

## CMP Annai MSD Meeting of February 17 & 19, 2010: “REFLECTIONS”

### On participants, participation, time, content, and process Submission, Bonita Harris, 3.4.2010

At the end of Day #1, six participants were persuaded to volunteer their views on the way forward. The Task Force and CMP team may find recalling them helpful for their planning on the way forward:

- *this is just the beginning, looking forward to results of the meeting, the big words were very confusing in the beginning, look forward to you guys coming back*
- *never heard of, or came across, the Code of Practice (this from an elder with a history of participation in many project and community development initiatives)*
- *this is the second time I am attending a Chainsaw Milling Project (CMP) meeting, the first time was confusing, but this second time brought a lot of enlightenment, good that we are having people coming more regularly to teach us*
- *this is a learning process, we don't have the same people from the first gathering, there are a lot of new people so it is like going over the same ground, I would like to see what we gained here today to be enforced, we must keep in contact & make more people aware of what is going on*
- *I have reservations on how much we on the ground understand, more sessions are needed, total buy-in is needed, more training from Forestry is needed, there is generally a need for more training (this from a Forestry Official)*
- *Annai needs to get itself in order; here is a good opportunity for our village councils to get revenue and to sincerely practice proper forest management of the lands it has put aside for economic development while protecting the forest nearby; the relationship between us and Forestry should be developed to get us where we want to be, the fear that Forestry Officials would seize wood for a little mistake that if they had a conscience they would think of the poor man and the poor man's family, I understand they are operating differently on the coast and would like to see it trickle down here, the police should be involved, happy to hear the Forestry Official say that they are setting up a system to resolve issues within 48 hours, our logs need to get to Lethem or Georgetown without fear; we need to know the right things so we can do it without harming one another; I appreciate the mix of strengths we have here today; the North Rupununi is very fortunate to have a group that will help to understand what we need to know and do; I would like to see in the next two to five years that this group can come back together and see where we are (this from the Annai MSD chair who also played important leadership roles in the Surama village and in the North Rupununi District Development Board [NRDDDB])*

In the first hour of Day #2 of the Annai Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Meeting, participants reflected on the first day's session. Most of the community-based persons felt it was useful and said they learned new things. Some members of the CMP team and institutional partners referred to the language barriers

(big words, too much English/English, unfamiliar concepts that should not have been introduced at all) that hindered communication, and the time constraints faced; others saw the level of participation as 'good' and appreciated the fact that the previous day was a 'learning platform' for all.

While we graciously accept the overall positive feedback from the community stakeholders, and while most members of the 'reflection team' felt the meeting went pretty well, all things considered, we have an obligation to probe deeper and hold ourselves accountable to standards that are far higher than our populations have come to expect.

Given the first element of the first stated objective of the Annai MSD meeting, i.e., 'to continue the stakeholder dialogue,' the fact that the majority of stakeholder **participants**, with the exception of Task Force members and the CMP team, were new to the dialogue strongly influenced the different levels of **participation**, the amount of **content** that could have been meaningfully covered in the **time** available, and the dialogue **process**.

## Questions & Issues from the Task Force 'reflections' session

- *Did Task Force members 'over-participate' or was their role crucial for stimulating and facilitating understanding given the newness to the dialogue process by many participants? What was the correct course of action when the language used elicited 'blank faces' from the majority of the indigenous participants? Is the Task Force Chairperson's view that 80% of the participants were 'new' valid?*
- A key role of the Task Force is to keep the CMP MSD process 'on task' whenever and wherever possible, whatever the conditions. To have reduced its role to that of mere spectator or observer of a process members would later critique would not have been helpful. The interventions by persons in possession of valuable information were necessary, showed integrity, indicated work that still needs to be done, and helped save a process in which most of the key stakeholders were at sea, because the dialogue process was 'new' to them or they were 'new' to it.
- No one aspect or element of the dialogue process can be expected to be sufficient in and of itself. What is important is to ensure that all the lessons learned from, and at, each stage of the MSD be used in two directions. They should tell us what we need to do to go forward more effectively and efficiently; and what we need to go backward and do. (See Recommendations #1 and #2 below.)
- Three examples of important Task Force interventions under Agenda Item "Reaching Consensus on Strategic and Practical Forest-Related Issues" which saw the Annai MSD meeting Chairperson as the lone community-based participant orally engaging in the dialogue, follow:
  - *Clarifications on references to the term 'sustainable' and its economic, social and environmental dimensions, Sustainable Yield and Sustainable Forest Management; clarification on the time periods generally referred to as short- (1-5 years), medium- (5-10*

- years) and long-term (10-plus years); and the need to achieve a balance between long-term and short-term, and outside (that is, international) and inside (national, regional and local) challenges. Nonetheless, it would be interesting to discover how this section of Guyana's indigenous population perceives and reckons short- medium- and long-term time. This can still be done at future meetings in the dialogue process by breaking up participants into pairs or threes, and having each small group discuss and say what time periods *they* would describe as 'short- medium- and long-term.' These can then be compared and reconciled with those used by professionals. A similar process can be used with respect to the other terminologies that participants did not grasp. The appropriate learning principle is to first find out what people think, feel and know; then expand, deepen and/or correct with many explanations and analogies; then ask again and again until everyone is on the same page. And we can take comfort in the fact that the concepts of ecology, biodiversity, and sustainability, at one time foreign terminology to North Rupununi residents (but not altogether 'foreign' in terms of organic indigenous knowledge and traditional practices), are now, just a handful of years after their introduction by 'experts,' the foundation of the Surama village economy. Community leaders and many villagers understand quite well, for example, that growing and sustaining the value added by birders and other eco-tourists means protecting the forest around the world famous Harpy Eagle and other forms of wildlife. The 'balance' point made during the discussion on strategic and practical forest-related issues was especially appreciated by the MSD meeting Chairman and respected community leader Sydney Allicock. "Greed drives destruction," he said. "We need, for example, medicines from the forest as well as wood to make houses." He also expressed the view when the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) surfaced during the discussion that "the CMP can help us measure whether we are going up or down."*
- *Offer to facilitate comprehension and oral participation by translating proceedings into Makushi: This offer, made by the Task Force chair, a Patamona Guyanese and experienced community development official of the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, to break the silence, was not taken up, largely because the group was not yet a community of stakeholders. All members of the CMP team in the 'reflections' exercise alluded to this participation-inhibiting factor in different ways when they spoke of the "need for a common understanding," and "need to go back and look at the approach to the MSD meeting" and "of the community not being sufficiently prepared." The quotation below, offered orally at the 'reflections' meeting, should guide the whole process, at every level. One of the reasons for warm-up and ice-breaking exercises with oral content is that we get to hear everyone's view and voice, people start thinking and talking, and the dialogue gets going before the formal start of the meeting. People, especially when 'new,' need to warm up to a process.*

**Community-building first, problem-solving second.**

[Scott Peck, *The Different Drum*]

- *Recognition and congratulations to North Rupununi stakeholders on their responsible management of their forest resources. This Task Force member from Ituni alluded to the prevalence of illegal logging and the raping of Guyana's coastal forests by chainsaw operators in his community and cautioned Annai participants about the importance of 'doing things the right way' and not waiting until 'things get out of hand.'* During the impromptu cultural event on the evening of the final MSD day he detailed the Guyana Forestry Commission's strategy to achieve significant behavior change in himself and other 'illegal' loggers and their recruitment by GFC in its drive to reduce conflict and illegality.
2. *Should more time have been allocated to the MSD meeting? Was the MSD meeting agenda too ambitious? Were the expectations of participation levels and the content that could have been meaningfully covered too high? Were some of the items on the meeting agenda more important than other items, and did the less important items take up time that could have been more usefully spent on the more important items? Should some agenda items have been omitted, or presentations curtailed, to allow more time for discussion and small-group work to enable stakeholders to 'own' the process? Did breaking the group into three smaller groups located in different sections of the large benab actually militate against what could have been the very early stages of a community-building process? Did this also inhibit participation? (The participants in at least one of the three sub-groups strongly resisted any effort to further separate and divide the group.) Should participation levels be judged mainly on the numbers of community participants making oral contributions? Should participants have been randomly assigned to groups or should they have been allowed to choose groups assigned topics in which they were interested? Are there not advantages to having people set aside their normal preferences and think outside their usual boxes? Should the Annai MSD meeting be positively regarded as a 'learning platform' instead of a meeting where many expectations were not met? Did the Annai experience not bring necessary practical clarity to an idea (the idea of a learning platform) which heretofore was abstract? Should we not be grateful to get early lessons and concrete evidence of what can go wrong and what needs to be done – while there is still time to make amends? Should we not look at the long list of 60-plus issues and find solutions to those we can and present them to stakeholders? Given the low levels of formal education and English literacy, should concepts such as governance, sustainable, agro-forestry, strategic vs practical issues be used at all? Should the SMART and SWOC tools be introduced at the community level, or are these tools too complex?*
- Like the 'intervene or not intervene, stand back and observe' debate, Task Force and CMP team members (and, in this case, an institutional partner) were to be found on both sides of the 'language and tool use' debate. There is no right or wrong view. Sometimes it is necessary to step forward with information, and stand up to correct what is clearly not right; and sometimes it is better to step back, stand down, and listen. Sometimes, perhaps most times, we have to use language that is readily accessible to all, and use the language they use, e.g., *planting in the forest* instead of *agro-forestry*. But we also have to guard against superior and patronizing thinking, attitudes and behaviors. We have a patriotic duty to widen and deepen community

vocabulary so all citizens can take a fuller part in the various dialogues currently going on around matters germane to their livelihood; and teach, train and make opportunities for practice with tools that people can use to make sound decisions, find good solutions to their problems, and take charge of their own development. This means that we also have to beware of opting for what looks like the easier route of finding and presenting solutions. Even those issues that require action from the 'top' call for informed participation from the 'bottom.' State and para-statal agencies, in particular, should be aware of what our constitution has to say on this matter.

The principal objective of the political system of the State is to establish an inclusionary democracy by providing increasing opportunities for the participation of citizens, and their organizations, in the management and decision-making processes of the State, with particular emphasis on those areas of decision-making that directly affect their well-being.

[Article 13, Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. Chapter II, Principles and Bases of the Political, Economic and Social System]

- **Time, content and process** are inextricably and inseparably linked, but it is necessary to reflect on each separately, examine how each impacts on the other, and try to understand how in combination they support or undermine meeting, MSD and project objectives.
- The **time** available is the five years, or what remains of the five years, of the CMP. The 'time' allocated to MSD meetings at the four proposed venues are merely four moments, albeit key moments, in the project's time span. The *learning platform* term used in project material came to life at the Annai MSD meeting. A simple dictionary meaning of the term *platform* is 'any floor or horizontal surface higher than an adjoining area.' Coastal Guyanese, because of our location on a below-sea-level belt, generally live in homes that have to be accessed by steps sometimes broken by a platform to allow for a rest or a shift in direction, but always ending in a platform. The 'platform' analogy is therefore useful for understanding how the MSD process is intended to evolve – by way of a series of steps to arrive at a place on the way to a final destination. The CMP facilitator first drew our attention to the Annai MSD meeting as a 'learning platform.' From this vantage point we can review the steps taken so far, and the steps still to be taken. Even if steps have to be re-mounted, there is still ample time.

Learning is not just learning things, but learning the meaning of things.

Learning is learning to think. Learning should lead to change.

If there is no change, there is no learning.

[John Dewey, a leading educator, 1859-1952]

- The **content** *planned* (as opposed to ‘content’ *meaningfully covered*) will necessarily be driven by the objectives of project, MSD process and specific MSD meetings at district, regional and national levels – and the expressed needs and recommendations of stakeholders in different spheres and at different levels. Knowing what ‘content’ was covered or should have been covered in the ‘time’ or phases (or steps) leading up to the meeting will help to guide the ‘content’ of each ‘next step.’ This is why is the ‘reflections guide’ requested by Task Force members directed attention to ‘what actually happened,’ and ‘what was supposed to happen.’ We need to monitor closely ‘what actually happens’ and ‘what is supposed to happen’ at each step of the process – bearing in mind all relevant objectives and desired outcomes.

“Monitoring ... provides continuous feedback on activities and short-term results ... accepts the plan and project design ... focuses on efficiency and compliance with procedures ... focuses on adjusting the implementation plan ... focuses on what happened ... To evaluate, we must monitor.”

- Take, for example, the occupational safety and health (OSH) ‘content’ of the chainsaw milling demonstrations on Annai MSD Day 2, which some felt, approaching it from different perspectives, was not properly handled. There is no question that safety and health are vital issues, especially in view of current chainsaw practice. But this too must be consciously addressed at both strategic and practical levels. Otherwise we will just be going through the motions. Annai chainsaw operators can barely meet their basic needs much less afford ear plugs intended for one-time use, goggles, special gloves, lower body protective gear and safety boots. These are people who have only recently (in terms of their history of forest livelihood) entered into chainsaw operations, without key information, knowledge, experience or skills; and who are on such friendly terms with the forest that they have no fear about entering it barefoot and lightly clad. Surely, there must be a well thought out plan for realistically addressing occupational safety and health with this population.
- Take another example. One member of the Task Force, himself a logger, expressed ‘surprise’ that the attachment which significantly reduces the dangers to life and limb, reduces the stress and strain of chainsaw use and increases efficiency, effectiveness and value – was ‘only \$40,000.’ A member of the CMP team, said, “But I told you!” Not everything that we say or tell people is heard. Even when the information has immediate practical benefit. Another member of the Task Force reported that after years of making a particular point to chainsaw operators, they are only now saying, “You know, you were right!” We should all be instructed by how difficult it was to get Guyanese men with a culture of multiple partners in a high HIV-prevalence environment to use the relatively low-cost safety device called the condom. While it was difficult, with persistence there has been significant behavior change, especially in the coastal belt where condoms are readily available. We should not underestimate the challenge, the time and work that will be needed to get chainsaw operators into safety mode and gear.

- Having noted what did not happen with respect to the covering of important content, the ‘next steps’ will entail going back (and forward) to stakeholders through their groups and representatives; going back to stated objectives, desired outcomes and to the issues; adjusting the implementation plan, and doing what needs to be done. Even though ‘safety’ is not specifically covered under objectives and outcomes, there is no denying that apart from being a key issue, there are ‘legal’ and ‘conflict’ related connections re compliance with labor laws, regulations and Code of Practice.
- Still on content. ‘Reaching consensus on strategic and practical forest-related issues’ is not a trivial matter, but a necessary foundation for moving the process forward in a meaningful manner. Recommendations to the CMP team on strategic vs practical issue matters noted “(i) that while attention to and work on strategic issues are critical, the failure to simultaneously address the practical needs of communities can cripple and endanger the entire development process; (ii) that when practical needs are addressed, without securing meaningful agreement on strategic issues, interests and needs, there is a possibility of eroding or reversing practical gains; and (iii) that the handling of the ‘illegality issue’ connected to chainsaw lumbering may be considered both a practical, and a strategic, issue.” This was borne out in the GFC approach to illegal logging in the Upper Demerara area.
- Another ‘content’ (and ‘process’) observation raised during the reflections session by a member of the CMP team is the fact that although stakeholders from all sectors were invited, the Annai MSD meeting focused primarily on chainsaw milling. This has to be corrected and will require adjustments. (The detailed recommendations that follow attempt to address this concern.)
- The MSD is not an event (unless we are thinking of a five-year event), but a ‘process.’ The MSD Annai meeting, although it can be described as an ‘event’ and many of the participants treated it as an ‘event,’ is more usefully seen as a very short-term process that is a key element of a longer term process. Another way of seeing the Annai MSD is as a high-point of the MSD process started some time ago with key stakeholder groups. A high-point, not the high point, since the process continues and is expected to climax with the national level dialogue and produce other desired outcomes including acceptance as international ‘best practice’ for addressing chainsaw lumbering.
- The MSD is also a ‘tool’ for participatory decision-making. Like all tools, for example, SMART, SWOC, the ‘ten-item reflection sheet,’ chainsaws, milling attachments, understanding how to use them and gaining the skill to use them easily, requires time and opportunities for practice. Learning how to use a tool, appreciating the usefulness of a particular tool and becoming skilled in the tool use is a process. It takes time. The project is not short of time, it just has to manage the time and other resources at its disposal to do what has to be done. A helpful analogy would be to see the Day 2 chainsaw milling demonstration ‘event’ as a short-term process that was part of a long-term process that started some years ago with a business plan (with formal and informal aspects) for a process that involved over time included some of the following activities: mobilizing and allocating resources; recruiting and training employees in using, demonstrating,

maintaining, repairing equipment, marketing and sales, mobilizing and transporting equipment and personnel, listening to and learning from users and potential users, advertisement and promotion to and with different markets.

- Much of the foregoing may seem like stating and re-stating the obvious. “Learning, especially skills development, is enhanced by repetition” is the applicable principle here. It was, perhaps incorrectly, assumed that the SMART and SWOC tools were standard, easy-to-grasp-and-use tools that everyone engaged in development work had, or should have, in their tool kits. Whatever ... it is still a valuable tool for young people, community based organizations, and adults with low levels of formal education to use to put their houses in order. In order to achieve the general and specific objectives of the CMP, it is crucial to build the capacity of all stakeholders to systematically identify Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic/Relevant & Time-bound (SMART) solutions to issues and problems after systematically identifying institutional, group and individual Strengths and Weaknesses and the existing Opportunities and Constraints (SWOC) in their community, regional, national and international environment. As was pointed out by one Task Force member in reference to a particular chainsaw tool, when you see and feel how useful a tool, properly used, can be; it can change your view of the tool.
3. *Given the levels of poverty facing most persons at the community level attempting to make a living from craft production, should craft production be the single most promoted form of ‘alternative viable livelihood’ promoted by the CMP? Did the chainsaw milling demonstrations, made more attractive with the understanding of the benefits of one model over the other, and the addition of the affordable component which significantly reduces wear and tear on the operators’ bodies, and the keen interest shown in the MSD Annai Day 2 session by operators who could not play an active role in the previous day’s dialogue, place the CMP in the situation of seeming to over- promote improved and more effective chainsaw milling? What does the research and what we already know of economic initiatives currently being tried by people from the forest-sector communities tell us about the way forward on viable livelihoods apart from more getting more value from chainsaw lumbering and craft? (See Recommendation #3.)*
  4. *Finally, although this point was not made at the reflections meeting, it must be recorded that the chairperson of the Annai MSD was well chosen, and his chairmanship effective, despite the constraints that be-devilled the meeting.*

**There is, in fact, only one legitimate source of pleasure in chairmanship, and that is the pleasure in the achievements of the meeting – and to be legitimate, it must be shared by all those present.** [Antony Jan, “How to run a meeting,” *Harvard Business Review*, March-April 1976]

## **Note to Task Force and members of CMP team**

Before moving on to recommendations on the way forward, it will be useful to remind ourselves of the general and specific responsibilities of the Task Force. This document is intended to be a working document, so those persons receiving it electronically, should print it, read it closely, annotate it and



hold it nearby for ongoing reference and monitoring. The Task Force also has unfinished business with respect to finalizing its draft strategic plan. A Task Force sub-committee may need to be appointed, given directions on working on a specific task, convene and report on its work at the next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 13<sup>th</sup> 2010, 10 am to 1 pm.

#### GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF TASK FORCE

1. **To promote the objectives and desired outcomes of the Project**
2. **To support the roles and responsibilities of Tropenbos International, FTCl, Iwokrama, Project Coordinator, and its stakeholders**
3. **To guide the multi-stakeholder dialogue process in ways that ensure stakeholders ‘own’ the process.**

#### SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES OF TASK FORCE

1. **To play an active role in guiding the planning of MSD meetings, to ensure that the meetings are conducted within a work plan, and to communicate the decisions of the meetings to relevant agencies and stakeholder groups, where appropriate.**
2. **To review, provide technical oversight and support, monitor the development and implementation of MSD work plans, activities, budget and expenditure.**
3. **To provide assistance for resolving problems and addressing challenges where necessary**

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ‘NEXT STEPS’

1. The CMP team should systematically review (i) the 13 stakeholder groups identified in the stakeholder analysis, and the names of participants involved in earlier stages of the dialogue (in focus groups and other sessions) within each of the 13 stakeholder groups, and compare with (ii) the names of the ‘stakeholders’ at the Annai MSD meeting. This would verify the percentage of participants who were new to the dialogue and establish the extent of the break in *continuity* of the process.
2. The CMP team should revisit MSD Meeting Objective #1 **“To continue the stakeholder dialogue, consensus and capacity building process for community livelihood and sustainable forest management”** focusing on each element of the objective separately. Planning ongoing work with Annai stakeholders, and preparing stakeholder groups for the MSD meetings at the Upper Demerara, Corriverton and Essequibo venues will include the following tasks:
  - (a) The CMP team should carefully plan what additional work must be done with the Annai District stakeholder groups to bring them up to the MSD meeting level (where they

were expected to be able to participate actively *in continuing the stakeholder dialogue, consensus and capacity building process*) and prepare them for the regional MSD.

- (b) The CMP team should, in the light of the Annai experience, review and adjust its work plan for building the capacity of the 13 stakeholder groups to participate effectively in the Upper Demerara and Corriverton MSD meetings.
- (c) The action plans for (a) and (b) above should be shaped by the SMART and SWOC tools so they can fit comfortably in the time boundaries (June 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> 2010 for Ituni, Upper Demerara and July 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> 2010 for Corriverton) set at the Task Force February 25<sup>th</sup> reflection meeting.
- (d) For greater effectiveness, stakeholder group meetings must be guided by a specific objective and agenda, meet in the round rather than in rows, and allowed adequate time for full participation by each member of the group. A good way of increasing participation levels is to **organize small groups** of two or three, **give groups specific assignments** and a **specific time frame** (short time frames encourage focus on tasks) for discussion. One person from each group should take turns reporting back to the large group. The small groups should not leave the circle, but shift slightly in their seats for their small-group consultations and then re-form the circle to hear, reflect on and contribute to other groups' thinking. **Maintaining the circle formation helps the community-building process.** The trick is to conduct the breaking up into small groups and the re-joining of the large group in a way that does not actually break the bond holding the group together. This technique not only **facilitates maximum participation** by breaking into small groups, discussing, identifying members to report to the whole group and repeating this over and over making sure that everyone gets a turn to represent the small group. It also **prepares participants for the representational work** ahead. Everyone gets representation practice and everyone gets a chance to see and hear and decide who among them would make the best representative at different spheres and levels of the dialogue process. Frequent use of this technique also **ensures that stakeholders 'own' the process** and **advances the communication** agenda.
- (e) Documentation of the stakeholder group meetings using the 5Ws & 1H tool by the group's scribe is helpful for working on the capacity-building objective of the project, and the self-monitoring and monitoring that should provide the basis for project evaluation. It will make it possible to track the **why** (objective and agenda of meeting), **who** (numbers, names, gender, occupational and geographic locations) participated, **when** (dates and meeting time), **where** (location of meeting), **what** (decisions and outcomes of meeting) and **how** (method of arriving at decisions, e.g., by general consensus, by decision of chairperson, by election) of the MSD stakeholder group process. Approaching this task systematically is vital to moving forward the dialogue effectively from the community level, to district, regional and national levels. Unless we know exactly *what* happened, *who* participated, *why*, *when*, *where* and *how* in the

earlier stages, planning for the next stages, Task Force communication responsibilities, and subsequent evaluation efforts will not be well served or well met.

- (f) As indicated at (d), the work plans must include engaging each stakeholder group in identifying the member or members who will represent them (that is, act as their delegates) and represent their positions on the issues they deem important. Each stakeholder group should have at least two or three representatives, to ensure that at least one is free and able to represent the group at specific points in the dialogue. Stakeholders will therefore need prior knowledge of agenda items of upcoming stages in the MSD process (the point made by the CMP community liaison person) in order to prepare themselves and their representatives on the positions they want represented.
- (g) Engaging stakeholder groups in an effective and sustainable process must include group-building and stakeholder community-building; must include capacity building on the principles of representation; must include understanding the duties of representatives before, during and after significant stages of the process; must include knowledge of and acceptance of the responsibilities of representatives and the stakeholders who are producing the representatives.
- (h) In diagrammatic terms, we should see the 13 stakeholder groups represented by 13 circles with arrows pointing to and from an MSD circle. The arrows pointing to the MSD circle would represent the 13 stakeholder groups sending their representatives forward to ensure their views are heard, and taken into account in “areas of decision-making that directly affect their well-being” (to echo Article 13 of our Constitution). The arrows pointing away from the MSD circle and towards the 13 stakeholder circles would represent representatives returning to their stakeholder groups to report back, get group feedback and receive instructions from the group on proceeding further. There would also be back and forth arrows from each stakeholder group to their various locations and communities in order to facilitate and continue the process of reducing the incidence of illegal logging, promoting viable livelihoods and sustainable management of the forest. Engaging stakeholder groups in actually developing, constructing and labeling such a diagram will assist them considerably in understanding their roles and responsibilities *in* the process and *to* the process.
- (i) Since this is also about capacity building for good **governance**, the opportunity should also be taken to ensure stakeholders and other project participants understand what is meant by ‘governance,’ not just the word, but its *structure, process* and *purpose*. The training recommended in the Task Force Strategic Planning Report should be followed up. A one-day training-of-trainers session with 12 to 16 members of the CMP team, Task Force and FTC staff on the nuts and bolts of ‘Understanding Governance’ and ‘Selecting and Electing Group Representatives’ will equip trainees to reproduce the process with peers, community development officers and community groups with varying levels of

English literacy. The CMP can take the lead in starting this work that although so crucial, is not currently being done by anyone anywhere in Guyana.

- (j) 'Strengthening community governance' has already been identified as a priority issue in the CMP consultations. This was reinforced at the Annai MSD meeting by Chairman Allcock. "Forestry has a Code of Practice," he said. "If we as leaders know the rules, we can enforce regulations. We need to have forestry officials present in the community to work with the loggers to enlighten them on new legislation, but this is not happening. Forestry should be helping, not frightening people. We need to be educated, and educate one another on the value of doing the right thing. Villagers can take the lead and help implement the rules. If the laws are implemented, it will help to guide us in the right way. He was strongly supported by a Task Force member with knowledge of forestry regulations and the non-need for permits by Amerindian communities, "You have got to be educated on the law so that people can't come and threaten you." Key recommendations from the Annai MSD meeting re the priority issues of *governance* and *communication* called specifically for the involvement of and work with the Police, District Development Officers, Community Development Officers, Village Councils, schools in the community, the Regional Development Council, the MYFM loggers association, women's groups, youth sports groups, the Makushi Research Unit, wildlife groups, and church groups. These persons and organizations "should be sensitized on the rules and regulations, on Sustainable Forest Management, and be invited to forestry workshops." Particular emphasis was placed on the police, the village council (especially with respect to regulation enforcement difficulties involving VC members' family and friends in small community settings) and capacity building of the new generation through the schools. The fact that most participants were totally in the dark on the existence of the Code of Practice should be a cause of major concern and a call to action. (For the record, it should also be stated here that the GFC was commended at the Annai MSD meeting for its much improved relationship with people in the Annai District, and its forestry-related training of 'our own people.' Also for the record, a GFC official at the meeting committed GFC to a 48-hour logging dispute resolution.)
- (k) The 'purple card group' assigned the task of coming up with a SMART solution under the 'effective communication' priority issue, agreed on specific aspects of the Code of Practice that the one member aware of the Code considered useful and necessary, indicated the number of days they would be willing to sacrifice for training in these areas, and decided on the season and time that would be most convenient. This proposal, along with those from the other two color-card groups, should be refined and acted upon so that the Annai MSD meeting can be seen to be delivering on its promise. Failure to carry through with these three attempts at 'SMART solutions' in a timely manner, and failure to communicate the 'carry through' efforts to stakeholders, will do considerable damage to the integrity of the process, and weaken stakeholders'

commitment to a process that is struggling to survive in an environment characterized by low community expectations and a good deal of skepticism.

- (l) The CMP team will need to make the report on the Annai MSD available to the Task Force so it can fulfill its specific responsibility to ‘communicate the decisions of the meeting to relevant agencies and stakeholder groups.’
- (m) Another ‘policy’ sub-issue that the CMP will have to give consideration to is the question of placing limits on the number of saws sold and/or operating in any sector. A Task Force member pointed to the likelihood of chainsaw over-saturation leading to an unmanageable situation especially in view of the impending entrance of the Courts hire purchase marketing giant into the region. Treatment of this sub-issue should be informed by other views expressed at the Annai meeting: (i) The needs for awareness building on the full utilization of a tree after felling, even if there is no ready market, keeping and storing remainders for later use, and on the variety of articles that can be made out of what is now seen as ‘waste.’ (ii) The smaller footprint, reduced deforestation, the greater recovery rates and possibilities for adding value to chainsaw milling operations as against big scale sawmilling operations re impact on forest sustainability. (These first two points were Task Force contributions.) “The more value a tree has, the more the community will protect it,” one member said, comparing the out-of-control illegal logging that characterized the coast with the more family- and community-orientation of hinterland forest-dependent communities. (iii) There was general agreement by all stakeholders on the importance of seeing the ‘forest’ and the ‘trees’ and that chainsaw milling is here to stay. (iv) An Environmental Protection Agency official (it is not known if he represented the EPA position or whether this was his personal view) cautioned, “Chainsaw milling is here to stay, if done sustainably, if other options are considered and implemented.” (v) The Annai MSD meeting Chairperson reminded people to bear in mind that there were other forms of livelihoods currently being engaged in, apart from chainsaw lumbering, but there is still a need “to promote good practices in killing a tree, that practices are already improving, and that who knows, laser beams may sometime become the dominant technology!” (vi) The CMP Coordinator closed the discussion on the third and fourth strategic issues put to the assembly: *That chainsaw milling is likely to be an ongoing source of individual and community livelihood in the foreseeable future;* and *That meeting the practical needs of the community while pursuing sustainable forest management will ensure that the current level of forest resources are adequate for the present and future development of communities in the Annai District* with the statement that “chainsaw lumbering is here to stay, but we need to improve on and consider other viable options.” [To sum up, can a policy restricting chainsaw proliferation co-exist with the ‘chainsaw is here to stay’ view without increasing the ‘conflict’ and ‘illegality’ issues?]
- (n) The CMP team will also need to plan for raising awareness and comfort levels re ‘strategic vs practical’ approaches to problem solving and make more explicit

connections between strategic and practical issues. The analogy outlined by the FTCl head in his remarks on the 2<sup>nd</sup> MSD meeting day was a helpful move in that direction.

3. Bearing in mind the observations made on the 'community livelihood and sustainable forest management' component of the MSD Annai Meeting Objective #1, and the focus on chainsaw milling, the CMP team should revisit MSD Meeting Objective #3: **“To demonstrate and facilitate hands-on-practice with a range of different technologies for more effectively converting logs into lumber”** and plan for demonstrating 'technologies' apart from the 'log to lumber' ones.
  - (a) While it was good that the forestry students at Bina Hill were involved in the Day #2 activities and in the focus group discussions that preceded the Annai MSD meeting, a structured way of involving them in the dialogue from the ground up and through all the stages of the dialogue still has to be worked out and worked on. Perhaps this can be accomplished by way of Stakeholder Group #11 (which for Annai can include the Wildlife clubs, hunters, fishers, rangers, eco-tourism workers, female partners of chainsaw operators). The natural location of the Bina Hill forest trainees is perhaps Stakeholder Group #13, but that group may already be over-burdened by many heavy-weight sub-groups. The meaningful involvement of Bina Hill forestry students via the representational participation principle in the different spheres and levels of the MSD as the process progresses within the community and from community, to region, to nation will go a long way towards meeting the desired outcome of having an 'institutionalized mechanism for permanent ongoing dialogue among stakeholders' in the Annai district. CMP team representatives will need to begin or continue the dialogue with past and current Bina Hill principals, forestry teachers or lecturers past and present, and, of course, the students themselves to learn about the expectations, objectives, training components and content, methodologies, experiences and challenges of the forestry programme and to share similar information on the CMP.
  - (b) In preparing for the MSD meetings at the Upper Demerara (Ituni) and Corriverton venues, it will be necessary to conduct similar dialogues with the various learning and skills training institutions in the area of Linden and its environs, and the University of Guyana, Berbice branch. (The discussion at the 'reflections' meeting which suggested Corriverton as a better location for the third MSD meeting, instead of Orealla, was very useful. A similar discussion on whether another venue may be preferable for what we have been calling the Ituni MSD meeting began. It should be continued with informed participants and a firm decision taken.) Whatever the final decision on the Upper Demerara forestry sector MSD meeting, it will be important to take stock of the unemployed and under-employed skilled human and other natural resources of that area for the purpose of steering the dialogue to consider *really* viable alternative livelihoods. We have already been alerted by the Task Force member from that community that going the 'craft' route alone may not find many takers.

- (c) With respect to the viable ‘community livelihood’ component of the MSD Meeting Objective #1, more realistic ‘alternatives’ (consistent with area resources and existing local initiatives) to chainsaw milling, practitioners, experts and other human resources in these ‘alternative viable livelihood options’ need to be identified – and the appropriate presentation methodologies worked out to make the best use of the time available.
- (d) In addition the sound advice given on Day #2 of the Annai MSD meeting on the practical and strategic advantages of inventorying resources, and considering, for example, whether crabwood oil extraction might not be a better option than crabwood lumbering, specific recommendations from the Task Force ‘reflections’ session for the MSD Day #2 demonstration agenda are outlined below.
- To consult the research already done for ideas on ‘viable livelihood’ follow-ups
  - To invite the participation of IICA’s Jerry La Gra and soil expert Livan
  - To allocate more time to ‘hands-on’ familiarity with the technologies
  - To add timber hygiene and timber grading in future demonstration sessions
4. Closing the formal part of the proceedings with an informal celebration is a great idea. The originators and facilitators are to be congratulated. With conscious guidance we can also serve community-building and standards-lifting purposes. The Ituni Task Force member who spoke of his (and his chainsaw brethren) experiences of operators battling with landlord, armed forces and GFC, their transformation into an association, the role reversal, and the current state of affairs is an indication of a good direction for future end-of-meeting cultural celebrations. Participants may also be asked to share personal chainsaw, tree or forest stories and/or tell what happens in and with their forests and/or what they would like to see happen and/or share tree and forest beliefs, myths and legends. It is an important aspect of capacity building to bring people around to a view of culture that is more than song-and-dance (which we did enjoy) and silly jokes; to a view of culture that comes closer to the definition offered by our national poet, Martin Carter: “Culture is a way of being, a way of seeing, a way of feeling, a way of living.”