

Regional Report of Multi-Stakeholder Forums held in Region Six

Total Number of Consultations Held: 23

Total Number of Participants: 771

Average attendance: 33.5

Summary Table of participation:

Area	Venue	Date	Attendance
Tain, Corentyne	Tain Primary School	11 th March, 2006	54
Rose Hall	Rose Hall Community Centre	18 th March, 2006	19
Albion	Albion Community Centre	20 th March, 2006	55
Betsy Ground, Canje	Betsy Primary School	22 nd March, 2006	32
Orealla/Siparata	Community Benab	27 th March, 2006	33
Fortland Ordinance, Berbice	Fortland Ordinance Primary School,	28 th March, 2006	58
Skeldon	Skeldon Primary School	1 st April, 2006	6
Rosehall	Lutheran Hall	2 nd April, 2006	4
New Amsterdam	Berbice High School	2 nd April, 2006	25
Fryish	Fryish Abdul's Residence	8 th April, 2006	56
No 19 Corentyne, Berbice	Bohemia's Primary School	9 th April, 2006	50
Auchlyne	Achlyne Primary School	19 th April, 2006	39
Manchester	Manchester Secondary School	23 rd April, 2006	20
Kildonan Village	Kildonan Primary School	26 th April, 2006	27
Wellington Park	Wellington Park Primary School	27 th April, 2006	34
Eversham	Eversham Primary School	1 st May, 2006	24
Black Bush Polder	Black Bush Secondary School	4 th May, 2006	65
No 48	No 48 Primary School	10 th May, 2006	25
No 68 Corentyne	No 68 Primary School	10 th May, 2006	79
No 63 East Coast Berbice	Tagore Memorial School	12 th May, 2006	4
No 56 Corentyne	No 56 Primary School	12 th May, 2006	28
Line Path	Skeldon Secondary School	16 th May, 2006	6
Crab Wood Creek	Crab Wood Creek Primary School	16 th May, 2006	28

1. What does Region Six celebrate as positives in Guyana:

Many participants in Region Six celebrate the richness in ideas, the interest and the commitment towards further development of Guyana by Guyanese. They celebrate the opportunity to speak out and participate in open conversations.

Furthermore, despite the many problems they have, a number of participants in the conversations celebrate the positive things in modern Guyana, which they never experienced before.

Inter-racial communities and marriages can prosper in Guyana and religious tolerance is widespread. Another such example is the fact that all races are recognised in the national holidays.

Lastly, many participants in the region celebrate the fact that Guyana has today only suffered minor environmental damage and manages to produce quality food.

Three conversations could not identify any positives to celebrate.

2. What are Region Six's Elements of a Vision for Guyana:

People in Region Six long for a **peaceful** Guyana; a country without racial tension and discrimination.

They hope that all citizens can expect to be treated with **respect** and that people can **trust** each other.

Furthermore, they ask for **political unity** and **honesty**.

Security issues are also very much part of the region's vision. People hope for a future with **less drug abuse**, better equipped and more committed **police** and more efficient **judicial system**.

Lastly, among the most important elements of the participants' vision for Guyana are **more jobs** and **improved educational** and **health** systems.

3. Key issues raised by residents/participants

[See Summary Table o Issues on page 5 for details]

The **poor infrastructure and services** in the region features heavily in the conversations. Total lack of electricity is a major concern in some areas. Other areas, which are supplied with electricity, ask for more street lighting. Furthermore, inadequate drainage is a constant worry for some areas and a reliable access to potable water is out of reach for many. So is access to

telephone services. In general, people in Region Six are asking for a robust investment in the infrastructure with the construction of new dams, trenches and bridges, together with better maintenance of existing constructions.

Negative attitude towards the **youth** is a constant theme, although participants also point out that very little is done for this group. Hence, they ask for rapid development of schools and recreational facilities.

Another key issue is the **environment**, in particular the disorganised garbage disposal system and stray animals.

The threat from **criminal activity** is also an issue participants want to see an improvement on, but many have little faith in the police. Drug and alcohol abuse is widely seen as a cause of this criminal activity.

Participants are generally disappointed with the state of the **education** and **health** systems in the region.

Lastly, people ask for more investment and **job creation**. In particular they ask about an **industrial site** that has been in the discussion for some time and a **new bridge** across Berbice River, which has been promised.

Participants of the conversations identified several issues that may lead to **violent conflict**. These are:

- i. Limited and unequal job opportunities,
- ii. Inadequate education,
- iii. Apparent need for guns among residents,
- iv. Irregularities regarding NIS,
- v. Squatting,
- vi. Noise nuances,
- vii. Allegations of corruption and lack of transparency in governance,
- viii. Unfulfilled promises regarding the infrastructure,
- ix. Decreasing police support and allegations of police brutality,
- x. Racial tension – sometimes fuelled by the media, and
- xi. Drug addiction.

4. Residents'/Participants' feelings about and expectations from the conversations:

In general participants were both eager to express the issues they came to discuss, and eager to see speedy results and actions. This willingness even took the form of impatience in some instances. In one conversation this willingness to help improve Guyana was exemplified when all the participants hugged and sang together.

However, some suspicion was aired in a few of the conversations that this was yet another politically motivated "talk shop", which would yield no results.

All agreed, nevertheless, that a safe space had been created for participants to express their views and that hesitant people was offered encouragement to come forward. People were not simply “talked to” in these meetings, which were proper conversations according to participants. Indeed, there was an opportunity for everyone to ask questions in each forum. One such noticeable question was on the meaning of “ethnicity”.

5. Process Issues:

Attendance in the communities was overall encouraging. Only four of the conversations had disappointing attendance. Lack of proper information about the conversations may be to blame. Participants in one conversation said for example that they had only been informed of ‘a meeting’, no further details were given.

Two of these poorly attended conversations were, nevertheless, particularly noticeable. Of six participants in Line Path, five were students of Sheldon Secondary School. These students voiced their concerns intelligently and had a lot to contribute to the wider discussion in the region. Furthermore, the participants from Village No. 63 gave an impression of a problem free and idyllic existence within their community.

Summary Table of Issues

Present local conflicts/ areas of tension	No. of Communities	Names of Communities which raised issue	Concrete commitments and ideas towards overcoming challenges
<i>INFRASTRUCTURE</i>			
Leakages of pipelines. ("Guyana Water Inc is asking not to waste water and they are doing just that")	2	Albion, No 19 Corentyne,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper repairs of breakages • Residents should not be told off for fixing breakages, when the GWA personnel do not do it in a timely manner
Shortages and poor quality of water	11	Albion, No 19 Corentyne, Betsy Ground, Fortland Ordinance, Kildonan Village, Crab Wood Creek, Black Bush Polder, No 68 Corentyne, No 56 Corentyne, Fryish, No 48 Corentyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination in the distribution of water should not be tolerated • People should not have to pay bills for twelve months supply of water when a six months supply closer to reality
Shortage and lack of electricity	10	Albion, No 19 Corentyne, Auchlyne, Orealla, No 68 Corentyne, Line Path, Crab Wood Creek, Black Bush Polder, Wellington Park, Eversham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost of electricity connection must go down • GPL transformers need more regular servicing • Proper meter reading is essential if people are expected to have faith in the limited service • Energy saving bulbs need to be distributed to all homes
Blocked and limited drainage system	12	No 19 Corentyne, Rose Hall, Fortland Ordinance, Kildonan Village, No 68 Corentyne, Line Path, Black Bush Polder, No 56 Corentyne, Fryish, Wellington Park, Eversham, No 48 Corentyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many trenches need to be re-dug • Make sure that cattle and pigs do not damage the system • Drains must be cleared of garbage • There needs to be a continuous maintenance of the drainage system • The government should look to other countries for technical solutions
Poor state, and lack of investment in, of roads, bridges and dams	11	No 19 Corentyne, Auchlyne, Betsy Ground, Fortland Ordinance, Kildonan Village, No 68 Corentyne, Line Path, Black Bush Polder, No 56 Corentyne, Fryish, Manchester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that cattle cannot damage dams • The community must be knowledgeable about planned repairs before work commences • Residents must be involved in the supervision • Heavy duty vehicles should be restricted to few main streets • The promised new bridge over the Berbice river must be constructed

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Structures causing floods	2	No 19 Corentyne, Auchlyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDC office must remove residents who build on reserve land Fish ponds can affect drainage
Lack of street lights	10	Auchlyne, Betsy Ground, Kildonan Village, Fortland Ordinance, Line Path, Crab Wood Creek, Black Bush Polder, No 56 Corentyne, Manchester, Wellington Park	
Lack of land phones	10	Auchlyne, Kildonan Village, No 68 Corentyne, Black Bush Polder, No 56 Corentyne, Fryish, Albion, Wellington Park, Eversham, No 48 Corentyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telephone applications should always be properly recognised
Isolated villages around Skeldon	2	Orealla, Line Path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roads must be constructed Cheaper boats must be made available
Lack of a burial ground	1	Crab Wood Creek	
Absence of an Air Strip in East Berbice	1	Manchester	
<i>Social Inclusion/Cohesion</i>			
Endangerment of persons by ethnicity	1	Albion	
Loss indigenous culture	1	Orealla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government must help the community to get back in touch with its roots and culture
Amerindian sentiments of being second class citizens	2	Orealla, Rosehall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethnic discrimination and stigma must stop in the wider society
Strained relations between individuals of different ethnic groups, e.g. at election time	4	Skeldon, Tain, No 56 Corentyne, New Amsterdam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERC needs to address conflict during election period Racial slur should not be accepted Potential leaders should not behave irresponsibly People should not be afraid of voicing opinions Security around elections needs to be tight The media should not air programmes that fuel tensions Ethnic relations should be taught at school

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Unresolved political issues	3	Skeldon, Tain, New Amsterdam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion needs to take place on shared governance • No governing party should serve more than two terms • The insecurity of Africans, real or perceived, should be addressed • Political party needs to be established that cuts across all racial divisions • Political leaders should not be allowed to incite hatred
<i>Social Issues</i>			
High incidence of HIV/AIDS, together with stigma and discrimination	2	Albion, No 68 Corentyne	
Pensioners have difficulties in receiving pensions	4	No 19 Corentyne, Auchlyne, Tain, Fryish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDC office instead of the Post Office could distribute pension
Lack of public awareness of social rights	2	Skeldon, No 68 Corentyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens should be educated about civil laws • Women in particular need to be educated about their rights
Unemployment of women, e.g. widows	1	No 68 Corentyne	
Trafficking of Amerindian girls	1	Line Path	
<i>Access to Opportunities and Resources</i>			
Poor access to health services and insufficient treatment	7	No 19 Corentyne, Auchlyne, Kildonan Village, No 68 Corentyne, Crab Wood Creek, Black Bush Polder, No 48 Corentyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good hospital is needed in Berbice • Skeldon Hospital needs doctors and nurses • Necessary drugs should be provided at all times • Doctors need to be more considerate when listening to complaints
Inadequate medical assistance at the Port Mourant Hospital	1	Auchlyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hospital needs to have a scanning machine
Amerindian communities are excluded from sport development projects	1	Orealla	
Exclusion from community benefits associated with certain types of communities	1	Orealla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orealla needs to be classified as a 'hinterland' community
Migration of the workforce	1	Orealla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs are needed locally
Problems with access to mortgage	1	Orealla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communal ownership may need to be revised • Similar access as one can find in Moruca could help

Present local conflicts/ areas of tension	No. of Communities	Names of Communities which raised issue	Concrete commitments and ideas towards overcoming challenges
Unequal and limited access to job opportunities	9	Skeldon, Tain, Rose Hall, Fortland Ordinance, Rosehall, No 68 Corentyne, Crab Wood Creek, No 56 Corentyne, New Amsterdam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions of unemployment need to be addressed • Those willing to engage in self-employment should receive financial support
<i>Youths</i>			
Teenage pregnancy	2	Albion, Black Bush Polder	
Idleness among youths	14	No 19 Corentyne, Orealla, Tain, Rose Hall, Betsy Ground, Rosehall, Kildonan Village, No 68 Corentyne, Crab Wood Creek, New Amsterdam, Manchester, Wellington Park, Eversham, No 48 Corentyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playfields should be developed and sporting equipment provided by the government • Technical training, and counselling, for youths needs to be provided • A programme is needed for school drop outs • A form of National Service needs to be established • Library for youths should be established • Stalled President Youth Choice Projects are not acceptable
Lack of employment opportunities for youths	7	Auchlyne, Orealla, Crab Wood Creek, Fryish, Wellington Park, Eversham, No 48 Corentyne	
Youth crime rate	1	Tain	
Lack of facilities for handicapped children	1	No 68 Corentyne	
<i>Morals/Values</i>			
The 'get rich quick syndrome'	1	Albion	
Lack of virtues in the society	4	Skeldon, No 68 Corentyne, New Amsterdam, Eversham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be religious and ethical education in schools • Parents should get training in developing their attitudes
Lack of discipline and respect in the society	5	Rose Hall, Rosehall, No 68 Corentyne, Black Bush Polder, Eversham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents need to accept more responsibility • Corporeal punishment can be introduced in schools

Present local conflicts/ areas of tension	No. of Communities	Names of Communities which raised issue	Concrete commitments and ideas towards overcoming challenges
<i>Law and Order</i>			
Lack of confidentiality in the Police Force and inequality of justice	10	Albion, Skeldon, Fortland Ordinance, No 68 Corentyne, Line Path, Crab Wood Creek, Black Bush Polder, No 56 Corentyne, Eversham, No 48 Corentyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero tolerance against bribery • Key persons in the community should own licensed firearms • Police officers should be given the opportunity to elevate themselves educationally • Civil forum for complaints needs to be established • Police needs to act on complaints, e.g. on disturbances from rum shops
Drug use and alcohol abuse	11	Albion, Orealla, Skeldon, Rose Hall, Betsy Ground, Rosehall, No 68 Corentyne, Black Bush Polder, Crab Wood Creek, Manchester, No 48 Corentyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol must not be sold to youths and children • Community services should be issued to drug users • Age limit for alcohol consumption should be 21
Insufficient police protection	10	Auchlyne, Tain, Betsy Ground, Rosehall, No 68 Corentyne, Crab Wood Creek, No 56 Corentyne, Fryish, Manchester, Wellington Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More police stations are needed • More police vehicles are needed • Police should be better paid • All communities need police patrols at night • Armed policing groups, accompanied by a police officer, need to be established in many areas. Already established policing group need more support from the police • The background of the personnel of policing groups needs to be checked
Apparent need for residents to arm themselves	1	Betsy Ground	
Prostitution	1	Line Path	
Speeding on public roads	1	No 56 Corentyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic police needs to be more vigilant
Squatting	1	Manchester	

Present local conflicts/ areas of tension	No. of Communities	Names of Communities which raised issue	Concrete commitments and ideas towards overcoming challenges
<i>Environment</i>			
Noise nuances	1	Albion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offenders should be penalised
Poor collection of garbage and littering	12	Albion, No 19 Corentyne, Orealla, Rose Hall, Betsy Ground, Rosehall, Kildonan Village, No 68 Corentyne, Line Path, Crab Wood Creek, Fryish, Wellington Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garbage bins should be allocated and placed at the head of every street • Specific days for the collection should be set • Persons who clean their own surroundings should be awarded tax-breaks • In Orealla, residents take great pride in their collective, weekly cleaning of the community. Perhaps other communities can learn from their efforts
Abandoned houses	2	Albion, No 68 Corentyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These houses should be eradicated
Road blockages by animals, parked trucks and piling of construction material	8	Albion, Auchlyne, Betsy Ground, No 56 Corentyne, Manchester, Wellington Park, Eversham, No 48 Corentyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political affiliation should not allow individuals to let their animals roam the streets • Stray catchers are needed • Pasture for cows needs to be provided
Snakes and alligators near homes because of uncut bush	2	No 19 Corentyne, No 56 Corentyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bush needs to be cut regularly near houses
Poor environmental inspection	1	No 19 Corentyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitary Inspectors need to work more than just one day per week
Destruction of the foreshore and poor sea-defences	3	Auchlyne, Wellington Park, No 48 Corentyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutting of the mangrove trees need to be limited • Dam needs to be built at the seashore in order to keep the sea water out
<i>Economy/Markets</i>			
Need for a boost in industries	4	Albion, Rose Hall, No 68 Corentyne, No 56 Corentyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more delays in investment in an industrial site in Berbice • Canneries and garment factories should be established • Red tape must be removed
Lack of technical support for job creation	1	Orealla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government must provide the necessary support
Dependence on logging	1	Orealla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needs to be more support for diversification
Lack of market facilities and opportunities for farmers	4	Kildonan Village, Crab Wood Creek, Manchester, Eversham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field officers should be appointed in order to educate farmers • International marketing of fruits should be explored

Present local conflicts/ areas of tension	No. of Communities	Names of Communities which raised issue	Concrete commitments and ideas towards overcoming challenges
Problems facing farmers, e.g. late payments to farmers from the rice mills	4	Black Bush Polder, No 56 Corentyne, Manchester, Eversham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage farmers to cultivate the crop at the same time • Combines should be provided in order to assist farmers with the harvesting • Pricing system needs to be constructed • Rice mills should pay interests on late payments
Poor wages of GUYSUCO workers	1	Crab Wood Creek	
<i>Education</i>			
Shortages of teachers	2	Albion, Auchlyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers need to be better paid
Absence of a nursery school	1	Albion	
Absence of secondary school	1	Orealla	
Absence of opportunities for slow learners	1	No 68 Corentyne	
Distances to training collage	1	No 68 Corentyne	
Lack of scholarships for capable, but economically challenged, students	2	Albion, No 68 Corentyne	
Children from squatting areas not attending school	1	Albion	
Violent behaviour of students towards teachers	1	Auchlyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System must be put in place to allay the fears of teachers who discipline students in the schools
Education is not receiving proper importance and the standard of the schools is poor	8	Auchlyne, Orealla, Tain, Rose Hall, Betsy Ground, No 68 Corentyne, No 56 Corentyne, Eversham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanctions should be laid against parents who do not send their children to school • The distances between schools and homes must be shortened • Local schools bring commitment to education • Local school need to be better supervised by official from the Ministry of Education • Dress code should be established for children and teachers • Bus system for school children needs to be introduced
Inappropriate relationships between teachers and children	1	Line Path	
Lack of school books	1	No 68 Corentyne	

Present local conflicts/ areas of tension	No. of Communities	Names of Communities which raised issue	Concrete commitments and ideas towards overcoming challenges
<i>Public Administration</i>			
Controversial appointments of community leaders and other key persons in the society	1	Albion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More transparency in the appointment processes is essential
Doubts that allocated money for youth programmes is properly spent	1	Albion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building for the youth group in Belvedere Block X should carry on as the funds have been allocated
Poor function of SIMAP Projects	1	Albion	
Conflicts between NDC officers and residents. Criticism of NDC	4	No 19 Corentyne, Fortland Ordinance, Kildonan Village, No 68 Corentyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings need to be held • Interaction between NDC and communities needs to improve
Allegations of discrimination in the development of the infrastructure	1	Auchlyne	
Allegation that politicians are more concerned about power than the people	2	Skeldon, Fortland Ordinance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The administration must be more honest, efficient and transparent
Poor handling of members of the public by public servants	1	Skeldon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public servants should be sent on courses to improve their public relation skills
Long wait for passport requests to be granted	1	Kildonan Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government must address the issue of passports urgently
Need to strengthen and sort out irregularities in connection with NIS	4	Manchester, No 56 Corentyne, New Amsterdam, Tain	

