

Regional Report of Multi-Stakeholder Forums in Region Nine

This report has two parts:

- **Part One** (pages 1-7) comprises a summary of the 15 conversations held at the community level between March 5th 2006 and April 30th 2006.
- **Part Two** (pages 8-15) is a summary of the outcomes of the Regional Conference held on May 31st 2006 for Region 9 as well as the points raised at the community level.

The information in this report is based on the information discussed at the community and regional conversations. The information has not been verified through any research or follow up enquiries

PART ONE

SUMMARY OF LOCAL COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Total Number of Consultations Held: 4

Total Number of Participants: 193

Average Attendance: 48

Summary Table of participation

Area	Venue	Date	Attendance
St. Ignatius, Central Rupununi	St. Ignatius Benab	11 th March 2006	34
Rupununi, Karasabai	Karasabai Community Centre	2 nd May 2006	37
Rupununi, Annai	Annai Community Centre	3 ^d May 2006	66
Rupununi, Aishalton	Aishalton Community Centre	4 th May 2006	56

1. What does Region Nine celebrate as positives in Guyana:

All four conversations in the region indicated that the peaceful relations and love for one another in the community was the main positive thing to be celebrated in Guyana. There is cooperation among the residents and the active community involvement of youth, women and captains in community affairs. There is a desire to live by the motto "One People, One Nation, One Destiny".

Another key positive to be celebrated was the diversity of the flora and fauna and the beauty of the region.

2. What are Region Nine's Elements of a Vision for Guyana:

In this region the residents' main dreams related to their **inclusion in all aspects of Guyanese life**. Residents in three of the four communities desired **respect for the Amerindian Community, equal access to rights, inclusion and consultation on decisions that affected them**. They also desired **more government attention to the development issues** of Region 9.

The other main elements of a vision for Guyana for this region were **improvements to the education system, ensuring equal access by all to quality education, youths remaining in the community, law enforcement, and infrastructural improvements with specific emphasis on transportation, roads and electricity**. Karasabai had an AIDS-free Guyana as part of its vision.

3. Key issues raised by residents/participants:

Generally speaking, the issues raised by the four communities varied. There were few areas of commonality on specific issues; even issues under headings such as education, land, law and order were varied among the communities. For instance while three of the four communities indicated that **land issues** were high on their agenda, each community had specific land issues. St. Ignatius spoke of improper demarcation of land, while many of Aishalton's land issues emerge from the absence of land titles by residents; and Annai's main complaint was that land for fishing and hunting was being taken away. The land issue took prominence in Aishalton. While it was important to the other communities, there were other issues that residents had serious concerns about. In fact in Karasabai, land was not mentioned as an issue.

Another issue that shared a similar fate was **Law and Order**. St. Ignatius spoke of insufficient policing in the area and poor response time of the police as well as poor monitoring of the border; Annai spoke of lack of legal advice on legal matters; Aishalton spoke of police action on cattle rustling; and Karasabai complained about civilians impersonating police and police not being in uniform.

The **most common issue** for the communities in Region 9 was their **need for inclusion**. This featured in three of the four communities. This need for inclusion stemmed from the prejudice Amerindians believe they face regarding access to education opportunities, rights to land, and essential infrastructure among other things. They also feel their interests are not adequately represented nor are they sufficiently consulted and included on decisions that affect them.

For each community specific issues stood out:

- **St. Ignatius** – the social issues relating to the lack of educational facilities such as school drop outs, drug abuse, domestic violence, teenage pregnancy and single parenting
- **Annai** – the exclusion from the society because of their Amerindian ethnicity; this is reflected in the lack of consultation with Amerindians on things that affect their community in areas such as forestry, projects and land and their feelings of manipulation and their feeling as not recognized as citizens of Guyana
- **Aishalton** – land issues were very prominent; facets included land titling, protected areas, intrusions by Brazilians and lack of access to resources that pass through their land
- **Karasabai** – had a mix of three main issues with none standing out in particular, these were education, law and order and community development.

St. Ignatius and Annai indicated that there were no issues that would likely lead to violent conflict. In Aishalton however, residents identified the rustling of cattle by the Brazilians, threats by the Police and coastlanders taking advantage of their women. In Karasabai, the issues that had potential for violent conflict were gossip, teenage pregnancy and drug abuse.

4. Residents'/Participants' feelings about and expectations from the conversations:

The common expectations that participants had across all conversations were:

- That their views would be properly recorded and reported and taken to the appropriate persons for attention and action
- The Ethnic Relations Commission will play an active role in ensuring there is action on issues raised by communities
- Reports on the conversations will be returned to the community as well as reports on the follow up action taken
- Follow up meetings will be held
- The Amerindian voice will be heard

At the end of the conversation persons were generally encouraged and hopeful, with a sense of satisfaction about the outcome. Only in one instance did participants feel the time allocated to the conversation was too short.

5. Process Issues:

The attendance by the communities in this region was good. The average attendance was 48 persons. In three of the communities, participants spoke in their native language. There was therefore need for interpretation. There was a spirit of cooperation among the facilitators, regional coordinators, UNDP and the ERC representatives at the conversations.

6. Key issues raised by residents/participants:

Summary Table of Issues

Present local conflicts/areas of tension	No. of Com.	Communities which raised issue	Concrete commitments and ideas towards overcoming challenges
Land/Jurisdiction			
Land for fishing and hunting taken away (area is a proposed protected area); Consensus on protected areas have not been reached	2	Annai Aishalton	Formation of a Land Issue Committee which will address land issue
Application for land by Amerindians not dealt with quickly; Land titles are not recognized by authorities; improper demarcation of Land	2	Aishalton St. Ignatius	Amerindians to be recognized as owners of ancestral lands. On conclusion of land issues, signatures and rubber stamp to be affixed
Non residents enter Amerindian Communities without permission	1	Aishalton	
Amerindians have no rights to minerals and waterways running through their lands	1	Aishalton	
Social Cohesion/ Amerindian Issues			
Discrimination against Amerindians; Amerindian community not recognised	2	Aishalton Annai	Amerindians should have their own representatives to finalise outcome of consultations
Issues affecting Amerindians not properly dealt with (misinformation being used to manipulate Amerindians)	1	Annai	
Local Police do not show respect to Amerindian Women	1	Aishalton	Women will be educated on issues of women rights
Business people within community do not respect village leaders	1	Karasabai	
Capacity of Amerindians not developed when projects are held in the area	1	Annai	
Loss of Amerindian Traditions	1	Aishalton	
Infrastructure			
Poor potable water supply		St. Ignatius Annai	
Roads: poor conditions are a health hazard; Ungazetted Roads – discrimination in the gazetting		St. Ignatius Annai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor efforts at the local level were being made in some areas on the Lethem roads

Present local conflicts/areas of tension	No. of Com.	Communities which raised issue	Concrete commitments and ideas towards overcoming challenges
Lethem is a township, but preference is given to Supenaam which is not a designated township		Karasabai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities can do minor maintenance on roads for a fee • Local SIMAP Officer • Budget for yearly maintenance of roads • Process of gazetting roads would be completed by the end of 2006 • Legislation is in place
Transportation Costs too high	1	Annai	
Environment			
No proper waste management/ solid waste disposal system (no policies or mechanisms)	1	St. Ignatius	
Destruction of forest leading to damage to flora and fauna	1	St. Ignatius	
Water Conservation is inadequate	1	St. Ignatius	
Pollution of rivers and waterways	1	Annai	
Social Issues			
School drop-outs	2	St. Ignatius Karasabai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loans should be made available to parents for educating children. Parents must also be educated in the management and repayment of loans and generating savings • Workshops and peer education forums in the school and the community, done at a local and regional level • Religious groups to play a more meaningful role
Drug and Alcohol Abuse Domestic Violence;	3	St. Ignatius Aishalton Karasabai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lethem and surrounding areas obtain radio and television licenses to produce and disseminate information on social and moral issues as well as develop popular educational programmes with youth in mind
Single Parents (female headed especially)	1	St. Ignatius	
Prostitution	1	St. Ignatius	
Migration	1	St. Ignatius	
Moral Values			
Indiscipline in schools; loss of respect for elders	1	St. Ignatius Karasabai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moral values to be re-introduced in schools • Parents must take responsibility for their children's

Present local conflicts/areas of tension	No. of Com.	Communities which raised issue	Concrete commitments and ideas towards overcoming challenges
			moral education
Moral Break-down among youth	1		
Law and Order			
Insufficient Policing in the area; Police are not always in uniform when on official business; civilians impersonating Police	1	St. Ignatius Karasabai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a Border Police Patrol • Proper Salaries and better working conditions for police • Community Policing Initiatives • Utilising Informants
No police action on cattle rustling	1	Aishalton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and support local policing groups to stop rustling
Lack of Legal Advisors on legal matters	1	Annai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region 9 should budget for legal advice on issues affecting Amerindians
Illegal drugs passing through the community and entering the school system	1	St. Ignatius Karasabai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Education and Youth			
Shortage of teachers (especially trained teachers)	1	St. Ignatius Karasabai	Training facilities for education (and health) should be established in region 9
No District Education Supervisor to monitor schools	1	Karasabai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Corporal Punishment – no feedback given on the UNICEF survey conducted	1	St. Ignatius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts have been made to assess the positives and negatives of replacing corporal punishment with alternative forms of discipline but there was no conclusive outcome
Child friendly classrooms and schools were being implemented the wrong way – teachers and students become to friendly- with teenage pregnancy resulting	1	St. Ignatius	
Economy/Markets			
Lack of jobs and decent employment standards	1	St. Ignatius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more jobs in the region • Salary payments must be based on position and qualification • More collaborative efforts between Regional Administration and the Village Councils in preparation

Present local conflicts/areas of tension	No. of Com.	Communities which raised issue	Concrete commitments and ideas towards overcoming challenges
			of budget for the Region
Limited employment opportunities	1	St. Ignatius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommended areas for economic investment include: small scale industries; subsistence farming, evening classes, dairy farming Establish a nut butter factory in Karasabai More cultivation of cashew for processing
Traders' goods are being confiscated by area police without just cause	1	Karasabai	
Discrimination in employment practices	2	St. Ignatius Annai	
Child Labour	2	St. Ignatius Karasabai	
Public Administration/Community Development			
GWI imposes its own agenda on Amerindian Communities;	2	Aishalton Annai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government to recognize District Toshaos Councils All communities and sub-districts to be involved in the consultation process The Regional Administrative Authority to forward issues to the National Administrative Authority
Religious sects have entered the community without approval from the Council	1	Aishalton	
Lack of training workshops on Community Development	1	Karasabai	
There is no District Development Officer			

PART TWO

SUMMARY OF REGIONAL CONFERENCE

DATE: May 23rd 2006
VENUE: Lethem Primary School
ATTENDANCE: 94

1. Key issues repeated from the local community conversations

- Social issues, **problems** with school children
- **Shortage** of teachers in the education system
- Infrastructure problems including **poor roads**, water, electricity
- Amerindian issues including land rights and social exclusion issues
- Law and Order problems especially as it relates to **Amerindian rights**

The only issue that was not expanded on in detail at the regional level was the lack of employment opportunities.

2. Other and new issues

- None; the same issues that were raised at the local community level were raised at the regional level

3. Participants' reaction to the Regional Conference:

None noted

4. Process Issues:

- The forum commenced with religious prayers and a cultural presentation. It was opened by the Regional Chairman. This was followed by remarks from the Chairman of the ERC.
- Participants were then explained the objectives of the exercise, ground rules and the agenda. They were then divided into groups

5. Any other observations

None noted

SUMMARY TABLE OF ACTION TO BE TAKEN ON ISSUES

KEY ISSUES HIGH LIGHTED	WHAT RESIDENTS CAN DO FOR THEMSELVES	WHAT RESIDENTS NEED HELP WITH		WHAT RESIDENTS NEED OTHERS TO DO FOR THEM	
		Issue	Person/- Agency to Assist	Issue	Person/- Agency to Assist
Social Issues					
School dropouts: Indiscipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form small groups to develop skills – craft, carpentry, brick laying Conduct survey on drop outs according to sub-district to assess problems related to drop outs Community can form groups where youths can express themselves Show respect for children Accept help that is needed Instill family values taught in school and at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional officials to encourage and support our programs Skilled persons to help drop outs Workshops and peer education forums in school and community Share information leaflets Persons to help with project proposal documents to allow the community to access projects Visits by officials to communities 	Church and NGOs Regional Office Government and Cyril Potter's College of Education Relevant agencies Regional Education and Health Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take time to share views and differences Education officer to play a major role Training should be fulltime Include programmes in next budget Have skilled persons to help with dropouts Advise parents on issues relating to the generation gap Funding for a proper library and research center Train teachers and parents so that they can give professional advice 	
Domestic violence and Drug/Alcohol abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion sessions on domestic violence where resource persons can speak on the topic Form a small sub committee Family life education Resource persons can have dialogue with parents Support groups formed by parents and elders Large forums for parents and teenagers (they must be held separately) Religious leaders must lead by example We need to discipline ourselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding to implement programmes Support groups to provide professional guidance Law enforcers should keep tabs on violators Enlighten villagers by creating a framework that can be applied to the issues that committees will be looking at Help and shelter for victims of abuse 	UNDP UNICEF Police Medical personnel, Judiciary Army and Law enforcement officers Religious leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persons to enlighten residents on their roles and rights Obtain a radio and TV license to produce and disseminate information on social and moral issues 	Resource persons
Migration					

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Education					
Ongoing training of educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage teachers training and upgrading 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training parents and teachers Create curriculum Full time teacher training center in Rupununi Prepare list of teachers for training or upgrading Training facilities for education (and health) should be established in region 9 	Ministry of Education
No District Education Supervisor to monitor schools				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education supervisors to monitor schools 	
Corporal Punishment – no feedback given on the UNICEF survey conducted		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts have been made to assess the positives and negatives of replacing corporal punishment with alternative forms of discipline but there was no conclusive outcome 			
Child friendly classrooms and schools were being implemented the wrong way – teachers and students become to friendly- with teenage pregnancy resulting					

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Infrastructure					
Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups to help repair and maintain roads • Community can ensure proper standards of infrastructure works have been complied with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government should provide materials to repair roads in the community • Consultations should be carried out before projects are identified 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget for yearly maintenance • Regular visits to check on roads especially during the rainy season • Monitor and evaluate projects before payments are made • Prompt payments to workers by contractors • Double carriage railway from Rupununi to a deep sea harbour which will provide cheaper transportation • Upgrade Georgetown to Lethem road • Local SIMAP Officer 	RDCs Ministry of Labour
Electricity		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheap and reliable electricity 			
Water				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce potable water 	
Environment					
Protection of wildlife and the environment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation and strengthening of wildlife and forestry legislation. Residents do not have knowledge about the legal framework 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance from specialized institutions in the area for example in environmental education for wildlife protection • Finance training in environmental management • National and local media should assist in protecting the environment 	
No proper waste management – policies or mechanisms					
Water conservation inadequate					
Economy and Markets					
Finding and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the resources we have in the 				

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improving markets	region for example cashew, peanuts, mangoes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create industries for example eco-tourism handicraft and leather tanning • Encourage more participation in the collection of raw materials • Need to reactivate local market in Lethem 				
Lack of jobs and decent employment standards		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more jobs in the region • Salary payments must be based on position and qualification • More collaborative efforts between Regional Administration and the Village Councils in preparation of budget for the Region 			
Limited employment opportunities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More cultivation of cashew for processing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended areas for economic investment include: small scale industries; subsistence farming, evening classes, dairy farming • Establish a nut butter factory in Karasabai 	
Traders' goods are being confiscated by area police without just cause					
Discrimination in employment practices					

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		Issue	Person/- Agency to Assist	Issue	Person/- Agency to Assist
Child Labour					
Regional Development and Governance					
Development plan for the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amalgamate existing plans and develop a comprehensive Regional Development Plan Make budget to support the extension of the development plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parliament to grant enabling legislation for local governance of Region 9 Parliament should enact the necessary legislation to facilitate election of regional officials Funding from the donor community to make the Regional Development Plan a reality 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government must help technically and financially for the amalgamate of the Regional Development plan The Region should be given more autonomy to effectively execute its plans Civic and other organisations should support the election of regional public officers directly Government should recognize District Toshaos Council The Regional Administrative Authority should forward issues to the National Administrative authority 	
GWI imposes its own agenda on Amerindian communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All communities and districts must be involved in the consultation process 				
Religious sects have entered the community without approval from the council					
Lack of training workshops on community development					
There is no District Development Officer					
Amerindian Issues and Inclusion					
Representation on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nominate an indigenous representative on 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government must support our request 	

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the ERC	the ERC			for a representative on the ERC	
Scholarships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage students to take up and related scholarships 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholarships for Amerindians students 	
Other issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local radio station on social issues that affect Amerindian people and others Lobby for training of social workers Write to International Labour Organisation that Code 169 and other relevant conventions have not been ratified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Assembly to oppose the formation of IPC 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government should recognize District Toshias Council Sub districts should be involved in the consultation process concerning Amerindian affairs Religious sects should seek the approval of the Council before entering villages Establish IPC/ERC lobbies to get government to ratify ILO 169 	Government and Conservation International
Land issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land areas of Amerindians should be recognized – not only the occupied lands Formation of a Land Issue Committee which will address land for fishing and hunting Treat and recognize lands as our own land A civil committee to monitor and distribute land equitably Cross border issues to be resolved through community discussion 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amerindians should be recognized as owners of ancestral lands Non residents should not enter Amerindian community without permission Amerindian should have right to minerals and waterways 	
Capacity of Amerindians not developed when projects are held in the area					
Lack of respect towards Amerindian Women		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women to be educated on issues of women's rights 			
Business persons within community do not respect village					

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		Issue	Person/- Agency to Assist	Issue	Person/- Agency to Assist
leaders					
Loss of Amerindian Traditions					
Law and Order					
Improving the quality of policing	Community police initiative	Utilise Informants		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a Border Police Patrol • Proper salaries and better working conditions for the police • Police should use informants 	
No police action on cattle rustling				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and support local policing groups to stop rustling 	
Lack of Legal Advisors on legal matters				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region 9 should budget for legal advice on issues affecting Amerindians 	
Illegal drugs passing through the community and entering the school system					