



## **THE GUYANA LANDS & SURVEYS COMMISSION**

### **UNCCD NATIONAL FOCAL POINT**

#### **GUYANA'S THIRD NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION**



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## Acronyms

ACCC	Adaptation to Climate Change in the Caribbean
CDC	Civil Defence Commission
CDM	Comprehensive Disaster Management
CHPA	Central Housing and Planning Authority
CoP	Conference of Parties
CPACC	Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change
D&I	Drainage and Irrigation
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEA	Guyana Energy Agency
GEF	Global Environment Fund
GENCAPD	Guyana Environmental Capacity Development
GNRA	Guyana Natural Resources Agency
GLSC	Guyana Lands and Survey Commission
GoG	Government of Guyana
GIS	Geographic Information System
GFC	Guyana Forestry Commission
GUYSUCO	Guyana Sugar Corporation
GGMC	Guyana Geology and Mines Commission
GTA	Guyana Tourism Authority
GINRIS	Guyana Integrated Natural Resources Information System
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
LUP	Land Use Planning
LDC-SIDS	Lesser Developed Countries – Small Island Developing States
MACC	Mainstreaming for Adaptation Climate Change
MINTIC	Ministry of Tourism Industry and Commerce
MSP	Medium Sized Project
NCSA	National Capacity Self Assessment
NAP	National Action Programme
NFP	National Forest Plan
NREAC	Natural Resources and Environment Advisory Committee
NSC	National Steering Committee
NBAP	National Biodiversity Action Plan
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plan
NDS	National Development Strategy
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OAS	Organisation of American States
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

## **Executive Summary**

Desertification is one of the world's most alarming processes of environmental degradation. Each year, desertification and drought cause an estimated \$42 billion in lost agricultural production. The risks of desertification are substantial and clear. It contributes to food insecurity, famine and poverty, and can give rise to social, economic and political tensions that can cause conflicts, further poverty and land degradation. Desertification and land degradation is recognised as an important concern by most countries and a critical issue for many.

The international community has long recognized that desertification is a major economic, social and environmental problem of concern to many countries in all regions of the world. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was adopted in Paris on June 17, 1994 and entered into force on December 26, 1996. The UNCCD places human beings at the centre of its concern to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought. It recognizes that National Governments play a critical role in combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought and that progress depends on local implementation of programmes in affected areas.

Guyana ratified the Convention on 24<sup>th</sup> of September, 1997. Land degradation in Guyana, while perhaps not very visible at this stage, has been increasingly occurring and the potential exists for it to expand at an increasing rate corresponding to an increase in the exploitation of natural resources and coastal erosion. Change in land use has been due to a rapid upsurge in economic activity over the last 10 years, in particular the sectors of forestry, mining, and agriculture with the expansion in state land leases for agriculture and commercial activities.

As a party to the Convention, Guyana is expected to prepare national reports on steps taken to implement the Convention. Two National Reports to the Convention were submitted in April 2000 and April 2002. This Third National Report has been done in accordance with the guidelines prepared by the Convention Secretariat and reports on key actions and initiatives that have taken place since the last national report in April of 2002. There has been a number of significant developments with regard to moving forward to meet UNCCD obligations. Principal among them have been:

### **1. A Change in the National Focal Point**

During the period 1997 to 2003, the Hydrometeorological Division of the Ministry of Agriculture (Hydromet Division) served as the National Focal Point for UNCCD. The main reason the Division was identified as the focal point was that in the early stages of UNCCD the focus of the Convention was principally on desertification with a close relation to climate change, hence Hydromet was the most appropriate organisation.

In 2003 the responsibilities of the National Focal Point were transferred from the Hydrometeorological Division of the Ministry of Agriculture to the Guyana Lands & Surveys Commission (GLSC) after it had been established as a Commission with direct responsibility for land management and reporting to the Office of the President.

## 2. Establishment of a National Coordinating Body

In 2003 when the National Focal Point responsibilities were handed over the GLSC, a National Steering Committee (NSC) was established with oversight responsibility for the implementation of the UNCCD activities. This Committee comprises the following institutions:

1. Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (National Focal Point)
2. Guyana Forestry Commission
3. Guyana Geology and Mines Commission
4. Environmental Protection Agency
5. Civil Defence Commission

## 3. Execution of a National Awareness Seminar

With support from the UNCCD Secretariat, a National Awareness Seminar was held in September 2005 at which there was broad stakeholder participation and input which set the basis for development of Guyana's National Action Programme.

## 4. National Capacity Self Assessment of UNCCD

Through the National Capacity Self Assessment Project (NCSA) which is being funded by GEF through UNDP, a Stocktaking and Thematic Assessment was done with respect to UNCCD. The Stocktaking and Thematic Assessment, which was conducted at three levels, (1) Individual, (2) Institutional and (3) Systemic, analysed Guyana's national capacity needs, priorities and constraints in meeting the obligations of the Convention.

## 5. Preparation of a National Action Programme (NAP)

A 5 Year National Action Programme has been prepared for UNCCD and approved by the Board of the GLSC on April 27<sup>th</sup> 2006. The preparation of the NAP involved stakeholder involvement and review by the NSC.

## 6. Preparation of a project proposal for assistance under the LDC-SIDS Portfolio Project for Sustainable Land Management.

A proposal to the tune of U.S\$660 000 is being prepared for funding from GEF/World Bank and facilitated by UNDP through the LDC-SIDS Portfolio Project for Sustainable Land Management. The principal objective of this project is to strengthen the enabling environment for SLM through ensuring broad-based political and participatory support for the process with three main outcomes of (1) Increased and enhanced capacity at the individual and institutional level for SLM, (2) Mainstreaming and harmonization of SLM into the development framework and (3) Investment planning and resource mobilization for implementation of SLM.

Since the last national report in April 2002, there has been a number of initiatives across sectors within the framework of natural resources, environment and land management. These have been elaborated within this report.

While efforts are underway to move forward with UNCCD implementation, there are a number of priority issues to be addressed in order to prevent and mitigate land degradation and desertification and to move towards sustainable land management. These issues are outlined as follows:

1. The need for a Land Use Policy to set the overarching framework for sustainable land management. It is expected that this policy will identify guidelines for land use as well as criteria for multiple land uses.
2. The need for capacity building and institutional strengthening of the GLSC and other Agencies for sustainable land management and to meet UNCCD obligations.
3. The need for a more proactive National Steering Committee for UNCCD in spite of good collaboration and cooperation among members.
4. The need to mobilise funds to implement the NAP perhaps through developing a financing strategy to draw on regional and international mechanisms.
5. A concerted and sustained effort towards education and awareness to address the generally low level of awareness and knowledge of land degradation in other Agencies, Government Institutions and society at large.
6. The need for a comprehensive study and assessment of the current land uses and practices and factors contributing to land degradation along with information gathering and developing a national clearing house (Focal Point) for information regarding land use, and land degradation. As well, there is need to develop early and forecasting warning systems for droughts and floods.
7. The need for the harmonising of legislation and institutional framework for sustainable land management and land use planning.
8. The need to improve institutional cooperation and collaboration for sustainable land management and better linkages between Government Agencies and NGO's and civil society for sustainable land management.

Guyana has built momentum in its efforts to move forward with addressing the issue of land degradation within the framework of sustainable land management. In meeting its UNCCD obligations the NAP outlines a comprehensive framework which sets the basis for action initiatives and establishes synergies and mechanisms for institutional and sectoral collaboration and cooperation. However, for this momentum to be maintained, capacity building and ultimately, financial resources are critical. Innovative mechanisms will need to be developed to maximize Government's in-kind contribution and those from donors while at the same time integrally involving the NGO and private sector.

## Section 1 – General Introduction

### 1.1 Summary Profile of Guyana



Guyana has an area of 214,970 square kilometres and a multi-ethnic population of approximately 765, 000 (2001 National Census). Five main natural geographic regions exist: the Coastal Plain, the Hilly Sand and Clay Region, the Highland Region, and the Rupununi Savannas. The Coastal Plain lies about 1.4 meters below mean high tide level and is protected by natural and man-made sea defences. It is 430 km long and varies in width from 5 to 40 km. Most of the population resides on the coastal plain which consists of the most fertile lands.

Guyana is well endowed with natural resources including fertile agricultural lands, diversified mineral deposits, and an abundance of tropical rain forests. The agriculture sector (mainly sugar and

rice), for which 95% is concentrated on the coast is one of the most important to the economy, both in terms of foreign exchange generation and the number of persons employed accounting for 35% of the GDP in 2004. Mining (gold, diamond and bauxite) and forestry also contribute significantly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which has continued to grow over the last decade.

Guyana's climate has traditionally been uniform and characterized by high temperatures, humidity and heavy rainfall with temperatures along the coast on an average high of 32°C and a low of 24°C, humidity around 70% year round and rainfall averaging 250 cm annually with two rainy seasons on the coast (May-June and December-January) and one in the southernmost region (April-September). Within the last decade, Guyana has experienced unpredictable changes in weather patterns characterized by severe El Nino in 1997-8 and extreme levels of precipitation on the coast in 2005 and

2006 resulting in widespread flooding along the coast to the extent that several areas were declared disaster areas.

Unlike its Caribbean neighbours, Guyana's threats from natural disasters do not come from volcanoes, hurricanes or earthquakes. The principal threat stems from the low-lying nature of its populated seacoast which makes it vulnerable to flooding from sea level rise, intense precipitation and breaches of the sea defences.

## **1.2 Approach and Methodology**

This Third National Report to UNCCD documents key actions and initiatives that have taken place since the last National Report in April 2002. The report has been prepared in accordance with specific Guidelines provided by the UNCCD Secretariat. These guidelines provided the fundamental methodology for the report preparation, taking off which, the following more specific steps were followed.:

### **1.2.1 Information Collection**

#### *Desktop Review of Existing Literature*

A review of the UNCCD Convention and related documents (UNCCD National Reports, National Policy and Planning documents and reports) was done. A number of these documents are identified in the Reference section of the report.

### **1.2.2 Stakeholder Input**

#### *National Focal Point and Steering Committee Engagement*

A combination of structured, semi-structured and informal interviews was done with the Convention Focal Point along with stakeholders from the UNCCD Steering Committee as identified below.

1. EPA
2. GGMC
3. GLSC
4. GFC
5. Hydrometeorology Division
6. Civil Defence Commission

#### *Validation Workshop*

A Validation Workshop was held on May 31<sup>st</sup> 2006 which was attended by 24 participants drawn from a cross-section of stakeholders including Government agencies, the private sector, NGOs and community representatives. Stakeholders provided review and input to the report.

### **1.2.3 Review and Approval**

The report was reviewed and approved by the National Steering Committee for UNCCD and then the Board of the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission.



## Section 2 - Land Degradation in Guyana

Land degradation in Guyana, while perhaps not very visible at this stage, has been increasingly occurring and the potential exists for it to expand at an increasing rate corresponding to an increase in the exploitation of natural resources and coastal erosion. Change in land use has been due to a rapid upsurge in economic activity over the last 10 years, in particular the sectors of forestry, mining, agriculture with a concomitant expansion in state land leases for agriculture and commercial activities.

Factors which contribute to land degradation are loss of forest and vegetation due to clearing of lands for agriculture, inappropriate logging, irresponsible mining, urbanization; improper land management; changing climatic patterns and coastal erosion due to flooding. These are summarily described below:

### 2.1 Coastal Zone

In the coastal zone, agriculture is a major pivot of the economy of Guyana. Ninety-five percent of Guyana's agricultural activities are concentrated on the coast and the sector contributing as much as 35% of the GDP (2004) principally from sugar and rice.

Erosion and flooding are critical issues as most of the coast lies below sea level. Sea level rise, destruction of mangroves, and coastal subsidence add to the pressures on the coastal sea defenses. Drainage and irrigation works in the coastal plain are still insufficient to prevent the periodic fresh water flooding and salt water inundation of agricultural lands. The problem is exacerbated by over exploitation of mangrove forests which protect the coast through stabilization of the shoreline.

Additionally, some of the vegetative cover on the coastal zone and the sandy plains further inland has been lost to competing activities such as mining, agriculture, human settlements, harvesting for fuel wood and coals. This reduction of forest cover in many watersheds, has contributed to reduced infiltration of rainwater into the ground and increasing risk of flash flooding and erosion.

As well, the coastal areas are underlain by aquifers some of which are the main sources of domestic water. Over the last several decades there have been huge losses in the heads of the aquifers which suggests that continued extraction could cause salt water intrusion and possible subsidence though no data exists to confirm this.

With an increase in demand for lands along the coast for commercial, agricultural and domestic use (housing) as well as more infrastructure, more lands are being converted to these uses. The potential for land degradation is further increased in the absence of a comprehensive planning framework for land planning and management within the coastal zone.

## 2.2 Natural Resource Utilisation

The natural resource base of Guyana is dominated by forests which cover some 80% of the land area. The forests contain extensive biodiversity with a rich variety of plant and animal life, including endangered wildlife, endemic species and unique ecosystems.

Available data and estimates from the Guyana Forestry Commission indicate that of Guyana's forested area of 16.45 million hectares, an estimated 2.27 million hectares are impacted by anthropogenic activities. (Guyana's Initial Communication to the UNFCCC). This total area is based to a large extent on the percentage allocated to logging as well as the influx of unregulated, mobile chainsaw operators which is contributing to loss of habitats, and species. However, adequate hard data are not available to confirm the extent of damage.

Within the natural resources sector, the contribution of mining to the GDP has been increasing over the years with contributions to GDP in 2004 of approximately 15%. This sector, however, is seen to be one of the main contributors to land degradation through the extractive practices for sand, bauxite, gold and diamond mining and quarriable materials. Gold and diamond mining activities have been on-going in Guyana for more than 100 years from the early "porkknocker type" operations which utilized hand methods (digging of pits, and operation of long tom sluice box and battel or gold pan) to mine or recover gold to present day small and medium scale operations which are highly mechanized to varying extents, employing high pressure monitors, bulldozers, excavators and other equipment. This improved technology is permitting larger operations and greater area coverage with consequential adverse environmental implications. However, the application of excavation equipment, excavators and bulldozers in 'dry' mining operations also present opportunities for employing reclamation techniques.

The activities of mining represent both a direct loss of biodiversity and a destruction of habitats, the cumulative impacts of which are not yet known. The disturbed forest area from mining activities is crudely estimated at 40,0000 ha notwithstanding the downstream effects on the health of rivers and impacts to local communities.

Bauxite mining, while confined to particular locations has resulted in mined out pits, excavated lakes and ponds which have not been rehabilitated or revegetated. Around the bauxite mines there are high levels of acidity in the waste dumps, residual lakes and settling ponds which potentially can be releasing acid leachates into the ground water and nearby streams.

The full extent of activities of Guyana's coast and natural resource utilisation and their contribution to land degradation is still to be determined. Expanding and changing land use poses an increasing threat to ecosystems and increases the potential for land degradation. Tables 1 extracted from the 2001 Guyana Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and 2 below provide a summary of the demographic and economic profile by region for Guyana, along with the key economic activities and land uses, their spatial distribution across the 10 regions and contribution to land degradation.

**Table 1. Demographic and Economic Profile by Region**

<b>Administrative Region</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Area Sq. Km</b>	<b>Population Density</b>	<b>Main Economic Activities</b>
1	18 294	7 853	2.3	Agriculture - fruits (avocado, citrus), agro-processing (Heart of Palm), Fishing Forestry Mining
2	43 139	2 392	18.0	Agriculture - rice, coconuts, fruits; Fishing, Logging
3	95 276	1 450	65.7	Agriculture - rice, sugar, ground provisions Fishing Ecotourism Logging
4	294 493	862	341.6	Agriculture - rice, sugar, vegetables, livestock, poultry, processing, coconuts, craft Logging Fishing Forest Products
5	51 274	1 610	31.8	Agriculture - rice, sugar, ground provisions, vegetables, fruit, coconuts, livestock Logging
6	141 455	13 998	10.1	Agriculture - rice, sugar, cattle, vegetables, fruits, Logging Mining - bauxite
7	14 682	18 229	0.8	Mining (gold) Agriculture - small scale farming, balata Ecotourism Logging
8	5 574	7 742	0.7	Mining - gold, diamonds
9	14 947	22 313	0.7	Agriculture - livestock, craft, crop farming Ecotourism
10	39 271	6 595	6.0	Mining – bauxite, gold, diamonds Logging Agriculture - farming (riverain area), livestock

**Table 2. Contributions of productive activities to land degradation**

Activity	Contribution to Land Degradation
Agriculture (rice production, sugar cane cultivation, cash crop farming)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Uncontrolled irrigation leads to waterlogging and salinization.</li> <li>2. Uncontrolled application of agro-chemicals leads to further salinisation and reduction of soil structure.</li> <li>3. Land clearance through slash and burn leading to deforestation.</li> </ol>
Mining (gold, diamonds, bauxite, sand)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Deforestation in localized areas.</li> <li>2. Destruction of vegetation, topsoil and habitats.</li> <li>3. Creation of waste spoil piles and open pits with the potential for acid rock drainage, lakes and ponds.</li> <li>4. Mineral recovery processes and tailings disposal, when not managed, leading to sedimentation of creeks and rivers and discharge of mercury (in small and medium scale gold mining) into the environment.</li> </ol>
Forestry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Land clearance and habitat destruction from log markets, skid trails and primary and secondary roads.</li> <li>2. Opening up of forest canopy and destruction to habitats and other tree species from felling as well as soil erosion on slopes affecting rivers and creeks by sedimentation.</li> <li>3. Indirectly facilitating other resource use such as mining through improved access.</li> </ol>
Mining and Forestry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compaction of forest roads leading to greater runoff and less infiltration resulting in erosion and sedimentation of creeks.</li> </ol>

## **Section 3 – UNCCD Status in Guyana**

### **3.1 Background**

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was adopted in Paris on June 17, 1994 and entered into force on December 26, 1996. Guyana ratified the Convention on 24<sup>th</sup> of September, 1997.

### **3.2 Institutional Arrangement**

#### **3.2.1 National Focal Point**

During the period 1997 to 2003, the Hydrometeorological Division of the Ministry of Agriculture (now Hydromet Services) served as the National Focal Point for UNCCD. The main reason the Division was identified as the focal point is that in the early stages of UNCCD the focus of the Convention was principally on desertification with a close relation to climate change, hence Hydromet was the most appropriate organisation. However, there was a change in thinking within UNCCD, with more focus being placed towards land degradation and sustainable land management. As such the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GLSC) emerged as the most suitable organisation having been established by law with the responsibility for coordinating land planning and management in Guyana.

In 2003 the National Focal Point responsibilities were transferred from the Hydrometeorological Division of the Ministry of Agriculture to the Guyana Lands & Surveys Commission (GLSC).

#### **3.2.2 National Coordinating Body**

At the time when the Hydromet Division served as the National Focal Point the role of the National Coordinating Body was performed by the National Climate Committee (NCC) which had oversight responsibility for the implementation of the UNCCD. NCC comprises several Agencies which have relevance to land degradation and climate change.

In 2003 when the National Focal Point responsibilities were handed over the GLSC, a National Steering Committee (NSC) was established with oversight responsibility for the implementation of the UNCCD activities. This Committee is comprised of representatives of the following institutions:

1. Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (National Focal Point)
2. Guyana Forestry Commission
3. Guyana Geology and Mines Commission
4. Environmental Protection Agency
5. Civil Defence Commission
6. Hydromet Service

The NSC is not a statutory body. It reports to the Natural Resources and Environment Advisory Committee (NREAC) through its Chairman, the Chief Executive Officer and Commissioner of Lands and Surveys Commission who is a member of NREAC.

The principal role of the NSC is to offer advice and guidance and oversee the planning of activities related to the elaboration and implementation of the National Action Programme (NAP) to combat land degradation. While the NSC is expected to meet on a monthly basis, in the absence of continuous activities regarding UNCCD, it has tended to meet as necessary. The NSC does not have a budget, resource allocation, or a secretariat, rather, its functions are carried out with resources from the GLSC. The NSC will oversee the implementation of the NAP.

The NSC is expected to be expanded to include participation from the private sector and NGOs. The present composition however, does enhance the synergistic programming and implementation of UNCCD since there is representation from the key institutions with responsibility for land and natural resource management and regulation.

Generally land, natural resources and environment planning, management and regulation are shared among several institutions as elaborated in Annex C. There is no one institution with the responsibility for coordinating sustainable land management though the GLSC, by virtue of its mandate has been performing in this capacity through inter-agency collaborative agreements and a number of committees (NREAC, UNCCD Steering Committee, principally) which GLSC chairs.

Guyana, through the GLSC, is a member of the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Body for UNCCD and has participated in regional and sub-regional meetings.

### **3.3 Legislative Arrangement**

There is no legislation that is specific to UNCCD, land degradation, SLM or land use planning. Annex C details legislation related to natural resources, environment and land planning and management. Sector specific legislation (such as the Forests Act, Mining Act, Iwokrama Act, Kaieteur Act) do offer safeguards with regard to land degradation by outlining sustainable management stipulations and guidelines. While these individual pieces of legislation do not form a coherent body of legislation for sustainable land management inter-sectoral and inter-agency coordination and collaboration are promoted through the Cabinet Sub Committee on Natural Resources, the NREAC, inter-agency collaborative agreements and a number of committees. However, it is recognized that there is a need for developing synergies, harmonization and capacity building.

Generally, enforcement of environmental laws has been a challenge due to inherent weaknesses in the legislative framework as a whole as well as limited capacity at the institutional level for monitoring and enforcement action.

### **3.4 National Reporting to UNCCD and Key Activities**

To date there has been the submission of two national reports (in April 2000 and April 2002); hosting of a National Awareness Seminar on September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2005, and participation at Conference of Parties (CoP) since 1998 and attendance at UNCCD regional meetings.

### **3.5 National Action Programme (NAP)**

The fundamental obligation under the Convention is the preparation of a National Action Programme (NAP) to serve as the guiding framework for implementing actions to combat land degradation and promote sustainable land management.

A National Action Programme has been prepared for UNCCD and approved by the Board of the GLSC on April 27<sup>th</sup> 2006. Assistance for the preparation of the NAP was provided by the UNCCD Secretariat along with in-kind contribution from the GoG. An initial National Awareness Seminar was held in September 2005 at which there was broad stakeholder participation and input which set the basis for development of the NAP. This was followed by the recruitment of a local consultant and direct engagement with other sector entities in the development of a draft NAP which benefited from review by the UNCCD Steering Committee. The draft NAP was then presented at a Focused Stakeholder Workshop for wider stakeholder review and revision. The NAP has received Government's endorsement.

Guyana's approach to the preparation of a NAP took into consideration that the country's natural resources are not under immediate threat that warrants quick reaction and that land degradation has not reached a critical proportion as is evident in many parts of the world. As such the focus in the NAP is somewhat different, one of prevention rather than response.

The NAP recognizes key land degradation issues facing Guyana such as floods, droughts and impacts of natural resource utilization in the mining, forestry and agricultural sector and proposes a number of actions to address these issues, principal among them being rationalization of the planning and management of land resources including legislation and institutional arrangements and synergies, promoting education and awareness, undertaking training and capacity building, securing financial resources and establishing financial mechanisms, developing early warning systems and utilizing local knowledge.

The 5 Year NAP seeks to build on the current framework for natural resources and environmental management as elaborated in Annex C and has identified 11 Key Issue Areas along with Actions under each. The NAP 5 Year Plan is outlined in Annex B. The salient features of the NAP are presented below:

#### **Key Issue Areas**

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Issue 1 | Need for rational planning and management of land resources   |
| Issue 2 | Need to harmonize and rationalize legislation to remove overlaps, and promote effective coordination, information exchange and institutional synergies. |
| Issue 3 | Need for financial resources  |

Issue 4	Public Education and Public Awareness
Issue 5	Increasing Capacities
Issues 6	Traditional knowledge
Issue 7	Promotion of regional* aspects of preventing land degradation
Issue 8	The need to alleviate poverty and improve the quality of life
Issue 9	The need to achieve food security and sustainable development and management of agriculture.
Issue 10	The need for sustainable management of drainage basins and watersheds
Issue 11	The need for Early Warning Systems and Emergency Plans to mitigate drought, floods and other natural disasters

Key immediate actions identified are:

1. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of current land use practices and factors contributing to degradation.
2. Finalisation of a National Land Use Policy and Developing a National Land Use Plan

While Critical long term actions are:

1. Harmonise and strengthen institutional arrangements for land planning and management.
2. Identify and Implement Early Warning Systems for disaster preparedness

Project concepts including budgets and work plans have been developed for these four priority actions.

The greatest challenge to the NAP process will be the securing of funding for implementation. Of the three Conventions, UNCCD does not have as many funding mechanisms for the benefit of Contracting Parties. In this circumstance Guyana has adopted an approach of identifying innovative ways to garner resources for implementing the NAP. At this stage there are four principal areas of opportunity where the UNCCD National Focal Point is seeking assistance:

(1) The UNCCD Convention Secretariat

GLSC intends to continue to work closely with the Secretariat to seek opportunities to provide and/or facilitate financial support.

(2) GEF/World Bank facilitated by UNDP through the LDC-SIDS Portfolio Project for Sustainable Land Management.

The principal objective of this project is to strengthen the enabling environment for SLM through ensuring broad-based political and participatory support for the process with three main outcomes of (1) Increased and enhanced capacity at the individual and institutional level for SLM, (2) Mainstreaming and harmonization of SLM into the development framework and (3) Investment planning and resource mobilization for implementation of SLM.



### (3) UNDP through the NCSA Project

The second phase of the NCSA will commence shortly to conduct capacity self assessment of priority issues in Guyana common to the three thematic areas of Biodiversity, Climate Change, and Desertification/Land degradation in relation to the NCSA Project with the three areas to be assessed being (a) The Legal and Regulatory Framework (b) The Institutional and Policy Framework and (c) Other Priority Cross-Cutting Issues.

### (4) In-Kind support from the Government of Guyana

Through the GLSC, Guyana has been providing in-kind support for activities of UNCCD. This is expected to continue throughout the implementation of the NAP.

## Section 4 - Progress in meeting Guyana's UNCCD Obligations

### 4.1 Progress measured against Convention Articles

The articles of UNCCD set out obligations of country parties. Table 3 provides a summary of these obligations and progress on Guyana's efforts to meet UNCCD Obligations.

**Table 3. Progress Update on Guyana's efforts to meet UNCCD Obligations**

Requirement (Convention)	National Initiative to Address (Plan, Strategies, Activities)	Progress (How well the requirement is being addressed)	Constraints preventing compliance
<b>Article 5 - Obligations of Affected Country Parties</b> (a) Give due priority to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought, and allocate adequate resources in accordance with their circumstances and capabilities;  (b) Establish strategies and priorities, within the framework of sustainable development plans and/or policies, to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought;  (c) Address the underlying causes of desertification and pay special attention to the socio- economic factors contributing to desertification processes;  (d) Promote awareness and facilitate the participation of local populations, particularly women and youth, with the support of nongovernmental organizations, in efforts to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought; and  (e) provide an enabling environment by strengthening, as appropriate, relevant existing legislation and, where they do not exist, enacting new laws and establishing long-term policies and action programmes.	National Disaster Plan to be developed. El Nino Emergency Assistance Project (World Bank funded)  Not specifically focused on drought and desertification. Existing framework outlined in Annex C and draft National Land Use Policy exists.  No specific initiative to date  National Awareness Seminar held in September 2005. GLSC in process of preparing a brochure series and developing its web page. The UNCCD web page has comprehensive info.  No specific initiative. Has been included as a key area of the NAP.	National Disaster Plan process to commence. El Nino project has come to an end, no specific initiative in train at this stage.  Draft Land Use Policy expected to be approved shortly and will set up framework through sector agencies and institutions for addressing sustainable land management.  1 <sup>st</sup> brochure prepared with assistance from the NCSA project and National Focal Point participated in National TV fora coordinated by NCSA Project.  NAP completed in April 2006. A review of legal instruments, policies and programmes as they relate to UNCCD has been included within the SLM-MSP Project Proposal.	There is need for more data and scientific research on elements of land degradation and contributors to desertification and drought. Need for the development of benchmarks and indicators along with monitoring and development of early warning systems.  Process did not move forward in a timely manner as envisaged.  Funding has been the principal constraint. National Focal Point has an insignificant budget for UNCCD activities. There was delay in funds from UNCCD Secretariat.  No specific constraints to NAP at this stage though financial resources needed for implementation.

<b>Requirement (Convention)</b>	<b>National Initiative to Address (Plan, Strategies, Activities)</b>	<b>Progress (How well the requirement is being addressed)</b>	<b>Constraints preventing compliance</b>
<b>Article 8 - Relationship with other conventions</b>	Mechanisms of NREAC and policies, programmes and plans outlined in <b>Annex C</b> facilitates a coordinated and collaborative relation with other Convention commitments	Need exists for strengthening of framework	Harmonising of legislation is important along with institutional strengthening and capacity building. At the same time, the Land Use Policy will set the framework which will be adopted by Agencies in their Work Programmes and Plans.
<b>Article 9 - Basic Approach</b>	At the National Awareness Seminar conducted in September 2005 the National Focal Point outlined the National Strategy and Action Programme for UNCCD	To date the National Awareness Seminar has been completed along with the preparation of the National Action Programme	Funding has been the principal constraint. Efforts being made to mobilise funding from UN System and Convention Secretariat along with other sources
<b>Article 10 – National Action Programme and Plan</b>	National Awareness Seminar conducted in September 2005 which outlined National Action Programme	National Action Programme prepared in April 2006 and received approval from the Board of the GLSC	Funding has been the principal constraint, was scheduled to be done in 2003, funds were not forthcoming until 2006
<b>Article 16 - Information collection, analysis and exchange</b>	There is no central database or clearinghouse for information on land use, management and land degradation. Specific institutions have individual database. There is the GINRIS Initiative which has established a GIS based coverage of land usage.	There is no specific information on land degradation and desertification.	Funding is the principal challenge. Already there exists a framework for data collection and management with established protocols among institutions. As well, the National Focal Point has some capacity through its Policy and Planning Unit to function as a Clearing House and Data Management Centre for this role.
<b>Article 19 - Capacity building, education and public awareness</b>  1. The Parties recognize the significance of capacity building – that is to say, institution building, training and development of relevant local and national capacities -- in efforts to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought. They shall promote, as appropriate, capacity-building:  (a) through the full participation at all levels of local people, particularly at the local level, especially women and youth, with the cooperation of non-governmental and local organizations;	The NCSA Project has initiated this and the NAP Implementation is expected to facilitate participation of Civil Society at the national and local level	NCSA initiative already underway and NAP ready for implementation	Funding remains the principal constraint. Efforts being made to mobilise funding from UN System and Convention Secretariat along with other sources and Govt in-kind support

<p>(b) by strengthening training and research capacity at the national level in the field of desertification and drought;</p> <p>(c) by establishing and/or strengthening support and extension services to disseminate relevant technology methods and techniques more effectively, and by training field agents and members of rural organizations in participatory approaches for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources;</p> <p>(d) by fostering the use and dissemination of the knowledge, know-how and practices of local people in technical cooperation programmes, wherever possible;</p> <p>(e) by adapting, where necessary, relevant environmentally sound technology and traditional methods of agriculture and pastoralism to modern socio-economic conditions;</p> <p>(f) by providing appropriate training and technology in the use of alternative energy sources, particularly renewable energy resources, aimed particularly at reducing dependence on wood for fuel;</p> <p>(g) through cooperation, as mutually agreed, to strengthen the capacity of affected developing country Parties to develop and implement programmes in the field of collection, analysis and exchange of information pursuant to article 16;</p> <p>(h) through innovative ways of promoting alternative livelihoods, including training in new skills;</p> <p>(i) by training of decision makers, managers, and personnel who are responsible for the collection and</p>	<p>No specific initiative at this stage.</p> <p>No specific initiative for desertification and drought though the Ministry of Agriculture has extension services in this regard to encourage sustainable agriculture practices. An EIA was done for the Intermediate Savannahs region.</p> <p>No specific initiative at this stage.</p> <p>No specific initiative at this stage though the Ministry of Agriculture is encouraging environmentally friendly technology and sound land management to farmers. Under the agriculture diversification project with IDB support environmentally friendly practices are being examined and introduced such as organic farming.</p> <p>No specific training though there are Initiatives of GEA to develop alternative energy (wind and hydro) for Guyana and experiments by IAST with bio-diesel as part of Guyana's Energy Policy.</p> <p>No specific initiative regarding Guyana.</p> <p>No specific initiative at this stage though it is an area generally being encouraged by Government.</p> <p>No action to date or initiative in train.</p>	<p>This is an area identified within the NAP and a principal focus area of the SLM-MSP Proposal currently being prepared.</p>	
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<p>analysis of data for the dissemination and use of early warning information on drought conditions and for food production;</p> <p>(j) through more effective operation of existing national institutions and legal frameworks and, where necessary, creation of new ones, along with strengthening of strategic planning and management; and</p> <p>(k) by means of exchange visitor programmes to enhance capacity building in affected country Parties through a long-term, interactive process of learning and study.</p> <p>2. Affected developing country Parties shall conduct, in cooperation with other Parties and competent intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as appropriate, an interdisciplinary review of available capacity and facilities at the local and national levels, and the potential for strengthening them.</p> <p>3. The Parties shall cooperate with each other and through competent intergovernmental organizations, as well as with non-governmental organizations, in undertaking and supporting public awareness and educational programmes in both affected and, where relevant, unaffected country Parties to promote understanding of the causes and effects of desertification and drought and of the importance of meeting the objective of this Convention. To that end, they shall:</p> <p>(a) organize awareness campaigns for the general public;</p> <p>(b) promote, on a permanent basis, access by the public to relevant information, and wide public participation in education and awareness activities;</p>	<p>Efforts being made by National Focal Point to maximise existing framework</p> <p>No action to date or initiative in train.</p> <p>A National Awareness Seminar was held in September 2005 and with assistance from the NCSA Project, a series of brochures are being prepared. A comprehensive approach is expected to be outlined as part of the NAP.</p> <p>GLSC plans to establish a web page which will provide information on UNCCD and Guyana's efforts. In the meantime the UNCCD web page provides comprehensive information and national reports from Guyana.</p>	<p>ne brochure is already prepared for dissemination to the public.</p> <p>Work is still to commence on the GLSC Web Page. A domain <a href="http://www.lands.gov.gy">www.lands.gov.gy</a> has been registered and funding allocated.</p>	<p>Funding has been the main constraint.</p> <p>Staff challenged and not having time to focus on this deliverable in terms of getting up required information.</p> <p>Funding is the main limiting factor to wider awareness efforts.</p>
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<p>(c) encourage the establishment of associations that contribute to public awareness;</p> <p>(d) develop and exchange educational and public awareness material, where possible in local languages, exchange and second experts to train personnel of affected developing country Parties in carrying out relevant education and awareness programmes, and fully utilize relevant educational material available in competent international bodies;</p> <p>(e) assess educational needs in affected areas, elaborate appropriate school curricula and expand, as needed, educational and adult literacy programmes and opportunities for all, in particular for girls and women, on the identification, conservation and sustainable use and management of the natural resources of affected areas; and</p> <p>(f) develop interdisciplinary participatory programmes integrating desertification and drought awareness into educational systems and in non-formal, adult, distance and practical educational programmes.</p>	<p>The National Awareness Seminar was the main event to lead this off. Consultations on the NAP and its implementation has followed on from here.</p> <p>No action to date or initiative in train.</p> <p>No action to date or initiative in train.</p> <p>No action to date or initiative in train.</p>		
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## 4.2 Sector Activities and Initiatives

Since the last national report in April 2002, a number of activities that are directly and indirectly related to UNCCD have been initiated within sectors of natural resources management and the environment. These activities are outlined in Table 4 and provide support to meeting UNCCD obligations and preventative action for land degradation while promoting sustainable land management.

**Table 4.** *Initiatives across sectors related to UNCCD since the 2<sup>nd</sup> national report 2002*

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Key Initiatives related to UNCCD</b>
<b>Coastal Zone</b>	<p>With EU funding in 2003 under its 9<sup>th</sup> EDF a Programme for Sea Defence Rehabilitation is being implemented with focus on mangrove management (estb. of pilot sites for revegetation), institutional strengthening, construction and maintenance of sea defence structures. Under this programme, aspects of the Integrated Mangrove Management Plan is being implemented along with institutional capacity building and training for selected institutions involved in environmental management.</p> <p>Under the CPAAC Project a study on ‘Guyana’s National Vulnerability to Sea Level Rise’ was done in January 2002. Currently, the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (2001-2005) is being revised through the ICZM Unit of the EPA and a revised Plan is expected in 2006. Efforts are underway to develop coastal resource mapping.</p>
<b>Environmental Protection and Conservation</b>	<p>Government enacted the Environmental Protection Act in 1996. This Act identifies and confers responsibilities to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in various areas of environmental management including environmental permitting, monitoring, public awareness, enforcement and conservation of natural resources. The EPA, through agreements (Memorandum of Understanding), has influenced environmental management capacity to be streamlined and strengthened at other natural resources management institutions.</p> <p>With regard to UNCCD, since 2002, the establishment of protected areas has continued with work at 2 of the 5 priority sites Shell Beach and Kanuku Mountains being supported by local and international NGOs such as Conservation International, Fauna &amp; Flora International, and World Wildlife Fund. In 2006 a component of the Guyana Protected Areas System project funded by GEF and KfW has started and is expected to provide further support to Shell Beach, Kanuku and Kaieteur National Park. Iwokrama and Kaieteur continue to improve management at these two existing protected areas with improvements to infrastructure and services.</p>
<b>Forestry</b>	<p>The Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) produced a National Forest Policy Statement (1997) and a Code of Practice (1998) that set the framework for sustainable use of timber and major non-timber forest products. The GFC is engaged in a forest zonation process, which could have implications for land-use planning in Guyana. A National Forest Plan (2000) has been prepared and endorsed at the Agency level.</p> <p>Since 2002, there has been a number of significant developments with regard</p>

	<p>to forest management which included a revision of the Code of Practice in 2002, revision of the National Forestry Policy in 2004, institutional strengthening of GFC in particular in GIS and information sharing and closer collaboration with sector agencies such as GGMC, promotion and support for community-based forestry, greater transparency in the allocation of concessions, inventory rapid assessment of concessions and the conduct of a Forestry Sector Environmental Assessment in 2005 to examine the key environmental and social impacts of the sector and to identify mitigation actions. A new Forests Act has been prepared and is before Parliament for consideration.</p>
<b>Mining</b>	<p>The Guyana Geology and Mines Commission published a Mining Policy (1997) and has developed mining laws and regulations. GGMC registers and administers all mining and exploration properties and regulates small, medium and large scale exploration and mining operations.</p> <p>Guyana and Canada have been collaborating on a project (GENCAPD) since October 1998 towards environmentally friendly mining. This has led to an upgrade of the Environmental Unit (functional since January 1996) at GGMC to an Environmental Division which, together with other sections of GGMC, monitors mining operations. Large-scale mining operations, those which use cyanide in their operations, and those in sensitive areas have long had the requirement of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) to be conducted.</p> <p>A number of development have taken place in this sector since 2002. The GENCAPD Project came to an end in 2005 and efforts are underway for a second phase to commence in 2006 with more focus on involving the private sector and communities. The EPA headed a multi-stakeholder committee that drafted updated Mining Regulations (Mining, Amendment No.1 Regulations, 2001.) that are more comprehensive regarding the use of poisonous substances, and the management of the environment, reclamation and protected areas. These Regulations, referred to as the 'Mining Amendment Regulations 2005' were approved by the Minister March 2005. Work is ongoing on other Regulations regarding mining and a Multi-stakeholder Technical Committee, headed by GGMC did substantial work on these Regulations which are being finalised by GGMC. Concomitant with the Regulations there will be associated amendments to the Mining Act.</p> <p>With assistance from the World Bank in 2005, a Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Mining sector was completed in April 2006 and is under review.</p> <p>Mining companies are required through their permits to observe the prescribed environmental guidelines as set out in the Regulations. There is also a drive by GGMC to promote environmental and public awareness among miners and stakeholders and to promote self regulation. In addition, there are ongoing activities by the GGMC to register all miners especially Brazilians, and mining activities.</p> <p>In the bauxite sub-sector, a study is currently underway to look at rehabilitation of mined out sites at one of the primary bauxite producing areas (Linden). The potential for aquaculture at mined out sites is being examined</p>



	<p>while a pilot project on re-vegetation involving GGMC and the community of Kara Kara is ongoing.</p>
<b>Tourism</b>	<p>The Government through the Guyana Tourism Authority Act in 2003 created the semi-autonomous Tourism Authority. GTA, in collaboration with the Guyana Bureau of Standards has been developing standards for tour operators, hotels, and interior resorts. In 2003, with assistance from Conservation International an Ecotourism Charette was conducted with recommendations for the development of the tourism product at Kaieteur, Rupununi and Georgetown. Aspects of the report are being implemented at Kaieteur through the National Parks Commission, in the Rupununi with the North Rupununi District Development Board and in Georgetown with the Mayor and City Council and Ministry of Culture.</p> <p>In 2005, with assistance from the Inter-American Development Bank, a 5 Year Strategic Tourism Development Plan has been prepared for the sector which identifies the development of tourism plans for key tourism corridors and areas as well as improving infrastructure for access.</p>
<b>Agriculture</b>	<p>The agriculture sector remains one of the principal contributors to national GDP principally through rice and sugar production with efforts being made to expand to non-traditional crops, livestock and fisheries.</p> <p>Since 2002, there has been a number of developments in the agri sector, principal among them being the implementation of a 10 year strategic plan for restructuring the rice industry, expanded cultivation and modern sugar factory for Skeldon, implementation of a 5-year strategic development plan for organic farming, continued efforts towards opening up the intermediate savannahs with investments in cattle ranching, cash crop farming, nature tourism and agro-forestry, expansion in fish processing and several initiatives in aquaculture including an integrated aquaculture-rice farming project, expansion in poultry production facilities including feed manufacturing plants, farms and processing plants while encouraging satellite poultry farming to satisfy the capacity of processing plans.</p>
<b>Disaster Management and Response</b>	<p>In 1981 a Civil Defence Commission was inaugurated to promote disaster preparedness. A National Disaster Preparedness Plan was prepared by the Civil Defence Commission in 1985 with subsequent revisions made in 2002. In 2003, with assistance from the Caribbean Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy Programme, a Results Framework for a Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Strategy was developed for Guyana along with a 3 Year Plan of Action.</p> <p>In the aftermath of the January 2005 floods, the CDC was fully reconstituted and in December 2005, a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Planning Workshop was held to identify a consensus vision for disaster risk management, establish broad consensus on roles and responsibilities and develop a Framework of An Action Plan for Disaster Risk Management.</p> <p>The CDC is expected to take the lead in 2006 to develop an Action Plan for Development of a Comprehensive Disaster Management Plan. In its road map for 2006, a number of critical areas have been identified such as facilities completion and warehouse management training, medical first responder</p>

	<p>training, search and rescue and mass casualty evacuation training, shelter preparedness and management training and disaster risk assessment.</p> <p>In the area of water management, a draft Water Level Management Manual has been completed for the East Demerara Water Conservancy with assistance from UNDP and this will be tested in June 2006 and thereafter, if approved will be adopted for all conservancies.</p>
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#### 4.3 Framework for UNCCD – Policy, Strategies, Action Plans, Laws and Institutions

The framework within which UNCCD fits provides the enabling environment for the implementation of the Convention. This framework is shaped by the policies, strategies, action plans, laws and institutional arrangement in the sphere of natural resources, land and environmental planning and management. Table 5 provides a summary of this framework which is further elaborated in Annex C.

**Table 5. Framework for UNCCD**

<b>Policies/Plans/Institution/Legislation</b>	<b>Date Developed/Estb.</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Policy</b>		
National Development Strategy 2001-2010	2000	Currently being implemented by Ministries and Line Agencies
National Poverty Reduction Strategy	November 2001	In the Implementation Phase
<b>Plans</b>		
National Environmental Action Plan 2001-2005	2001-2005	In the Implementation Phase
National Biodiversity Action Plan	30 November 1999	In the Implementation Phase
Integrated Costal Zone Management Action	December 2000	Approved by Government
National Forest Plan	April 2000	To be formally approved by Cabinet
Integrated Mangrove Management Plan	November 2001	To be formally approved by Cabinet
Climate Change Action Plan	April 2000	In the Implementation Phase
Integrated National Tourism Development and Management Plan	January 1999	Considered by Cabinet with endorsement of some elements, being implemented by MINTIC and GTA
<b>Legislation</b>		
Forests Act	Act 15 of 1953	Being Revised
Guyana Forestry Commission Act	Act 20 of 1979, revised in 2000	Current
Mining Act	Act 20 of 1989, Act 34 of 1920 and amendments	Regulations being upgraded. Regulations for environmental management enacted in March 2005.
Guyana Geology and Mines Commission Act	Act 9 of 1979	Current
Hydroelectric Power Act	Cap. 56:03, Amended Act 1 of 1972	Current
Geological Survey Act	Cap. 59:02 Act 6 of 1918	Current
Guyana Natural Resources Agency	Act Ord. 37 of 1986	Current
Town and Country Planning Act	Cap. 20:01, Act 25 of 1946 and amendments	Current
State Lands Act	(Cap. 62:01, Act 32 of 1903 and amendments)	Current
State Lands Resumption Act	(Cap. 62:02 Act 30 of 1905 and amendments)	Current

Acquisition of Land for Public Purposes Act	Cap. 62:05, Act 31 of 1914 and amendments	Current
Acquisition of Land	Land Settlement Act; Cap. 62:06 Act 13 of 1957 and amendments	Current
Acquisition of Lands	Act 2 of 1984 [Not Beneficially Occupied]	Current
Title to Land (Prescription and Limitation)	Act (Act 62 of 1952 and amendments)	Current
District Lands Partition and Re-allotment Act	Cap. 60:03, Act 16 of 1926 and amendments	Current
District Government Act	Cap. 19:02, Act 27 of 1910 and amendments	Current
Municipal and District Councils Act	Cap. 28:01 Act 24 of 1969 and amendments	Current
Local Democratic Organs Act	Act 12 of 1980	
Amerindian Act	Cap. 29:01, Act 22 of 1951 and amendments. New Act of March 2006.	Current
Kaieteur National Park Act	Cap. 20:02 and amendments, Act 41 of 1929, amended by Act 4 of 1972, further amended in 1999 and 2000	Current
National Parks Commission Act	Act 23 of 1977	Current
The Environmental Protection Act,	1996	Regulations developed
The Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation And Development Act	1996	Current
<b>Institutions</b>		
<i>Land and Natural Resource Planning, Management and Regulation</i>		
Guyana Forestry Commission	1979	Operational
Guyana Geology and Mines Commission	1979	Operational
Guyana Energy Agency	1998	Operational
Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission	2003	Operational
Ministry of Fisheries, Crops and Livestock	1997	Operational
Ministry of Agriculture	1963	Operational

<i>Development Planning</i>		
Central Housing and Planning Authority	1946	Operational
Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development	1996	Operational
Regional Democratic Councils		Operational
Neighbourhood Democratic Councils		Operational
Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission		Operational
<i>Environmental Management and Regulation</i>		
Environmental Protection Agency	1996	Operational
<i>Area Management</i>		
Village Councils		Operational
National Parks Commission	1977	Operational
Iwokrama International Centre	1996	Operational
Conservation International Guyana (forest concession)	1996	Operational

## **Section 5 - Principal Constraints and Challenges to UNCCD Implementation**

While efforts are underway to move forward with UNCCD implementation, there are a number of priority issues to be addressed in order to prevent and mitigate land degradation and to move towards sustainable land management. These issues were identified through the NCSA process and are outlined as follows:

1. Approval of the draft Land Use Policy to set the overarching framework for sustainable land management. It is expected that this policy will identify guidelines for land use as well as criteria for multiple land uses.
2. The need for capacity building and institutional strengthening of the GLSC and related Agencies for sustainable land management and to meet UNCCD obligations.
3. The need for a more proactive National Steering Committee for UNCCD in spite of good collaboration and cooperation among members.
4. The need to mobilise funds to implement the NAP perhaps through developing a financing strategy to draw on regional and international mechanisms.
5. A concerted and sustained effort towards education and awareness to address the generally low level of awareness and knowledge of land degradation in other Agencies, Government Institutions and society at large.
6. The need for a comprehensive study and assessment of the current land uses and practices and factors contributing to land degradation along with information gathering and developing a national clearing house (Focal Point) for information regarding land use, and land degradation. As well, there is need to develop early and forecasting warning systems for droughts and floods.
7. The need for the harmonising of legislation and institutional framework for sustainable land management and land use planning.
8. The need to improve institutional cooperation and collaboration for sustainable land management and better linkage between Government Agencies and NGO's and civil society for sustainable land management.

The NCSA exercise examined in detail capacity at the individual, institutional and systemic levels for implementing UNCCD. These findings are summarised in Table 6.

**Table 6. Key Capacity Findings from the NCSA Exercise**

<b>Individual Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>Limited Human Resource Base</i> (few persons with the requisite skills and understanding of UNCCD, the obligations, and issues of desertification and land degradation in relation to Guyana and SLM);</li> <li>b. <i>Absence of Programmes for Training and Capacity Building</i> (no formal programme for training and human resource development in particular as it relates to SLM)</li> <li>c. <i>Limited information and data collection and management</i> (very little information exists as it relates to issues of desertification and land degradation and there is a need for more studies and assessments to provide a clear understanding of the elements of land degradation as well as strengthening the current system for information management and sharing which is limited to a few institutions).</li> <li>d. <i>Limited education and awareness</i> (generally there is little awareness of land degradation issues and the need for SLM in the Guyana context).</li> <li>e. <i>Absence of incentives for gaining new skills and technical abilities as it relates to SLM.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Institutional Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>Overlapping mandates among institutions and limited understanding of roles and responsibilities and stakeholder involvement as it relates to achieving overall objectives of SLM</i> (the GLSC works with a few natural resource and environment Agencies through a number of committees but regional and local government bodies and communities need to be more integrated and there is need for more implementation on-the-ground of SLM best-practice by sector Agencies)</li> <li>b. <i>Insufficient technical infrastructure among institutions for effective involvement in SLM</i> (the technical infrastructure for SLM is represented by the status of GLSC and there is no Government allocation of funds for SLM)</li> </ul>
<b>System Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>Absence of a comprehensive analysis of the policy, regulatory and management framework for SLM</i> (the current system where aspects of natural resources and environmental management are shared among Ministries and Agencies in not the most efficient and effective system despite efforts at coordination through Cabinet Sub Committee, NREAC along with other Committees. Also, there is no specific legislation regarding land use and land management. Individual legislation addresses specific land uses. Each piece of legislation concerns itself with a particular activity and collectively they do not form a coherent body of legislation for land use planning and management.</li> </ul>

## **Section 6 – Conclusion**

Since the last National Report in April 2002, there has been a number of significant developments with regard to moving forward to meet UNCCD obligations. There has also been several initiatives across sectors within the framework of natural resources, environment and land management. There is clearly an acceleration in moving forward with UNCCD, principally through:

1. Identifying an appropriate institution as National Focal Point
2. Establishing of a representative National Coordinating Body
3. Identifying capacity needs and opportunities for UNCCD through the NCSA Project
4. Preparation of a 5 Year National Action Programme to serve as the guiding framework for implementing actions to combat land degradation and promote sustainable land management.
5. Preparation of a project proposal for assistance under the LDC-SIDS Portfolio Project for Sustainable Land Management.

Guyana has built momentum in its efforts to move forward with addressing the issue of desertification and land degradation within the framework of sustainable land management. However, for this momentum to be maintained, capacity building and ultimately, financial resources are critical. Innovative mechanisms will need to be developed to maximize Government's in-kind contribution and those from donors while at the same time integrally involving the NGO and private sector.



## Section 7 - References

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Environmental Protection Agency (December 2000) *Integrated Coastal Zone Management Action Plan*, Guyana.

Government of Guyana (May 1994) *National Environmental Action Plan*, Guyana.

Government of Guyana (1996) *Environmental Protection Act*

## **Section 2 - Web Sites**

Guyana National Development Strategy 2001-2010 <http://www.sdn.org.gy/nds/>

Guyana Geology and Mines Commission <http://www.sdn.org.gy/ggmc/>

Guyana Poverty Reduction Strategy <http://www.povertyreduction.gov.gy/>

Ministry of Tourism, Industry & Commerce <http://www.mintic.gov.gy/>

## Section 8 – Stakeholders Engaged in the Preparation of the Third National Report

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9	Chabilall Ramsarup	Civil Defence Commission	226 8815	<a href="mailto:chubby@hotmail.com">chubby@hotmail.com</a>
10	Mona Bynoe	Forest Products Association	226 9848/2821	<a href="mailto:fpasect@guyana.net.gy">fpasect@guyana.net.gy</a>
11	G. V. Misir	Region 7 Regional Administration	455 2251	
12	L. Fraser	Guyana Red Cross	226 0384	<a href="mailto:guyanaredcross@yahoo.com">guyanaredcross@yahoo.com</a>
13	David Fredericks	National Agriculture Research Unit	220 2841	<a href="mailto:fredericks_david@yahoo.com">fredericks_david@yahoo.com</a>
14	Bhaleka Senlall	Hydromet Service	225 9303	<a href="mailto:bhalekasenlall@yahoo.com">bhalekasenlall@yahoo.com</a>
15	Zainool Rahaman	Hydromet Service	227 2463	<a href="mailto:zainoolm@yahoo.com">zainoolm@yahoo.com</a>
16	Karen Livan	Guyana Geology Mines Commission	227 1232	
17	Patrick Phyll	Linmine Secretariat	444 3298	
18	Andrew Bishop	Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission	227 2582	
19	Bramhanand Singh	Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission	225 0524	
20	Murthland Wilson	Information Securities Lending Association	441 2229	
21	Indarjit Ramdass	Environmental Protection Agency	222 5784	<a href="mailto:iramdass@hotmail.com">iramdass@hotmail.com</a>
22	George Howard	Sea Defence Division, Ministry of Works	227 2469	
23	Sonia Reece	Guyana Forestry Commission	226 7271	

## ANNEX A COUNTRY PROFILE

### UNCCD Country Profile

#### GUYANA

This UNCCD country profile has been provided by: Andrew Bishop, CEO

Name of Focal Point Institution: Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission

Date: May 31<sup>st</sup> 2006

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### Biophysical indicators relating to desertification and drought

#### 1. Climate<sup>i, ii, ix</sup>

1.1.	Index of aridity <sup>1</sup>	N/A
1.2.	Normal rainfall	1525-2030mm
1.3.	Rainfall standard deviation	N/A

Sub-national areas	mm
1. Savannah	1525
2. Georgetown/Coastal	2290
3. Forest	3000

#### 2. Vegetation and land use<sup>iii</sup>

2.1.	NDVI (normalized difference vegetation index)	N/A
2.2.	Vegetation cover (% of total land area)	78.5
2.3.	Land use (percent of total land)	N/A

Land use	1990 – 1999	2000 – 2005
Arable crop land		480 000 ha
Irrigated		139 200 ha
Rainfed		340 800 ha
Pasture		1 230 000 ha
Forest and woodland		16 879 000 ha
Other land		

2.4. Surface albedo <sup>2</sup>	N/A
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<sup>1</sup> The index of aridity is the ratio P/PET; P=precipitation, PET=potential evapotranspiration. Climatic zone maps to be annexed if available in a scale of 1/million.

<sup>2</sup> Surface albedo map to be annexed if available.

### 3. Water resources<sup>iv</sup>

3.1.	Fresh water availability (million m3)	N/A
3.2.	Fresh water resources per capita (m3)	314,620
3.3.	Agricultural water use (million m3)	N/A
3.4.	Industrial water use (million m3)	N/A

### 4. Energy

#### Consumption

4.1.	Energy use per capita (kg oil equivalent)	3,828 (10 <sup>3</sup> Boe <sup>3</sup> )
4.2.	Agricultural energy use per hectare (millions of BTU)	N/A

#### Production

4.3.	Energy from renewables excluding combustible renewables and waste (% of total supply)	Estimate 1%
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#### Renewables - Consumption by sector

4.4.	Industry (% of total renewable consumption)	N/A
4.5.	Residential (% of total renewable consumption)	N/A
4.6.	Agriculture (% of total renewable consumption)	N/A

### 5. Types of land degradation

Type of degradation	1990 – 1999		2000 – 2005	
	million ha	Percent of total area	million ha	Percent of total area
Forestry			N/A	N/A
Mining		N/A	N/A	N/A
Agriculture	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

### 6. Rehabilitation

Lands under rehabilitation	1990 - 1999	2000 - 2005
Rehabilitation of degraded crop land (km2)	N/A	N/A
Rehabilitation of degraded rangeland (km2)	N/A	N/A
Rehabilitation of degraded forest (km2)	N/A	N/A

<sup>3</sup> Boe – Barrel of Oil Equivalent

## Socio-economic indicators related to desertification and drought

### 7. **People and economy** <sup>v, vi, vii</sup>

7.1.	Population (total)	767 000
▪	Population: urban (percent of total)	37
▪	Population: rural (percent of total)	63
7.2.	Population growth (annual %)	0.6
7.3.	Life expectancy (years)	62
7.4.	Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	52
7.5.	GDP (current US\$)	0.72 Billion
7.6.	GNI per capita (current US\$)	840
7.7.	National poverty rate (% of population)	N/A
7.8.	Crop production (metric tons)	3 663 000
7.9.	Livestock production (metric tons)	27 000

### 8. **Human development** <sup>viii</sup>

8.1.	Primary education completion rate (% age group)	N/A
8.2.	Number of women in rural development (total number)	N/A
8.3.	Unemployment (% of total)	N/A
8.4.	Youth unemployment rate (age 15-24)	N/A
8.5.	Illiteracy total (% age 15 and above)	N/A
8.6.	Literacy male (% age 15 and above)	99
8.7.	Literacy female (% age 15 and above)	98.2

### 9. **Science and technology**

9.1.	Number of scientific institutions engaged in desertification-related work (total number)	4
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### 10. **Please specify the data sources**

iii, v	<a href="http://www.fao.org/es/ess/yearbook/vol_1_2/pdf/Guyana.pdf">http://www.fao.org/es/ess/yearbook/vol_1_2/pdf/Guyana.pdf</a>
vi	<a href="http://www.povertyreduction.gov.gy/documents/Guyana%20at%20a%20glance%20PART%202.pdf">http://www.povertyreduction.gov.gy/documents/Guyana%20at%20a%20glance%20PART%202.pdf</a>
vii, viii	<a href="http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2003/indicator/cty_f_GUY.html">http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2003/indicator/cty_f_GUY.html</a>
i	<a href="http://www.blacknet.co.uk/homeland/guyana.htm">http://www.blacknet.co.uk/homeland/guyana.htm</a>
iv	<a href="http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEEI/Data/20855969/Guyana.pdf">http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEEI/Data/20855969/Guyana.pdf</a>
ii	<a href="http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-26772">http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-26772</a>
ix	<a href="http://www.sdn.org.gy/gallery/mm/guyana.html">http://www.sdn.org.gy/gallery/mm/guyana.html</a>

## ANNEX B

## NAP WORK PLAN

ISSUES AND ACTIONS		YEAR 1				YEAR 2				YEAR 3				YEAR 4				YEAR 5			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>1</b>	<b><i>Need for rational planning and management of land resources</i></b>																				
	a. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of current land use practices and factors contributing to degradation																				
	b. Finalisation of a National Land Use Policy and Developing a National Land Use Plan																				
	c. Develop a system for land use planning at the Regional level																				
	d. Promote soil conservation and stringent management through sustainable agricultural practices																				
	e. Provide technical assistance to finalise and implement regulations in the environment and natural resource sector to prevent and mitigate land degradation																				
<b>2</b>	<b><i>Need to harmonize and rationalize legislation to remove overlaps, promote effective coordination, information exchange and institutional synergies</i></b>																				
	a. Review and develop legislation in relation to natural resources management and land use planning and management at the national, regional and local level																				
	b. Harmonize and strengthen institutional arrangements for land planning and management																				
	c. Strengthen institutional arrangements for natural resources and environmental management.																				
	d. Strengthen the existing Land Information Systems for information access, sharing and management																				
	e. Prioritize data needs for land planning and management and develop a programme of research and data collection																				

ISSUES AND ACTIONS		YEAR 1				YEAR 2				YEAR 3				YEAR 4				YEAR 5			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>3</b>	<b><i>The need for financial resources</i></b>																				
	a. Develop a financing strategy for SLM with emphasis on seeking donor support financing																				
	b. Maximize in-kind contribution from GLSC and other institutions																				
	c. Network with institutions to share resources to achieve objectives																				
<b>4</b>	<b><i>Public education and public awareness</i></b>																				
	a. Undertake Gap Analyses and Design Education and Awareness Programme for SLM																				
	b. Maximize existing tools such as GLSC newsletter and brochure series, GLSC webpage local media																				
	c. Implement Programme through networking at the regional and local level with Govt, NGO, civil society and communities																				
	d. Educate hinterland communities on sustainable use of the forests to address issues of forest fires and conservation practices																				
<b>5</b>	<b><i>Increasing Capacities</i></b>																				
	a. Undertake a Skills Assessment for SLM																				
	b. Develop a Training Programme to deliver essential skills needed for SLM with training including University of Guyana, targeted short courses and workshops in areas such as GIS, LUP, EIA, among others																				



ISSUES AND ACTIONS		YEAR 1				YEAR 2				YEAR 3				YEAR 4				YEAR 5			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>6</b>	<b><i>Traditional knowledge</i></b>																				
	a. Develop a mechanism to gather local knowledge and information on a regular basis																				
	b. Developing Database and Inventorising Best-Practices																				
	c. Incorporating traditional knowledge best practice into the system for land planning and management																				
<b>7</b>	<b><i>Promotion of regional* aspects of preventing land degradation</i></b>																				
	a. Linkages with Regional Action Programme																				
	b. Development of regional support project for sustainable and management																				
	c. Participation in the implementation of the Regional Action Programme (developed for LAC in 2003)																				
	d. Participation in a regional initiative for Early Warning Systems and Information Network for land management																				
<b>8</b>	<b><i>The need to alleviate poverty and improve the quality of life</i></b>																				
	a. Subsequent to 1 (a) identify and implement alternative livelihoods initiatives																				
	b. Diversify agriculture practice with value adding and promote efficient multiple land use																				

ISSUES AND ACTIONS		YEAR 1				YEAR 2				YEAR 3				YEAR 4				YEAR 5			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
9	<b><i>The need to achieve food security and sustainable development and management of agriculture</i></b>																				
	a. Support and promote agricultural research																				
	b. Promote diversification in the agriculture sector through non-traditional crops and other means																				
	c. Expand agricultural production by opening up new areas																				
	d. Expand community-based agriculture initiatives e.g PRSSP																				
	e. Promote value-added in the agricultural sector																				
	f. Promote soil conservation and stringent management through sustainable agricultural practices such as strip cropping, terracing, mulching and crop rotation																				
10	<b><i>The need for sustainable management of natural resources and drainage basins and watersheds</i></b>																				
	a. Promote and support sustainable management in forest and mining																				
	b. Restoration and protection of biodiversity and watersheds in collaboration with relevant agencies																				
	c. Undertake a groundwater situation analysis including an assessment of salt water intrusion																				
	d. Undertake a study and situation analysis of both coastal and hinterland surface water systems																				
	e. Support the implementation of the approved Drainage and Irrigation Master Plan																				
	f. Strengthen and expand the system of Drainage and Irrigation																				
	g. Strengthen the current D&I Management System and expand the Water User's Association and their role in management																				

ISSUES AND ACTIONS		YEAR 1				YEAR 2				YEAR 3				YEAR 4				YEAR 5			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
11	<i>The need for Early Warning Systems and Emergency Plans to mitigate drought, floods and other natural disasters</i>																				
	a. identify and implement actions to reduce natural and man-made fires																				
	b. Identify and Implement Early Warning Systems for disaster preparedness																				
	c. Develop a comprehensive National Disaster Response and Management Plan																				
	c. Strengthening of institutional arrangements for disaster preparedness and response																				

## ANNEX C OVERVIEW OF POLICIES, STRATEGIES, PLAN AND LEGISLATION

Policies/Plans/Institution/Legislation	Date Developed/Estb.	Status
<b>Policy</b>		
National Development Strategy 2001-2010	2000	Currently being implemented by Ministries and Line Agencies
National Poverty Reduction Strategy	November 2001	In the Implementation Phase
<b>Plans</b>		
National Environmental Action Plan 2001-2005	2001-2005	In the Implementation Phase
National Biodiversity Action Plan	30 November 1999	In the Implementation Phase
Integrated Costal Zone Management Action	December 2000	Approved by Government
National Forest Plan	April 2000	To be formally approved by Cabinet
Integrated Mangrove Management Plan	November 2001	To be formally approved by Cabinet
Climate Change Action Plan	April 2000	In the Implementation Phase
Integrated National Tourism Development and Management Plan	January 1999	Considered by Cabinet with endorsement of some elements, being implemented by MINTIC and GTA
<b>Legislation</b>		
Forests Act	Act 15 of 1953	Being Revised
Guyana Forestry Commission Act	Act 20 of 1979, revised in 2000	Current
Mining Act	Act 20 of 1989, Act 34 of 1920 and amendments	Regulations being developed
Guyana Geology and Mines Commission Act	Act 9 of 1979	Current
Hydroelectric Power Act	Cap. 56:03, Amended Act 1 of 1972	Current
Geological Survey Act	Cap. 59:02 Act 6 of 1918	Current
Guyana Natural Resources Agency	Act Ord. 37 of 1986	Current
Town and Country Planning Act	Cap. 20:01, Act 25 of 1946 and amendments	Current
State Lands Act	(Cap. 62:01, Act 32 of 1903 and amendments)	Current
State Lands Resumption Act	(Cap. 62:02 Act 30 of 1905 and amendments)	Current
Acquisition of Land for Public Purposes Act	Cap. 62:05, Act 31 of 1914 and	Current

	amendments	
Acquisition of Land	Land Settlement Act; Cap. 62:06 Act 13 of 1957 and amendments	Current
Acquisition of Lands	Act 2 of 1984 [Not Beneficially Occupied]	Current
Title to Land (Prescription and Limitation)	Act (Act 62 of 1952 and amendments)	Current
District Lands Partition and Re-allotment Act	Cap. 60:03, Act 16 of 1926 and amendments	Current
District Government Act	Cap. 19:02, Act 27 of 1910 and amendments	Current
Municipal and District Councils Act	Cap. 28:01 Act 24 of 1969 and amendments	Current
Local Democratic Organs Act	Act 12 of 1980	
Amerindian Act	Cap. 29:01, Act 22 of 1951 and amendments. New Act of March 2006	Current
Kaieteur National Park Act	Cap. 20:02 and amendments, Act 41 of 1929, amended by Act 4 of 1972, further amended in 1999 and 2000	Current
National Parks Commission Act	Act 23 of 1977	Current
The Environmental Protection Act,	1996	Regulations developed
The Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation And Development Act	1996	Current
<b>Institutions</b>		
<i>Land and Natural Resource Planning, Management and Regulation</i>		
Guyana Forestry Commission	1979	Operational
Guyana Geology and Mines Commission	1979	Operational
Guyana Energy Agency	1998	Operational
Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission	2003	Operational
Ministry of Fisheries, Crops and Livestock	1997	Operational
Ministry of Agriculture	1963	Operational
<i>Development Planning</i>		

Central Housing and Planning Authority	1946	Operational
Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development	1996	Operational
Regional Democratic Councils		Operational
Neighbourhood Democratic Councils		Operational
Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission		Operational
<i>Environmental Management and Regulation</i>		
Environmental Protection Agency	1996	Operational
<i>Area Management</i>		
Village Councils		Operational
National Parks Commission	1977	Operational
Iwokrama International Centre	1996	Operational
Conservation International Guyana (forest concession)	1996	Operational

## **Introduction**

Coordination of natural resources policy is carried out through the Natural Resources Sub-Committee of the Cabinet, and the Natural Resources and Environment Advisory Committee (NREAC). In addition to these permanent Committees there are several other important Committees that function in an advisory capacity on specific national programs.

A number of strategies and action plans for sustainable development and resources use have been developed and are now in various stages of implementation. These, along with the institutions and legislation related to UNCCD are identified below:

## **Policy Framework**

The overall policy is one of sustainable development which emanated from the Rio Summit of 1992. A number of strategies and action plans for sustainable development and resources use have been developed and are now in various stages of implementation. These, along with the institutions and legislation related to UNCCD are identified below:

- National Development Strategy (2001-2010)
- National Poverty Reduction Strategy

## **National Development Strategy**

The National Development Strategy represents the highest level of national planning. It is an integrated document outlining the national strategy and policy in a number of priority areas including agriculture, environment, forestry, fisheries, mining, tourism, land management and the eradication of poverty. The Strategy was formulated through a comprehensive national participatory effort and serves as a framework for policy and planning in the respective sectors of the economy.

Chapter 22 deals specifically with land by describing the basic features of land management, issues and constraints and identifies broad objectives of land policy and a strategy. Among the key policy objectives identified is the need for better collection and management of land information; improving the functioning of institutions with responsibilities for land and to improve the process of making land available for development activities. This, as stated within the NDS, is summarised as follows:

### ***Land-use Policy***

*There is no land-use policy in Guyana at this stage. Although over the years, several attempts have been made to devise comprehensive land capacity classifications for the country, and to utilise these as the basis for land zoning and land allocation, the process is far from complete. The problems that are inherent in the absence of a land-use policy and land-use plans are compounded by the complexity of the land tenure system.*

### ***Land Tenure***

*Apart from the special circumstances of GUYSUCO's land holdings there are the two following types:*

- *Publicly owned lands that comprise State Lands and Government Lands. State Lands, formerly called Crown Lands, are controlled by the Commissioner of Lands and Surveys. However, the Guyana Forestry Commission, the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, and the Lands and Surveys Department administer land that is utilised for forestry, mining, and agriculture,*

respectively. Each of these three Government agencies may issue titles for different purposes over the same land space. Government lands are those purchased by, or granted to, the Government to be developed for general revenues, such as hospitals, schools, government administrative buildings, and land development schemes. State and Government Lands are approved by the Ministry of Agriculture, while under the existing legislative framework, Cabinet must approve the sale of State and Government Lands.

- *Freehold Private Lands* are those lands that have been “alienated” from the State and which are held by private or corporate interests. Freehold land administration is carried out by the Deeds Registry under the Office of the Attorney General of the Supreme Court.

The Guyana Government owns about 90 percent of the national territory. In coastal areas where most of the population is concentrated, roughly half of the farms are freehold properties. The distribution of lands is characterised by the predominance of small farms of 5-15 acres each. This structure of distribution originated during the colonial period when both the size and number of plots that were allocated to former slaves and indentured workers were restricted. In the post colonial years the predominance of small farms has continued to be encouraged by Government policies that limit the size of plots that are leased or granted to individuals by the State to hypothetical minima that could support a family.

For purposes of defining policies for the National Development Strategy, and to understand the land tenure framework that underlies the planning and control requirements of the UNCCD, the following classes of interest in land are recognised:

- *Holders of State leases* who are the legal occupants and possess lease documents that are issued by the Land and Surveys Department
- *Sub-lessees of State leases* who rent lands from principal lessees. Under the present lease arrangements, they are considered illegal occupants of State lands
- *unregularised occupants of State Lands*: those who have applied for lands they occupy while waiting on the applications to be approved
- *squatters on State Lands* who are illegal occupants of State Lands, not including sublessees
- *owners of freehold lands*: those who have purchased from the State or previous holders by way of transport or certificate of title
- *renters of freehold lands*: those who rent under private arrangements from freeholders, both formally and informally
- *unregularised occupants of freehold lands*: those who have claims to the lands they occupy but whose claims are not legally documented. This is often the case on old freehold estates that have been subdivided but for which individual titles have not been issued
- *squatters on freehold lands*: illegal occupants of privately owned lands
- *indigenous communities*: Amerindian communities throughout Guyana, recognised as Amerindian Districts, Areas and Villages
- *the sugar industry*: meaning GUYSUCO and inclusive estates
- *prospective investors*: those who seek to possess lands for agricultural or other purposes
- *the landless*, may be classified as citizens of the lower income bracket, desirous of obtaining land for agriculture but who are deterred by cost factors, the laborious process and other associated arrangements.



## **Issues and Constraints**

*Some of the key issues and constraints currently facing land-use planning initiatives in Guyana and impacting on the implementation of the UNCCD are:*

- *The Government loses a considerable amount of revenue from State Land that could be applied to improving land administration, other related services, and infrastructures.*
- *The large number of agencies and sub-agencies that are concerned with the allocation of land and the collection of rents and fees from the plethora of land types has led to accusations of unfairness, bribery and corruption and to undoubted inefficiencies.*
- *The unattractive conditions of State leases include: the duration of leases, which is currently twenty-five (25) years. There is great difficulty in obtaining production financing, since most banks do not accept a lease of 25 years as collateral.*
- *The illegal occupation of State lands for agriculture and other purposes, especially housing, has increased over the last decade or so. Much of the land squatted on for housing is prime agricultural land for both cultivation and grazing.*
- *The survey process has greatly slowed and there is little money in the system to pay surveyors.*
- *There is evidence of significant incidences of underutilised freehold lands due to a lack of sufficient stimulation and incentives for agriculture production; the poor state of maintenance of the drainage and irrigation system in many areas; absentee landlords, who either have gone overseas or have neglected the land for other, possibly urban, careers; and restrictive procedures for land rental, which discourage renting out land that the owner cannot utilise.*
- *Over time, owing to the workings of legacies, some land holdings have become very fragmented. A peculiar problem has arisen in that the form of agricultural plots has become very long and narrow, in order to assure that each plot retained access to irrigation and drainage canals. In Essequibo some plots are known to have dimensions of 12 feet wide by more than 9,200 feet deep, while in Berbice the extreme dimensions are 12 feet by more than 12,000 feet. Such distorted shapes are highly unsuitable for cultivation.*
- *Unclear or unmarked boundaries of indigenous settlements have led to encroachment from loggers and miners and a general sense of insecurity regarding rights and ownership of the Amerindian peoples.*
- *Underutilised land resources under indigenous holdings are sometimes exploited by others (e.g., foreign investors), and all benefits and incomes they produce elude the community and its peoples, resulting in growing feelings of exploitation and mistrust for the Government.*
- *GUYSUCO holds a large percentage of coastal lands; although much of it is cultivated a portion has been left idle for some time. This has created a situation where there is idle land that is not available to those who might put it to productive use.*
- *More than eight thousand farm families possess less than ten acres of land with an average holding of two acres in that group. This clearly is an infra-subsistence level of land holding, and very likely it is the major explanation for the poverty found in rural areas.*
- *No central data base system exists for the storage, analysis, management and retrieval of data on title and tenure conditions. There is also inadequate data on existing land-use, soil type, temperature, rainfall, slope, land tenure, indigenous settlements, physical infrastructure, social infrastructure and population, etc. The lack of data hinders the planning and implementation of a land-use plan and subsequent development projects, as well as individual choices and decisions in land-use for agricultural and other purposes.*

- *The absence of environmental regulations on the occupation and utilisation of the land resource, can lead to environmental degradation of the land resource through deforestation, pollution from waste disposal etc.*
- *The issues of land distribution, in general, and of ancestral lands, in particular, are of extreme importance in Guyana. Indeed, they are considered by many to be as potentially explosive as the racial problem.*

### **Sectoral Objectives**

*The principal broad objectives for land policy relevant here are:*

- *To improve the efficiency with which land resources are utilised in production.*
- *To improve lease arrangements towards providing greater security of tenure.*
- *To improve access to production financing for agricultural investments, improve the transferability of leased land and its use as collateral, extend security of tenure to sub-lessees of State Lands and to accelerate the process of conversion to freehold.*
- *To make more effective the management of Guyana's State land resources by putting in place a proper lease management system, with better documentation, and an effective system for collecting lease rentals.*
- *To re-centralise the Land and Surveys Commission functions towards more efficient land administration.*
- *To make more timely surveys and improve the quality and coverage of data on land registration and land characteristics, and to modernise data management systems.*
- *To improve renting conditions of freehold lands, and so make more agricultural land available and increase the average intensity of its use (e.g. by making available the sugar industry's unutilised land for agriculture and other development)..*
- *To establish clear Amerindian District boundaries both on the ground and in maps.*
- *To improve access to State lands for agriculture, aquaculture and other development.*
- *To improve the coordination and communication among all related institutions, in order to attain improved land utilization and to improve the functioning of each institution responsible for land allocation and administration.*
- *To clarify national land policy, at a broad level in the Strategy and more specifically in subsequent documents.*
- *To acquire the land use and land capability data necessary for investment.*
- *To promote the sustainable use of land for agriculture and other purposes by continuous environmental impact assessments.*

### **The Strategy**

*Some key elements of the strategy are:*

- *The responsibility of carrying out field inspections for application purposes will be delegated to the Districts' land selection committee. The land selection committee will include in its recommendation report, the present status of the land in question.*

- *The Guyana Land and Surveys Commission will embark on a special project to eliminate the existing backlog of surveys.*
- *A new standard agricultural lease will be formulated. This will include the following provisions:*
  - *Lease terms of 99 or 999 years compared with the present 25-year limit.*
  - *The ability of lessees to transfer leases freely and fully after ten (10) years of beneficial occupancy, without requiring administrative approval.*
  - *The ability to use leased land as collateral without seeking approval from Guyana Lands and Surveys as is now the case. Lessees will, however, be required to register the mortgage with Lands and Surveys.*
  - *The ability to sublet in full and in part any portion of the land that has been leased, without the consent or approval of the lessor, provided that the sublease is pursuant to a written instrument filed with the Commissioner.*
  - *Lessees who have beneficially occupied the same plot of land for a period of more than fifteen (15) years, will be allowed on conclusion of the leasehold to convert to freehold consistent with established freehold criteria.*
- *The new policy for managing leases on State lands mandates the introduction of market valued land rents, based upon relatively few aggregate categories of land, which should be determined by the land's capability, its proximity to transportation and the adequacy of its drainage and irrigation. Special rent provisions will be made for the rural poor (defined as families with incomes below the prevailing poverty line). These rentals will also be subject to annual adjustments.*
- *The current status of each lease will be investigated and the findings recorded in a computerised lease management system.*
- *Given the existing problem of housing and the trend to regularise the process, squatters on State lands that show marginal or no agriculture capability should be regularised into a formal housing scheme.*
- *The regional Lands and Surveys offices, will be reorganised and strengthened to carry out an efficient service throughout the country, regionally. The regional offices will be staffed with clerks and land rangers as necessary, to handle applications and inspections for applications, along with the district and regional land selection committees. The regional offices will be linked by a computer/telecommunication network.*
- *An accurate land register and cadastral maps will be established.*
- *An assessment of the status of all lands held by GUYSUCO will be made to determine immediate and future needs, and to develop a programme for relocation of lands to other users.*
- *GLSC will start a central data base where information to guide prospective investors can be accessed, such as land capability maps. The process of applying for land will be improved and opportunities for funding or credit will be sought by providing full documentation on the land to banks.*
- *Government will carry out an institutional analysis of current land administration, including non-agricultural lands as well, eliminating existing overlaps and giving the responsibility to the institution most related to and involved with each function. Given the historical role as manager of the land resource, and that the Commissioner of Lands and Surveys is the custodian of all lands, the Lands and Surveys Department should be the final clearing house regarding land use.*

- *The formulation and implementation of a National Plan on Land Use, based on present land use patterns and possible opportunities, should take into consideration physical, environmental, economic, social, cultural and demographic factors from a Guyanese perspective.*
- *The national land use plan will utilise the concept of sustainability, to protect all lands, in this instance agricultural lands, and it will strive to make that concept operational in as many instances as possible. It will take the lead in defining sustainable land use practices.*
- *Environmental regulations will be incorporated into all leases or title conditions, regarding proper waste disposal, replanting, etc.*
- *Environmental impact assessments will be carried out for existing large-scale land uses (agriculture, effect of D&I on soil erosion) and they will be mandatory for any proposed land development scheme, before granting permission, and as a method of monitoring land use regards environmental degradation of the land resource.*

A status report on the implementing of the NDS with regard to land management is needed.

### **Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)**

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) is directly linked to the NDS in the areas of economic policy, good governance, infrastructure development and improvement in social services with the objective of reducing poverty. The main goals of the PRS are: (i) sustained economic expansion within the context of a deepening participatory democracy; (ii) access to social services including education, health, water and housing; and (iii) strengthening, and where necessary, expansion of social safety nets.

The NDS and the PRS complement each other in setting out the country's economic and social development in the short and long term. Both strategies take into account environmental and natural resources management, agricultural production, and improvements in the social sectors, amongst others, which are important to combat land degradation directly and indirectly. They have a common objective which is the reduction of poverty. Alleviation of poverty and reversing land degradation go hand in hand. Both involve improving food security, educating and training people, strengthening the capacity of local communities, and community participation.

### **Planning Framework**

- National Environmental Action Plan (2001-2005)
- National Biodiversity Action Plan
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan
- National Forest Plan
- Integrated Mangrove Management Plan
- Climate Change Action Plan
- National Ecotourism Development Plan

### **National Biodiversity Action Plan.**

The National Strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Guyana's Biodiversity was completed in 1997 as an initial step to define the national position on biodiversity. The Strategy was preceded by the Country Study on Biological Diversity, which was undertaken in 1992. The National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) of 1999 is a product of national policy to elevate concern for biodiversity to the level of planning and action. It recognizes biodiversity as an important national asset that offers the country manifold economic options. The basis of the productive sectors of agriculture, fisheries, forestry and the

wildlife trade is biodiversity, in which the maintenance of diversity offers considerable opportunities and advantages.

The NBAP is intended to be consistent with the general direction of the National Development Strategy so that both documents will harmonise in respect of matters relating to place and use of biological resources for development activities. The Plan promotes both the conservation and the responsible use of biodiversity and biological resources. It comprises a number of programme areas under which various actions are identified for execution.

Among its objectives is recognized the importance of maintaining high water quality and preventing serious flooding in part by protecting watersheds from erosion or down-stream sedimentation and pollution. It recommends that as part of the ecosystem approach to biodiversity management sectoral entities should be encouraged to adopt integrated land and watershed management and prepare integrated management plans.

The NBAP has been in the implementation phase since 2000, with the EPA coordinating activities. Recently, through assistance from UNDP, there was a review of NBAP activities.

### **National Environmental Action Plan**

The National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) of 2001-2005 is a follow-on from the NEAP of 1994 which summarizes the national environment policy and focuses on coastal zone management, natural resources management including land resources, biodiversity, wildlife, forestry and ecotourism, waste management and pollution control, and mining. It also takes into consideration the role of public awareness and education in addressing environmental problems. The NEAP also identifies and recognizes the roles and functions of relevant stakeholders including private sector and non-governmental organizations in environmental management.

The NEAP states that "in order to conserve and improve the environment, the Government of Guyana will endeavour to:

- Assure all people living in the country the fundamental right to an environment adequate for their health and well-being.
- Achieve a balance between the use and conservation of the nation's resources to meet the needs of economic development and improved standards of living.
- Conserve and use the environment and natural resources of Guyana for the benefit of both present and future generations, based on the principle of the exercise of sovereignty.
- Maintain ecosystems and ecological processes essential for the functioning of the biosphere to preserve biological diversity and to observe the principle of optimum sustainable yield in the use of renewable natural resources and ecosystems, both on land and the sea."

### **Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan**

Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) is an ongoing process that seeks to promote the wise use, development and protection of coastal and marine resources; foster greater collaboration among sectoral agencies and enhance economic development. In 1999 an Integrated Coastal Zone Management committee was established to foster a more integrated approach to coastal zone management by coordinating and facilitating the work of agencies already directly involved in coastal zone management. In 2001 an Action Plan for Integrated Coastal Zone Management was produced. The Plan, which has been approved by Cabinet, addresses policy development, analysis and planning, coordination, public

awareness building and education, control and compliance, monitoring and measurement and information management.

Other activities to be undertaken are the strengthening of the institutional setup for integrated coastal zone management; the creation of a dynamic public awareness campaign to bring about deeper and more meaningful appreciation of the vulnerability of the coastal zone to sea level rise and climate change; the creation of a database of coastal resources to facilitate improved integrated coastal zone management.

The ICZM 5 Year Plan is currently being reviewed and a revised Plan is expected in 2006.

Guyana is part of the Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change (CPACC) project. The CPACC is a Global Environment (GEF) funded project being implemented in Caribbean countries by the Organisation of American States (OAS). CPACC is supporting Caribbean countries to cope with the potential adverse effects of global climate change, particularly sea level rise, in coastal areas, through vulnerability assessment, adaptation planning and capacity building. CPAAC has come to an end and the next phase, the Mainstreaming for Adaptation to Climate Change (MACC) is expected to commence with World Bank support. In the interim, through CIDA support, an Adaptation to Climate Change in the Caribbean (ACCC) project is underway to continue activities. Under the CPACC initiative, Guyana was able to conduct a socio-economic assessment of sea-level rise as part of a wider vulnerability assessment and developed a Climate Change Adaptation Policy and Implementation Strategy for coastal and low-lying areas.

### **National Mangrove Management Action Plan**

In 2001 the Guyana Forestry Commission, along with the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Committee developed a National Mangrove Management Action Plan to guide the work of key stakeholders involved in the utilisation and protection of mangrove resources. The Plan, a product of the National Forest Plan and Integrated Coastal Zone Management Action Plan recognises mangrove forests as an important coastal and riverain ecosystem and seeks to elevate concern for mangrove forests and foster a more coordinated approach to policy formulation, planning, inter-institutional cooperation and implementation of actions with regard to mangroves. A number of key actions are proposed within the Plan, principal among them being (1) reviewing policy and legislation to address the conservation of mangrove forests; (2) reviewing zonation of mangrove forests; (3) develop minimum operating standards for mangrove harvesting; (4) research; (5) raising of education and awareness; (6) rehabilitation and restoration of mangrove sites and (7) monitoring and enforcement. The cost of implementing proposed actions was estimated at approximately G\$33.5 Million.

The National Mangrove Management Action Plan has been endorsed at the Agency level with the Guyana Forestry Commission expected to take the lead in coordinating activities.

### **National Forest Plan**

The National Forest Plan (NFP) of April 2000 takes into consideration the National Forest Policy of 1997 and proposes a range of activities under five programme areas including land use, forest management, research and information, forestry training and education, and forest administration and governance. The overall objective of the National Forest Policy is the conservation, protection, management and utilization of the nation's forest resources, while ensuring that the productive capacity of the forests for both goods and services is maintained or enhanced.

One of the three specific objectives of the Policy is to ensure watershed protection and rehabilitation; prevent and arrest the erosion of soils and the degradation of forests, grazing lands, soil and water;

promote natural regeneration, afforestation and reforestation; and protect the forest against fire, pests and other hazards.

The Policy recognizes that the country's forests provide important services to the country's inhabitants: they protect the soil from erosion; they regulate and purify the nation's water supplies; and, perhaps of greatest importance, they ensure environmental stability. It states that forest management shall conserve biological diversity and its associated values, water resources, soils, and unique and fragile ecosystems, and by so doing, maintain the ecological functions and integrity of the forests.

The National Forest Plan has been endorsed at the Agency level with the Guyana Forestry Commission expected to take the lead in coordinating activities.

### **National Climate Change Plan**

Guyana's Climate Change National Action Plan (2001-2005) identifies short term programs and activities for implementation in order to meet commitments to UNCCC. Among the critical areas of the plan are capacity building for national inventory of greenhouse gases, vulnerability assessment, administrative framework and adaptation and mitigation options. This Plan is currently being implemented by the Hydromet Division of the Ministry of Agriculture.

### **Integrated Ecotourism Development Plan**

In 1998 an Ecotourism Development Plan was prepared with assistance from the OAS. Aspects are currently being implemented by the Guyana Tourism Authority. As part of this Plan, a Kaieteur Master Plan was prepared and has served as the basis for planning and management initiatives over the last 3 years by the Kaieteur Park Board and National Parks Commission.

### **Institutional Framework**

Land, natural resources and environment planning, management and regulation are shared among several institutions. There is no one institution with the responsibility for coordinating sustainable land management though the GLSC, by virtue of its mandate has been performing in this capacity through inter-agency collaborative agreements and a number of committees (NREAC, UNCCD Steering Committee, principally). The institutional framework for handling the various conventions essentially involves a Steering Committee for each Convention which is chaired by the national focal point. The many committees, within the context of limited institutional capacity, is proving an undue burden and there is a clear need for harmonization. The following is a summary of key institutions and organisations.

- *Land and Natural Resource Planning, Management and Regulation*
  - Guyana Forestry Commission
  - Guyana Geology and Mines Commission
  - Guyana Energy Agency
  - Guyana Natural Resources Agency
  - Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission
  - Ministry of Fisheries, Crops and Livestock
  - Ministry of Agriculture
- *Development Planning*
  - Central Housing and Planning Authority

- Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development
- Regional Democratic Councils
- Neighbourhood Democratic Councils
  
- *Environmental Management and Regulation*
  - Environmental Protection Agency
  
- *Area Management*
  - Regional Democratic Councils
  - Village Councils and Neighbourhood Democratic Councils
  - National Parks Commission
  - Iwokrama International Centre

## Legislative Framework

There is no specific legislation for land degradation, SLM or land use planning. There are, however, several principal legislation, spread over several decades, which address specific land uses and regulations, among them being the Forests Act, Mining Act, Iwokrama Act, and Kaieteur Act). Each piece of legislation concerns itself with a particular activity and collectively they do not form a coherent body of legislation for land use planning and management, however they do offer safeguards with regard to land degradation by outlining sustainable management stipulations and guidelines.

**Table 1** below identifies the key pieces of legislation with bearing on land use planning, land management and UNCCD.

***Table 1 Key Land Planning and Management Legislation***

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Forests Act (Act 15 of 1953)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Guyana Forestry Commission Act (Act 20 of 1979)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Mining Act (Act 20 of 1989, Act 34 of 1920 and amendments)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Guyana Geology and Mines Commission Act (Act 9 of 1979)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Hydroelectric Power Act (Cap. 56:03, Amended Act 1 of 1972)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Geological Survey Act (Cap. 59:02 Act 6 of 1918)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Guyana Natural Resources Agency (Act Ord. 37 of 1986)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Town and Country Planning Act (Cap. 20:01, Act 25 of 1946 and amendments)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>State Lands Act (Cap. 62:01, Act 32 of 1903 and amendments)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>State Lands Resumption Act (Cap. 62:02 Act 30 of 1905 and amendments)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Public Land (Private Roads) Act (Cap. 62:03 Act 8 of 1893 and amendments).</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Acquisition of Land for Public Purposes Act (Cap. 62:05, Act 31 of 1914 and amendments)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Acquisition of Land (Land Settlement Act; Cap. 62:06 Act 13 of 1957 and amendments)</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Acquisition of Lands (Act 2 of 1984 [Not Beneficially Occupied])</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Lands Department Act (Cap. 59:01 Act 30 of 1903 and amendments)</i></li> </ul>
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- *Title to Land (Prescription and Limitation) Act (Act 62 of 1952 and amendments)*
- *District Lands Partition and Re-allotment Act (Cap. 60:03, Act 16 of 1926 and amendments)*
- *District Government Act (Cap. 19:02, Act 27 of 1910 and amendments)*
- *Municipal and District Councils Act (Cap. 28:01 Act 24 of 1969 and amendments)*
- *Local Democratic Organs Act (Act 12 of 1980)*
- *Amerindian Act (Cap. 29:01, Act 22 of 1951 and amendments)*
- *Amerindian Lands Commission Act (Cap. 59:03 Act 23 of 1966)*
- *Kaieteur National Park Act (Cap. 20:02 and amendments, Act 41 of 1929, amended by Act 4 of 1972, further amended in 1999 and 2000)*
- *National Parks Commission Act (Act 23 of 1977)*
- *The Environmental Protection Act, 1996*
- *The Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation And Development Act 1996*

The following is a brief review of this legislation (*adapted from Bishop A.R 1996, Baseline Document on Land Use in Guyana*).

**Forests Act (Act 15 of 1953 - Repealed Ordinance 176 of 1929).** Under this Act, the responsible Minister may, by order, declare an area to be a State Forest, and may vary or revoke the order. The Minister may also, after consultation with the Forestry Commissioner make regulations regarding fines, harvesting, marketing, export, and transportation of timber, standards and grading, fees, sawmilling construction, operation and record keeping, transfer of titles and Amerindian rights and privileges.

The Act provides for the Commissioner of Forests to regulate the harvest and sale of forest produce through the issue of various permits, licenses and agreements and further goes on to define the boundaries of State Forests, and prescribes regulations in respect of royalties, transfer of title, felling, conveyance of produce, sawmillers and timber dealers, measurements, woodcutting leases and timber sale agreements.

A new Forests Act is before Parliament for consideration.

**Guyana Forestry Commission Act (Act 20 of 1979, revised March 2000).** The Act provides for the establishment and functions of the Forestry Commission. Some of the more pertinent functions are:

- Formulate and implement forest policy
- Carry out inventories of Guyana's forests
- Undertake studies and prepare plans and codes of practice for the management, conservation and sustainable use of forests
- Manage and control the exploitation of forests
- Regulate the production and marketing of forest products from State Forests or other State Lands
- Impose and collect royalties, rents, fees, tolls and levies
- Grant permits for felling and removal of timber, and for the occupation of forest lands.

**Mining Act (Act 20 of 1989, Act 34 of 1920 and amendments).** The Mining Act was first passed in 1920, and amended 18 times over the next 69 years. The Act of 1972 (Cap.65:01) was repealed by the

present Act, but provides that any provision of the 1972 Act which is consistent with the present Act remains in force.

The current Act provides for the prospecting and mining licenses for metal and minerals, notably excepting petroleum. Both of these licenses confer the **exclusive** right to perform operations and work necessary for the purpose of the license. The Act also provides for quarrying permits, geological and geophysical surveys, the regulation of dredging, appeals and penalties. Efforts are underway to amend the Mining Act and the Regulations are being revised and upgraded.

**Guyana Geology and Mines Commission Act (Act 9 of 1979).** The Act established and incorporated the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC). The stated functions are:

- Promote interest in the production, supply and sale of minerals;
- Advise on the economic exploitation, utilization and marketing of mineral resources;
- Explore for, and exploit minerals, and undertake relevant research.

The Minister may give general policy direction to the Commission. In matters of substantial capital outlay, training, education and research, the Commissioner shall act in accord with a general program approved by the Minister.

The Commission may construct roads for transportation with the concurrence of the Minister. The Commissioner is responsible, under the Minister and the direction of the Board, for the enforcement of the Act and Regulations. He is also responsible, under the Minister responsible for mining, for enforcement of the Mining Act and Regulations.

**Hydroelectric Power Act (Cap. 56:03, Amended Act 1 of 1972).** This Act makes provision for the granting of licenses for the use of water bodies for generating hydroelectric power. The President may grant such licenses and may make regulations for carrying out the provisions of the Act.

**Geological Survey Act (Cap, 59:02 Act 6 of 1918).** The Act facilitates the making of geological and mineralogical surveys. It gives the Commissioner the right of entry on any land during day-time to make surveys authorized by the Minister, and take away samples. The Act also provides for compensation for injuries to property or owner.

**Guyana Natural Resources Agency (Act Ord. 37 of 1986).** This Order established the Guyana Natural Resources Agency (GNRA) as a public corporation. Its stated functions include:

- To plan and secure the development, exploitation, and management of natural resources. Natural resources include forests, minerals, metals, hydroelectric power and petroleum. It does not include land and water.
- To formulate policy in respect to the development, exploitation and management of all energy resources for approval by the concerned Minister, and implement such policy.
- To provide the Minister with all assistance required by the Minister.

The Order also provides for the Agency to perform surveys, explorations, processing, research, development, monitoring and marketing related to the discharge of its functions.

**Town and Country Planning Act (Cap. 20:01, Act 25 of 1946 and amendments).** The Act provides for the (orderly and progressive) development of urban and rural lands and the preservation and improvement of amenities pertaining to such development. Development under the Act is restricted to buildings and roadworks incidental to buildings. The Act is concerned principally with town planning schemes and

regional schemes (out of urban areas). Such schemes comprise of buildings, sanitation, coordination of roads, facilities and public services, provision of amenities and the conservation and development of resources. Implementation and enforcement are vested in the Central Housing Planning Authority (CHPA). The Authority, with the approval of the Minister, has the power to make regulations to implement the Act. CHPA, by resolution, may decide to prepare and adopt a scheme. When a draft scheme is prepared, it is submitted to the Minister for approval. The Minister may approve, modify or require a new scheme to be drafted. The scheme is formally in effect on the date of public notification of approval.

The Act provides for cooperation with local authorities, establishment of a register, permit processing for building operations, land acquisition for schemes, compensation, and enforcement of the provisions of a scheme. There is also provision for zoning and the regulation of building and site design, roads, amenities, public services, transport and communications.

**State Lands Act (Cap. 62:01, Act 32 of 1903 and amendments).** This Act provides for the regulation of State land, rivers and creeks. The Commissioner is authorized to issue licenses for agriculture, the cutting of wood related to agriculture or the taking of any substance or thing found in State Lands except minerals.

The Commissioner is also authorized to give permission to occupy for those purposes, without giving an exclusive right to occupy. Important conditions and limitations are:

- Reservation of minerals - in any grant, lease or sale, minerals remain the property of the state. This does not include stone, gravel, kaolin or other clays.
- Land specified on a license or permit may be taken back and used for public purposes.
- Conditions of a grant remain in force regardless of sale or mortgage to a successor.

The Act also provides for regulations prescribing fees, royalties and rents.

**State Lands Resumption Act (Cap. 62:02 Act 30 of 1905 and amendments).** This Act provides for the State to resume (take back) lands which have been abandoned by the owner. If State Lands which were formerly alienated appear to the Commissioner of Lands to be abandoned for eight or more years, the Act prescribes procedures for the resumption through Ministerial order.

**Public Land (Private Roads) Act (Cap. 62:03 Act 8 of 1893 and amendments).** This Act enables persons to construct and maintain roads for mining, wood cutting, etc. on public lands, and to charge tolls.

The Minister may grant permission to construct, and may revoke the permit and resume the land. If the road passes over land occupied by someone else, it will be subject to that person's consent or terms prescribed by the Minister. The Minister may authorize the grantee to fix tolls for the use of the road. The grantee owns the land occupied by the road. An existing road may be regarded as if it were built in accordance with the Act.

**Acquisition of Land for Public Purposes Act (Cap. 62:05, Act 31 of 1914 and amendments).** The Act facilitates the acquisition of lands for public purposes. The Minister may by order declare a work to be a public work, and may authorize the Commissioner of Lands to enter, examine, test, etc. The subsequent report and plan may be reviewed by the Minister, who may, by order, declare that the land is required for a public work.

The Act prescribes procedures for notification, compensation, arbitration, appropriation, vesting and payment. The provisions of this Act do not apply to the Resumption of State Lands Act.

**Acquisition of Land (Land Settlement Act; Cap. 62:06 Act 13 of 1957 and amendments).** This Act provides for the acquisition on lands to be used for the purpose of land settlement. Under this Act, "land settlement scheme" means a project which establishes farming settlements or distributes land by sale or lease to individuals for agricultural purposes.

The Minister may, by order, declare a scheme to be a public work, and thereafter the acquisition procedures of Cap. 62:05 applies.

**Acquisition of Lands (Act 2 of 1984 [Not Beneficially Occupied]).** The Act provides for land which is not beneficially occupied to ensure rational use of such land. Land refers to all land, whether covered by water or not, excluding State Land and Government Land.

The Commissioner is authorized to enter on land to ascertain whether it is beneficially occupied. If the Commissioner recommends that it is not, the Minister may issue notice that if the land is not beneficially occupied within a period not exceeding one year, the land will be acquired by the State. The Minister retains the right to extend or revoke the notice.

If the land does not become beneficially occupied within the prescribed period, the Minister may make an order which vests the land in the State, free of all encumbrances. Compensation provisions of Cap. 62:05 applies to this Act.

**Lands Department Act (Cap. 59:01 Act 30 of 1903 and amendments).** This Act established the Lands Department. It gives the Commissioner charge of all rivers, creeks and State Lands, except State Forests. The Lands Department (now the Lands and Surveys Department) is responsible for executing all surveys and maintaining a register of grants and leases.

The Department also has charge over all Government Lands except lands and buildings under the charge of the Ministry of Public Works.

**Title to Land (Prescription and Limitation) Act (Act 62 of 1952 and amendments).** The Act provides for prescription and limitation in respect of title to land. Notable points are:

- Title may be obtained by prescription after 30 years of sole and undisturbed possession, use or enjoyment of the land.
- Action cannot be brought to recover land after the expiration of 12 years from the date when the right to action commenced.

**District Lands Partition and Re-allotment Act (Cap. 60:03, Act 16 of 1926 and amendments).** The Act provides for the partition of lands for the re-allocation of holdings and for the issue of title in order to make more beneficial the occupancy of the land. The Act details the procedures, from petition to review and approval of the Minister. It also details any required surveys and compensation in regard to crops and buildings affected by re-allotments.

**District Government Act (Cap. 19:02, Act 27 of 1910 and amendments).** The Act proclaimed the establishment of local government districts. The responsible Minister was able, by order, to establish, extend or reduce districts. The Act also established District Commissioners who were responsible for the general administration of the district, and who reported to the Minister.

Sub-legislation created the districts of East Berbice, West Berbice, East Demerara, Upper Demerara, Essequibo Islands, Essequibo District, Northwest District, Mazaruni-Potaro and Rupununi.

**Municipal and District Councils Act (Cap. 28:01 Act 24 of 1969 and amendments).** The Act seeks to make better provisions for local government of Georgetown, New Amsterdam and other towns and areas.

It provides for the constitution and meetings of the city, towns and other districts. Subsidiary legislation constituted Corriverton, Rose Hall Town, Linden and other districts.

The Act also provides for Councils to acquire, appropriate, let or sell lands, and for finances and the levy of rates and taxes. The functions of these Councils under the Act are drainage, roads, traffic control, supply of water, animal control, public health, burial grounds, housing and subdivisions, recreation, gardens, fire service, schools and libraries.

**Local Democratic Organs Act (Act 12 of 1980).** The Act provides for the instituting of a national system of local government through the establishment of Local Democratic Organs (LDO). LDO's include cities and towns, and also Councils under the Amerindian Act. The Minister can regulate the relationship of such Councils with other LDO's.

The Act allowed for the division of Guyana into ten regions. Each region is divided into sub-regions, districts, communities, neighborhoods and co-op units. Criteria for division are population, physical size, geographic characteristics, economic resources, existing and planned infrastructure, and the potential for facilitating the most rational management and use of the resources.

The Minister controls the composition, rights, duties and responsibilities of each LDO. LDO duties include:

- Maintain public property and the physical environment.
- Stimulate economic activity and improve production, efficiency, and working and living standards.
- Promote the social, cultural lives of people, and raise their level of civic consciousness.
- Preserve law and order and safeguard rights.

LDO's may make regulations for:

- Revenue generation through rates and taxes.
- Land Acquisition.
- Management and administration of its functions.

The Minister may delegate powers to LDO's and may establish Petty Courts for offenses related to production and theft of agricultural products.

The Act also provides for a Regional Democratic Council (RDC) for each of the ten regions, and prescribes the composition, election of councilors and officers.

The Act also provides for a National Congress of Local Democratic Organs (NCLDO) - its composition and election of members and officers. It also provides for the election of members to the National Assembly from the Congress and the RDC's.

The Minister may rescind or modify the provision of any law that applies to an RDC or the Congress.

All prior laws relating to local government cease to apply. However, certain provisions of the Municipal and District Councils Act (MDCA) are retained.

**Amerindian Act (Cap. 29:01, Act 22 of 1951 and amendments, and new Act of 2006 ).** The Act seeks to provide for good government of Amerindian communities. It established Amerindian Districts, Areas and Villages. The Minister responsible may, by order, amend these areas by adding, deleting or otherwise

changing the boundaries. The Act also provides for the registration of Amerindians and the appointment of captains.

Under the Act, the Minister may, by order, establish a District or Area Council, while the Minister's Chief Officer may establish a Village Council. District Council may levy taxes for the exclusive benefit of the District. Title and rights to the land are vested in the Council, except for:

- Rivers, and land 60 feet from low water mark;
- Minerals and mining rights;
- Existing airstrips and buildings.

The Minister may transfer title and rights of private holdings within a District, Area or Village (DAV) to that DAV. A DAV may make rules, subject to the approval of the Minister, relating to food production, trapping, maintenance of infrastructure, erosion, brushfires and liquor.

The Minister may make regulations for the proper administration of a DAV including education, care and custody of children, public order and the prohibition of certain rites and customs.

A new Amerindian Act was passed on Parliament in February 2006 with emphasis on protection of Amerindian rights and their decision making over natural resource management in their communities especially with regard to mining.

**Amerindian Lands Commission Act (Cap. 59:03 Act 23 of 1966).** The Act provides for the establishment and functions of a Commission on Amerindian Lands.

The Commission is appointed by the Minister. The Commissioner of Lands will collaborate with the Commission by making surveys and supplying available plans. The Commission has the power of a High Court to summon and examine witnesses under oath, and call for the production of documents.

The functions of the Commission are:

- Determine the area where any tribe or community of Amerindians was resident on May 26, 1966.
- Recommend whether persons belonging to such tribes or communities should be given rights of tenure, and if so, the nature of the rights and in whom such rights shall be vested.
- Determine what freedoms or permissions such tribes or communities had on May 26, 1966, and recommend what corresponding right should be granted and to whom.

**Kaieteur National Park Act (Cap. 20:02 and amendments, Act 41 of 1929, amended by Act 4 of 1972, further amended in 1999 and 2000).** The Act constitutes a defined area in the vicinity of Kaieteur Falls on the Potaro River as a National Park, and provides for the control of the park and the preservation of the natural scenery, flora and fauna. The Act also provides for the Minister responsible to establish a Kaieteur National Park Board for the control of the Park. The Minister may make regulations to implement the Act, including building, camping and hunting in the Park.

**National Parks Commission Act (Act 23 of 1977).** The Act identifies Kaieteur National Park and the National Park as two national parks under the Act. It defines a park as an area or open space the public can go to enjoy natural beauty or open air recreation.

The Board in the Kaieteur Park Act is the Commission in this Act. The Minister is the Minister of Public Works.

The Act establishes the National Parks Commission with responsibility for the maintenance of public parks. Its responsibilities also include:

- Maintaining and regulating use.
- Recommending to the National Trust that an area of natural beauty be conserved. Working with local authorities in developing parks for recreational purposes.
- Providing maintenance services to local authorities according to terms set by the Commission.
- Retaining the services of professional persons and making payment with the approval of the Minister.

**The Environmental Protection Act, 1996.** This Act established the basic institutional and regulatory framework within which all activities that may significantly impact on the natural, social, and cultural environments are assessed. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the key Governmental Agency mandated under this Act to make this assessment and to issue environmental permit authorizing the carrying out of any such activity.

Species Protection Regulations were passed in 1999 along with Regulations on Hazardous Waste Management, Water Quality, Air Quality and Noise Management in 2000. These pollution management regulations were developed to regulate and control the activities of developmental project during construction and operation.

**The Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation And Development Act 1996 (Bill No. 7 Of 1995).** This Act provided for the sustainable management and utilisation of approximately 360,000 hectares of Guyana's tropical rainforest dedicated by the Government of Guyana as the programme site for the purposes of research by the Iwokrama International Centre to develop, demonstrate and make available to Guyana and the international community systems, methods and techniques for the sustainable management and utilisation of the multiple resources of the tropical forest and the conservation of biological diversity.