

# **PRESENTATION OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ORGANISATIONS OF GUYANA ON THE EU FLEGT VPA**

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PRE-JMRC TECHNICAL SESSION, MARCH 8, 2022

LOCATION: GUYANA

# LIST OF ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTED

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- APA: Amerindian Peoples' Association
- GOIP: Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous Peoples
- NADF: National Amerindian Development Foundation
- TAAMOG: The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana

# ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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# I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VPA MUST BE INCLUSIVE, TRANSPARENT AND PARTICIPATORY

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- Procedures for allocation of concessions need to be a lot more transparent and inclusive - have consultations with village councils where these concessions may overlap with their lands;
- Verification procedures need to be enhanced to include Indigenous Peoples in this process;
- In order for the implementation process to be successful, there must be a robust communication and engagement strategy developed in an inclusive manner and which is accessible;
- The national COVID – 19 protective measures have made information and engagement with villages and communities restricted;

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VPA MUST BE INCLUSIVE, TRANSPARENT AND PARTICIPATORY

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- Engagement with Indigenous communities must include district council bodies which are provided for under Section 35 of the Amerindian Act 2006 and functions outlined in Section 36. District Council bodies play a crucial role in the representation of collective discussions and decision-making; the National Tshaos Council (NTC) as a national elected representative body of Indigenous communities must also be included as well as technical support given according to their needs;
- Last but not least, Indigenous Peoples non-governmental organisations continued inclusion is important as we work with communities to raise awareness, transfer knowledge and facilitate empowerment of Indigenous Peoples to participate in community, regional and national decision making and representation.

## 2. IMPACT ASSESSMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF VPA

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- A participatory impact assessment on the implementation of the VPA on Indigenous Peoples must be conducted in a participatory manner, with indigenous representatives guiding how the assessment can be conducted – with enough time to give leaders and communities to provide effective inputs;
- There must be access to information enhanced to demonstrate improved governance to support indigenous peoples input into how impacts may be mitigated

### 3. ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE COMPLAINTS MECHANISM TO ADDRESS GRIEVANCES

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- Section 57 – Right to access lands and exercise traditional rights; this is still to be addressed through a participatory process and what grievance redress mechanism is in place; this also includes cases of titled villages facing challenges on their boundaries and logging activities;
- A robust redress mechanism can only be deemed effective if this is designed in a participatory and inclusive process before the implementation and ratification of the VPA;
- Indigenous Peoples must be included in this process. There are many reported cases of indigenous workers and labourers who have cited various individuals and companies who have not been paying them or have been underpaying them. Any GRM must then be accessible and fair.

## 4. RIGHTS GUARANTEED UNDER LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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- Guyana's side of implementation of the VPA must recognize that there has been ongoing work with regards to strengthening legislation to ensure effective protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, more specifically the Amerindian Act 2006. To this end, the government of Guyana is strongly encouraged to ensure that all relevant legislation are updated or revised to protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples under the various strategies and programmes such as the VPA being implemented.



THANK YOU!

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