Ayanna Williams

Report on UNDP’s Meeting with the CRAC

January 2016

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# List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CCT - Caribbean Court of Justice

CRAC - Constitution Reform Advisory Committee

CSOs - Civil Society Organisations

GNOW - Grenada National Organisation of Women

IAGDO - Inter Agency Group of Development Organisations

M and E - Monitoring and Evaluation

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

NNP - New National Party

OECS – Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States

QC - Queen’s Counsel

SADO - St. Andrew’s Development Organisation

SOE - Supervisor of Elections

SRO - Sub-Regional Office

TAMCC - T. A. Marryshow Community College

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

**PROJECT: SUPPORT TO REFERENDUM ON**

**CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM IN GRENADA**

**Meeting of the Constitution Reform Advisory Committee and the UNDP**

**Location: The Greenery Room, Radisson Beach Resort**

**January 14, 2016**

**2:30 p.m. – 5:01 p.m.**

# Agenda Items

* Call to Order
* Prayer
* Introductions
* Welcome – Chairman of the CRAC
* Briefing by the UNDP
* Remarks from the Chairman of the CRAC
* Discussion on the Civil Society Education and Public Education
* Any Other Business
* Vote of Thanks
* Closing Prayer

# Participants

* Mr. Stephen O’Malley, Resident Representative UNDP SRO for Barbados & the OECS
* Ms. Juliette Maughan, Project Consultant, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
* Ms. Fernanda Lopes,  Electoral Cycle Support Programme Specialist, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
* Dr. Francis Alexis QC, Chairman, Constitution Reform Advisory Committee (CRAC)
* Mr. Robert Branch, Coordinator, Constitution Reform Advisory Committee (CRAC)
* Ms. Sandra Ferguson, Representative, Inter Agency Group of Development Organisations
* Senator the Honourable Simon Stiell, Representative, the New National Party (NNP)
* Mr. Alex Phillip, Supervisor of Elections
* Mr. Ferdinand Phillip, Voter Registration Officer
* Mrs. Kindra Mathurine Stewart, Representative of the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique
* Pastor Alfred Horsford, Representative, the Association of Evangelical Churches

# Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:06 p.m. by Dr. Francis Alexis, QC, Chairman who then invited Pastor Alfred Horsford to lead the prayer.

# Prayer

The prayer was led by Pastor Alfred Horsford.

# Introductions

The Chairman invited the members who were present to introduce themselves. Introductions were made by the following persons: Senator the Honourable Simon Steill, Mr. Alex Phillip, Mr. Ferdinand Phillip, Pastor Alfred Horsford, Ms. Ayanna Williams (rapporteur), Ms. Juliette Maughan and Mr. Stephen O’Malley.

# Welcome

The Chairman extended a special welcome to the representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and he thanked them for their wisdom, experience and for their material assistance. Dr. Alexis further informed the meeting that last month there was the reading of six (6) constitutional bills. He expressed hope that the UNDP would see them through the end.

# Briefing by the UNDP

Mr. Stephen O’Malley, Resident Representative UNDP Sub Regional Office (SRO) for Barbados and the OECS reported that this morning they had held a first meeting of the Project Board and the objective was to review the project documents and the workplan. He advised that they had agreed to the activities of the plan and would have to look at the budget to address the priorities that were identified in the meeting. Also, there was the need to look at the modality for funding the civil societies and in general they were able to advance the understanding of this project and have a broader understanding of some of the issues in the constitutional reform process.

# Remarks from the Chairman of the CRAC

Dr. Francis Alexis stated that the word transparency took up a lot of the focus in the session this morning and it would be looked at going forward. He also advised the meeting that the Committee took the process to first reading of six (6) bills in the House which occurred on December 4, 2015. Never before did the Country have a reading of constitutional reform bills and advised that they were talking about reform since 1985. He placed on record their gratitude to UNDP for helping them to attain that milestone. He noted that this was a matter of history. He shared that the next step was to educate people on the bills and themselves on the process of the road to referendum.

He said that in the last week he had called Mr. Branch to accompany him to the Electoral Office to speak to the staff on what the electoral question might look like. That visit generated all that was going on at the table today. Both of them sitting in different rooms perceived the need to have a conversation with that staff to talk about the constitutional question, what was a ballot paper and what did it look like. He said that there was much discussion on what would be the question. He conceded that they did not have all of the answers and that was the harsh reality. He made it clear that no one on the planet had all the answers. Thus, sharing was helping them to build their confidence and their vision on what to do with the referendum bill and the referendum regulations. At the same time, they needed to discuss with the people and determine what was satisfactory to all of them.

The Chairman of the CRAC indicated that the next step was to firm up the National Civic Education Plan. He said that there was no point in trying to do it by themselves in the Committee. He made it known that they were hunting for a Communication Strategist with the know how to help them chart the way forward. He then explained that Mr. Branch had indicated that by the first day of next month they would have that person in place. He expressed that it was gratifying to see how many applications were already coming in and once that person took his or her seat they would be in a better place to reach out to the people. He identified Mr. Ruggles Ferguson as a key person who was not at the meeting today. He explained that Mr. Ferguson was responsible for leading the exercises on the west coast, that he himself led on the east coast and that Mr. Branch was responsible for meeting with the interest groups. He shared that they had a media launch and appearances on radio stations. They had attempted to go on the television on the first Monday of the year, but the feedback from persons in the media was that it was too early for that and that they wanted to catch their breath first. They were advised that they would accommodate them in the next week and therefore, on Tuesday morning accompanied by Mr. Ferguson he went on a certain programme. He also stated that he had done some other television appearances. So they had literally been on the road from day one of the year, except for when the media advised that it was too early.

# Discussion on the Civil Society Education and Public Education

Please find below a summary of the thematic areas of the discussion:

## Civil Society Organisation Education

It was established that the CRAC would be responsible for the civic education and public education components and that there would be support around the grant modality to back the process that was envisioned.

It was stated that the manner in which the CRAC went forward with the National Civic Education Plan should be complementary to the UNDP project on constitutional reform. It was specified that the CRAC was responsible for public education on the bills and that the UNDP support project would help with what would be done by the CRAC.

The meeting was advised that in the upcoming week there would be two (2) three (3) day workshops with one being from Monday to Wednesday and the other from Thursday to Saturday. Those workshops would brief the civil societies. On the final day of workshop they would try to develop the modalities on the civil education. It was further stated that the CRAC would work with the civil society groups in each parish. Large meetings would be a start and they would try to carry them on radio and live television.

A point was raised that the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique were concerned about the changing of the name of the country and that it was difficult to envision that a civil society group from Grenada would make representations to UNDP for a grant on that specific issue. In addressing this concern, a representative of the UNDP informed the meeting that the CSOs should disseminate information on all of the bills and not just on a specific bill. The representative of Carriacou and Petite Martinique stated that she wanted to ensure that there would be a balance, given that there was no recognized civil society group in Carriacou that could present a development programme to UNDP. She further stated that she was looking at the Grenadians and the persons here and their take on that particular issue. She elaborated by stating that on this particular issue it was really one of Carriacou and Petite Martinique versus Grenada. She expressed that the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique felt very strongly about this particular issue and that it was unfortunate that this sentiment had not registered in Grenada.

A UNDP representative explained that the UNDP was not seeking proposals on any specific bills and reiterated that the idea was that any participating organisation would be disseminating information on all of the bills and not on any specific bill. Further to this, she added that if there were aspects that were more in the interest of one particular group of persons than another, that same could be discussed and elaborated on. However, she reiterated that the information should be provided on all of the bills and explained that this was why consistency on the tools that would be used was important in the understanding of all of the issues. She made it clear that they could not favour proposals that would go in one direction or another or which favoured one position over another. She noted that they could look at the general allocation of the grants to ensure that the country was covered and the population was reached by different geographical divisions.

Another UNDP representative expressed understanding of the position advanced by the representative of Carriacou and Petite Martinique and shared that the bill might be seen as a concern only to a minority population and it may not even be considered, given that some civil society groups have questioned why this bill was there. The response provided to this issue was that everybody should be able to answer that and it was emphasized that this was why the information coming from the CRAC should be more official and should explain why all of the bills were there and their implications.

There was a request for a definition of civil society organisation and whether it could be defined in such a way to make allowance for Carriacou and Petite Martinique. The Maroon Committee and the Carnival Committee were put forward as two (2) organisations in Carriacou. The representative of Carriacou and Petite Martinique clarified that there was a Festivals Board which was a corporation. In responding to the request for definition, a UNDP representative stated that the organisation must have registration.

A civil society representative on the CRAC replied to the issue raised by the representative of Carriacou and Petite Martinique by stating that she was concerned by the statements made and the implications of same. She acknowledged that the IAGDO knew of the sense of exclusion that they have felt, but the way that the representative had presented this situation was of concern as it was not only relevant to Carriacou, but to the state of Grenada. She further expressed that Carriacou was of the opinion that its concern would be remedied through ensuring that its name was included as part of the state. She went on to say that the entire population including Carriacou, had to appreciate what were the implications for the change of the name of the state to the public islands of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. She underscored this point by stating that this was not only a decision for the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique because it concerned all persons within the state of Grenada.

The Carriacou and Petite Martinique representative replied that this emphasized the problem that the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique were having. They were of the belief that this was a very touching position for most persons. She further stated that these types of sentiments and feelings that it affected the general Grenadian populace and the implication that it would have to the Grenadian public and not the reverse, of the implication that it was going to have to the Carriacouan or Kayak public has been the problem. She noted that persons were very vocal on it. With respect to Grenadians, she expressed that this was neither something that was dear to them nor one in which they saw value and that this was the type of problem that they were having. Consequently, it was no longer a Carriacou issue and had become a wider Grenadian issue and was about the implications to Grenadians.

The representative of the New National Party contributed to the discussion by stating that each of the bills would impact a particular interest group. He provided as example, that the local legal fraternity were very vocal on the issue of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) and the Privy Council though the bill would have national impact. He continued to state that as an interest group they would have had closer association with that one (1) issue. Likewise the renaming of the state resonated with the people of Carriacou and Petite Martinique, but the issue also would have a national impact. Thus, he felt that they should not say that they had a national issue that was being driven by a singular voice. He further expressed agreement with the representative of Carriacou and Petite Martinique that with respect to CSO representation on this issue that Carriacou and Petite Martinique be properly served. He stated that this would come down to the criteria to be used within the selection process, the definitions for organisations and ensuring that across the board they had fair representation on all matters. The NNP representative then asked if there was a deficiency or limited capacity in one area from one stakeholder group should they ignore it or move forward if they were able to get another interest group who was able to speak on that behalf, whether supportive or unsupportive. He concluded by reiterating that they needed to ensure that there was fairness across the board on all issues.

The Chairman of the CRAC told the meeting that sameness did not always mean fairness across issues. He expounded by stating that if they applied the same criteria to the sister islands of Carriacou and Petite Martinique in terms of requiring that there be a registered CSO there, that would not be fair to them and would not be treating them as equal. He continued to state that as a matter of fact they would be perpetuating the same lack of sisterhood and brotherhood about which they were complaining, because they would be applying to them criteria which were guaranteed to perpetuate a lack of equality. He took the opportunity to request that the UNDP finds a way to recognize that in Carriacou and Petite Martinique there were no CSOs to apply for funding in the way that they had them on Grenada. He ended by stating that he thought that was the best that they could do now and they would leave it to UNDP to see what it could do about it.

The first response from the UNDP representatives on this request was that they would look at some of the logistics and work out a small questionnaire and some of the things that they needed to include and determine what the capacity was during the training. The second response was that based on experience the UNDP had a list of criteria and rules that needed to be followed, however, they could not forget that the national context was also important and they had to be flexible enough to accommodate some times to certain exemptions, if they were discussed and agreed to among all the interlocutors who were part of the decision making process. This representative of the UNDP advised that she was in Tunisia when the so called revolution happened and suddenly from one day to the other there were 16,000 CSOs registered in the country with some consisting of only two (2) persons. This presented all sorts of challenges, but they needed to understand the context of the country. Thus, there would be certain flexibility when looking at these aspects, but that would be discussed amongst the group that would be part of that decision.

The Resident Representative of the UNDP Sub Regional Office (SRO) for Barbados and the OECS responded that if this was the way that they wished to go it would require a separate conversation between UNDP and the Festival Board or whichever entity to ensure that the understanding was very clear. He elaborated by stating that the reason why they had specific qualifications such as a CSO being a registered entity was as a risk mitigation method. Therefore, they would apply a different set of risk mitigation methods to take account of the specific context and they could talk through them in a sensible way.

The representative of the IADGO expressed that in a sense she felt misunderstood and what she saw occurring was a division between Carriacou and the persons on the mainland, however, she refused to delve further into this point. She acknowledged that there was a challenge with CSOs and provided as example, that they had been trying for a number of years to engage the non-state actors’ panel there. The representative went on to qualify and to repeat her point that there was the need to understand implications not only for Grenada as the mainland, but for all the citizens of the state which also included those on Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

## CSO Civic Education Training Workshop on Constitutional Reform – The Role of Constitutional Reform Advisory Committee

Ms. Maughan was charged with leading on the discussion of the Civic Education Training Workshop on Constitutional Reform and the Role of the CRAC. She reminded the meeting that as mentioned earlier there would be two (2) three (3) day sessions with the first being from Monday to Wednesday and the other from Thursday to Saturday. The purpose of the training was to familiarize the CSOs some of whom did not participate in the December training and others who would have wanted something more in-depth. Therein they would simplify the opportunity to craft messages, to understand the basics and the foundations around civic education, to understand the constitution a bit more in a broken down form, to understand the constitutional reform process and the amendment bills.

She explained that on the first day there would be a presentation of the process and then there would be presentations on the international standards on elections and more than likely they would be speaking on referendum and what that meant, the constitution and constitution building. With regard to that agenda item they were interested in hearing how the CRAC would like to shape some of these sessions for example, the constitutional reform process, in a very constructive way. She noted that this would follow the presentation on the constitution and the constitutional building exercise. Also, she said that she had discussed this with Ms. Fernanda Lopes with regards to putting same on the last day of the workshop when everyone would have had the opportunity to understand civic education, processes and examples. Ms. Maughan further expressed that they thought it was important to have a discussion about what constitution reform exercise looked like in Grenada.

With respect to the second day of training she would ask Ms. Fernanda Lopes to break down this day based on the Bridge Methodology. They would discuss the following topics: civic education, the terminologies, the concepts, the principles of civic education, different steps, building campaigns, targets and articulating those, techniques of communication, some of the tools that could be used and the development of key messages. The approach was described as very participatory and that it would be almost led by the participants.

She explained that the final day was exactly what they had discussed today. Ms. Maughan said that it would be interesting to hear whether they felt comfortable talking about it or whether they could provide space for voter education and the Supervisor of Elections. She identified this as another area that they would be open to discussing in terms of the contribution of the CRAC. In the afternoon session they would be talking about the project and the grant modality and those types of things. She invited feedback from the meeting on what she had shared and on how they saw the CRAC contributing within these sessions.

The Chairman of the CRAC was the first to offer feedback on what Ms. Maughan presented. In doing so he said that perhaps more thought should be given to the referendum bills and the referendum process and that they should not be cramped into one (1) day, but spread over the days. He provided as example that there were six (6) bills that would be compressed into two (2) hours. He recommended that two (2) bills be presented per day for the specific purpose of being more detailed in the process and to keep throughout the seminar these bills as the focus. He suggested that every day they should be discussing the bills and the referendum process. He remarked that he was not seeing where the Supervisor of Elections and his team would be allowed to talk to participants about the role of the Electoral Office in designing the ballot paper with specific reference to the use of symbols. He acknowledged that the UNDP had its own mission and vision, but expressed that he thought that the central thrust of the seminar would have been focusing on the bills and the ballot paper.

In response Ms. Maughan said that considering the discussions that they had, they needed to make some space for Mr. Phillip to bring his experience on voter education, the considerations, the difficulties and the challenges of organizing voting along referendum to start to prepare the minds of people to potentials of what the ballots could look like in the interim. She then asked Mr. Phillip if he would be open to doing a session and how much time he required. The Supervisor of Elections proceeded to explain that Mr. Ferdinand Phillip would attend the three (3) days and he was exposed and on the second day they would have other persons who were experienced. He further commented that he was sure that they could have interactions, would be sharing and the participants would be aware of the challenges that they face and on their proposal on how they intended to present the ballot and listen to suggestions and so forth. He continued to state that if would have been nice to have PowerPoint and also if their plans were finalized so they could have presented and say that this was it. However, in the absence of that they could say what they were proposing based on the information that they had. He cautioned that they wanted to be guarded because they did not want persons to go out and say that this was what the Supervisor of Elections said the ballot was going to look like and then the design changed down the line. He expressed that they would be cautious as they went forward, but they would share.

Ms. Lopes expressed support for the idea espoused by Dr. Alexis and she expounded by suggesting that they could reformulate the agenda to allow for the presentation of two (2) bills per day with each bill being allotted 1.5 hours. This would provide persons with the opportunity to focus on that aspect and thereafter there could be a practical session with groups that could start working on producing sample materials and tools that could translate that discussion in some format that would be simple to the public. If more time was needed to discuss the bills they could reduce the time for other sessions. This would give the opportunity for everybody to clearly understand and expose their concerns.

The Chairman of the CRAC expressed that the suggestion advanced by Ms. Lopes would be very helpful. He then asked if they could have a session called Referendum Day where they could have a dummy ballot with dummy questions and the groups could look at variations on the theme What is a Workable Ballot Paper? Ms. Lopes responded by stating that they could have such a practical session on the design of the ballot paper and that they could prepare it together. Additionally, she recommended that the Supervisor of Elections could lead that exercise. The Supervisor of Elections stated that they would grasp that opportunity.

The Chairman of the CRAC then asked the meeting what they expected to gain from these two (2) three (3) days workshops. Ms. Maughan responded by stating that she expected that the CSOs would be more comfortable to discuss the constitution, constitution reform, referendum and what they will be voting on and then be able to create messages and have the communication tools and strategies to impart that knowledge in a way that people could receive it. The Chairman stated that from where he sat it was about what they were voting on. Ms. Maughan explained that in the training last year it was very evident that the attendees’ interest was piqued on the constitutional reform process. While they expressed interest in the process, they did not feel confident enough to explain it to others. Thus, they wanted to use a methodology that could inspire participants and at the same time have them engaged in creating the messages. Therefore, by trying to come up with the ballot papers and these things they would be able to understand what goes into the process, what it would look like and its complexities. Thus, they were hoping that when the evaluation was done at the end of the three (3) days that the participants would say that they feel a lot more confident to speak on the issues on the radio, television and in their communities.

The Chairman of the CRAC further stated that he understood the concern expressed by the Supervisor of Elections that he does not want to go there and say that this is the form of the ballot paper. The Chairman then asked for samples of ballot paper from the Bahamas, Scotland and Thailand to be provided as useful examples. Ms. Lopes agreed to provide same. The Chairman later qualified that the requested samples should be those specifically on constitutional referendum. He added that there were a lot in the Bahamas which had the bills with the ballot paper at the end of them. However, he felt that they shouldn’t want the ballot paper at the end. Instead, they should want to ask the voter if he or she agreed with this bill a copy of which was attached and to explain what the gist of same was.

Ms. Lopes took the opportunity to add that she did not think that this training was enough by itself. She admitted that it was organized in the moment when they thought it was important to initiate something and further stated that they would focus on methodology and techniques of communication. However, once they went through the process of allocation of the funds to the organisations, there would be need for another training with those organisations that they would actually work with to ensure more participation with two (2) or three (3) persons representing each organisation. She went on to state that this would just be Phase One as she didn’t think that they would exhaust everything there.

Ms. Maughan advised Ms. Lopes that at the Project Board meeting they did discuss a lot around the allocation of resources and everyone was very much on board around the activities and the priority areas, however, another workshop would require additional resources or reclassification. Ms. Lopes then inquired if the UNDP had already granted modality and whether the criteria were already established. Ms. Maughan indicated that they were not. In response Ms. Lopes stated that this was why she though that once the organisations were granted a certain amount they would need to be guided on the UNDP requirements on reporting and how to conduct these things. She then suggested that in the meantime they could assist in producing material that was informative about the bills in a format like postcards, one per bill that would speak to the implications of the decisions of voting yes or no on the question. She reckoned that this could be used to disseminate the information and they could use this training to work to advance on that.

Ms. Maughan then stated that they needed a realistic review of what was going on because just as how they had discussed the ballot paper and developing that was an area of priority, the Project Board said that there should be some resources, therefore, there needed to be a critical look at what it was going to look like.

Ms. Lopes then replied that the training did not have to be another three (3) day workshop. It could be a meeting with everybody where they could look at the format. She further stated that she did not want to give the impression that the UNDP did a training that was not very complete or comprehensive and then provided monies and that was it. She expounded by stating that what she really wanted was for them to be there to facilitate working together and to provide all the tools and resources that people needed.

Various details of the workshop were provided as follows: It would be held at the Main Conference Room, Grenada National Stadium, a projector would be provided, there would be a site visit of the venue tomorrow, thirty (30) participants were anticipated, there would be the presence of the employee responsible for civic education from the Office of the Supervisor of Elections, CRAC members could attend to observe the proceedings, impartiality was an aim of the training and they did not want the appearance of political influence, the UNDP did not publicize that it was having these seminars and it had directly invited the CSOs.

The question was posed on whether the UNDP was not interested in the public knowing about the outcomes. Another question from the Chairman of the CRAC was how he should respond if he was asked whether the UNDP was involved in organizing seminars on constitution reforms. Ms. Maughan answered by stating that they had invited sixty (60) organisations and that they were engaged in building capacity of civil organisations to develop education. Ms. Lopes sought to qualify the response provided by Ms. Maughan by stating that there was involvement and it was not an individual initiative of the UNDP and that it was a close dialogue with the people responsible for the process. Yes, we can be considered a partner or facilitator, but not in the sense on its own initiative nor taking over on something that is a national issue. If at some point the presence of the UNDP is not relevant then we can address that.

Ms. Lopes cautioned that they had to be very careful because she understood in this context that everything was very politicized and though all of the CSOs would end up having a certain orientation, they should be aiming for impartiality and not to have a political influence on what they would be doing. Therefore, she did not want to have the presence of someone who was politically affiliated officially as it would give a bad perception and a wrong perception if someone wanted to use that. Thus, she would be careful about that. The Chairman of the CRAC clarified that his particular interest was with the members of the Committee and if they wanted to be there. Ms. Lopes answered by stating that the Committee was the official body and the members could be there, but not as representatives of a political party. She also stated that there should be the presence of the employee from the Office of Elections who was responsible for communications.

Mr. Branch then addressed the Chair by stating that though the Opposition had withdrawn its membership from the CRAC if at this time they indicated that they wanted to attend the training then it was his view that they should be welcomed. Ms. Maughan then interjected by stating that they could observe and for the sake of transparency with the process they could come and sit in to see what information was being shared. Ms. Lopes then expressed her support to observe whatever would be best for the perception of impartiality and neutrality. The Chairman of the CRAC then asked Ms. Lopes if she had ever worked in a small society before. Ms. Lopes advised him that she did not think so. The Chair then replied that he had asked the question because her concern about impartiality and neutrality may need to be tailored to suit their circumstances. Ms. Maughan then shared that she was from a small island where everyone was known to each other and they all had strong views. She then shared that she had observed earlier today where at one point during the lively debate the Senator poured water for the representative of the Opposition. This reminded her that this was exactly how persons were in the Caribbean. She then explained that this was why she had made the reference before that when carrying out their roles they had to be able to craft messages and know how to communicate the pros and cons and devise a system where they were able to communicate knowledge without allowing too much of their personal judgments to leak and cause influence. She noted that this was the reality of where they were.

The Chairman of the CRAC then stated that a person could come from a CSO and violate the requirements. To this remark Mr. Ferdinand Phillip replied that he heard of the intent to invite Mr. John Rullow who was made famous because of the referendum. He then proceeded to inquire if there would be a perception that impartiality was being infringed upon by having Mr. Rullow there since he had the impression that Mr. Rullow was against the constitution referendum. In responding to Mr. Phillip, Ms. Maughan agreed that Mr. Rullow was against constitutional reform. She went on to state that the training was to provide information and was not a consultation of sorts. She said that they were inviting persons who made up civil society and that Mr. Rullow was very much interested in constitutional reform and he could come and share his views. The most important thing was that in the training the participants would start hashing out, airing views and developing messages. She noted that Carriacou and Petite Martinique would have three (3) participants. In the training they would be able to record the views for and against then determine how to create the messages. She advised that it was when they would go out to the public that it would get a bit trickier and concluded by stating that if they could develop those tools then they would something that was educational.

## The National Civic Education Plan

The Chairman of the CRAC advised that within fourteen (14) days of appointing the communication strategist they should be able to deliver the National Civic Education Plan. It would commence with a session in Grenville on January 28, 2016. He advised that in October, 2014 in the southern half they had a national consultation and this time they would have a national education forum.

The Coordinator of the CRAC advised that the CRAC in consultation with the St. Andrew’s Development Organisation would bring other NGOs and the business community which would provide refreshments to help to chair the session. If that session was considered a success then they would like to replicate it in the other parishes. They were expecting to host a similar session on Gouyave on February 11, 2016 and in Carriacou on February 17, 2016. They were currently talking with the development organisations in each parish to have these forums. The agenda was not yet established, but they would be presenting the bills and there would be room to look at a discussion on the voting process. The Chairman of the CRAC was supportive that there was room for that discussion and also stated that the focus should be on the bills and the rod to referendum. He further expressed that he wanted a projector so that he could give a PowerPoint presentation to people on what was a referendum, how they would vote in the referendum and how the votes would be counted. He stated that the UNDP could assist by providing them with a projector.

## Communication Strategist

The CRAC informed the meeting that they were advertising the position of Communication Strategist to get someone who would assist with the crafting of the message and to coordinate the activities going forward. The advertisement was released to the media and was hosted on the CRAC’s website. The deadline for the submission of applications would be January 27, 2016 and interviews were carded for February 1, 2016. The Communication Strategist was expected to be in place by February 1, 2016. The meeting was also informed that the CRAC had not finalized the specific modalities of moving forward, but generally that was how it intended to go forward. It was also noted that once that person took his or her seat they would be in a better place to reach out to people. The CRAC was asked to share the advertisement with the CSOs.

## Engagement with the Chamber of Commerce

The Coordinator of the CRAC reported that he had a great meeting with the Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday, during which the Chamber gave its commitment to soon release a statement of support to the process. The suggestion to issue the statement was made by Senator Christopher De Allie who had also been a judge in some of the competitions held at the T. A. Marryshow Community College (TAMCC) on constitutional reform. Additionally, the Chamber was desirous of having a group of ten (10) persons from the private sector be trained in the public education. These individuals could then go throughout the country and explain the bills. The Chamber advised that they would try to identify persons within the private sector who wanted to be trained. These two (2) initiatives of the Chamber were deemed very significant and it was expressed that should they be effected the process would gain momentum.

## The Role of the CRAC

The Chairman of the CRAC indicated that the CRAC had asked itself internally what its main role in this process was. Whether it was to go out there and ask people to vote for the bills or was it simply to go out there and tell the people what the contents of the bills were. He further stated that at the end of the day each member of the CRAC would have to decide that issue for himself or herself, advised by the constituency group or organisation whom that person represented.

He continued to express that if he were to go to the public and say that there was a bill to establish a Commission to run the elections and if he was asked what he thought about it and he hesitated or smiled then his response would send a message that would be deleterious both to the committee and to the reform process. Therefore, he was prepared to say that in his view the bill was a good idea and that he was asking them to vote for it. He could not see how it could be done otherwise.

He then took the opportunity to share with members who were not present at the meeting held earlier today on the modality for the small grants programme. He proceeded to explain that the applications would go directly to the UNDP where a dossier and comments would be prepared on them and then same would go to the Board for decision making. He explained that the option of the UNDP being responsible for determining which applicants to fund would attract a cost and thus the option was not selected. Additionally, to guard against loss of funds and to reassure civil society and others that the CRAC would not be materially deciding these things all by itself, they went for that middle ground where the UNDP will do a dossier on the project, send its recommendations to the board and then the Board would decide on the awarding of the funding. He noted further that while none of the funds would be going directly to the CRAC which would only see same in passing, the CRAC would get the satisfaction that the public education programme would be funded by the UNDP.

## The Role of Civil Society in the Strategies of the CRAC

The representative of the IADGO was asked if she or her group had any perspective on the role of civic society in national exercises. She answered by stating that they saw their role as one in which they would deliver a message on the amendments and what were their implications. She continued to state that they were concerned about the possibilities of ensuring that things that were not considered in the interest would not go forward in the final vote. The Chairman of the CRAC then asked if the people should be given a vote on these things. In response, the IADGO representative asked the Chairman how much opportunity was he giving them to discuss what may be harmful to the people. She conceded that civil society realised that there were some things that they did not know such as the fundamentals. She noted however, that they did already have some red flags, but she would prefer if they were dealt with after the sessions from the next week where they would understand more from the Chairman’s presentation on the bills.

The representative from the NNP then inquired if the role of civil society in the education process was to highlight the red flags, the concerns and the implications thereof. The IADGO representative stated that it was about educating the public on what the amendments were, what they meant and raising any red flags to say yes this was good let’s endorse it. The representative from the NNP then responded by stating that this was different because what he had heard before when they were talking about balance was the negatives, but surely balance was positive and negative. He added that she had concerned him as she was focusing on the negatives. The IADGO representative then remarked that they could forget about whether it was positive or negative and what were the implications and what did they mean, were they positive or negative. She added that they must focus on the negatives because four (4) positives would not balance out the negatives. The representative then asked the Chairman of the CRAC if he remembered why the people in St. Vincent did not accommodate it. The Chair responded by stating that they did not have separate bills as Grenada. The IADGO representative then stated that they were not saying that there would be four (4) or five (5) questions on one ballot box and that if you wanted ‘x’ then you must also go for ‘z’. She added that they must understand how these things were going to affect them or they would end up in the same situation.

The Chairman of the CRAC then inquired if there could be a question for every single proposal. The representative of the IADGO remarked that she was not the legal one here to answer those questions. The Chairman then inquired from the IADGO representative which item she had a problem with as it may be possible to isolate a particular item. The IADGO responded by stating that this was why they were talking about the red flag and if was possible to have changes.

The representative of Carriacou and Petite Martinique expressed that constitutional reform was a complex issue that required know how. She expressed concern that a group of persons with a misconception on their part could publicize same. She was also concerned with what support was available for guiding the civil society groups in terms of explaining what the amendments meant and how they would be fundamental in changing what existed before. She questioned how they could be assured that the civil society groups were aware of the things that they would be speaking about. A representative of the UNDP advised that this was where the civil society training would come in and also this was the area in which they welcomed the participation of the CRAC and its various members who would be able to communicate in various ways. She highlighted the feedback from the civil society organisations which deemed the language as legislative language and therefore, there was the need to break it down so that it could be understood by a mother, child, housekeeper or farmer. She added that Ms. Fernanda Lopes would be one of the facilitators for the session on the basics of civil education and building democracies. She noted further that the input of the CRAC would be welcomed in a way that would simplify it.

The representative from Carriacou and Petite Martinique continued to press by asking if there was extra support and explained that she was concerned about what could be said by the CSOs that may not necessarily reflect what was happening. The NNP representative then asked if the UNDP would provide the necessary support to CSOs to ensure that they had the right tools and the correct framing of the subject matter to enable them to highlight the negatives, the red flags and the implications of what they were doing. He expressed that based on what he had heard, the provision of this support would be counterproductive to the concern he raised at the beginning of the meeting on the importance of having a balance in all things that they did. Based on what the representative of the IADGO had said there was no balance, but at the end of two (2) statements a slight qualification. He continued to state that he was hearing a position that may well be taken that may not be supportive of the functioning of what it was that they were trying to put in place and he was also hearing of support given to galvanize that position. To him that did not sound balance and fair.

The representative of the IADGO informed the NNP representative that she would like to couch the language in terms of pros and cons and reminded the meeting that red flags were of particular importance and she was not going to apologize, but was going to emphasize it again.

A UNDP representative reminded the meeting that this was about civic society and civic education and that there were different components. She further reminded them that they had spoken about the support for developing civic education tools that could provide for the foundation on the constitution, about what it meant and so forth because these areas were raised by the CSOs and that the public was going to ask the same things. She also stated that there would be other tools that would break down the amendment bills that were read in Parliament because that was also part of the process with civil society organisations. She remarked that it would really come down to the proposals and framework that were being developed. Essentially, it was around the type of educational support that they could provide to allow the citizen to understand the process and to make an informed decision with respect to the vote. The UNDP representative also stated that based on the criteria that they would develop, they would see what would be the best way to monitor that and the types of proposals that they got.

Another UNDP representative added that this was about the process element, including the meaning of the referendum and also about substantive elements like what does bill number one discuss and materials that would allow someone who was giving a presentation or organizing a meeting to be able to explain for example, the bill on the CCJ. The answer to this would be that the CCJ would replace the Privy Council as the Court of last resort. He went on to state that there may be a separate debate by people on whether this replacement of the Privy Council by the CCJ would be a good thing as it was a popular topic in Jamaica and Trinidad for other reasons. Thus, that debate may arise out of a factual presentation on the contents of the bill. People may ask what would be the value of replacing the Privy Council with the CCJ and whether it would cost them more money and would it change the course of justice.

## Timing of the Baseline Study

Concern was raised by the Supervisor of Elections about the timing of the upcoming visit by Mr. Peter Wickham given that the education process was not specified and the question was posed on whether or not the visit could be postponed. This participant also stated that based on what he had heard the CRAC intended to intensify the public education and he expressed that he didn’t know what was expected from Mr. Wickham at his time. He further inquired if Mr. Wickham would evaluate and come back at a later time to determine the impact from the education process.

In response a representative of the UNDP advised that they hoped to get baseline information and that as soon as they got back in touch with Mr. Wickham he could hit the ground running. She further stated that they were hoping that by the second week in February they would have a sense of what the education was and what they needed to focus on.

A representative of the CRAC expressed that there was virtue in what the Supervisor of Elections had said. He then asked if it would not be better for Mr. Wickham to come after the first session in Grenville. He continued to state that if Mr. Wickham came at this time the chances were that around the country some people might say that they did not know too much about the bills. He then qualified his statement by stating that he was referring to the concrete bills that were read in the House.

Ms. Sandra Ferguson stated that, “On a point of order I need to clarify my position right here. I am a member of the Constitution Reform Advisory Committee, I understand the process and the majority goes forward, but I certainly would like to put on my record that I do not share the pride in what we described as that historic moment. I stand in a minority position and I go back to the discussion that we had this morning about bills being inclusive and participatory and all of that. And now here we are at this meeting talking about we haven’t presented the bills to the people yet, so if Wickham comes in now you know, does it make sense right? This is one of the issues that was raised very early about process, because if we followed this and we thought about it, I remember from day one there was also an issue and I don’t wish to go back to rehash, but I think it was necessary for me to clarify about the logistics and mechanics of the referendum process. So I just want to say that for example, one of the recommendations and certainly coming out of the national consultations I think on which I played a role was the issue of recommendations and bills being debated in the public, what are the pros and what are the cons, what are the implications of these amendments, are you better or are you worse off before it goes to Cabinet. If Cabinet has the power and Cabinet reviews, but at least people would have seen what were the implications for them. I have seen the bill for example that puts the Elections and Boundaries Commission and the independence of the office of the Supervisor of Elections cease to exist with that amendment. Now as a member of the public is this a good thing for me? I am saying that we have not had those discussions yet”.

In response to Ms. Ferguson the representative of the NNP stated that the record was clear on the process that was taken with its flaws, strengths and weaknesses. He maintained that there was no perfect system. He reminded the meeting that they had engaged in about fifty (50) consultations. He further stated that they had mass meetings with thousands of people and were on numerous programmes including radio and television. He also said that they could say whether the sky was blue, pink, black or white and they could all take their positions regardless of what was the colour of the sky. He added that with regard to the process which got them to where they were, one could simply state that he or she didn’t agree and that the process was flawed and not enough. He noted that it should be the Chairman and not himself to defend this process. However, they had all sat around the table for the past two (2) years to get them to where they now were. He reiterated that there was no perfect system and stated that there were those who wanted to move forward in the most transparent, accountable and inclusive way. He advised that they were at a point where what they were supposed to be talking about ventilating what they had. The representative indicated that they had this discussion in the morning and it seemed as if they were repeating it here now.

A UNDP representative then stated that one of the areas that were important was the monitoring and evaluation. She reminded the meeting that they had radio and television sessions, but asked if it was actually penetrating the minds of the people. The NNP representative on the CRAC stated that he understood roadmaps very clearly. He then stated that before they could surmise whether this was appealing to the masses, they needed to get what they had out there right now and then go forward. He asked if they were going to present the bills that were read on December 4, 2015 or were they going back to first principles and ventilate from there. He was firm that they could ventilate what was taken to the Parliament to the people. He appealed for them to concentrate on how they develop the communication plan in line with the UNDP and get it out to the people. He stated that they should collect the feedback and state what they wanted to do with it.

## Access to UNDP Funds

There was significant discussion on how the UNDP could support the CRAC given that the latter would not be eligible to directly access the small grant funds. In addressing this matter a representative of the UNDP stated that the consensus that was reached in the meeting held earlier today was that the information would be put out to the public in as many ways as possible. He advised that they had worked with civil society in different parts of the world. Additionally, the Government would be allocating some of its own money for the public education process. Therefore, in a sense the CRAC would undertake some activities and the CSOs would do some as well as the business community.

Further clarification was sought on whether the UNDP was able to put at the disposal of the CRAC the resources to go out and buy materials. In response a representative of the UNDP advised that monies could be allocated for the design of a tool such as a fake ballot if requested by the Supervisor of Elections. The money would not go towards buying a projector for the CRAC. She further elaborated by stating that the other component of the grant was designed with civil service in mind by way of training and recognizing that there was the need to have persons understand the basics and civil society may be best positioned to deliver the basic education and in this way compliment what the CRAC would be doing. The representative of the CRAC then summed that the Project Board could allocate funds to civil society and the Supervisor of Elections, but not to the CRAC. In response the representative of the UNDP stated that they could pay for things directly such as procuring the services of a marketing firm to create something that was fun; however, the funds would not go directly to the CRAC. She then reiterated that it was the civil society organisations that could directly access the grants.

In light of the elaboration provided by the UNDP representative, the representative of the CRAC stated that they would have to focus on people that the Project Board could make allocations to like the Supervisor of Elections, St. Andrew Development Organisation, Carriacou etcetera. He then asked if Carriacou and Petite Martinique would be able to access the monies. The UNDP representative stated that they could access the grant if they were registered as a CSO. Another representative of the CRAC advised that they would need to get additional contact persons in Carriacou and Petite Martinique.

A question was raised on whether the UNDP would fund a project that the CRAC would propose that would be executed on its behalf by a CSO. A representative of the UNDP stated that it would depend on the type of project and inquired if there was a specific example of a project. Another representative of the UNDP stated that it could be possible through discussions between the CSOs and the CRAC on how to do a particular education (for example to reach youth in a specific location) that out of those discussions a CSO might agree to put forward a proposal. Once same was well put together then it might be funded. A representative of the CRAC reminded the meeting that the Project Board was made up of substantial membership from the CRAC and that they knew who were the key and influential players in Grenada and provided as example GNOW and SADO. He stated that those groups would be advised to consult the CRAC and expressed that he could not see how they would make a presentation and not invite persons from the CRAC. He further stated that they needed persons who had opposing views to be a part of the presentations. His closing remark was that they had to ensure that the grants would go where they were supposed to go.

Another member of the CRAC inquired about the basis for which the UNDP determined to put the resources for the civil society and not for the CRAC. In addressing this inquiry a UNDP representative stated that this was an area of specialty to the UN system whose area of priority was neutrality. Therefore, it was natural and they had needs assessment missions where this was identified as an area of need in Grenada. She continued to elaborate that this type of education was needed for the citizen to have an informed vote in an unbiased way.

The Chairman of the CRAC queried if the Committee was bound to the UNDP’s rules since it was not receiving any funding from the UNDP. The response from a UNDP’s representative was, “No”.

Another UNDP representative suggested that perhaps a way to mitigate these types of concern was to produce material on the format of one page for each bill which would explain the aspects of each bill and their implications. The materials could be made available to everybody and distributed by the civil society organisations as the CRAC may not have the capacity to distribute same. She further elaborated that each organisation could produce different materials, but there could be one (1) main one from the CRAC. The Chairman of the CRAC shared that last week he tried to draft a likely look of the ballot for presentation to the voters. He advised that with respect to the drafts that he created while some took up only one (1) paragraph, two (2) bills took up two (2) pages.

The meeting was advised that the UNDP had allocated resources to developing communication tools like audio visual and pamphlets that would tie into the needs of the community. Further to this, it was said that these could be used by the CRAC and the CSOs to have consistent messaging on what the constitution was, what were the amendment bills and what was one’s right to vote. She further added that they could probably access a consultancy firm to help develop the message. In response a representative of the CRAC said that they had no direct funding to get that done. The CRAC’s representative was advised that the US$20,000 would not go directly to the CRAC; however, education materials on constitutional amendments and civic education videos and short videos on the amendment bills could be designed with the CRAC’s input. It was further explained that graphic designers and animators could be hired to form the communication tools that they could use. Another member of the CRAC advised that they did have money to get some of these things done. This was challenged by the Chairman of the CRAC who asked where this money was. He further stated that every time he spoke a representative of the Government would say that there was money. He then asked if this was so why it was that he could not get the projector he had been asking for since last year. The representative of the Government replied that the budget was read in November, 2015, was approved in December, 2015 and they were awaiting approval from the Ministry of Finance to spend monies. He further added that from next week they would be able to spend.

## Role of the UNDP and Monitoring and Evaluation

It was stated that the UNDP or the UN in general only provides technical assistance when requested to do so by an official body. In Grenada a request was put forward by the local authority. In light of same a needs assessment mission was held last year during which they met with all of the stakeholders including civil society and had an assessment of what could be the involvement of the UNDP in this process and what the risks were. She noted that the process was very political and the UN does not want to seem as being in favor of one position or another. There was an assessment of the office based in Barbados and the conditions were met for the UNDP to move forward and provide support. One was the provision of technical support and they worked with the electoral management body when they were in Grenada. There was no issue of credibility and no lack of capacity.

With respect to the ballot design the representative noted that it would be with bills and different from the normal ballot with ticks. The other aspect was to support civil society and help to disseminate information to the population. This she explained would be done through the small grants fund. The idea was that the CSOs that applied for the grants and which were eligible to receive the grants would receive specific training on how the reporting should be done and how to plan their activities. The representative made it clear that the UNDP’s position was always to inform and give the resources for the organisations and individuals to formulate their own choice, but not to influence that choice. She further noted that their resources would help, but ultimately the decision was the choice of the individual and that those were the implications of choice. She further advised that it was the responsibility of the organisations to organize the people who would be implementing the programme.

One participant inquired about the purpose of monitoring. A representative of the UNDP explained that monitoring was done during the process to get a sense of what was done and to be able to determine if objectives were being met. It was stated that the monitoring could be done along with the Commission and that the Commission could be as involved as possible as it wanted to be in this process. It was explained that the UNDP wanted to facilitate a mechanism so that they could work together and understand the same messages. Further to this she stated that they wanted to ensure that everyone had the same understanding of the implications of the choices and she reiterated that people could make their choices.

In response to the explanation of the monitoring process one participant asked if there was ever an instance during a monitoring process where the UNDP recognized a miscarriage by a CSO and if yes, if an end was put to the funding. A UNDP representative answered that she believed that this had happened before, but that there were not a lot of instances of this as they ask the organisations to make an oath that they will be impartial. She further stated that the monitoring would help them to see if anyone was instigating a violent reaction on the population or passing a wrong message and that would be a matter of discussion and eventually to put an end to that support. That was why on the small grants only part of the funds would be released in the beginning and the rest at the end following a report provided by the organisation and complimented by the monitoring and evaluation. In conclusion, she stated that it was very important for them to do all of these things together.

The NNP representative asked what mechanisms could be put in place to measure the quality of the programmes that would be established. He noted that there was a need for the communication programmes to be supportive of the process. He also identified as a subjective component the measuring of the pros and cons. He then asked if that was something that the UNDP was seeking to back in their objective to supporting a balance with a positive and a negative. One UNDP representative answered that they all had they own belief systems and further stated that from where she was sitting in the civil society training in December, one of the big things was whether they could organize debates in schools or online where persons with strong views for yes or no would be welcomed. In that way, there would be a platform where you would have both sides of the argument. The viewer could strengthen his or her support for one side or the other, but at least as a package there would be the presentation of the various arguments. The NNP representative then asked how would they monitor the balance to that package because if it was not monitored properly along with the framework that was governing what they were doing with these funds and the proposals that would be accepted and how they were implemented, it would be very easy to manipulate that process so that what they ended up doing was something that was counterproductive.

It was proposed that this question could be put before the CSOs in the upcoming meeting and form part of the discussion on the aforementioned concern. It was expressed that everybody was fine with robust debates. What was not comforting was the possibility that a CSO using funding through the grant modality could set up biased events. It was recommended that this also be discussed directly with civil society on how they would move forward with them playing their role in the process in a balanced way. Advanced also was that there was the desire to have people stand up and be critical or supportive for one reason or another, but at the core there was the need for a factual presentation on the process to date, the bills, what the bills said and what they meant. For example, the impact that the bill on the CCJ would have was that the CCJ would replace the Privy Council.

In response to this suggestion the NNP representative remarked that it was absolutely necessary to ensure that there were mechanisms in place and that it also related to how proposals were assessed, how performance was monitored and managed and to ensure that overall they were supportive of the process and that there were clear guidelines that were spelt out in the request for proposals and that same was reflected in everything that followed. He expressed that he would hate to think that with the limited resources that were available to them at the national level that a chunk of that would go towards activities that were aimed simply to derail the process. He reiterated that it was essential that there were mechanisms in place to ensure that this did not take place. The feedback from the UNDP representatives was that this was seen as a challenge and they would discuss same with their partners and the CSOs.

The IADGO representative expressed that she was looking at the issue from the flip side where she had the problem with the message that they had the bills and they wanted persons to vote for them. She explained that there were a number of proposals condensed into five (5) or six (6) bills which in her opinion contained provisions that were inimical to the citizens. As far as she was concerned the issue of balance was applicable both to civil society and the CRAC. She was concerned that citizens should understand that they could support four (4) out of five (bills) and that one (1) was not in their interest. She confessed that she did not have the legalities and the interpretation which she would hear when the CRAC presented same, but that was how she was thinking and so she was very concerned. To illustrate her point, she drew reference to the Elections and Boundaries Commission which would do away with the independence of the Office of the Supervisor of Elections. She then stated that she did not think that she should vote for that. In response, the Chairman of the CRAC stated that the Commission would be an independent body. The IADGO representative stated that they should leave the matter and they could talk about the details later. She indicated her willingness to listen to all of it and expressed that she did not want to derail the process, but only wanted to make her point clear. She reiterated that the issue of balance was not only one for CSOs, but also for the CRAC.

## UNDP’s Neutrality

A question was posed to a UNDP representative regarding what her response would be to someone on Halifax St. who sought her opinion on the referendum bills. The representative of the UNDP to whom the question was posed responded by stating that in her capacity she did not have a view on whether one would vote for or against. She added that it was interesting to communicate on the arguments for and the arguments against and allow the person to make a decision. She reminded the other participants of the meeting that as professionals this was something that was done every time there was an election. An individual would know whom he or she would vote for, but in his or her capacity, he or she would have to provide the same information. She further commented that if a person was to be impartial and balanced he or she would have to do research. Finally, she stated to the other participants that it was their job as there was a call for action and they would have to sit and decide what the options that they wanted were.

## Feedback from the Parliamentary Elections Office

A representative of the Parliamentary Elections Office advised that they engage in on-going voter and civic education and that they target students who are about to turn eighteen (18) years old. In engaging in these presentations up to yesterday, there were many misconceptions held by people. He provided as an example of misconception the interpretation of a song sung by the Trinidadian calypsonian Gypsy titled ‘The Sinking Ship’. A part of the song included the lyrics, ‘Captain the ship is sinking’. The traditional interpretation was that money was a problem; however, it is not until years after the song was released that there was an explanation that same was taken out of context because there was too much money and it was the money that was the problem.

The representative further stated that whether there was agreement or not they were simply seeking to present the items to the population. He cautioned that if they were not all on the same page, the whole process could be derailed and they could make a mountain out of a molehill and could fail. He continued to state that whether they agreed with the process or not they were at this present position and they wanted Grenadians to be best informed going forward. He added that there was a need to get things thrashed out in this small circle before going forward and he also expressed hope that in the interest of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique on a whole that the issues would be dealt with at this time.

A concern was raised regarding the level of involvement of the Parliamentary Elections Office in the referendum. A representative of the Office opined that they should have had greater input. He advised the meeting that members of the public were frequently asking them about the referendum as the assumption was made that the Parliamentary Elections Office would be the ‘point man’ in this process. In response, the Chairman of the CRAC inquired if the Parliamentary Elections Office had a copy of the bills. The representative of the Parliamentary Elections Office confirmed that they were in receipt of same.

The Coordinator of the CRAC advised the meeting that the CRAC was just turning itself to this issue as the initial focus was placed on the bills. The Coordinator stated that the budget was read in November, 2015 and was approved in December, 2015 and they were awaiting the go ahead from the Ministry of Finance to spend monies.

The Supervisor of Elections advised that they were charged with voter education and the process and wanted to stay neutral in that regard. He also stated that they would leave the education on the bills up to the CSOs. He expressed support on the position that the CRAC should have taken a different approach initially by being impartial and giving persons the pros and the cons and allowed the populace to decide really and truly where they stood. He reiterated that as the primary body responsible the public should be educated on the pros and cons and at the end of the day the decision should be left to them.

# Any Other Business

## Upcoming Workshop on the Referendum Bills and Act

Participants were advised that a workshop to discuss the referendum act and the simplification of the questions on the referendum bills was carded for January 29, 2016. The time of the meeting would be determined. Persons invited to attend same were the members of the CRAC and a list of interested groups from the public.

## Upcoming National Education Forum

Given the mandate to hold dialogue with some organisations in the country, there will be a national forum in Grenville on January 28, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

## Tentative Date of the Referendum

The meeting was informed that the tentative time for the referendum was July, 2016. The reason for the extension from April, 2016 was to ensure that the Electoral Office would have all systems in place. Also factored into this decision was that the bills were first read in December, 2015 and the 90 day period for airing of said bills was in effect. Additional time was necessary to accommodate changes, if any, to the bills. Thus, the ballots would only be printed when the draft bills were finalized. The Electoral Office estimated that they would require a period of three (3) months from said finalization to be ready. The meeting was also advised that the Prime Minister was not happy with this extension; however, to undertake the referendum in the month of April would be a challenge. A concern was raised that July was close to the carnival season. A representative of the Office of the Supervisor of Elections advised that they were considering that the referendum would be held either the first or second week in July.

There was a question of whether or not there was a strategy laid out to ensure that interest in the referendum was maintained up to the referendum day. In response, a member of the CRAC advised that some activities were planned until February and that by the middle of the said month there would be a detailed plan. This representative also said that they were trying to seek additional funding for the process.

# Vote of Thanks

Mr. Robert Branch moved the vote of thanks during which he expressed appreciation to the UNDP for its involvement in this process. He stated that he was involved from late 2010 in this process struggling on and that it was not until the UNDP came along that it came clear that their technical assistance would be crucial. He further said that most of the work was already done and acknowledged the neutrality of the UNDP and that no one involved ever questioned same. Mr. Branch noted also that there were assessment missions and thanked Ms. Maughan as Project Coordinator for the assistance that she was providing. He then proceeded to thank the rapporteur and also the Supervisor of Elections for the discussions as to how they could assist in moving the process forward. In general he thanked everyone who participated in the meeting and reminded all members of the CRAC that they needed to attend the sessions next week and that everyone should not attend the sessions on the same days.

In response to this reminder Mrs. Mathurine Stewart informed that she would attend the last sessions.

# Closing Prayer

Mr. Ferdinand Phillip said the closing prayer.

# Photographs



Photograph 1 above shows the participants who were involved in the meeting. Photo credit – Mr. Robert Branch.



Photograph 2 above provides another view of some of the meeting’s participants. Photo credit – Mr. Robert Branch.