

CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCTION

(BACKGROUND INFORMATION)

This Section of the National Communication provides information on Guyana's obligations under the Convention and on the National Circumstances that prevailed during 1994, the base year for Guyana. It also provides information on the geography, geology, climate, history, demography, economy, energy sources, land use, forestry and biodiversity.



Our National Bird – The Canje Pheasant

2.1 General

Guyana signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which was held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992.

The ultimate objective of the UNFCCC is to achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system and within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner (Article 2).

The Convention entered into force worldwide on March 21, 1994 (90 days after the date of deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification). Guyana ratified the Convention on August 29, 1994 subsequently entering into force on November 17, 1994.

2.2 Guyana's Obligations

The commitments under the UNFCCC pertain to all the greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Guyana, being a developing Country Party not included in Annex 1 nor Annex 2 will prepare its communications under the guidance of the following Conference of the Parties (COP) decisions:

- Decision 10/CP.2, including the annex guidelines for the preparation of initial communications from Parties not included in Annex 1 (DOC FCCC/CP/1996/ 15/Add.1)
- Decision 11/CP.2: Guidance to the Global Environment Facility (FCCC/CP/1996/15/Add.1)
- Decision 2/CP.4: Additional guidance to the operating entity of the financial mechanism (FCCC/CP/1998/16/Add.1)
- Decision 12/CP.4: Initial national communications from Parties not included in Annex 1 to the Convention (FCCC/CP/1998/16/Add.1)
- Decision 11/CP.1: Initial guidance on policies, programme priorities and eligibility criteria to the operating entity or entities of the financial mechanism (FCCC/CP/1995/7/Add.1)

2.3 Convention Guidance

Articles 4.1 and 12.1 require Guyana to communicate to the COP:

- (a) A national inventory of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of all greenhouse gases (GHG) not controlled by the Montreal Protocol to the extent its capacities permit, using comparable methodologies to be promoted and agreed upon by the COP;
- (b) A general description of steps taken or envisaged by Guyana to implement the Convention; and
- (c) Any other information that Guyana considers relevant to the achievement of the objectives of the Convention and suitable for inclusion in its communication, including, if feasible, material relevant for calculations of global emissions trends. Article 12.4 permits Guyana, on a voluntary basis, to propose projects for financing, including specific technologies, materials, equipment, techniques or practices that would be needed to implement such projects, along with, if possible, an estimate of all incremental costs, of the reduction of emissions and increments of removals of GHG, as well as an estimate of consequent benefits.

Articles 4.3 and 12.5 oblige Guyana to make its initial communications within three years of the availability of

financial resources to meet the agreed full costs of the preparation of the national communications.

2.4 COP Decision Guidance

- **COP 1** requested the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to give priority to funding agreed full costs (or agreed full incremental costs, as appropriate) incurred by developing country Parties in complying with their obligations.
- **COP 2** decided to adopt guidance to the GEF, as the interim operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention and also decided on guidelines, facilitation and process for consideration in communications from non-Annex 1 Parties.
- **COP 4 decided** on additional guidance to the GEF for funding implementation of adaptation response measures (Article 4.1), building of capacity for participation in systematic observational networks to reduce scientific uncertainties and assisting in developing, strengthening and/or improving national activities for public awareness and education on climate change and response measures, among other decisions. COP 4 also decided that, among other things, communications from non-Annex 1 Parties shall be considered in a facilitative, non-confrontational, open and transparent manner.

2.5 The Enabling Activity Project

A Project Document "GUY/97/G31/A/IG/99" titled "Enabling Guyana to Prepare its Initial National Communications in Response to its Commitments to the UNFCCC" was signed on June 5, 1998 between the Government of Guyana and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) whereby the UNDP/GEF provided a maximum of US\$196,730 in order to enable Guyana to prepare its Initial National Communication to the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC. The Project had the following components:

- An inventory of greenhouse gases following the guidelines decided by the Conference of Parties (COP);
- An assessment of potential impacts of climate change in Guyana;
- An analysis of potential measures to abate the increase in GHG emissions and to adapt to climate change;
- Preparation of a National Action Plan to address climate change and its adverse impacts; and
- Preparation of the Initial National Communication of Guyana to the COP.

The following actions were taken in order to respond to the objectives of the Project and to implement the project successfully:

- A Project Steering Committee, titled "National Climate Committee (NCC)" was established. It is chaired by the Chief Hydrometeorological Officer, who is the Climate Change focal point.
- A Project Coordinator was appointed to work full-time on the project.
- An international consultant on Climate Change and other experts were appointed to advise the Project Coordinator and to guide the national agencies on methodologies, data gathering and analyses.
- A National Task Force was set up to prepare the National Action Plan and the Initial National Communication.

- An Internet web site was set up to provide information on climate change activities in Guyana.

2.5.1 The National Climate Committee (NCC):

The NCC is comprised of participants from the following agencies:

- Environmental Protection Agency
- Hydrometeorological Service
- Institute of Applied Science and Technology
- Guyana Forestry Commission
- Guyana Manufacturers Association
- Private Sector Commission
- Guyana Energy Agency
- Guyana Natural Resources Agency
- Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Housing & Water
- Ministry of Health & Labour
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- University of Guyana
- Office of the President
- Guyana National Bureau of Standards

The Terms of Reference of the NCC are:

- Advise the relevant Ministers on developments and the need for policies and regulations in areas of climate change activities.
- Make recommendations to the Adviser to the President on Science, Technology, Energy and Environment on national measures to address issues related to several climate-related conventions and associated protocols.
- Promote technical, scientific, technological and financial co-operation among Institutions/ Organizations with responsibility for climate change activities.
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of action programmes related to the national obligations under the climate-related conventions and associated protocols.
- Oversee the country's activities for the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (WMO-UNEP).

2.5.2 The National Task Force:

The team was tasked with the job of developing the National Action Plan and the Initial National Communication. It included the following persons:

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| 1. | Ms. Sandra Bevan | - | Guyana Energy Agency |
| 2. | Ms. Verly Cordis | - | Ministry of Agriculture |

3.	Ms. Ravita Diaram	-	Environmental Protection Agency
4.	Mr. Zainool Rahaman	-	Hydrometeorological Service
5.	Ms. Deborah Montouth	-	Ministry of Housing and Water
6.	Ms. Susy Lewis	-	Guyana Natural Resources Agency
7.	Mr. Anthony Ross	-	Guyana National Bureau of Standards
8.	Ms. Maria Kattow	-	Guyana Forestry Commission
9.	Ms. Denise Simmons	-	University of Guyana, Environmental Studies Unit

The team's work was coordinated by the Project Coordinator of the Enabling Activity Project.

2.5.3 Workshops

The following workshops were held to facilitate the preparation of the Initial National Communication:

- **The Initiation Workshop** was held on October 19, 1999 to provide information on climate change issues, identify the sector agencies (and sector coordinators) and to discuss methodologies and other issues.
- **The Inventory of Greenhouse Gases Workshop** was held on October 19 – 21, 1999 and provided training to sector agencies in developing the sectoral inventories.
- **The Vulnerability and Adaptation Workshop** was held on October 21, 1999 and provided training to sector agencies in the operation of a suitable methodology of vulnerability assessment, adaptation issues, data collection and data gap studies.
- **The Workshop on Mitigation Analysis** was held on October 22, 1999 and provided training in GHG abatement analysis and mitigation methodologies and programmes.
- **There were other working group** meetings of the task force to clarify problem issues and data gap analyses. These were held on March 01 – 03, 2000.
- **The Task Force provided a draft of the Communication for the National Strategy Workshop**, which was held on June 23, 2000 and the National Action Plan for responsive measures along with the other components of the Initial Communication were discussed and fine-tuned for submission to Government.