

CMP MSD Region 10 Reflections Report

On the Structure of the 'Reflections' Process, Report & Participants

An eight-item questionnaire was given to members of the Task Force and the Project Management Team as a guide to structure their 'reflections' on the MSD Region 10 meeting of July 7th and 8th 2010. The first agenda item of the Task Force meeting of July 21, 2010 was dedicated to an assessment of the MSD meeting.

The following members were present at the Task Force Reflections meeting:

1. Mr Khalawan, Representative, Forest Products Association, Current Task Force Chairperson
2. Mr Leroy Welcome, CMP Community Forest Advisor
3. Ms Irene Bacchus-Holder, Representative, Guyana Arts & Crafts Producers' Association
4. Ms Simone Benn, Representative, Guyana Forestry Commission
5. Mr Charles Thom, Representative, Community Forest Associations
6. Ms Rohini Kerrett, CMP Coordinator
7. Ms Vanessa Benn, Consultant, Iwokrama
8. Dr Raquel Thomas, Director of Resource Management & Training, Iwokrama
9. Ms Bonita Harris, CMP Facilitator

Each person took turns to present his or her view of the two-day meeting using the items on the questionnaire as a starting point. The report has been structured in a similar manner:

- *On achieving key aspects of the MSD meeting's objectives*
- *On whether the dialogue was genuine and the meeting participatory*
- *On preparation for the MSD meeting and the best thing about each day*
- *On stakeholder representatives seeming to 'own' the process*

The recommendations which follow the sections flow directly and indirectly from the dialogue at the special Task Force meeting and from the Facilitator's sense of some of the crucial 'next steps.' In order to facilitate the Task Force in its examination of the recommendations to take decisions on action or non-action, all twenty (20) recommendations have been collected in a separate appendix to this Report.

On Achieving Key Aspects of the MSD Meeting's Objectives

1. **Continuation of the stakeholder dialogue:** There was general consensus that this was achieved.
 - Credit was given to the systematic preparatory meetings that had been held with stakeholder groups. The general objectives of these meetings were to provide information on the chainsaw

milling project, the use of multi-stakeholder dialogue tool, the representation process and facilitate the preliminary listing of issues and solutions.

- Re-presentation of stakeholder issues and solutions generated at the preparatory meetings (color-coded for easy reference) to representatives on Day 1 of the MSD meeting was another building block for continuation of the dialogue.
- The CMP workshop linking community mobilization with capacity building and sensitizing the CMP team on representation principles was also an important contributory factor. This, and the fact that the CFW was required to identify representatives by name and stakeholder group before the meeting was convened, ensured that the vast majority of participants had been previously engaged in the earlier stages of the dialogue – and consequently prepared to participate in its ‘continuation.’
- Utilizing lessons learned from the first MSD meeting at Annai, amendments to the mobilization process, and the CMP Task Force involvement in the Region 6 MSD meeting planning process were also critical to the ‘continuation’ aspect of the meeting’s objective.

“The beauty of the MSD is that a person can get up without fear and talk his mind.”

[Charles Thom, Upper Berbice Forest Producers Association and Chair of Region 10, MSD Meeting]

2. Consensus building: Two members of the ‘reflections group’ had reservations on this aspect of the objective. One Task Force member who was the sole representative of the traditional sawmilling stakeholder group at the MSD Region 10 meeting felt that there was not sufficient time in his group to build consensus, or time to reflect on the issues of other stakeholder groups, but did have a sense of consensus-building taking place during the MSD. The following areas where ‘consensus building’ did take place were identified:

- In view of the highly irregular and informal nature of the chainsaw sector at the start of the CMP and MSD process, the key stakeholder group, the chainsaw operators, were
 - not only accepting of the need for more information, education, training and certification for operators, but were also advocating for it;
 - moving away from the tendency to complain against and blame the GFC for issues confronting the sector, and more accepting of personal and collective responsibility for finding and working on solutions to improve the functioning of the chainsaw lumbering sector and the quality of the sector’s product;
 - recognizing that the CMP MSD process was a genuine platform where they could raise their issues in the presence of ‘authorities’ not only without fear of victimization, but with the confidence that they would be listened to and treated respectfully;
 - no longer being seen, or seeing themselves, as illegitimate offspring or as ‘itinerant dysfunctional bush children,’ but as businessmen and contributors to families,

communities and country with an important role to play in improving operations in the sector and sustainable forest management.

- All stakeholder representatives recognized the need for more information and more easily accessible information on a range of sustainable forest management issues and viable livelihood options.
- In an environment where representatives were free to state their views honestly and forthrightly, the general agreement that prevailed as stakeholders considered and engaged in dialogue on key issues and the directions solutions should take, both at the level of the small groups and in the meeting as a whole, was another indication of growing consensus.
- The fact that all of the groups of stakeholder representatives, except for one (the resale and manufacturing group), proposed strategic solutions in addition to the practical ones, is another indication of consensus building on the importance of both strategic and practical approaches to sustainable forest management.

Recommendations:

- (1) That while the focus on 'solutions' was critical and necessary, more time should be allowed for the small groups of stakeholder representatives to consider in more depth, and engage more fully in consensus-building and dialogue on their own and other stakeholder group 'issues.'
- (2) That the Project Management Team, the Chainsaw Milling Team and the Task Force engage in a process of clarifying and deciding on the *what, who, where, when, why* and *how* of formal and informal consensus building and achieving – in preparation for the national level of the multi-stakeholder dialogue.

“As one of the persons who conducted research in the early stages of the Chainsaw Milling Project, I was happy to participate in the dialogue, to see how the project has progressed since its start, and to see how representatives are addressing the issues. ... With regard to capacity building, having Mr Charles Thom (a member of the Upper Berbice Forest Producers Association) chair the meeting gave chainsaw operators a role model and his peers a practical sense that ‘I can do this too!’”

[Vanessa Benn, Consultant, Iwokrama & Guyana Forestry Commission Board member]

**‘Capacity’ is understanding, ability and discipline.
It suggests skill and will, and involves both practice and attitude.**

[John Paul Lederach, The Moral Imagination]

- 3. Capacity building:** It was generally felt that the capacity building objective of the two-day process had been achieved. With respect to both consensus and capacity building, it was

pointed out that 'building' was the operative word, that it was a process in which there was still more ground to be covered with continuing activities. The following areas where consensus building were taking place were noted:

- Stakeholder representatives were presented with a model of 'consultation' where people are not just 'talked at,' but are able to participate in respectful dialogue with others starting off from differing standpoints.
- Individuals (from governmental and non-governmental organizations) at the MSD meeting were able to participate in a meeting, where most had had a part to play in its preparation, that started and ended punctually, that was effectively managed, that proceeded systematically and smoothly, that demonstrated genuinely participatory ways of coming up with solutions to problems, that provided important information on a range of needs and interests, and that saw participants accepting shared responsibility for problem solving. This, for our country, is important capacity building.
- The experience of planning and preparing for and conducting this meeting (and learning from the experience with previous meetings) also built the capacity of members of the CMP team and Task Force.
- Members of each of the working groups benefited from the opportunity to consider and select the persons whom they felt could most effectively represent the group, and representatives benefited from the opportunity to record and re-present the thinking, issues, solutions and recommendations of the group.
- There was growing understanding of the importance of genuine representation, the principles on which representation must be built, and the connections between good governance and good representation.
- There was also growing understanding of the need for ongoing sensitization, education and training in the principles and skills of representation, organizational development and governance for community groups, associations and councils.
- Despite having to cut short the 'logs to lumber' demonstration, the need for capacity building in this area became clear as operators were able see how the milling attachment could improve the quality of their sawn lumber, reduce the physical strain on chainsaw operators, and safeguard their health and safety when engaged in this occupation.
- The presence of the Ituni Women in Action Group, which did not exist before the CMP mobilization activities in the Ituni pilot community, and their display of products they had made as a result of training facilitated by the CMP was also an example of capacity building flowing directly from the preparatory work for the MSD Region 10 meeting. The trainers, Jean and Glendon Allicock from Surama (an Amerindian village in Annai, another CMP pilot

community), also visited Orealla (the third CMP pilot community) to conduct a two-week training session. A visit to Suriname provided evidence that their craft items compared very favorably with that produced by their Surinamese counterparts. The importance of this form of capacity building which utilizes personnel from one CMP location to share experiences and expertise with other CMP locations and help start up, inspire, and move women to use their resources more creatively cannot be understated – even while we note that training in design and other assistance with marketing of products will be necessary.

“I went to the closing of the Ituni training. The women were happy because they didn’t know they had things they could use. Glen and Jean Allicock went into the community and saw what they had, showed them the tools that they had brought and what the tools could do. The project bought tools for the group so that they could continue. There was a mini-exhibition and people were very enthusiastic. There is now something where there was nothing. A way of earning an income is opening up for the Ituni Women in Action Group.”

[Rohini Kerrett, Chainsaw Milling Project Coordinator]

4. Providing information: There was general consensus that a great deal of “information to guide stakeholder decision-making” was provided on both days of the MSD meeting. ‘Stakeholder decision-making’ was not only confined to those stakeholder representatives present at the MSD meeting. As a result of embracing the representative principle, persons present are responsible for communicating with those stakeholder groups and communities whom they represent so that all stakeholders involved in the process are enabled to make better and more enlightened decisions about the chainsaw lumbering sector, other forms of viable livelihoods, and sustainable forest management. Apart from the information provided orally during the multi-stakeholder dialogue and by way of power-point presentations on both days of the meeting, stakeholder representatives were supplied with lists of their issues reproduced simply and attractively. This information will no doubt be used as the basis for continuing dialogue with peers, groups and organizations. Copies of *Climate Change & The Role of the Forests: A Community Manual* supplied by the Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development were eagerly taken up by stakeholder representatives.

- Although the Task Force, in its effort to maximize the opportunity for bringing valuable information and experience to participants, had planned many presentations on ‘livelihood options’ for Day 2, all of which were well received, it was felt that this placed unwelcome stress on the chairperson who had to enforce the 10-minute limit on the presenters and curtail dialogue following each presentation, thereby placing him in the situation of seeming to restrict the dialogue.
- Another negative effect of planning several interesting presentations to precede the ‘logs to lumber’ demonstration was the unforeseen early end due to rain for which we

had made no provision. It was also felt that beginning the ‘logs to lumber’ demonstration earlier in the session would allow chainsaw operators who were most interested in the technology to leave early enough to get to their distant homes. The effort and cost of the Farfan & Mendes mobilization and transport of men and equipment to the MSD site was another vital reason for making optimum use of this capacity building opportunity.

Recommendations:

- (1) That given the range of livelihood options available to Region 6 residents, it may not be necessary to include this item on that region’s upcoming MSD meeting agenda. Although it was strongly felt that the ‘logs to lumber’ demonstration should in the future precede the ‘other viable livelihood options’ on the Day 2 agenda, such a decision should be taken in collaboration with Mr Andrew Mendes, the key facilitator of this activity and the Community Forest Worker for Region 6. Whatever decision is eventually arrived at, since Orealla/Siparuta is the last of the three CMP pilot communities to be involved in a regional MSD, it is even more important to continue to integrate capacity building with the continuing community mobilization in all four regions (9, 10, 6 and 2) where the CMP has (or will have) a presence.
- (2) That the Occupational Health & Safety information shared and issues examined need to be expanded and deepened with a strong self-awareness and sustainable livelihood component. A behavior change communication strategy (creating an enabling environment; providing user-friendly, accessible services and commodities; utilization of traditional and mass media, community networks and other effective communication activities that include peer -to-peer one-on-one and group communication, posters and flyers of chainsaw operators speaking to their peers) should be adopted.
- (3) That the Chainsaw Milling Project consider the need for information, education and training in design (by local and other designers), small business management, marketing challenges and strategies for overcoming these; for continuing to involve researchers in specific initiatives; and for facilitating the production of community manuals on Reduced Impact Logging and Sustainable Forest Management.
- (4) That the Chainsaw Milling Project collaborate with the Forest Products Development & Marketing Council to boost creativity, design and production of functional and other craft items that assist the most impoverished sectors in project communities to make an income.
- (5) That the Chainsaw Milling Project make linkages with new Women of Worth (WOW) project.
- (6) That the Chainsaw Milling Project consider ways of making information in the possession of the GFC more generally available to and accessible by various categories and levels of stakeholders.

“Having dialogue opened people’s minds.”

[Khalawan, Forest Products Association representative and current chairperson of CMP Task Force]

“People were engaged and spoke freely and frankly.”

[Rohini Kerrett, Chainsaw Milling Project Coordinator]

On Whether the Dialogue Was Genuine and the Meeting Participatory

There was general consensus that the dialogue was indeed genuine and the meeting participatory. One pocket of ‘quiet’ was noted, although this does not necessarily mean non-participation. It was noted that the ‘quiet table group’ comprised persons who had travelled long distances to get to the meeting (from Surama and from Orealla) and one young man who indicated that he was representing his father. It should be noted that keen and attentive listening is a vital aspect of genuine ‘dialogue.’ In the later oral evaluations, two of the quiet persons (women) and the young man (a UG computer technician) said that they were glad to be present and had learnt a lot.

A noteworthy feature was the enthusiastic participation of the stakeholder representing the regional governing body and his engagement in genuine dialogue on issues and solutions with representatives of Amerindian village councils and Community Forest Associations. The *Proceedings Report* documented the key strategic and practical proposals arising from the dialogue involving these groups. This is an important platform for subsequent stages of the MSD in which the involvement of policy makers will be crucial.

The discussion on dialogue and participation also considered involvement of the wider stakeholder community and interested members of the public not present at the MSD meetings. NCN Linden TV repeated a news item on the MSD meeting and the national NCN newscast reported on the meeting.

Recommendations:

- (1) That given the disappointment of a key member of a Region 6 local government body that he was not able to be present, despite the invitation extended to the Mayor & Town Council and the various preparatory meetings held with the Council, the CMP Coordinator should arrange a follow-up meeting with the Council to ensure their continued involvement in the dialogue.
- (2) That a communication plan be proposed by the CMP Coordinator and Facilitator and presented to the Project Management Team and Task Force.

I enjoyed the programme and the interaction even though I am not a logger I really enjoyed listening to the loggers speaking and learning what is going on in the different parts of Guyana.

[Jean Allcock, Makushi language teacher and craft producer, Surama, Region 9]

I really enjoyed everything. I am not a logger, but my children work in it. I learned much that I can share.

[Yvonne Williams, craft producer, Orealla, Region 6]

On Preparation for the MSD Meeting & the Best Thing about Each Day

Day 1:

Preparation: The preparation for Day 1 was good; people worked well in the groups; there was not much confusion.

Best Things: The day went very smoothly; the high level of participation and respectful engagement with one another; the facilitation; the openness of community representatives; the work on solutions; representatives' willingness to engage in critical discussion and arrive at consensus.

Day 2:

Preparation: The preparation for Day 2 failed to make contingency arrangements for the rainfall that brought an untimely end to the 'logs to lumber' demonstration and the cancellation of the chainsaw ripping competition. Because of the enthusiasm of the Task Force to include a variety of livelihood options for the economically disabled Region 10, there were many presentations (perhaps too many) – this restricted the presenters, the stakeholder question and answer session after each presentation, and the practical demonstration that was scheduled to follow.

Best Things: The inclusion of practical demonstration to make chainsaw lumbering more efficient and improve the quality of the product – especially in view of the fact that at the start of the chainsaw project people were wary because they thought the government was making a move to ban chainsaw milling; people were very, very interested in the presentations; the presentations shared a lot of information; the orderly conclusion to Day 2 events despite the rain; the respectful but firm clarifications and interventions to forestall further feelings of alienation expressed by two disgruntled participants.

Recommendations:

- (1) That the 'logs to lumber' demonstration be held early in the day to allow time for chainsaw operators from far time to travel back to their home communities; and that tents be set up to shelter participants in case of rain.
- (2) That a small committee be set up to follow up MSD meeting proposals for regional and/or national chainsaw ripping competitions.

- (3) That the MSD Day 2 agenda with presentations on viable livelihood options and practical demonstrations be reviewed, and a decision taken to inform the planning for the Region 6 MSD meeting.
- (4) That the alternative livelihood options be more fully integrated into the ongoing CMP and MSD process.

On stakeholder representatives seeming to ‘own’ the process

Most members present at the Task Force reflections meeting felt ‘yes,’ that stakeholders did seem to own the process. Mr Charles Thom, the chairperson of the event, in support of stakeholder ownership, commented, “We (referring to Task Force and CMP team members) hardly spoke!” One of the others who felt ‘somewhat’ was closer to the reality noted that ‘owning the process’ is in itself a process, especially since this is a new approach. Others noted that ‘there was a lot of participation from the usual suspects,’ the non-verbal participation of the women and young man at the ‘resale and manufacturing’ table and the very verbal participation of the stakeholder wearing at least two hats (that of a local government representative and a community forest association representative).

Participants’ comments at Annex 6 of the *Proceedings Report* should be reviewed to get a better sense of how they felt about the process. Some of their comments have been reprinted below.

Some ‘reflections’ on the MSD from chainsaw operators

What I learned from this gathering is really bridging the communication gap.

We who are from the Berbice River don’t see each other often to interact and share ideas.

I am challenged to communicate what has transpired here today.

When people are asked to be trained, I know there will be resentment because they will have to give up opportunities for earning, but it is for us to encourage them to develop themselves, especially the youths.

It is our responsibility to continue trying to communicate to them in a manner for them to accept training.

[Gerald Gilbert]

Today I’ve learned so much even though I’ve been in the chainsaw industry for such a long time. I started at 17 and now I’m 53. I can encourage the youths to take chainsaw operating more seriously. I hope that as we prolong these dialogues and go higher up, we suggest that chainsaw operators must get a certificate because it is very dangerous.

[Michael Hernandez]

I’m in the business for 22 years and I know we must have certification. I had planned to put up my chainsaw for sale, but after today, I’m back in business!

[Ecliffe Lindie]

I now see chainsaw logging from a different perspective.

[Ezra Kersting]

Thank you all for today. I ask you to go through with the plan for training operators. I will meet with workers and tell them what it is all about. I can tell you that we will be willing to take the training.

[Leslie Adrian]

Additional Facilitator Recommendations

- (1) That the Chainsaw Milling Project (CMP) engage in dialogue with the Forest Products Development & Marketing Council (FPDMC) towards taking action on the following:
 - Marketing-related matters concerning forest products (lumber and craft);
 - Its undertaking communicated at the MSD Region 6 meeting to work with financial institutions to support applications from the chainsaw sector; and
 - Working with Community Forestry Associations.

- (2) That the CMP consider and decide on action to be taken with respect to the following matters arising from the Day 2 presentations at the MSD Region 10 meeting:
 - Requesting wider and more in-depth consultations on the LCDS for itself, for Region 10, and for membership on the LCDS multi-stakeholder committee;
 - Facilitating training in design through the USAID GTIS, LCDS and FPDMC;

- (3) That the CMP organize a meeting with key team members and GFC personnel organizing and working with Community Forest Associations (CFAs):
 - To discover the current issues, challenges and conflicts within these CFAs;
 - To plan for the organizational development and strengthening of the CFAs;
 - To begin the work of building regional forest associations; and
 - To decide whether similar institutional strengthening and governance work with local government bodies (town, district and village councils) may be tackled at the same time.

- (4) That the CMP Coordinator convene a meeting that includes the Region 9 Community Forest Worker to decide what needs to be done, by whom, how and by when to bring Annai up to speed for the national dialogue.

- (5) That the CMP meet with Go-Invest to discuss what is available and how it can be accessed by various forest-related stakeholders, including support for re-tooling that was communicated by the FPDMC Director at the MSD Region 10 meeting.

- (6) That the Project Management Team, the CMP team and the Task Force begin drafting a coherent plan for resolution of the practical and strategic issues being raised by stakeholders so all can be clear where we are going and how we intend to get there.

Bonita Harris,
CMP Facilitator, July 28, 2010

Appendix

Recommendations:

1. That while the focus on 'solutions' was critical and necessary, more time should be allowed for the small groups of stakeholder representatives to consider in more depth, and engage more fully in consensus-building and dialogue on their own and other stakeholder group 'issues.'
2. That the Project Management Team, the Chainsaw Milling Team and the Task Force engage in a process of clarifying and deciding on the *what, who, where, when, why* and *how* of formal and informal consensus building and achieving – in preparation for the national level of the multi-stakeholder dialogue.
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8. That the Chainsaw Milling Project consider ways of making information in the possession of the GFC more generally available to and accessible by various categories and levels of stakeholders.
9. That given the disappointment of a key member of a Region 6 local government body that he was not able to be present, despite the invitation extended to the Mayor & Town Council and

- the various preparatory meetings held with the Council, the CMP Coordinator should arrange a follow-up meeting with the Council to ensure their continued involvement in the dialogue.
10. That a communication plan be proposed by the CMP Coordinator and Facilitator and presented to the Project Management Team and Task Force.
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 12. That a small committee be set up to follow up MSD meeting proposals for regional and/or national chainsaw ripping competitions.
 13. That the MSD Day 2 agenda with presentations on viable livelihood options and practical demonstrations be reviewed, and a decision taken to inform the planning for the Region 6 MSD meeting.
 14. That the alternative livelihood options be more fully integrated into the ongoing CMP and MSD process.
 15. That the Chainsaw Milling Project (CMP) engage in dialogue with the Forest Products Development & Marketing Council (FPDMC) towards taking action on the following:
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 - To decide whether similar institutional strengthening and governance work with local government bodies (town, district and village councils) may be tackled at the same time.
 18. That the CMP Coordinator convene a meeting that includes the Region 9 Community Forest Worker to decide what needs to be done, by whom, how and by when to bring Annai up to speed for the national dialogue.
 19. That the CMP meet with Go-Invest to discuss what is available and how it can be accessed by various forest-related stakeholders, including support for re-tooling that was communicated by the FPDMC Director at the MSD Region 10 meeting.

20. That the Project Management Team, the CMP team and the Task Force begin drafting a coherent plan for resolution of the practical and strategic issues being raised by stakeholders so all can be clear where we are going and how we intend to get there.