

Summary Report on International Small Business Summit and Green Expo

Overview

Guyana's inaugural Green Expo and International Small Business Summit was held in Georgetown from the 18th – 21st October 2018. The event, held under the theme *"Sustainable economic growth through small business innovation, entrepreneurship and transformative government policies"* was made possible through the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of the Presidency, UN Environment, Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE), IDB, the African Business Roundtable, and the Small Business Bureau of the Ministry of Business. The international Summit was hosted at the Ramada Georgetown Princess Hotel, Providence, East Bank of Demerara from the 18th – 19th October, while the Green Business Expo was held at the National Stadium, Providence until the 21st October, 2018. The latter event provided small-scale entrepreneurs with an opportunity to showcase their green and innovative products, whilst the Summit provided the platform for experts, entrepreneurs, academia, politicians and the other representatives from 16 countries to exchange information and experiences in green economy initiatives.

UN Environment and PAGE participated at both events and took the opportunity to enhance public awareness on the *Guyana Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040* and the work of the national partners of Partnership for Action on the Green Economy (PAGE) in the country. At the Expo, PAGE was represented through two booths – one staffed by representatives of the UNDP and the other by UN Environment team working out of the Green State Development Strategy Coordination Office. Patrons to the Expo were informed about PAGE's work globally as well as some of the initiatives being undertaken in Guyana including the macro-economic modelling and the green industry assessments undertaken to inform the elaboration and support the implementation of the Green State Development Strategy Vision 2040. Staff from the Ministry of the Presidency's Department of the Environment was also on hand to engage with participants at the Expo on the Strategy.



Summary of the Green Summit Proceedings

The International Summit featured a keynote address from the Honourable Mr. Winston Jordon, Minister of Finance. Other opening remarks were made by: the Honourable Mr. Dominic Gaskin, Minister of Business; the IDB-Country Representative, Ms. Sophie Makonnen; UN Environment's Regional Director (ROLAC), Mr. Leo Heileman; Director of the Department of the Environment, Ms. Ndibi Schwiers; and the Chairman of the Institute of Applied Science and Technology (IAST), and CGX Guyana, Prof. Suresh Narine.

This was followed by two panel discussions:

- i) "The Green State Development Strategy Vision 2040" chaired by Ambassador Rawle Lucas of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The panel heard from Ms. Ndibi Schwiers and Mr. Ramesh Dookhoo of the Private Sector Commission, on the benefits of a green state agenda and private sector participation. Ms. Schwiers informed that waste management is the greatest challenge facing the Department of the Environment and requested the Private Sector to assist with initiatives to convert waste to wealth. In response, Mr. Ramesh Dookhoo of the Private Sector Commission stressed that implementation of the Strategy should learn from past lessons whereby many strategies were discarded with changes in government. He also advocated for the re-establishment of the State Planning Secretariat, and the establishment of an extensive ICT programme. Ms. Adriana Zacarias (Regional Coordinator, Resource Efficiency – UNEP/ROLAC) and Ms. Deirdre Shurland (GSDS Project Manager) presented on the policy recommendations of the Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040;
- ii) "Big Ideas for a Sustainable Energy Future in Guyana" chaired by Dr. Devon Gardner, Energy Programme Manager, CARICOM Secretariat. The panel featured experts in energy development and renewable technologies including Dr. Mahendra Sharma CEO of the Guyana Energy Agency, who identified the possible renewable energy scenarios studied by the GEA. Mr. Mike Singh of the TC Group, Abu Dhabi who presented bold energy investment ideas potentially available to Guyana based on models in Abu Dhabi; Ms. Meshia Clarke, President of the Barbados Renewable Energy Agency, who shared Barbados' experience in making the transition to renewable energy based on investments in solar PV panels who stressed the importance of cross-border collaboration and partnership; Mr. Martin Carto, Alternative Energy Manager – Farfan & Mendes Limited; Mr. Albert Gordon, CEO Guyana Power and Light Ltd. who discussed the challenges experienced by the national electrical grid and the plans afoot to improve grid performance, reliability and cost effectiveness; and Mr. Gareth Davies of ABIS Energy, Aberdeen, U.K. who shared the experience of the Orkney Islands off the coast of Scotland.

In his feature address, Minister Jordon noted that small and medium-sized businesses have a vital role to play in the transformation of Guyana into a green economy and the Expo and Summit will create opportunities for networking and facilitating trade with the growing demand for green products and services globally. The Minister reiterated that the required transformation will be in the context of the priorities established by the *Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040*.

Mr. Leo Heileman lauded Guyana's ambition for embracing green development, and remarked that the UN Environment was honoured to support the country in the development of the *Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040*. He explained that the Strategy provides Guyana with an opportunity to properly manage its petroleum revenues to boost social and economic development while safeguarding the country's environmental assets for future generations.

"The Government of Guyana is highly committed to Green Economy, and has become member of our Global Partnership for action on Green Economy (PAGE), a joint initiative of five UN Agencies: UN Environment, ILO, UNIDO, UNITAR and UNDP. We are working closely with the government and multiple stakeholders, supporting the transition towards a Green Economy. So far in 2018 PAGE has started the

work on Economic modelling, the Green Jobs Assessment and the Green Industry Assessment, and the alignment of the Green State Strategy with the Sustainable Development Goals. You will hear more about this work in the next Panel and tomorrow's panel on Green Manufacturing.

Throughout the summit and expo you will see evidence of how small businesses are innovating in Guyana today, and the success of Government efforts to support them. Public initiatives like the small business procurement programme, the assistance offered by the Small Business Bureau, and the small business tax procedures, all strengthen the enabling environment and help small businesses thrive."

On the day two of the Summit (Friday October 19th 2018) there were four panel discussions under each of the following green themes: i) *Shaping Agriculture for a Green Economy*; ii) *Green Manufacturing, the key to Sustainability*; iii) *Thing Green, Act Green, Manufacture Green, Buy Green, Live Green*; and iv) *Sustainable Green Growth through Strategic Transformative Thinking*. Representatives of ILO, UNIDO and SWIT made presentations and participated in the panel on "green manufacturing" whilst Vivid Economics participated in the panel on sustainable green growth.

- i) "Shaping Agriculture for a Green Economy" – chaired by Dr. Maxine Parris-Aaron, Agricultural Health Specialist, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA). The session opened with remarks from the Honourable Mr. Noel Holder, Minister of Agriculture. The Minister alluded to the importance of ecological green agriculture to food security, safe guarding of the environment and water use efficiency. He recognized the need to integrate traditional practices into green transformative agriculture, and for the capacities of farmers to be developed for them to adapt to green practices. The panel featured local and international agricultural scientists and practitioners including Dr. Mahendra Persaud (Chief Plant Breeder at the Guyana Rice Development Board); Mr. David Aparisio (proprietor of Sabina Farms, Guyana); Dr. Lystra Fletcher-Paul (sub-Regional Coordinator, FAO); Dr. Arlington Chesney (Special Advisor to IICA) and Prof. Subramanian Gomathinayagam (Director, University of Guyana, Tain Campus). The panelists shared their experiences and aspirations for green agriculture, including the role of green agriculture to the development of vulnerable individuals, particularly women and youth.
- ii) "Green Manufacturing, the key to Sustainability" - this session was chaired by Mr. Ramesh Dookhoo who in his deliberations requested for efficient green energy initiatives to support the manufacturing sector, and for incentives/awards be given to manufacturers for undertaking responsible actions to safeguard the environment. The panel heard from Dr. Suresh Narine, Mr. Rawle Small (Consultant, ILO), Ms. Vera Guseva (Workers Activities Representatives, ILO), Prof. Carlos Scheel-Mayenburger (Professor Emeritus Monterrey Institute of Technology) and Dr. Leonard Pineda (Economist, Directorate of Research and Innovation, University of Bogota, Columbia). In his presentation, Dr. Narine identified energy, culture and ecology as major challenges to green manufacturing. He explained that one of the energy limitations is the regulation that prevents private producers of solar voltaic energy from selling excess power to the national grid. Culturally, agriculture is generally based on petro-chemicals. Of note, was his call for the relevant authorities to desist from promoting industrial agriculture in the Rupununi savannahs. Mr. Small of the ILO recommended for Guyana's green agenda to consider amongst other things: i) enhancing of environmental regulations at industrial sites; ii) a demonstration (immediate impact) of resource efficiency in one of the major sectors e.g. rice or sugar; iii) development of green management plans for industrial estates; and iv) the export potential of agro-processing. Prof. Carlos Scheel and Dr. Leonardo Pineda presented on opportunities for Guyana to achieve green and resilient sustainable development by aligning a circular economy strategy with the Green State Development Strategy. Their presentation was based on the results of an analysis of the conditions and capacities required to develop a circular economy in the mining sector at Bartica. Their results showed that opportunities exist for the creation of

- new businesses and wealth from the by-products and waste (e.g. scrap metal, discarded tires and coconuts) emerging from gold mining.
- iii) Thing Green, Act Green, Manufacture Green, Buy Green, Live Green – Chaired by Dr. Raquel Thomas-Caesar (Director of Research and Training at Iwokrama). Experts on the panel were Dr. Paulette Bynoe (Lecturer, University of Guyana), Ms. Heather Reid and Mr. John Patterson (proprietors of Abbey Garden, Canada), Ms. Johan Rogers (Megapower Limited, Barbados) and Dr. Terrance Blackman (Dean, Medgar Evers, College, USA). These presenters outlined the social, economic and environmental benefits of green living and livelihoods.
 - iv) Sustainable Green Growth through Strategic Transformative Thinking – this session was chaired by Dr. Leyland Lucas (Dean, School of Entrepreneurship and Business), and featured a panel that consist of financial experts and managers, including Mr. Olympus Mohlatlego (Climate Change Finance Manager, Development Bank of South Africa), Mr. Charlie Dixon (Senior Economist, Vivid Economic, UK), Mr. Pravichandra Dav (CEO, Demerara Bank, Guyana), Mr. David Staples (CEO, Williams Capital Barbados) and Dr. Hector Butts (Finance secretary, Ministry of Finance). Mr. Dixon presented on options for green financing and investments; and Mr. Dav informed on the financial instruments, terms and conditions for loans from Demerara Bank to support green initiatives. Other presentations on green financing and bonds were done by Mr. Staples and Mohlatlego.

Closing remarks and vote of thanks for the two-day Summit was delivered by Dr. Hector Butts, Finance Secretary-Ministry of Finance.

Web-links with info on Summit and Expo:

<https://dpi.gov.gy/green-guyana-expo-and-summit-opens/>

<http://www.un-page.org/recognizing-role-small-business-inclusive-green-economy-guyana>

<https://www.stlucianewsonline.com/guyana-recognises-smes-as-a-key-pathway-in-its-transition-to-a-green-state/>