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Participation in Developing the USAID/Guyana Program Strategy

Donor Consultation, Roundtables of Guyanese Opinion Leaders, and Mass Media

11-13 April 1994

Submitted to:

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1. Summary

In a Statement of Principles on Participatory Development issued on 16 November 1993, the USAID Administrator noted,

Our support is more likely to lead to [desired] results if the development programs are relevant to people's needs, and for this there needs to be broad participation by people in defining development priorities and approaches.

Shortly after this Statement was issued, USAID's Regional Development Office for the Caribbean (RDO/C) found an opportunity to create "broad participation by people in defining development priorities and approaches" in launching, in Guyana, a four-year program strategy comprising three new projects in addition to an ongoing PL480 Title III program. This participation took the form of consultations with other donor agencies, roundtable discussions with 47 Guyanese national and local opinion leaders, and nationwide dissemination of information about the program through the press, television and radio. These activities, held on 11, 12 and 13 April 1994, are described in this report.

In the last weeks of 1993, RDO/C prepared a draft Interim Strategy for Guyana which served, among other purposes, to assist in developing a U.S. Government position on assistance to Guyana for the Consultative Group meeting held in Georgetown on 27-28 January 1994. Subsequently, RDO/C contracted with Management Systems International (MSI) to assist it in developing a Program Objectives Document (POD) from the Interim Strategy. The MSI consulting team, consisting of Bruce L. Mazzie (Team Leader), David Read Barker, and David M. Callihan, visited Bridgetown, Barbados, from 7-18 March and, following extensive consultation with RDO/C staff, submitted a draft POD on 18 March 1994.

Mechanisms for achieving broad Guyanese participation in the USAID program strategy were seen as being a core component of the strategy, and detailed plans for introducing the strategy were developed simultaneously with the POD. Under its contract with RDO/C, MSI provided David Read Barker and David M. Callihan to facilitate two roundtables and a press conference. The process required broad participation by USAID staff: the RDO/C Mission Director led six USAID staff from Bridgetown, and the newly arrived General Development Officer and the PL480 Monitor at the fledgling USAID Mission in Georgetown were fully involved in the process. In addition, the U.S. Ambassador to Guyana participated in all of the events.

Consultation with donor agencies

On 11 April 1994, the U.S. Ambassador hosted a breakfast meeting for resident representatives of all foreign donor agencies, at which the USAID Director briefed the donors on USAID's strategic objectives and described in some detail the three technical assistance projects and the PL480 Title III program which comprise the initial stage of the strategy. Each donor representative was given a 17-page summary of the POD, prepared by RDO/C staff.

Roundtables of Guyanese opinion leaders

Two roundtables were held, with a total of 47 Guyanese opinion leaders and up to 11 USAID and U.S. Embassy staff. Each roundtable focused on one strategic objective. The first, on 11 April, concentrated on strengthened democratic and legal institutions and processes, and the second, on 12 April, examined expanded economic opportunities for the rural and urban poor. Potential participants were identified through consultation between RDO/C, the PL480 Monitoring Unit in Georgetown, and the U.S. Embassy. Invitations were sent to 58 people by the PL480 Monitoring Unit in Georgetown. The participation rate, over 80 percent of those invited, is an indication of the importance the Guyanese ascribed to the event. Participants came from a broad spectrum of society and included senior Government executive, judicial, and legislative officials, political party leaders, top businessmen, church leaders, and NGO leaders and advocates for the poor and Amerindian minority.

From the viewpoint of USAID, the objectives of the roundtables were to:

1. Provide the opportunity to a broad cross-section of Guyanese society to express their perceptions about, and provide a reality check on, the proposed USAID Program. Does the Program as a whole make sense? Are the planned outcomes realistic? Is the focus appropriate?
2. Gain understanding of, and enthusiastic support for, the USAID Strategy and Program by key opinion leaders, and initiate and strengthen personal relationships among them.
3. Identify people who could form a consultative group that could stay in touch with program managers on an ongoing basis.
4. Demonstrate an innovative approach to increasing participation in USAID Program formulation.

All individuals who accepted the invitation to the roundtables were sent a copy of the Summary POD by the PL480 Monitoring Unit, and most of them appeared to have read it before the roundtables began. Each participant completed a registration form and was given a briefing folder containing the agenda, objectives of the roundtable, graphic material on USAID's strategic planning process, and the strategic objective tree, program outcomes and indicators. For background reading, each participant was given the USAID "Statement of Principles on Participatory Development" and *Strategies for Sustainable Development*.

In the strengthening democracy roundtable, the participants were roughly evenly divided among those with parliamentary, judicial, and NGO backgrounds, so the facilitators divided them into three small groups, each of about eight people, labelled "judicial," "legislative," and "advocacy" on the basis of their occupation and title. In the expanded economic opportunities roundtable, the participants seemed to have a very wide range of backgrounds and occupations, so the facilitators divided them at random into three small groups of approximately eight people each.

Groups were tasked to identify underlying issues that USAID might not be fully aware of and to prioritize implementation. Each group was assigned a facilitator, in most cases a USAID staff member, and selected a rapporteur, who presented the group's deliberations orally, supplemented with flipcharts. There was general discussion after each group's presentation, and the Mission Director summarized the major implications for the USAID program.

At the conclusion of both roundtables, a participant spontaneously expressed a vote of thanks on behalf of the whole group. At the strengthening democracy roundtable, Manzoor Nadir said, "We express our gratitude for our participation. You want to be transparent. We each lobby for our own cause, and we are assured that you are another avenue to Government for us." At the economic growth roundtable, Jocelyn Dow said, "I would like to salute you for this initiative, and I would encourage you to do this."

Press conference

The Mission Director conducted a press conference on April 13 attended by 15 press reporters and three TV cameramen. The press conference resulted in extensive news coverage by Guyanese TV and newspapers. The conference is summarized in Chapter 10 of this report

Follow-up

USAID achieved all of its objectives through these activities, at least in part because the re-opening of the USAID Mission and expansion of U.S. assistance to Guyana is a significant milestone for the Government of Guyana and for the Guyanese people. Building, as it did, on numerous individual consultations over the previous months in the course of designing the three projects that comprise the initial strategy, the Mission and the U.S. Embassy were able to identify appropriate participants. The participants, in turn, were genuinely pleased (and perhaps somewhat surprised) at having USAID solicit their views in such an open forum. Both roundtables re-affirmed the central importance of **people and people's participation** in the development process, and issues such as public sector salary increases, human resource development and education, the functioning of NGOs, and access to credit by the poor were the most prominent in the discussion.

Having now aroused high expectations for widespread participation in both the implementation and the overall direction of the USAID program, the challenge for USAID will be to develop mechanisms to sustain these expectations. Formation of formal or informal consultative groups of opinion leaders can begin in the near future. The excellent start of close working relationships with the media also represent a good opportunity to generate mass participation in the program.

2. Small Group Reports and Discussion in the Strengthening Democracy Roundtable

A. Judicial Group

The discussion of the judicial group was reported by Josephine Whitehead of the Georgetown Legal Aid Clinic. The group emphasized the need for increased salaries, improved court reporting, and management and preservation of records.

1. Salaries

The main crisis in the justice system is in civil salaries, from the top to the bottom. We are not looking to USAID for salary enhancement, but USAID will waste its money unless it persuades Government to raise salaries.

Justice is a revenue collection agency. Government has said that salaries can be raised in such agencies. The whole scheme of charges for judicial services needs revision. Fees for court services are now so low that lawyers do not charge separately for hearings fees because they are such a small item compared to legal fees. Fines in Magistrates Court have not been collected for the past six years, since 1988, because there are no process servers. The increased revenue from higher fees could be used to enhance salaries. USAID should work to improve salaries for staff at all levels before it looks at anything else.

Historically, the judicial system was a closed system, in which revenue could be used to cover expenses. Fees collected go back into the system rather than into general revenue. We suggest that this be reapplied. Therefore, salaries can be paid that are higher than for the rest of the public sector. This may not require legislation but could be done as an administrative action.

2. Court Reporting

The technology for improved court reporting is available, but since the salaries of people who would operate it are so low, it is impossible to recruit and retain qualified people. We have made an effort to contract out court reporting to the private sector.

3. Management and preservation of records

This will be covered in the GJIP Project. USAID must emphasize people. USAID will waste its money if it concentrates on buildings rather than people.

B. Legislative Group

The discussion of the legislative group was reported by Frank Narain, Clerk of the National Assembly. The group concluded that USAID can offer considerable assistance to strengthening the legislative branch, which makes the constitution and all laws. Priority areas for USAID assistance were stated to be legal reform and revision, a Parliamentary library, the Hansard, the Parliamentary committee system, and salaries of Members of Parliament (MPs).

1. Law reform and revision

Many laws are outdated. Simple amendments have been passed, but comprehensive reform is needed. There has not been legal reform for several years. Technical people are needed for revising the existing laws. Help cannot be given directly for salaries, but technical assistance could be obtained. USAID should fund a team to help in this exercise, which should include local legal experts.

2. A Parliamentary library

There is need for a proper Parliamentary library, which Guyana does not now have. Hundreds of documents and records have been accumulated, but MPs cannot easily get access to these records, because they have been scattered and not maintained. Last year the National Assembly got increased space, and the staff is anxious to establish a library. The staff seeks aid from USAID.

3. Hansard

The verbatim transcripts of legislative debate, called the Hansard, makes the words of MPs available to the public and to researchers. All kinds of problems have prevented the publication of verbatim records for more than 20 years. Last year the UK granted Guyana some assistance for production of the outstanding Hansard. The staff of Parliament seeks assistance from USAID.

4. Strengthening and enlarging the Parliamentary committee system

Guyana has both a Parliamentary committee of the whole and appointed committees. The question of whether more matters should be considered by appointed committees is being examined. The future of committees depends on the availability of both staff and MPs.

5. Salaries of MPs

In Guyana, all MPs, except Ministers of Government, are considered to be part-time workers. They receive very small salaries, about G\$6,000, equivalent to approximately US\$50, per month. There is a need to increase the salaries of MPs.

C. Advocacy Group

The discussion of the advocacy group was reported by Lincoln Van Sluytman of the Working People's Alliance. The group presented 12 specific issues for consideration by USAID in its program.

1. The Consumers Advisory Bureau, Ltd.

Demand and need for services far exceed the organization's current capacity. USAID assistance can help increase the bureau's capacity.

2. NGOs outside of Georgetown

Assistance to NGOs outside Georgetown is more difficult because of transportation problems. NGOs outside of Georgetown do not have adequate support.

3. Elections Commission

There is need for greater management capacity in the Elections Commission. It is necessary to establish on a more permanent basis.

4. NGOs in Guyana

NGOs are relatively new to Guyanese culture. For many years there was an effort to dissuade them from carrying out their activities. NGOs are at an infant stage in Guyana. Institutional strengthening across the board is a high priority. NGOs generally do not know about funding sources or making project proposals. They need support for management, overhead costs, office space, staff development, and project proposal development. They have no equipment such as fax machines.

5. Legal framework for NGOs

There are no legal guidelines or legal framework for NGOs in Guyana. A UNDP team that looked at NGO legislation found that NGOs can be formed in Guyana as business organizations, burial societies, or friendly societies, but that there is no legal provision for registering other types of NGOs. USAID should encourage change in this area.

6. Funding for NGOs

Information is not widely available for NGOs about how to access funding sources. NGOs have become funds-driven. They have not approached development from a strategic approach. Programs are developed because funds are available. USAID support to NGOs should encourage them to become strategy-oriented.

7. NGO-implemented projects

NGOs are too engaged in project activities. There is not enough support and attention given to policy issues such as helping NGOs to be more effective at developing and influencing social and economic policy. USAID support to NGOs should be broader than just "project" support.

8. NGO umbrella organization

An NGO umbrella organization is greatly needed. Efforts are underway to organize one. USAID can assist this.

9. Re-allocation of donor funds by Government

There is a question of whether funding to Government from donors, designated for specific target groups, permits Government to shift funds to other sectors or groups.

10. Media legislation

Media legislation is needed. Broadcast legislation gives government significant monopoly control. Guyana needs guidelines for the burgeoning private TV and radio industry, which is now growing in an *ad hoc* manner. There is need to strengthen government information services, which are inadequate because it is getting more difficult for government to get its message across.

11. PL480 Title III

There is an urgent need for a look at what assistance could be provided to improve education, environmental awareness, and health care. USAID should assist in discussions with Government about using Title III funds for these sectors.

12. Race relations

Race relations are a critical area for Guyana. A Race Relations Committee has been formally brought into being at the instigation of the President, but it has been hard to get it going. USAID could assist this.

D. Response by USAID Mission Director

Thank you all.

The small groups were very conscientious and provided us with excellent guidance. We will look at all your suggestions, in particular the "people" issues.

With regards to the judicial group, we will work with Government on the issue of salaries and work with the World Bank on public sector reform. We probably can work on many of your concerns within the framework of our projects. We can facilitate movement by Government on the salary issue and on re-establishing the judicial system as a closed revenue system, to accommodate the administration of justice in a way that will enable the judiciary to recoup hearings fees.

All the suggestions of the legislative group are things which we have been talking about in design of the forthcoming Strengthening Democracy Project. There will need to be negotiations on the subject of salaries of legislators.

There was a long list of requests from the advocacy group. The forthcoming legal reform project can look at the legal framework for NGOs. The BEEP Project definitely fits within parameters for strengthening NGOs; working with the Consumers Advisory Bureau; media and television;

and government services. Environment, health, and education are concerns that we have addressed with the PL480 Title III program.

We want to remain engaged with you, to keep a dialogue about successes and failures. We will be asking you for advice and will solicit your service on an advisory board. Thank you for your long hours.

3. Small Group Reports and Discussion in the Economic Growth Roundtable

This section captures the principal discussion points presented by each of three small groups asked to comment on USAID's proposed four-year economic growth strategy for Guyana. Participants for each group were selected randomly among roundtable participants representing government, private sector businesses, trade and manufacturers associations and various NGOs. The chapter's first section -- Synthesis of Priority Actions/Concerns -- identifies discussion points common among the three groups. Subsequent sections of this chapter present highlights of the presentations made by each of the three groups. These presentations are organized according to priority implementation actions; underlying issues USAID may not be aware of; and highlights of the general discussion which followed each group's plenary presentation.

A. Synthesis of Priority Actions/Concerns.

The common ideas and concerns presented by the three groups were as follows:

- There needs to be increased support provided to micro and small businesses. All three groups mentioned the need to make credit more accessible to businesses and also that business/management skills training is needed. Two groups mentioned the importance of access to land titles, and one group specifically stated that land titles could be an important source of collateral that would enable more businesses to access credit. Two of the groups stated there is a need to help businesses access technology and information, including information about sources of grant funding, new technologies, and new markets.
- All groups emphasized the importance of upgrading human resource capabilities. A wide range of issues around this topic were discussed, including: without significant upgrading of skills (and public sector pay increases to retain those skills) then donor assistance to the ministries would likely fail; the country is in dire need of managerial skills, for both the public and private sectors; both formal and informal training should be provided; and, in light of thin public sector human resource base, consideration should be given to increasing the portion of project resources channeled to the private sector.
- Two groups cited the absence of development banks as a constraint to private sector development. (This is related to the issue of the inability of most businesses to access credit.)
- Two of the groups mentioned that the judicial redress process has gone into delinquency and therefore banks are reluctant to lend to businesses.
- Two of the groups stated that a USAID priority should be to find ways (mechanisms and institutions) for donors to channel funding directly to NGOs and vulnerable groups, including Amerindians. The same two groups also mentioned the need for USAID to institutionally strengthen NGOs and to offer support to NGOs outside the realm of project-specific funding.

- Two groups mentioned the poor state of health care in Guyana.

What follows is a listing of key points identified by each of the small discussion groups, including comments on priority implementation suggestions, underlying issues which USAID may be unaware of, and general discussion points.

B. Small Group #1

Priority Implementation Actions

1. Retain basic parameters of Justice Improvement Project.
2. Provide human resource development skills and focus effort on beneficiaries of USAID projects. Without attention to improving the public sector's human resource base all donor assistance to the public sector will fail. A focal point for USAID's skills training and NGO development efforts should be identified outside of the Ministry of Trade and Finance. USAID project should find a mechanism to provide project training and institutional strengthening assistance to NGOs without involving or depending on government.
3. Improving public sector revenue generation is important for funding of social development, i.e., there needs to be more effective collection of commercial taxes.
4. Revisit PL 480 and BEEP to ensure poverty reduction and equity issues are more adequately addressed. More PL480 assistance should be directed to help the agricultural sector. Agriculture is basis for Guyana's growth and development. Problems with disbursement of PL480 Funds: Small farmers are not benefiting adequately, nor are small industries (micro-enterprises).
5. Consultation with other donors is essential to avoid duplication of effort.
6. Need to ensure access to resources by micro and small businesses. Poor people are unable to borrow due to absence of collateral. Small enterprises should be able to access funds for transactions, in both the agricultural and industrial sectors.

Is program focused on appropriate areas: Equitable distribution of resources would imply more focus on agricultural sector (rural), particularly skills development.

Underlying Issues USAID may not be aware of

- Human resource skills are not strong enough
- NGOs need institutional strengthening
- umbrella NGO does not exist to provide assistance to NGOs
- formation of NGOs needs to be encouraged/strengthened

- Training of entrepreneurs needs attention, e.g. business courses/curricula introduced into public schools.
- Need to assist informal business integrate into formal sector
- Needs to be judicial redress for loan delinquency
- No emphasis on development banks in USAID program, however, access to capital is a major constraint facing small businesses
- Should be a partnership between the private sector and the University of Guyana
- health services are poor
- environmental health is poor
- Labor leadership needs to become more informed about key issues concerning economic development strategies and technical assistance

Discussion Highlights

Overall concern: equity versus so large a portion of project resources being channeled through government ministries.

The program is useful, but we would like to express a few suggested modifications. For example, there needs to be more equitable distribution of resources, to focus on agriculture and human resource development in rural areas. The justice project should be expanded to include a wider beneficiary group. The USAID program should also focus on poverty reduction and equity, which is not now adequately addressed. There should be more intensive consultation among donor community to avoid duplication. Also, there should be more consultation among beneficiaries.

Target sectors mentioned as critical to Guyana's development but not addressed by USAID program are: Health, Social Infrastructure, and Water Development.

USAID should pursue a synergistic approach based on consultation and collaboration.

Private sector participation in improvement of quality of life - to result in growth and development for entire community.

Strengthening of NGOs should include informal NGOs.

Performance measuring and monitoring criteria need to be developed to measure progress of development strategies.

The program does not give enough attention to helping small and micro operators to access funds. This should be addressed.

Comments on Units of Measurement proposed in USAID strategy - Reduce of tariff rates. USAID should work closely with local representatives to establish proper rates. Strengthen the consultative process. Identify poverty line.

One criteria bothers me: tariff reduction. Guyana's membership in CARICOM means that the country is not free to independently set tariff rates, but rather tariff rates must be set through consultation and agreement with other CARICOM members.

Also, regarding land leases, this component seems a little unclear as to which leases are being discussed. Do you mean all leases? The criteria for measurement should be more specific. USAID may want to establish a small consultative group to discuss this.

USAID resources need more focus on agriculture. Guyana would like to access Peace Corps volunteers to provide assistance in rural areas.

Regarding selected ministries, we are not questioning the ministries, but do they have the capability to deliver?

We are asking whether the government chose the best ministries for assistance. The question could be reviewed. Are the ministries properly staffed? I am talking about the whole public sector.

C. Small Group #2

Priority Implementation Actions

1. There are broad and underlying problems in Guyana which the USAID strategy does not address. These problems include debt alleviation and income distribution disparities. Inadequate public sector wages is such a big problem that unless this issue is addressed these conditions will negate the effectiveness of any donor assistance to Guyana's public sector.
2. The acute state of the health and education sectors demand allocation of resources. This should include substantial attention to both formal and informal approaches to human resource development.
3. Additional mechanisms/institutions need to be developed which can channel assistance to most vulnerable sectors. Gender issues should be given special consideration for resource allocation. Means for donors to directly support Amerindian community need to be developed -- these mechanisms should operate independently of government structures.
4. There is a great need for assistance to micro and small businesses. This should include assistance in the areas of business management training and project development assistance. Other assistance needed by the small business community includes: access to markets, credit, and new technologies and information as to how to access information and resources, e.g. where and how can small businesses access funds and technical assistance.

5. There is a need for general assistance to develop the NGO sector. Attention should be given to strengthening existing NGOs and assisting in the formation of new organizations.

Underlying Issues USAID may not be aware of

1. Broader, underlying problems: Debt Alleviation and Income distribution. Social and physical infrastructure and housing and ethnicity/race and crime. Inadequate income and wages pervasive nature.
2. Acute state of health and education demand re-allocation of money, resources, and formal and informal approaches to human resources development.
3. There should be a way for donors to provide assistance directly to Amerindian communities.
4. Businesses need access to information, technology, markets and credit.
5. Need for technical assistance to micro-businesses in areas of project development, and technical and business management skills training.
6. Mechanisms and institutions are needed for both receiving and implementing technical assistance programs as well as capable mechanisms/institutions through which donors can channel technical assistance funding in order to address social and economic issues facing Guyana's most vulnerable. Gender issues/disparities should be given special attention.
7. Gender issues should be considered in all technical assistance training and credit programs.
8. The following niches and opportunities were identified as development needs in Guyana which are not currently being adequately addressed:
 - development of entrepreneurial culture and skills
 - implementation of community based, participatory approaches to development
 - research and develop technical assistance approaches that emphasize social and organizational development
 - provide linkages between productive Guyanese endeavors and community development (consultancies, project development)
 - use formal and informal approaches to project/activity development
9. Need to promote development of NGO sector, especially NGO formation and institution building.
10. Improved public sector performance is necessary to foster/enable development of civil society/civil organizations.

11. Need to recognize the pervasive nature of inadequate incomes/wages and government revenues.
12. Formal and informal approaches are needed to upgrade human skills base.

Discussion Highlights

Debt, income distribution, and acute state of health and education sectors necessitate reallocation to human resources development - USAID program should place a greater emphasis on this. USAID program areas did not target these but there are opportunistic niches.

USAID program presupposes notions of participation and democracy that do not exist because people over 35 have no tangible experience with them. There must be some focus on this lack of a conceptual framework.

Direct support should be provided to NGOs from donor community, including to local communities and minorities (amerindians), including developing mechanisms and institutions that can provide more direct support to vulnerable groups. Most vulnerable people have no access to channels of assistance, e.g. ghetto residents. Need institutions and mechanism to address problems of Guyana's most vulnerable communities. Most acute needs are among women.

There needs to be emphasis on technology and training.

Comments by other group members:

The private sector faces a challenge of how to get it out of its lethargy. It needs information on technology, opportunities for joint ventures, and needs to upgrade its capital assets. Also, need mechanisms to broaden the information base.

D. Small Group #3

Priority Implementation Actions

1. Increase access to credit, we would like to see:
 - the development or emergence of development banks, in private or public sector.
 - availability of venture capital, to ensure that liquidity is used for the development of business.
 - access and title to land, and the use of this as collateral.
2. Acute shortage of human skills needs to be redressed, including:
 - Entrepreneurial training
 - Business training
 - Technology training

There is also a great shortage of managerial skills. Companies that want to grow find it difficult to locate qualified managerial staff.

Focus on developing micro businesses. Entrepreneurial training and culture where people want to take risks. People do not want to take risks and only borrow for projects that will succeed.

3. Access and title to land, security of tenure
4. Industrial estate/support services, business incubator
5. Community development: holistic, has to do with people. Promote micro businesses. Use technique of participatory research for people to find their own solutions
6. Promote foreign investment/partnership

Underlying Issues USAID may not be aware of

The judicial redress process has gone into delinquency. Therefore banks are unwilling to lend without heavy collateral.

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6. Agenda for Roundtable on Proposed USAID/Guyana Development Strategy

April 11, 1994, Georgetown, Guyana

Savannah Suite, Pegasus Hotel

- 3:30** Arrival and Registration
- 4:00** Welcoming Remarks - U.S. Ambassador
- 4:05** Opening Remarks and Introduction to USAID (Mosina Jordan, USAID Representative, Guyana)
- 4:10** Introduction to Workshop (MSI)
- 4:15** Self-Introduction by Each Participant
- 4:30** Introduction to USAID Strategy Development Process
- presentation of objective tree methodology
 - brief discussion of uses of objective tree and USAID performance management system
- 4:40** Presentation of USAID/Guyana Proposed Development Strategy
- PL480 Title III
 - Building Equitable Economic Participation
 - Guyana Justice Improvement Project
 - Democratic Initiatives
- 5:10** Small Group Discussions of USAID/Guyana Strategy
- 6:00** Plenary Presentation of Group Discussions
- 6:45** Synthesis of Group Presentations and Closing Remarks
- 7:00** End of Roundtable - U.S. Ambassador's Reception
- 7:30** Buffet Dinner

**7. Agenda for Roundtable on Proposed
USAID/Guyana Development Strategy**

April 12, 1994, Georgetown, Guyana

Essequibo Suite, Pegasus Hotel

- 3:30** Arrival and Registration
- 3:45** Welcome, by the U.S. Ambassador
- 3:55** Opening Remarks and Introduction to USAID, by Mosina Jordan, USAID Representative, Guyana
- 4:05** Introduction to the Roundtable, by MSI
- 4:10** Self-Introduction, by Each Participant
- 4:30** Presentation of Projects in the USAID/Guyana Proposed Development Strategy, by USAID Project Officers
- Guyana Justice Improvement Project
 - Democratic Initiatives
 - PL480 Title III
 - Building Equitable Economic Participation
- 5:00** Small Group Discussions of USAID/Guyana Strategy
- 6:00** Plenary: Presentations by Small Groups and Discussion
- 6:45** Synthesis of Group Presentations and Closing Remarks
- 7:15** End of Roundtable - U.S. Ambassador's Reception
- 7:45** Buffet Dinner

8. Roundtable Welcome by Ambassador George Jones

The following is a summary of the welcome remarks made at both roundtables.

This is the first full day of the re-opened USAID office in Guyana.

USAID stresses participation as a key to the development process, and it practices what it preaches. We want you to hear what we are going to do and tell us what is going wrong. Please give us your frank views.

The idea of doing this was stimulated by aid donors meeting in January, when we met with NGO leaders, whom we invited on short notice, to meet the new AID Assistant Administrator for Latin America and Caribbean. The response was so great that we got the idea for this.

I would like to introduce to you the first resident AID staff member, Mr. Introduces Patrick McDuffie, who previously served in Belize.

To start, we have the Director of USAID's Regional Development Office for the Caribbean, Mosina Jordan, who has been supervising the aid program, both when we had only PL 480 and the new expanded program. She will be the first Director of the AID mission when it opens in a few months.

9. Roundtable Welcome Statement by Mosina Jordan

Welcome Statement

I am pleased to be here today, to participate in an event which marks the re-introduction to Guyana of the United States Agency for International Development and the start of our new program here. USAID is committed to a participatory approach to development, so this roundtable discussion of our program strategy is a fitting beginning.

I am also pleased to be able to introduce Mr. Patrick McDuffie, who arrived on Friday to take up his new post as USAID's General Development Officer stationed in Georgetown. Mr. McDuffie is a USAID career officer with extensive experience in Africa and the Caribbean. He has served recently in Haiti and then in Belize, where he was posted until coming here. I am sure you will find him open to continued dialogue on the program as it moves forward.

Since it has been some years since USAID had a full mission in Guyana, it might be useful to say a little about who we are and what we do:

The U.S. Agency for International Development is the agency of the United States Government that is responsible for international, bilateral assistance. This includes humanitarian assistance to countries in crisis, for example, as a result of natural disasters or civil strife, as well as assistance to countries, such as Guyana, that are moving along a path of sustainable development.

USAID currently has missions in about 70 countries around the world. The world is changing and USAID is also changing. For many years, the "cold war" was a major impetus of our assistance programs. The cold war is over. Now, we are devoting substantial resources to help the countries that used to be our adversaries in that war -- the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe -- helping them make the transition from authoritarian rule and centrally -- planned economic systems to democracy and market-oriented economies.

We are also providing increased resources to the Middle East, where there is new hope for peace.

Large amounts of our assistance resources continue to go to countries that remain in dire straights, for example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, where economic progress has been very elusive. In many places the effects of poverty are more severe than in this part of the world -- too many children lack access to basic education and health care, and get too little to eat.

As you are probably well aware, the U.S., itself, has had to do some "belt-tightening," particularly with regard to the national budget. President Clinton was elected with a mandate to improve our domestic economy and to trim government to reduce our own huge deficit. USAID, too, has had to trim its programs and operations. Last fall, a decision was made to close 21 missions around the world, including our regional office in Barbados.

In these circumstances, our new program here is indeed a powerful statement of our interest and support for what you are trying to do in Guyana. Although the resources we can make available are modest, they are significant in what is, for us, a very tight budget situation. They are also significant on a per capita basis, when compared to the resources we are able to provide to countries with much larger populations.

Because our resources are so limited, and there is stiff competition for those resources, we are determined to use them very well.

To keep the support of the American Congress and of their had to reshape its program strategies to fit the changing world as well as to fit the budget constraints. The new strategies put great emphasis on broad participation, and on equity and poverty reduction -- on making sure that the poor and disadvantaged have opportunities to participate in and benefit from development.

Based on numerous assessments and discussions in Guyana by our staff and consultants, there appears to us to be a very nice "match" between these strategic emphases of USAID and what is happening here in Guyana. Thus, while our program strategy for Guyana must fit within our own U.S. global strategies and priorities, we are confident that we can engage in a truly participatory process, in which we will not find great differences between what you, representing a cross section of the people of Guyana, find important, and the program of assistance we have planned.

That is not to say that we do not expect to hear differences expressed in our discussions. Some of you may believe that we should be applying our resources in other ways. Because our resources are so limited and because we want to use them to achieve maximum impact, we have had to focus them narrowly. This means that very important sectors and needs will be left out. We will listen to your views and appreciate your advice, even if we cannot always respond to your satisfaction. We hope, also, that even if you disagree with our priorities, this dialogue will help you understand what we are hoping to do and why, and that you will continue to give us your guidance and advice, so that our program does the greatest amount of good for the people of Guyana.

The USAID Strategy for Guyana

The overarching theme of USAID's program strategy is participation. Participation works at a number of levels:

- USAID assistance is only a small part of the development effort. We participate in this effort along with other donors and with the Government and people of Guyana, who bear the primary responsibility for the ultimate success of Guyana's development.

- USAID's program is being designed and will be implemented in a participatory way. The strategy and activities being presented today have been developed through extensive consultations with many Guyanese in the public and private sectors and NGO community. These roundtables are another step in this process. We expect to continue the

dialogue and look forward to working with many of you here in the implementation of the program.

- The major thrust of our program strategy is to help achieve greater participation by the Guyanese people in their country's economic growth and in its governance. A broadly participatory society is dynamic because it taps the wisdom and unleashes the creative energies of the people.

USAID's program strategy for assistance to Guyana is focused on two strategic objectives, reflecting the two areas of dramatic change already underway in Guyana.

The first relates to Guyana's decision to move to a market-oriented, private-sector led economy. USAID has defined its strategic objective in this area as "expanded economic opportunities for the urban and rural poor." Under this objective, USAID will seek to achieve four program outcomes:

- First, we will provide assistance to increase Guyanese capacity to implement economic policies for growth with equity. This will be done through a new project which will provide technical assistance and training for the Ministries of Finance and Trade.

- Second, under the same project, we will help broaden participation in dialogue between the public and private sectors.

- Third, we will provide limited assistance to improve economic infrastructure. This is being done mainly through the conditionality and local currency being generated from the wheat imported under the PL-480 Title III program, being used to support programs financed by other donors.

- Fourth, we will help increase the services available to support micro, small and non-traditional enterprises through private sector associations and non-governmental organizations.

USAID's second area of strategic focus supports Guyana's move toward a more democratic system of government, which began with free and fair national elections in 1992. The local elections planned for July will be another important step. Under USAID's second strategic objective -- defined as "strengthened democratic institutions and processes" -- the outcomes we expect from our program are a civil society that is more engaged in the democratic process, and a government that is more responsive to its citizens.

- We have recently made modest grants to two U.S. nongovernmental organizations to provide assistance for the local and municipal elections coming up in July.

- We hope to be able to begin a new project later this year strengthen the judicial system to improve the effective administration of justice.

- We are also considering possible assistance to other democratic institutions. This may include, for example, helping non-governmental organizations increase and strengthen the role of civil society in dialogue with government. It may also include

assistance to the Parliament. Another possibility is training for local government officials to enable them to respond more effectively to the needs of the people.

One consequence of USAID's strategic focus on these two areas is that we will not be able to provide assistance in many areas of need. It is natural to want to tackle all of the many development needs you have in Guyana, and there may be many different views as to which are the most compelling. However, not to focus is to run the risk of so dissipating the limited financial and human resources available as to have no significant impact.

The draft summary Program Objectives Document which was distributed to all of you explains the strategy which I have just outlined. It also provides a brief explanation of other areas we considered, but in which we decided we could not make a meaningful contribution.

Thank you for listening to me. Now it is time to hear your views and guidance to ensure the success of our proposed program.

10. Press Conference

A. Introduction

A press conference by Mosina Jordan was held at the U.S. Embassy, Georgetown, Guyana 13 April 1994. The conference was attended by 15 reporters. There were three TV cameras and one still camera photographer.

Ambassador George Jones:

Today we announce good news, the opening of the USAID mission in Georgetown. The USAID mission closed in 1982. In the years following, Guyana was not completely without an aid program. The U.S. provided food in 1986 and made grants in 1992 and 1993 for debt reduction. There has been a contract employee here for several years to assist with the PL480 program. But there has been no resident aid office since 1982. The purpose of the conference this morning is to announce the re-opening, with a permanent resident officer, Patrick McDuffie, aid representative. It will be a subsidiary of the Regional Development Office for the Caribbean. In a few months, we hope to sever that relationship and open independent office. Here with us this morning to tell you about new office and new program, we are happy to have the Director, Mosina Jordan.

B. Statement by Mosina Jordan

It is with great pleasure that I announce the reopening of an USAID office in Georgetown. USAID has not had a resident officer in Guyana since 1982. The new resident officer is Patrick McDuffie, who arrived 8 April.

USAID's overall objectives in Guyana are to expand economic opportunities for Guyana's urban and rural poor and to strengthen democratic and legal institutions and processes.

The USAID program to accomplish these objectives is expected to be funded at the level of US\$8 to 10 million annually. The funding will be entirely grants which will not add to the country's debt burden.

The largest part of the USAID program involves an annual grant of wheat under Title III of U.S. Public Law 480. Funds generated by the sale of this wheat are used to rehabilitate and maintain existing infrastructure and to help support the private sector through non-government organizations. The 1994 PL 480 agreement was for US\$6 million. We hope to continue these grants on an annual basis.

Another USAID program is the "Building Equity and Economic Participation," or BEEP, project. BEEP will provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Finance and to the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry to improve the legal, judicial and regulatory framework for private sector business development. BEEP funds will also be used to assist

private sector organizations working to promote small and medium-sized business development. Over the next several years, USAID expects to allocate US\$4.5 million to BEEP programs from its own funds, and another \$1.6 million from PL 480 counterpart.

Our third program will be the Guyana Justice Improvement Project, or JIP. The objective of the JIP will be to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Guyanese justice system. Technical assistance, training and equipment will help the Guyanese judiciary improve the management of the court system and will provide legal aid for disadvantaged groups. Funds generated by PL 480 will help to refurbish the physical facilities of the courts. Over the life of the project, USAID will invest US\$3.0 million of its own funds and \$1.0 million from PL 480 counterpart.

AS USAID settles into its new home in Georgetown, other projects will be introduced.

USAID seeks the advice and participation of the Guyanese people in developing and refining our programs here. For the past two days USAID has hosted roundtable discussions in which some 50 local opinion makers were given the opportunity to review USAID's proposed four-year strategy for assistance to Guyana. Participants included representatives of the political parties, government, religious groups, the media, non-governmental organizations, and small and large businesses. However, we hope the process of dialogue between USAID and the Guyanese people will not stop with these roundtables. We hope to maintain an open door and open minds throughout our stay in Guyana - for many years to come - and we continue to welcome ideas and proposals for ways in which we can improve our programs and better meet our objectives.

C. Questions from the Press

Q: Stabroek News-- Please expand on the grants to U.S. NGOS.

R: We have made two grants. First, to IFES, for equipment, technical assistance to poll workers, operations and procedures, reestablishing relations with the CEC. Second, to NDI for technical assistance for voter education and training, and for civil oversight.

Q: VOA-- Why has USAID decided to return now, and why did you leave in 1982?

R: You can appreciate the difficulty in working in political environment in the early 1980s. Now Government has gotten back on track. There are donor consultations. The free and fair elections were a benchmark.

Q: -- How satisfied are you with Government's utilization of funds?

R: In the PL480 grant program, we are pleased with the way Government is implementing the program, which is strengthening the private sector, rehabilitating infrastructure-- sea defenses and roads. We are pleased with progress to date.

Q:-- The decision to reopen... was it influenced by Jimmy Carter?

R: Ambassador-- If you mean did he play a direct role in the decision, No. But indirectly, his role was in monitoring and observation of October 1992 elections, and his report saying that it was the judgment of 66 members of observation team that the election was free and fair. That report influenced the U.S. Government to re-establish the USAID office and expand the program here. If the report had been different, we would have had great difficulty in reaching this decision.

Q:-- What is your four-year plan?

R:-- Expand economic opportunities and strengthen democratic institutions and processes. We had a cross-section of opinion. Major points were to include labor in the process and that the salary structure is a critical factor. The major contributions will be factored into the program.

Q: Catholic Standard-- Would you agree that the amount of aid is very small in relation to needs, and you have limited yourself to certain specific needs. Have you in mind increasing the amounts?

R:-- In designing the program, we took into consideration other donor programs and looked for a comparative advantage or niche. In the area of democratic reform, there are not other donors. We will also assist in stimulating foreign investment and the need for judicial reform. The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Trade and Industry need assistance to use available funds, to unblock them, to meet conditionalities, to strengthen NGOs, and to begin engagement between small and large organizations. We are looking forward to democratic initiatives, including with parliament, to provide training and technical assistance to help people get good government.

Increased funding depends on appropriations from Congress. We also have budget constraints. We have closed 21 missions around the world because funds do not permit them. so opening here is indicative of the importance we place on Guyana. Funds are modest, but highly targeted. On a per capita basis, the level of assistance is quite high.

Q:-- What are you currently doing with Guyanese NGOs?

R:-- We currently provide support through IPED. We are looking at support to small NGOs through an umbrella organization which we understand is forming.

Q:-- What is total sum for U.S. NGOs?

R: \$167,000 to IFES and \$67,000 to NDI. We are planning to fund the Carter Center for a program to support government to develop long-term plan, with priorities, by sector, and with targeted donor assistance.