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## **Building Resilience and Sustainable Livelihood: Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Management/Disaster Risk Reduction into the Agriculture Sector in Guyana**

### *Minutes* **Second Steering Committee Meeting**

September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

ADRM- Agriculture Disaster Risk Management

CDC-Civil Defence Commission

CIMH – Caribbean Institution of Meteorological & Hydrology

DRM- Disaster Risk Management

DRR-Disaster Risk Reduction

EPA-Environmental Protection Agency

FAO-Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

GLDA-Guyana Livestock Development Authority

GMC-Guyana Marketing Corporation

GMSA-Guyana Manufacturing and Services Association

GoG-Government of Guyana

GRCS-Guyana Red Cross Society

GRDB-Guyana Rice Development Board

GSA-Guyana School of Agriculture

IICA-Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture

MoA-Ministry of Agriculture

MoC-Ministry of Communities

NAREI-National Agriculture Research and Extension Institute

NDIA-National Drainage and Irrigation Authority

PoA-Partners of the Americas

PTCCB-Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board

UGCCS-University of Guyana Centre for Communication Studies

UNDP-United Nations Development Programme

## Participation

1. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, CDC, Ministry of Finance, other line Ministries, UN Agencies and Development Partners, as well as stakeholders within the agriculture sector in Guyana. The list of participants is found on a separate sheet.

## **OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP**

2. Chaired by Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP, Ms. Shabnam Mallick, the meeting of the steering committee commenced with welcome remarks by Ms. Mallick who thanked participants for their presence while reinforcing the critical nature of their involvement to the progress of the project. As a preamble to the meeting, the Deputy Resident Representative encouraged participants to review the minutes of the Steering Committee meeting to better inform questions and comments during the morning session.
3. Reporting on the key outcomes of the Inception Workshop held in June 2016 that included the involvement of fisherfolk in project deliberations, Programme Analyst, UNDP, Ms. Chika Ohashi informed the steering committee that UNDP was in the process of identifying locations most appropriate and reflective of farming representatives to finalize their participation as observers. The meeting concurred with this general direction.
4. With respect to the platform and availability of the minutes of the first meeting of the Steering Committee post July 2016, to enable ample review, Ms. Ohashi explained that these were posted on the UNDP website. She used the opportunity to illustrate navigational tools to accessing the digital copy of the minutes. FAO Assistant Representative, Ms. Angela Alleyne, clarified that the minutes were posted after being shared and endorsed electronically by the board members.

## **4. PRESENTATIONS**

5. The two (2) presentations delivered at the meeting in keeping with the objectives were (i) Project Activities Progression Update as of July, 2016 and (ii) Disbursement of the project budget.

6. Assistant FAO Representative, FAO, Ms. Angela Alleyne, presented the Project Activities Progression Update as of July, 2016 based on the last board meeting. It was established that a regional consultant was contracted to undertake the activities of *output 1.1* of the project work plan, including assessment of the implementation of the DRM plan for the agriculture sector which was developed in 2013. The consultant visited Guyana during the first week in September and met with key stakeholders over four days to gather information on the institutional arrangements and the current gaps and challenges of implementing the DRM plan. The preliminary findings of the consultant's assessment were subsequently revealed at a stakeholder's workshop to which most of the stakeholders were invited on September 9, 2016. A draft mission report and a report on the assessment were also submitted by the consultant. However, the assessment report is currently being reviewed by the technical officer in Rome with feedback anticipated soon, following which it will be dispatched to the Ministry of Agriculture for consideration before being circulated among the wider board membership.
7. Ms. Alleyne also pointed out that a second mission is expected in November to conduct training as one of the key recommendations emanating from the assessment report. She reiterated that the succession of mainstreaming of the DRM in the sector relies on the re-establishment of the ADRM Committee thus the members of that committee will be trained.
8. It was also established that the implementation of activities should occur during Agriculture month in October. However, the FAO representative stated that the calendar of activities for Agriculture month largely reflects ministry and departmental activities. This has caused the planned implementation activities for October to be postponed, but work will continue in November as a field assessment is planned to determine which communities or farmers will be included in project activities. The community for the pilot site is expected to be determined in November, along with LEGS training of the extension staff and farmers in DRM for the livestock sector.
9. On the other aspects of the project, Ms. Ohashi noted the difficulty associated with identifying consultants with meteorological expertise. She stated that further to the discussion with the Head of the Hydromet, collaboration with CIMH in Barbados will be sought through the Hydromet's official request. Moreover, CIMH has been working closely with the agency given that Guyana is one of their member countries. An expert from CIMH is expected to agree and commence the consultancy work in January 2017.

10. October 2016 has been earmarked as the timeline for the development of the communication strategy to undergird the ADRM project. Several communication products have already been developed to advocate for the project. These include a brochure which is aimed at the technical officers among the agencies under MoA. A draft poster will be sent to each member to comment for further deliberation.
11. In elaborating on the findings from the assessment report, Ms. Alleyne isolated, among them, the appointment of the DRM focal point for the Ministry of Agriculture, the establishment of the ADRM committee and the establishment of a D-group for the sharing of information since information about DRM initiative is usually learnt at workshops or stakeholder meetings. There are currently two (2) sets of communication for workshops from ICCA – risk mapping workshop – and the Office of the President – technology needs assessment which relates to *output 2.2* which UNDP is responsible for. Two (2) weeks prior, the regional office indicated their interest in completing several upscaling tasks with respect to good practices for DRM tools and practices within the sector.
12. Ms. Alleyne indicated the need to have mapping of events to highlight synergies and eliminate duplication of efforts; this initiation was also highlighted in the assessment report since this would also help to minimize the use of funds. Ms. Alleyne also indicated that the PowerPoint presentation used by the consultant would be shared with each member prior to the close of business today. She also stressed the need for a gender assessment before the implementation of the project.
13. In an effort to address the latter concern, a joint skype meeting has been earmarked for October 23, 2016 involving gender experts from UNDP regional office with the aim of developing a gender strategy of the project. Additionally, Ms. Ohashi stated that collaborations will occur with the FAO's regional office to develop the strategies for this project. Each UN agency will also be ensuring the trainings will be conducted through gender lens.

### **Project Delivery**

14. Under the project budget, US \$85,883 remains undisbursed with spending accounting for US \$16,500, representing about 20% of the total UNDP budget. Ms Ohashi explained that project

consultancies which were not yet finalized will further account for monies expended thereby providing a more realistic reflection of disbursements. This will be shared at the next meeting of the Steering Committee.

15. Meanwhile, the UN FAO Assistant Representative reported that the budget disbursement for the FAO was conducted at the headquarters level from where it is being managed. However, she noted the slight tardiness of the first disbursement of over US \$69,000 thereby causing a delay in activities that commenced in February. This is likely to cause a surplus for the 2016 budget since only the *output 1.1* was implemented.

**During the general discussion, the following points were highlighted:**

16. It was established that the farmers will be consulted on various aspects of the project. The identification of an organization to conduct gender assessment activities was also highlighted as an imperative that required timely action. The value of collaboration was again emphasized as a cost saving measure, in addition to the sharing of the calendar of events at meetings to enlist support.

**Questions, Comments and Discussions on the Presentations**

17. Training Assistant, CDC, Allana Alleyne invited the other Steering Committee members to International Day of Disaster Risk Reduction scheduled by CDC for October 13, 2016. The invitation was supported by many members as each endorsed collaborative efforts. An upcoming National Risk Management Platform meeting, scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup> September and previously chaired by CDC was also noted. It is currently chaired by Minister of State who is the minister responsible for DRM. Many of the organisations involved in DRM do attend this meeting.

**Inter-sectoral collaboration**

18. It was widely agreed that collaborations within organisations is essential to eliminate duplication and to make the project a success. Ms. Alleyne stated that Office of Climate Change collected substantial information on climate change and disaster risk reduction where initiatives and projects were outlined. She noted too that this information should be used to identify overlaps.

19. Training Assistant, CDC, Allana Alleyne indicated that the CDC holds the mandate for the local coordinating for DRM but there are other organisations that participate in DRM activities. For example, during this meeting two sets of communication were identified – for a workshop and promotional event – to be hosted by IICA and the Office of the President respectively; activities such as these are not coordinated by CDC. Ms. Alleyne also highlighted that the Minister of State is the responsible point person for the CDC.
20. Disaster Risk Management Focal Point, Ministry of Agriculture, Dr Jean David, expressed disappointment with the Ministry of Agriculture in the initial approach to the ADRM Plan, but said she anticipated a chance for the MoA to redeem itself as the project advances. Dr David bemoaned the lost ADRM Plan in the ministry at which point it was determined that the plan will be uploaded electronically to the UNDP project website. In restating the sector’s support of the project, the MoA official highlighted the Finance Minister’s budget speech which expressed commitment to its implementation and strengthening of the ADRM Plan by putting forward a set of practical action plans that are linked to measurable targets to achieve five F’s: food security, fiber and nutritious food, fuel production, fashion and health products, and furniture and craft.

#### **Public Awareness under Output 4.1**

21. According to Ms. Mallick the language of the information for planned public awareness has to be suitable and culturally sensitive to reach the publics for which the messages are intended and gain their support since most of the project’s target will be farmers.

#### **Summary**

22. In summary, the major points of convergence included the fact that participants:
- AGREED that the consultant’s report be shared and reviewed by the Steering Committee after FAO’s Technical Officer reviews it;
  - AGREED that member/s should attend the National Risk Management Platform meeting scheduled for September 29<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 am at CDC;
  - AGREED on a meeting to be scheduled for the Minister of Agriculture to meet with stakeholders to establish how the DRM plan should be implemented;

- AGREED that CDC will be contacted to centralize information and how to develop coordinated system;
- CALLED for increased collaboration amid organisations that are hosting DRM related activities;
- ACKNOWLEDGED the need to assess what communication already exists and how other organisations are utilising information channels and products;
- ACKNOWLEDGED the importance of Public Awareness to capture target groups and how this project will impact their lives;
- AFFIRMED establishment communication strategy that is gender-sensitive.
- NOTED two TORs of the consultancies on Community-Based EWS and the Baseline Needs Assessment have been merged and procured an international consultant; AND
- NOTED that the 2017 work plan will be developed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in November along with the 2017 budget which will be reviewed and endorsed by the Project Steering Committee by mid-February 2017.

## **5. Next Steps/the Way Forward**

23. In an effort to ensure that the committee functions effectively through a coordinated approach, the UNDP has undertaken to have a presence at the meeting scheduled for September 29 to clarify the performance and management of the existing ADRM Committee, followed by a letter to the Minister of State restating the need for added synchronization and to initiate the beginning of coordination. The key findings of the consultant's report will be distributed thereafter to each member.

## **6. Closing Remarks**

24. In offering final comments, each member of the Steering Committee endorsed the idea of enhancing future collaborations expressed willingness to cooperate, while others expressed gratitude for being part of the impactful project.
- ❖ Research Scientist, NARI, R. Chandranauth welcomed the DRM initiative and the opportunity to participate in this project.



- ❖ Training Assistant, CDC, Allana Walters explained that there's the need to close and strengthen the gaps which prevents smooth coordination but she is very grateful for the opening to have some input into this project.
- ❖ Fisheries Officer, Fisheries Department, Seion Richardson expressed gratitude to UNDP for undertaking such a project and he also commended Ms. Ohashi and Ms. Alleyne on their efforts to develop this project.
- ❖ Fisheries Officer, Fisheries Department, Nakita Dookie fully endorsed Mr. Richardson's statement.
- ❖ Lecturer/Farm Manger, GSA, Osbert Nurse stated he is pleased that GSA should be benefiting from this project.
- ❖ Agriculture Diversification Specialist, MoA, Dr. Jean David said she is elated about this project and is willing to assist as much as she's permitted to.
- ❖ Chief Executive Officer (CEO), NDIA, Fredrick Flatts said his organisation helps with avoiding disasters and he is willing to clarify any further information. Mr. Flatts also extended seasoned greetings to each member present.
- ❖ Technical Coordinator, Office of Climate Change, Shereede Yusuf applauded both Ms. Ohashi and Ms. Alleyne on their efforts spent to put the presentations together.
- ❖ Volunteer, Guyana Red Cross, Cromwell Crawford mentioned that this project is essential therefore better synchronization and collaborations are also paramount.
- ❖ Economic and Financial Analyst, MoF, Aubrey Johnson welcomed all efforts made to push this project forward. Mr. Johnson expressed his joy in seeing the potential of this project but he professed networking is very important to the project.
- ❖ Department Head, MoF, Donna Levi stated her interest in seeing this project become a success.
- ❖ Project Manager, Partners of the Americas, Kelvin Craig stated his willingness to assist with some aspects of the project.

- ❖ Marketing Manager, Guyana Marketing Cooperation, Richard Hanif expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to contribute to this project.
- ❖ Field Technician, IICA, Jermaine Joseph indicated his readiness to participate in the project.
- ❖ Extension Manager, GRDB, Mr. Kuldip Ragnaugh recommended that the MoA engages a consultant to manage problem solving enquires, while stating his eagerness to see the growth of this project.

Programme Analyst, UNDP, Chika Ohashi stated a lot was said prior, however, she is appreciative to all present. Assistant FAO Representative, FAO, Angela Alleyne endorsed Ms. Ohashi's statement.

Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP, Shabnam Mallick concluded by revisiting the crucial points arising from this meeting. Ms. Mallick also expressed her gratitude to each member for attending and participating.