale model, because we are talking about the entire rainforest in Guyana. We're not talking about a small pilot in some country where you can have extremely good practices within the pilot are and the rest of the forest be degraded. Secondly we're talking about payments based on performance. Thirdly we're talking about a rigorous system for measuring performance, that is an MRV system, a world class MRV system, the development and deployment of that system. Fourthly we're talking about a transparent, we're defining this agreement transparent, accountable, financial transfer mechanism that could be audited and could withstand international and local scrutiny. Fifthly – I may be losing count – we're talking about the institutionalization here of a multi-stakeholder participation in the development of our REDD strategy and throughout its implementation. Sixthly we're talking about safeguarding indigenous people's rights, making sure, that if they obtain with their lands they do so only with their free prior informed consent and even if they don't obtain they still benefit from the resources that the country can garner through the state forest. That their land rights and all their traditional rights will be protected, these are some of the issues that I've heard most often.

We're going to have international monitors on the ground to look at all of these phases to see that they comply with some international standards. So I think that this model, the agreement that we signed with Norway, can give answers, they may not be a perfect agreement because we are all still learning, and it was pointed out that this is the first such agreement in the world. It may evolve over time but it seeks the answer of all the issues that have been raised about REDD in the past.

I'll just stop there, thank you.

Jo Andrews:

Thank you.

Toshao Pearson can I ask you what you think of the agreement and is it going to work? And is it something that is going to deliver benefits for your people?

Toshao: Presentation from the perspective of an indigenous peoples leader

Thank you. First of all I would like to take this opportunity to say I feel very privileged to be here and have my input. Yes we believe about the agreement, we believe it can work, and things can only work when all the stakeholders participate and have knowledge of what is happening. So we believe it can work, we believe the indigenous people have a very important role to play, we have been participating in all the discussions and we have been talking and getting ourselves to better understand what is happening. My being here today tells that the indigenous people are really participating in the policies of Guyana. There is much more that I can tell you about the people's participation and how we hope to benefit and how we know we will benefit some

Jo Andrews:

Thank you very much indeed. Rosalind can I turn to you and ask you what your reaction is?

Dr Rosalind Reeve: Response from Global Witness

[PowerPoint presentation]

First of all I want to thank President Jagdeo and Yvonne Pearson for being here, and for being prepared to engage with us in this open way. I think it's very encouraging. Secondly I wanted to actually respond when you said you see the NGOs in two camps, some see the opportunities some see the risks, I think I want to clarify where Global Witness's stand on this. I think that we see both. We do see it as an opportunity we also see the risks and so what we are trying to do is to address some of those risks early on in the work that we're doing.

We were in Washington at a Dialogue meeting about three or four weeks ago that Chatham House held with WRI and RRI and at the end a question was asked: "Who in the audience sees REDD as an opportunity put their hand up and who sees it as a risk, put their hand up?"

I actually wasn't sure, I think, you were there Alison remember? I actually wasn't quite sure which to do, and in the end some people actually put both hands up. I think that really sums up how we see REDD.

But I wanted to start off, I wanted to address two issues, one is governance and one is monitoring and these are two issues that are key for Global Witness. And I'm starting with a slide here, which is on illegal logging just to give some example of where the different countries stand as in 2007; on the issue of illegal logging. And these pie charts show [referring to presentation] the total timber production and that's the whole pie and then the white part is the legal timber production and the red part is the proportion of timber produced in 2007, which was considered illegal. And as you can see Guyana there, it's not the worst, in fact I think PNG takes the prize out of all the countries there, that's Papua New Guinea.

But the level of illegal logging is significant and of concern so that is one issue that we wanted to flag. Moving on to issues of governance more generally. It was actually this meeting on Governance and REDD a few weeks ago that got us thinking about this when someone pointed out these Coface risk ratings. Coface is the French export credit agency, it supports business operating in high risk markets and it assesses sovereign risks and assigns ratings to these countries. There are two type of ratings; country ratings and business climate ratings. So this is purely something for the private sector. There are seven levels within the ratings they run from A1 through to D and I looked at the REDD countries to see where they fitted in this spectrum and found that actually all of them fall in the bottom set of categories from A4 right through to D. To give an example A4 were the best so from the indicators the institutional framework has shortcomings, they are acceptable but occasionally unstable business environment. So that's the best type of environment you're talking about in terms of the countries engaging in REDD.

A 'D' country was described as a high risk political and economic situation, business environment was very difficult and the institutional framework has serious weaknesses. So then we looked at some of the red countries, and this is where I wanted to raise the issue of governance to really ask how this is going to be addressed in Guyana and actually not only in Guyana but other countries that are engaging in this process. Because if you look I've highlighted the top where we have Brazil, Panama and Mexico, and I think that everybody knows that even in those countries there are problems. Then at the bottom Cambodia, CAR, Democratic Republic of Congo and Guyana all came out as DD in these risk ratings in business climate and sovereign risk so I just wanted to raise that as an issue that perhaps needs to be addressed.

So how do we see some risks to REDD, and I think one the President raised already, corruption. One I think there's a spectre of this which perhaps people aren't addressing, but I think we're going to have to address down the road, it's what we're calling carbon crime. Two types of this; carbon cowboys, so people who are going round with fraudulent certificates, there's been a little bit of this happening already in Brazil and Papua New Guinea, but later down the road we may have to address the involvement of organized crime. I think that these are the issues that haven't been thought about enough yet.

What about monitoring? I was very happy to hear that Guyana, and I do know that Guyana's been developing quite a rigorous framework, for MRV – measurement reporting and verification – this is just not a question for Guyana now, this is more generally within the REDD discussion. There's been a real focus on carbon and emissions and removals and I've actually taken this from someone else's slide, on MRV. But I think all the focus has been on the M of carbon, so the measurement of carbon to date. Little focus on reporting and very little on verification. Which a lot of us think the rubber will hit the road.

Not a lot of attention paid on how we're going to monitor issues of governance, social issues and impacts and impacts on environmental integrity, the drivers of deforestation. I think these issues are now being addressed in the FCPF and we're seeing progress there. UN REDD has been raising these issues for quite some time but it's actually not being reflected in the wider negotiations. But so saying a few weeks ago when we were in Washington for the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility Meeting and

James [Head of Guyana Forestry Commission] who's sitting in the front row presented Guyana's proposal on MRV could see that, we had felt up until that point that there had been a lot of focus on the carbon on measuring the carbon and these other issues what we call elements 'beyond carbon' hadn't been addressed. But clearly that thinking is changing, was our perception, and we welcome that, because we saw some elements in there that were looking at a broader monitoring system I think that there are still, I highlighted two issues that still need to be thought about and that is; how will governance issues be looked at in a monitoring system, and how will social impacts be monitored as well. So those are two more issues.

This slide may be a slightly strange slide to finish with. But I want to say this slide illustrates what we don't want in REDD. I took this from a presentation at UN REDD side event in Barcelona just the week before last. The slide before this was from the DRC, before and after. Democratic Republic of Congo was identified as the country. Then the presenter went on to this slide and didn't identify which country this was. All he said was that it was not a developing country and didn't name it so I asked which country was it, because if you're prepared to name the DRC, you know if this isn't a developing country it's obviously an Annex 1 or developed country so there's a transparency issue here so which country is it. The presenter said that he couldn't say.

Afterwards someone told me that this is actually Quebec, Canada, in 1991 on left and Quebec on right in 2002 on the right. This is actually what we wouldn't want to see in REDD. There's an issue of transparency here and I'm saying that it's in developed as well as in developing countries. I do think that Guyana is showing a way forward as far as transparency issues are concerned. I think that we have a good start and that there's a long way to go. I also think that finally for the last year a lot of us who have been involved in REDD have been involved in what I would call the REDD rush. It's been a mad year, a manic agenda and I think it's actually unprecedented. And probably after Copenhagen it's not going to slow down that much but I think we do need to take time to develop the standards necessary and address the issues we think are falling between the cracks until now. One issue is governance and another is monitoring beyond carbon. We have an opportunity for Guyana to show the way on this. It will be very encouraging if they could.

I would like to thank you and thank the president for coming.

Duncan Macqueen: Presentation on the consultation process for Guyana's Low Carbon Development Strategy

Good afternoon. My name is Duncan Macqueen from the Institute for International Environment and Development. I've been asked to talk this afternoon on an independent review of the consultation process that Guyana undertook to review and revise its Low Carbon Development Strategy. I'm going to talk about the process. I'm going to talk about what that process added, and I'm going to talk about some shortcomings and then I'm going to give a few conclusions.

The process of consultation coincided with the launch of the Low Carbon Development Strategy coincided on the 8th June. It was a three month initial consultation process. We helped to develop some of the best practice indicators based on prior work with national forest programmes, the FLEGT initiative, and AccountAbility international standards on consultation and so on. We developed principles which the government of Guyana put forward and we endorsed as best practice. Transparency, inclusivity and a number of other indicators. At the end of the consultation process we did an independent review of the people who had taken part in those consultations and they scored them from all different stakeholder groups, so transparency – scored between one and ten – scored an 8, inclusivity 8, information and timeliness 6, representation 8, flexibility 7, clarity 7, accountability 7, continuity yet to be decided. It gives you a flavour of what people thought independently of that consultation process.

What was the process? Well it involved a massive publicity outreach through independent television, all different radio channels, dedicated Low Carbon Development Strategy website, a jingle, published question and answer documents, information packs. It involved independent oversight through a multi stakeholder steering committee that comprised Amerindian groups, civil sector organizations and private sector representatives, that really determined the process of the consultations. It was built around 15 sub-national consultations, primarily directed at Amerindian areas, indigenous areas. These were held in the country between 19th June and 7th July, and another 30 awareness sessions, with specific stakeholder groups, from industry, labour, private sector, civil society, indigenous peoples, women and youth. The Low Carbon Development Strategy was debated in the newly constituted National Toshi's Council, which comprises 174 elected members from all Amerindian communities of all regions of the country. There was significant free press coverage in all major newspapers both for and against it. We commissioned David James an indigenous lawyer to conduct an assessment of how the process fitted with free prior informed consent. He came back with a broadly positive view both of what had happened and of the precedent it set. There was a comprehensive analysis of the main points raised in these sessions by the government of Guyana and we contributed our own independent assessment of that.

So that was the process, what did it add? I think the measure of a process is what it adds to, what's originally there in the Low Carbon Development Strategy, and so there were calls for; a more comprehensive look at broader low carbon energy sources especially solar power but also including wind and micro hydro. There was a call for greater emphasis to the diversification of agriculture and other income generating opportunities particularly in the interior. There was a call for careful attention to improving the sustainability of forest management in Guyana, to independent forest monitoring. There was a call for curbing unsustainable and uncontrolled forestry with a more explicit and more stringent control and enforcement including of smaller operators, chainsaw loggers. There was a call for reforestation activities as a specific activity and acknowledgement that ecotourism was an important engine for wealth creation in a low carbon economy. They wanted increasing monitoring and enforcement of more stringent international standards on mining, low cost financing to allow small miners to gain access to mercury free technology and modern excavators. There was a call for the resolution of outstanding titling of Amerindian lands. The recognition of historic stewardship roles of indigenous peoples including recognition of the carbon neutral nature of the rotational agriculture. There was emphasis on building up youth capacity to conduct green business. And there was need for an emphasis on the oversight mechanism on the financial flows coming in from REDD to Guyana. These things were additional to the many things already in the Low Carbon Development Strategy and I've highlighted them to show you that there were some substantive points put forward.

In terms of the perceived main shortcomings you can read all about this in the document. There are some copies left I think at the back and you can get them from the IIED website. The main shortcomings from the independent team's point of view were the non engagement in the consultation process on the ground by the opposition members of parliament and opposition political parties. That was a major constraint to the development to the LCDS. There were constraints in logistics in getting the LCDS documents out into the public for sufficient time before hand for study. As you are aware this was a fairly tight programme reaching into the interior was tough, translation lagged somewhat behind, particularly into some indigenous languages which are in any case mostly oral.

There were some difficulties in terms of mechanisms for providing feedback from particularly interior communities that don't have access to the website and internet, and there were some complaints of slow uploading of critical comment on the LCDS website. There was felt to be insufficient highlighting of the fact that there was a multiphased approach to the LCDS so that this consultation be all and end all and that there was still going to be opportunities in the future consultation. That wasn't felt to have been made sufficiently clear. There was some complaint about the abbreviated bullet point format of the reporting in the official capturing of the consultation processes. People felt there should have been a little bit more verbose depth to the comments being captured.

Academia were felt to have been somewhat overlooked in the consultation process. A lot of the attention to the indigenous people in the interior and the various groups I've described. But academia had some qualms. We felt that perhaps the use of trained independent facilitators in the consultations themselves would have enhanced the feel of those consultations and the ability to capture the information required. And we would have certainly have benefited as an independent monitoring team from rapporteurs to help us in our work. There was a general lack of comprehension on the part of the Guyanese, when the LCDS process started, about REDD and what environmental services were and what payment mechanisms might involve and also there was a need for a risk assessment for those groups who were unfamiliar with REDD. So these are a list of what we felt were shortcomings of the process. But I don't want to leave this meeting with the list of shortcomings because all processes of this type have shortcomings.

Instead I'd like to conclude with four points:

My first point is largely based on an independent assessment of taxi drivers in Georgetown. Almost everyone in Guyana has heard about the Low Carbon Development Strategy. Almost everyone has an opinion on it. Some people are quite articulate with their opinions of it and I think that's a tribute to the consultation process. My perception from speaking with members in Guyana is that almost nobody disagrees with the benefits of the Low Carbon Development Strategy in principle. Some people have other reasons for wanting to see the LCDS fail but I don't think it's based on what the LCDS is. As a model of consultation we feel that Guyana's example has provided a sound and credible global model, about which future exercises in relation to REDD could be based. And really finally the point is that the revision of and implementation of the revised Low Carbon Development Strategy will be the ultimate test of this consultation process in line some of the additions with what I've laid out.

Thank you very much

Jo Andrew:

Thank you, Duncan. David [Young, Global Witness] has the microphone and he has to get to you before you can answer the question. If you want to ask a question ask him first of all. I'm going to start by saying I remember when we were at the ITN in Westminster, on occasion MPs that we didn't know used to wander in to the studio and say "we want to be interviewed" and we used to look at them and think we don't know why they are here, but lets just sit them down and ask them three questions. It seems to me that those three questions are at the heart of this: will it work?, what will happen to the money?, and is it good model for others to follow? If you asked them those three questions by the end you'd have a pretty clear idea of why they were sitting in front of you. So with that I'm going to hand this over.

Question and Answer session

Daniel Nelson, Journalist:

I'm a journalist which is why this might seem to be rather negative. Am I right in being worried or am I being ridiculously negative? I don't know anything about, I can't possibly comment on this scheme, I haven't been there I haven't read about it, but the more successful this is and it sounds good, the greater the danger for the REDD talks in Copenhagen in the sense that there's many unfinished issues about REDD, some quite disturbing, and in the rush to REDD people are going to hold up Guyana, I mean the protagonists will hold up this project and say see everything is fine. We've got a

good project it works, lets sign the REDD agreement and get on with it. When even though some of the language has not yet been thrashed out leaving some terrible loopholes potentially in the REDD agreement. So I just wonder whether that's an issue.

And while I've got the mike can I just ask you something President ever since Poznan or was it Bali, I can't remember now, it's all a blur. At one point you said that at the beginning of the process you were not a believer you didn't take climate change very seriously, what is it that made you change? Do you read? Did you read something? Was it an individual? What caused the change?

President Jagdeo:

You're right I said it somewhere. In 1997 when the Kyoto Protocol was signed I was minister of finance at that time I became president in 1999. I never paid attention to this issue, it was never discussed at the cabinet, it was seen as something that was for environment ministers and we did not understand at that time the development impact of climate change. I think subsequently as we started facing real situations, in 2005 we had the worst flood ever in our history. It wiped out the equivalent of 60% of GDP. For the last 10 years we've lost on average of about the equivalent of 10% of GDP due to flooding. We live in a valley between 360 kilometres of sea defences to keep the sea out, and some earthen conservancy dams to keep the water from the highlands water from running down to the coast. Most of our productive lands are there, so any change in the weather condition would have a devastating impact on our country. We, working with McKinsey and company estimated the cost of adaptation just to build more sea defences better control over water, it would be about \$1bn that we'd have to spend. So we recognized the development impact of it. That's how I became a believer but also we don't want to just complain about the issue, we want to be part of a solution. The other question I'm hoping that this will actually help with the agreement in Copenhagen.

People who have been discussing the REDD issue for such a long time and many times we have been bogged down with the technical details, and many with views as to why this can't work, they would look at the agreement between Guyana and Norway, a developing and a developed country, and would see within this agreement some serious attempts to address the very legitimate concerns, that I outlined before that have been raised and then they would say if this could be done in a bilateral agreement, we surely can do this within a multilateral framework. We are probably going to agree with REDD but we still have lots of work to do, maybe over the next few years to ensure that all the concerns raised are addressed in a substantive way. No one wants to give money to any country that is not performing or meeting its obligations. So I'm hoping that this will help in Copenhagen.

Question

Dr Maritta von Bieberstein, Coordinator of Studies Programme of Amazon at Sao Paolo University:

Without meaning this as a political question but as a technical question, how would your model transpose to areas so much vaster, in this case the Brazilian Amazon, because in a sense it's a privilege to work on a more limited geographical universe, and much more complicated to avoid seepage in the larger universe?

Second question is that in Copenhagen, if you say yes, it won't be perfect but it will be a learning curve, how do you envision setting up a mechanism that ensures and structures this learning curve?

Jo Andrews:

One question at a time, it's not fair to ask two.

President Jagdeo:

The way I see it President Lula has announced that he is prepared to cut deforestation rate by 80% by 2020. I think this is great and that the world should support this. Clearly Brazil will need help to ensure that that happens and clearly Brazil will have to deliver results if it wants that help. And I am sure that within the two, within Brazil's capacity to deliver its need to deliver and the world to provide the finances we can cut the deforestation rate in Brazil. I think we don't have much time to lose here. We need to really, for us to get to this sustainable trajectory as defined by the IPCC, emission levels have to peak by 2015 maybe maximum 2020. If we don't do something now, deforestation rates are going to continue, greenhouse gas emissions are going to continue, along the business as usual trajectory and there will be no hope of achieving 450 parts per million much less 350. I think everyone has demonstrated that we don't need to develop technology now to address forestry. It's a low hanging fruit, as everyone is saying. If we have the will and we're prepared to provide the resources to deal with this issue, the informal working group has come up with this interim financing for REDD.

They have come up with you can cut 7 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2015 for 25bn Euros. That's 5bn per annum by 2015. That works out to 1.5cents per person in the Annex 1 countries per day. It is not unaffordable so I think we need to really put a lot of energy, because if everything fails in Copenhagen, if we're not going to get renewables deployed at large scale, if we're not going to get major fuel efficiency standards, if we're not going to get major movements on transport, then where are we going to start cutting emissions? It can only come from the forestry sector. So I think we have to make this work and we have to do it an accountable transparent way where countries have to demonstrate that they are performing and then they get help if they are performing. I think it can work in Brazil too, I think President Lula has made an earth shattering basically declaration on saying he's prepared to cut deforestation rate by 80% by 2020. You talk about the structures, I think part of the structures that we need to build are reflected in the MoU; a transparent financial transfer mechanism where you have audits of funds so that the money is not stolen. Secondly, a rigorous MRV system so you can monitor any change in the forest carbon stock. These are two critical elements of that system and of course the indigenous peoples' rights and multi-stakeholders' participation. All of those are an essential part of the system. But the first two I think would answer the major concerns of those countries.

Jo Andrews

And are you convinced that they're really in place in Guyana?

President Jagdeo

Well we're putting this in place, that is why I took a little issue with what you are saying. Don't take this any way because we're having a friendly chat here – maybe not so friendly when some others raise issues – but you've highlighted illegal logging and yes there is illegal logging but illegal logging takes place in some cases because of weak administration, but because of real people, they need to eat. Let me take for example, Haiti all the trees are gone because they needed firewood. The government didn't support this it was all illegally done. But that's restating the problem; we need to look for the solution. This MOU is just the start, we're trying to build a system that will prevent illegal logging in the future that will first of all track it, identify it, to remote sensing devices and then take enforcement action. But what do we do with those people who need to cut firewood, or need to earn a living? We can't say to them starve. So the money needs to be spent on creating alternative employment for them, as part of the LCDS.

We've said for every indigenous people's village, we have to create two sets of activities; use the money to 1) food security and 2) some sustainable activity where they can create income so they don't

have to cut trees anymore. We have to focus on education, healthcare and maybe bringing in more fibre optic cables so we can do ICT related work so the young people won't have to go to the trees. We still have 40,000 people who depend on the forest directly through mining and forestry. We have to over time find alternatives for them, so it's restating some of the problems. And with these credit rating agencies we had a discussion before, but maybe we need to do due diligence on the credit rating agencies. And I hope that the NGOs that are here will start paying attention to this. Because when you are a developing country they just dismiss you. I was pointing out that the Doing Business guide that the IFC produces. The IFC says if you produce social safety nets in your country marks you down because that say it affects labour market mobility, on the World Bank, of which the IFC is part, urges you to put in social safety nets for people. These the world economic forum the indices that are used, if you're number one the largest economy in the world gets the highest point, so guess who gets number one? The United States of America.

You're marked down for malaria, for tuberculosis, for HIV Aids; these are things that are predominance of it are in the developing world. These things are stacked against you and are serially correlated so if you get marked down in one it tends to reflect itself in many many others. We are doing that now with the Clinton Foundation. So to ask all of these agencies, how do you rate the country? Some of them never come to Guyana, never do an assessment on the ground, and suddenly you wake up one day and your country is rated. So I would like maybe for some of you to work with me and doing a due diligence on how these agencies come up with ratings.

Last point, Columbia University did an environmental performance index, and we're number 130 I think, the United States is doing better than us. We have less than two tones of per capita emission, we have 85% of our country covered with forest and we are 135 and they're doing so well 20 tonnes per capita, most of their original forest gone, Canada is way ahead of us, what happens in Quebec, you wouldn't find that in Guyana. It's how the indicators are selected and I guess who pays for their studies too.

Jo Andrews:

Next question

Question 3

Constantino Casasbuenas:

I'm Amerindian, working with Oxfam for the last 10 years. I wouldn't say that Oxfam has a left hand raised for the right hand. The reality is we are defining our policies regarding REDD, and what I have heard from the presentations is really good in terms of carbon and in terms of people's rights. But the key constraint that we have has to do with somehow privatisation of carbon and privatisation of people's rights. So the specific question we want to make is to what extent the scheme that you have presented here, people's rights has some level of independence or a total level of independence from private investments. In other words is the model being used for the profits of transnational companies or for the direct profit of people? The social way that public policies guarantee people's rights, independent from what happens with private investments from REDD.

President Jagdeo:

I've made it clear that when and if the indigenous people decide to opt in with their forests that all of the compensation garnered would go back to the indigenous people themselves. We have some large scale holders of leases in Guyana, logging leases, but they will not get any money from any REDD scheme, the money will go for adaptation purposes, for education, healthcare, some type of infrastructure like, the one I mentioned fibre optic cable. We're looking a hydro power which has a

limited impact on the basin, but that could move all by one project and shift all of our energy by fuel to renewable energy. That's where the resources will go. Some may go to the village economies in the indigenous communities, small miners, and small forestry holders so they can have low impact logging, or sustainable forestry practices or dealing with mercury but none of the money will go to any of the large concession holders.

In people's, indigenous people's rights, traditional rights is going to be preserved through the entire forest.

Toshao:

I would like to say a little on the land rights situation in Guyana. All indigenous peoples we have legal title to our lands it's recognized by the law and they are considered as private property, so in the low carbon strategy, we have the opportunity, we have the right, to opt in or not. And we also recognize free, prior and informed consent, it's important for us to have all the information for us to make that decision. So one can point out that there is absolutely no pressure on the indigenous peoples to make any decision. We have a few other land issues, for titling of land, but then our law, the Amerindian Act 2006, there are procedures set out with how to deal with those situations. So that is where we are presently.

Jo Andrews:

The man at the back in the black jacket is allowed his moment

Question

Emailed in by Janette Bulkan (Andrew W Mellon postdoctoral fellow in international environmental human rights, Colby College, Waterville, Maine 04901, USA)

It was recently reported that some of the forests in Guyana, including the forests that have logging concessions attached to it, have been excluded from the Low Carbon Development Strategy, why is this?

President Jagdeo:

I'm asking the Head of the Forestry Commission if he knows, I don't know about that.

Questioner:

It was reported at the Low Carbon Development Strategy Awareness Session on 21st July 2009, at Georgetown University

President Jagdeo:

I don't know about that.

Jo Andrews:

Are you from the Forestry Commission?

President Jagdeo:

Yes, he's the head of the Forestry Commission

Jo Andrews:

Do you know whether or not that's true?

James Singh, Head of the Guyana Forestry Commission:

That is not correct

Jo Andrews:

It is not correct, apparently.

President Jagdeo:

But on that point Janette Bulkan once said we're allowing these big bad Asian companies to come and; she wrote that we're to denude our forest. Then I saw in an article in the Guardian we shouldn't be paid any money because there's no pressure on the forest. So you can't believe in both things at the same time, neither are true.

Simon Counsell, Rainforest Foundation

I'm one of the people who sent in a number of questions actually so I don't know if someone is going to ask some of them on my behalf but I'll try to limit the ones I have to one question divided into three parts.

It follows on from the last point in a sense the whole type of this seminar is a little bit challenging; a test case for reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation, in that the emissions from deforestation in Guyana aren't terribly high and they haven't been for a very long time. What I'd like to know from the President is why does the agreement with Norway set a baseline deforestation rate of 0.45% per year below which Guyana will receive financial benefits from Norway when the actual rate of deforestation in Guyana is probably one half or one third of that. In fact I was looking at the United Nations official statistics this morning, and they actually give the deforestation rate of about zero between 1990 and 2005. Linked to that, the second part of the question, why does the agreement with Norway not require reduction in much more substantial forest sector emissions due to degradation rather than destruction in the forest, particularly those due to the logging and mining activities which you have just referred to. And thirdly, why have you personally repeatedly stated in the national press and elsewhere in Guyana, that these high carbon emitting logging and mining activities will not be affected by the Low Carbon Development Strategy even though they are by far the largest source of emissions in Guyana overall? Thank you

President Jagdeo:

Let's start with the last one; first, what I've said I've made it clear is that there are going to be changes in forestry and mining. There would have to be changes, I've made it clear to people. I've made it clear also that we don't anticipate that all mining will stop or that all forestry will stop in Guyana. In fact the whole model is based on two sets of countries. One set that has had traditional high deforestation rates and another set that has basically intact forest cover, low deforestation rate. We fall in the latter category. So our argument has consistently been that those countries that have had high deforestation rate, the idea is to get them to reduce that. And those who have low deforestation rate that those will have if you, if they, if you keep that intact without any growth in emission then they will be disadvantaged versus those who have had a high rate in the past because they will have a reference level, set at 4% per annum and we would have a reference level at zero. So how do they get paid for deforesting at below 4% per annum, we get paid basically nothing, you can't cut on zero. This is the key issue. A lot of things with Norway are going to change. If you look at the short term indicators between now and the development of a detailed MRV system, you'll see that we've used some proxies. We recognize that things are going to evolve. So first of all if we have a REDD agreement in Copenhagen a lot of these reference levels may change.

Secondly when you have a detailed MRV system, they will monitor the slightest change because if you look at what we are using here, it's the Marrakesh Accord which defines deforestation at 0.05% of one

hectare. So eventually when you have a detailed MRV system which we are hoping that within three years we may get to a tier 3 system that any change in the forest will be accounted for against the baseline. So that is how we've seen it. We're not sure what the deforestation rate it says between 0.1 and 0.3 they are different estimates. We are going to do some detailed work between now and October 2010 then we will know what that figure is. Basically we're doing some work on the MRV system, will give us a greater fix on that figure then we can look at the historic deforestation rate is and that may cause some adjustment in baselines.

Jo Andrews:

But under this agreement am I right in thinking you get the right to increase deforestation?

President Jagdeo:

Basically, yes, we can get to anything 0.45 we get compensated for the difference between the actual and 0.45.

Jo Andrews:

Even though at the moment you're not deforesting at that rate.

President Jagdeo:

That is yet to be seen. We've said 0.3 as a proxy for the current deforestation rate. But this comes back to the whole question of how you treat countries that are in the avoided deforestation category. Do you use a historic baseline to assess them or a future baseline? Because if you use a historic baseline, they get locked into an unfair system. The bad boys will get a better deal than those countries that have kept their forests intact. My view is that within reasonable limits allow small growth in these countries that have avoided or kept their forest in tact.

Jo Andrew:

Can I ask if there anyone here from Norway, from the Norwegian Government? Can I ask you to comment? So you think the deal is a good deal for Norwegian tax payers?

Marta Nordseth – Norway International Climate and Forests Initiative

Just to add to what has just been said, it's correct that it's established now in the MOU a reference level of 0.45%. That is derived from a global deforestation rate compared to a national deforestation rate. That is in order to make it more global and relative to also other countries. So the global deforestation rate 0.6 and then in Guyana somewhere between 0.1 and 0.3 are the estimates.

So if you compare those together, we have agreed that we put 0.45. Then if you in the agreement with Norway since there is so much uncertainty on what the actual deforestation level is, I can't remember the exact formulation now, but what is in the agreement now is that Norway will not until we know these numbers before we have an MRV system in place Norway will not compensate for increased deforestation. So assuming that it is 0.3 now Norway will compensate up to 0.3, but the methodology says that it is 0.45 but due to all the uncertainty regarding data and so on and because there is the MRV system is still starting to be built, that is an interim mechanism. I can also add, regarding Guyana's role as a country with high forest cover and low deforestation. If you look at most countries, in the world and their deforestation rates you see that all countries are when they start developing a lot economically, the deforestation grows dramatically.

That is the case with almost all countries. So then you have the risk of not allowing a country to evolve economically and socially because you cannot allow the countries to emit from the forest sector. So looking now, what do we want to do with a REDD mechanism? Well you want to create incentives in developing countries to reduce emissions from the forest sector. So if then all the countries like Brazil and Indonesia with high deforestation rates today are given incentives from deforestation and degradation this would then create a very high pressure on those countries which currently have low deforestation rates. So that if you look at for example, Brazil which is a target now with reducing 80% of their deforestation by 2020, if they succeed, what about the neighboring countries like Guyana, if they don't have incentives to keep their forests. So this is also a point, the risk is what is called in the jargon, "international leakage".

Question

Jutta Kill, FERN; Environmental and Social Justice Campaign Group:

I had a comment to Duncan which I'll keep until later and restrict myself a question to the president. With initiatives like REDD and the Low Carbon Development Strategy there's always those who win and those who lose and I found that rather than looking at indicators a fairly good measure for judging who will win and who will lose is listening to those in power and listening to what they say and don't say. I must say that my concerns remain that those who will be losing are those who have been losing for why too long because I haven't heard you say very clearly what will happen to the outstanding land claims; claims that have been outstanding for about 40 years. And those people who don't have a choice to opt in or out of your strategy, so if you could clarify what the process will be to address those outstanding land claims and give an indication of the timeline? And secondly what will be the process for the revenue that is attributed to the lands where the ownership is unclear; will that money be put into a trust fund so there will be no further difficulties later on when those outstanding claims are resolved? The second concern I didn't hear is shifting cultivation. A big concern for everybody in those areas and I didn't hear reassurance that they will not be losing their livelihoods.

President Jagdeo:

Yvonne has asked to speak and then I will speak

Toshao Yvonne:

I would like to respond a little on the outstanding land claim. Now to be specific maybe that's where your questions are coming from, there are some villages in the Upper Mazaruni who has a case in court presently. Through to National Toshao's Council which is made up of all the Toshaos throughout the length and breadth of Guyana, we are trying to address those issues. We're talking to the Toshaos of that region – the seven Toshaos – and let us find a common ground. The case has been in court for the past 11 years and over. It's not getting anywhere. We don't have anything to force the court or whatever. But what we have we can talk, lets negotiate, lets talk about it. Those are the only villages who have a big issue with lands; as I said before we have other issues, villages who do not have their title yet and as I said, there are procedures set out in the Amerindian Act, what are the things we have to do, those villages they know what we have to do. It is there in the act, demarcation of boundaries. That also is set out in the law. 60 of our villages have already been demarcated. So there are so many things that we can do and if I want to use the word, talk to government but we can negotiate and I would like to say the National Toshaos Council is the people and we have the opportunity to meet with government to bring our issues and lets negotiate. So that's what I would like to say on the land claim.

President Jagdeo:

I'm glad you raise the issue of indigenous people because it's something that we hold very dearly and so maybe you gave me the opportunity to talk a bit about what has happened. So far with indigenous people their rights and how integrated they are in society and our government, since we've assumed office, the past 10 years, the land held by indigenous people has moved from 6% to now close to 14%. That is titled land. That's the first point. Secondly we have built into our constitution an indigenous people's commission that will oversee part of the National Toshias Council that's made up of all the elected villages that they will oversee indigenous peoples affairs. We took four years of consultation to get an Amerindian act in place. We finally got it.

The act gave indigenous people autonomous rights to set their own rules in their villages, secondly to veto small and medium scale mining, the first time they had subsurface rights in our history the large scale holdings to be a process of consultation, and it outlined a process for solving land claims. It says who is eligible. If you live on the land for 25 years and you have more than 150 people you're free to apply and the government is time bound to deal with your applications. So if you look at that we have in the Cabinet three ministers of 19 are indigenous people, the foreign minister was the head of the ministry of Amerindian affairs that we created that was never there. They have an indigenous peoples' fund created by the treasury, we have a school and a health centre in every indigenous village so I'm very proud that's why I wanted to talk about it, of our record in this area.

We have one area of Upper Maz where we have this major problem because they claim in block and the matter has been in court. The judiciary is independent, but if they follow procedure in the act then the government is obligated within a timeline which is set out in the act to deal with those claims. I personally know maybe 70% of the elected indigenous leaders because I travel to all the remote areas in the country I spent two full days with them – Yvonne was there – sitting discussing not only land issues but development issues, two full days when they came out for four days recently, so they have access to us and we want to solve this issue. We hope the funds could accelerate the demarcation process; the funds from REDD could accelerate the process of demarcation and settling the claims. We're very proud of that record and the access that indigenous people have.

Question

Gustavo Faleiros Brazil, O Eco Website Journalist:

Coming back to this question on the right of the forest, this seems to be the question also behind the target in Brazil; we say that by 2020, about 20% of deforestation is still to exist, which is the size by area as big as London city being deforested, every year. The NGOs are saying it's possible to have zero deforestation, actually there is even an EU proposal on the REDD of having zero deforestation by 2030, so my question is do you believe in zero deforestation and in a more broad sense what's your long term view of the economy of Guyana, is deforestation needed?

President Jagdeo:

I think that you can't actually get to a rate of, I mean if you define sustainable forestry management that is the extraction, selective extraction of logs of deforestation I don't think it's possible because no country in the world is going to stop extracting logs selectively in a sustainable fashion and just lock the forest away. But I think outside of that you could actually get down to very low levels of deforestation if there are the right incentives, and incentives are used to create alternatives, I actually believe that. It will take time because you don't re-orient your economy immediately, it takes time to reorient economies and I think that is what some countries will have to do; our national Low Carbon Development Strategy points out how we plan to reorient our economy to remove the long term pressures on the forest because there are going to be pressures on the forest particularly, as Marte points out, as development takes place. There's a road connecting us to Brazil, President Lula and I recently opened a bridge connecting the two countries, that road runs through our forests, it brings

greater danger to the forest. So we , it's not as though there is no pressure. But if we are locked into the system we have to ensure that there is no degradation or there is no deforestation along that corridor if it does we can't receive payments for it. You can't get the money and then cut down the trees. Its not very simple, its not easy but it is do-able; it requires cooperation and maybe better monitoring systems; this is why the MRV systems is so critical in Guyana's case because that is the basis for anything to say the product is real to say it is happening or it's not happening. The only way you can know if it is happening on a net basis is if you measure it right down to the detail level. I think a lot revolves around a proper MRV system. But I think over time it may be possible to get down to that position.

Jo Andrews:

Rosalind do you want to comment, is it possible to get down to 0%?

Rosalind:

I'd like to think it would be but off the top of my head I think realistically it's going to be extremely difficult, that's my answer. I think realistically probably not; but I would hope that we can slow rates down considerably, because if we don't I think today we have serious problems, basically we are screwed as a planet if we don't, that is it. But the problems are so high that to expect us to get to zero is not necessarily going to happen but they have to be cut considerably that has to be our aim to get as close as we can.

Jo Andrews:

Are there any more questions?

Question

Rod Westmaas, Proud Guyanese, Pomeroon District:

President Jagdeo, I am currently doing research on ecotourism with the focus on Iwokrama. Can you give examples on how the ecotourism product can be enhanced, with a view on alleviating rural poverty with the help of REDD?

President Jagdeo:

I think if you preserve the forest it helps naturally. First of all we suffered in Guyana from a major problem, most people think we're in Africa, if you talk to people. When we do marketing, people go to Ghana. Sometimes the president of Ghana receives my letters and I get some of his and then we have to exchange. This helps to put us on the map a bit and therefore the recognition of the country. And to take away this image of Jonestown. Americans only know Guyana by Jonestown the mass suicide that took place there. I think it's changing the image and therefore if you preserve the forest and its rich biodiversity then that goes hand in hand with ecotourism. We have our rainforest is bigger than England; we have some of the most advanced biodiversity in the world. I see the job that Costa Rica has done with a tiny forest but they're good at marketing, so maybe we need to improve on the marketing side.

Jo Andrews:

Perhaps you should be 'Guyana the place where the trees are', which might distinguish you from Ghana.

Question

Andy Whitmore, indigenous peoples links:

I welcome the comments you made on indigenous rights, it's another question on indigenous peoples' rights. Obviously the issue of free prior informed consent is essential. I'm glad you used the terms indigenous rights, because effectively indigenous peoples' are rights holders as opposed to just stakeholders. I just want to follow up on the comments with regards to the 2006 Amerindian Act. I think specifically you've talked about advanced issues with regards to it has also been criticized by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which raised issues not only with the speed of titling in 2006, followed up in 2008, but on other aspects of the law, so I wonder particularly if this will be an opportunity effectively to review the law as a general framework before it is put into place? And I would like to follow up on the issue of shifting cultivations as I do think it's important and it wasn't answered because it was supplementary. Effectively as I understand it the MoU regards it as degrading whereas from the consultation, the call from communities was to ensure it was sustainable.

President Jagdeo:

On shifting cultivation, often whatever we're negotiating with Norway will be done has to be compatible with the UNFCCC process. And unfortunately until now they treat shifting cultivation as degradation of the forest. I'm hoping that maybe that will change but since indigenous people don't have to opt in now, they still have options, they can after weighing those factors, they can the make a decision whether they want to be part of it or they don't want to be part of it. But clearly if you're building an MRV system you have to build it for the entire country and that's why it's a national scale MRV system. So we're stuck a little but with the definition in the UNFCCC process, but in my view this is done in a manner that could be sustainable and that point came up in the consultation, many people raised that, and hopefully we get that changed maybe but it has to be changed through the UN system.

The Amerindian Act took us four years of consultations back and forth. It's significant; is it perfect? No, it's not perfect. But it's significantly advanced the rights of indigenous people in our country. But like everything else you have coastal people you have different interest groups in the country, so I think the Act was about balance of all the interests but significantly in favour of indigenous people. So right now there will be no return to the act now. But if you examine its provisions it's a light year ahead of most countries. In fact the gentleman from the World Bank came down to look at indigenous peoples' rights and said we have the second best legislation in the world. I think he was from the Philippines so he said they had a better one.

Like I said before it's not perfect I don't think you can find perfection in everything. But it has moved the rights of indigenous peoples forward.

Toshao Yvonne:

I would like to say a little on shifting cultivation, and what is happening on the ground of some villages. In my village we are doing agriculture. We started out with organic farming, we're one of the villages that have certified organic farmers and we've carried out a number of experiments that would help us to stop burning. Of course it will take some time. We've already done a number of experiments and we know it can work. So we are already heading in the line of low carbon, we've been doing that for the past four years. So we are almost ready to go in larger scale, maintaining our soil fertility without burning. So these are just some things that are happening in our local community and I wished to mention that.

Jo Andrews:

I'm going to take two more questions

Reuters Journalist:

[To Norway Delegation]: You said you will not compensate Guyana over a rate of deforestation until you have the final figures. When you have those final figures and they are still 0.3 or lower, will you then compensate up to 0.45? Or what will then happen, do you have a plan for that?

Marta Nordseth - Norway:

I think this is a conversation we need to have between Norway and Guyana when we have those numbers and I don't think we can start concluding on that now.

Jo Andrews:

I just want to go back to this, because it strikes me as a former journalist that your tax payers could end up compensating Guyana and I really understand the dilemma that the President is in but effectively they could compensate Guyana for increasing the deforestation. Do you really think your people will be happy with that?

Marta Nordseth - Norway:

Well if you read the MoU, Norway will not pay Guyana for increasing deforestation.

Jo Andrews:

OK thank you very much; I think I'm going to take the last question. Is Jon Cracknell here? He is. It goes to you Mr Cracknell.

Jon Cracknell:

I didn't have a specific question

Jo Andrews:

You didn't have a question? I was told you did, you had a burning question.

Jon Cracknell:

There was some talk about talking about the Environmental Funders Network, which I can do but I'd rather give someone from the floor a question.

Jo Andrews:

Right, the lady here in the front with the big REDD sticker

Question

Emailed in by Raphael Trotman, leader of the opposition Alliance for Change Party, Guyana.

How do we ensure meaningful national assembly involvement in such important processes as developing an LCDS and overseeing REDD payments?

President Jagdeo:

I'm surprised that Trotman asked you to ask the question here when he could pick up the phone and call me. And we tabled the LCDS in the National Assembly they did not debate it and they walked out of the parliament so as I said more recently I can't force the opposition to be part of the process. I think I have to make sure that the consultations are transparent and broad based but and the

opposition has taken a negative attitude in Guyana to the whole process. I'm prepared to put it back, to table it again in the national assembly so there could be a full debate and he could ask all the questions and it's televised in Guyana so then everyone would see and the answers would have to be given in the National Assembly. The same questions you raised about transparency etc are all outlined in the MOU. There will be a reputable international institution that will manage the funds, the Ministry of Finance will implement it. They'll be reports to the national assembly, audits done, international firm will do audits of the project, and money can only be used for projects identified through the consultation process in the LCDS; we have listed a number of areas. It will have to be done through public tender. All of these have been outlined there, but I'm very surprised this is the problem of the past, the opposition can't pick up the phone and call me and ask about this. And they have opportunities.

Jo Andrews:

Perhaps David Cameron will start talking to Gordon Brown through Global Witness too. That might be an advance.

I'm just going to ask each of the panel to make any comments that they would like to make.

Duncan:

I think it was a privilege to be asked to monitor the consultation process, it's a surprise we haven't always been particularly favourable with the Government of Guyana, so it was a surprise, and the team I took part in really did attend every meeting I think throughout the consultation process. And every of the weekly multistakeholder steering committee meetings which the president was there and chaired. So for me that bodes well and the commitment to carry on that multistakeholder process both in the team that is revising the LCDS and in the implementation of it also bodes well. So I'm not going to sit here and say something negative when I don't see something negative to see.

Rosalind:

I think I want to hone in on one issue, MRV, we're very encouraged to hear you say how you recognize the importance of it and how fundamental it is. I think the one issue that we would ask is that we start to think beyond carbon. As we're into now phases one and then two of implementing REDD because I think an MRV system is more than just measuring emissions and removals, it's more than satellite monitoring, it's more than carbon accounting on the ground through sample plots. What I'm trying to say is I think we need to move on to see how we're going to monitor these underlying issues of governance, social impacts, environmental integrity, and drivers and how we build those into the monitoring system and part of which will be monitoring the carbon. And I think the beginnings are there, I was encouraged with James's presentation in Washington. I would encourage you to build on that and actually build a monitoring system that we can use as a model for other countries and on these issues beyond carbon as well.

Toshao Yvonne:

I wish to say that I thank God for being given the opportunity to be here and sharing with you and I would like you to know that the indigenous people of Guyana, we're very much involved, we're part of the consultations, we are on every – I don't want to say stakeholders group – rights holders because indigenous peoples' have rights, and so we are everywhere and we will continue to support this initiative to work very closely with the government. And ensure that all that has been said of indigenous people that it will happen; we are discussing the benefit sharing which we haven't mentioned really, but we're into everything. We are supporting the Low Carbon Development Strategy of Guyana, and we think it can work. Thank you.

President Jagdeo:

Thank you very much for this interesting meeting. I live in a democratic country and every five years we have elections, we have a lot of poor people in the country. And many times from the developed world people talk about the money that they're giving. Norway is particularly generous. But the money that Norway has given is just a tiny tiny fraction of its gross domestic product. In exchange what I'm saying to my people is I'm locking away a huge asset from you; that you can use to get out of poverty, to develop, to use as a developed countries did, and taking that away from you on the promise that the international community will live up to their expectations. Sometimes it's felt that political capital can only be squandered or used in the developed world that we don't expend political capital too. If I fail on this people will judge me harshly and if I fail then more people will remain poor probably get poorer, I'd take away from them a means by which they can live. So I hope that you understand the risk we are taking too because often I hear about the risks from the other part of the world.

We are taking a huge risk by getting involved with this and so I hope there is balance in this debate. We will try as hard as it is and there are still many questions that have to be answered and developed. But as difficult as this is, this is good for the world and it can offer a different path to countries like ours if carefully done.

What we need now is not just people who are finding fault with it, we need people who recognize concerns and who are prepared to work hard to overcome them. It's a process it's not going to be perfect in the beginning. But I think if we stick with it long enough this could be the biggest single climate change action that is taken anywhere in the world for the next five years saving the forest. Thank you.

[Applause]

Charmian:

I was just going to ask if you could give all the speakers a round of applause. I think they've earned it.

Thank you all, I think the questions and the range of questions show just how challenging and difficult some of this is going to be. There's clearly a real spirit to do something good, but the challenges absolutely remain, the questions show here that it is an ongoing and pretty difficult discussion that's going to continue. I think it's been very open. I'm delighted that we've recorded the whole thing and transcribed it, and I look forward to those that aren't able to be here, who aren't in the room, to actually see it and hear it.

Thank you very much and please join us for a drink afterwards.

END