



DET KONGELIGE  
MILJØVERNDEPARTEMENT

*Royal Ministry of the Environment  
The Minister*

See attached list

Your ref

Our ref

Date

10.05.2011

Dear all,

I would like to thank all of you who signed the open letter to me dated March 24 this year on the Norway-Guyana Memorandum of Understanding. I have read your letter with interest. The letter is focusing on issues that are important to our cooperation with Guyana and where our two countries have an open dialogue on how to achieve our common objectives.

Through our partnership, Guyana and Norway are exploring new models of cooperation and new ways to meet the challenges of climate change. We are “breaking new ground” which is not an easy task and we will meet criticism. But the alternative, doing nothing, cannot be an option. We do appreciate feedback. The participation of engaged individuals and civil society is vital in this process.

It will not be possible to go into the details of your letter here, but please allow me some general comments to the issues you raise:

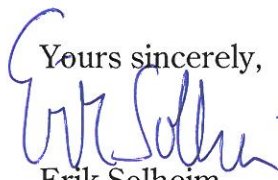
The first transfer of funds to the Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund that you are referring to, was done to make money available for projects for the Fund to start operating. As you are aware, funds are only disbursed from the Trustee to the Partner Entities when projects have been approved by the Fund’s Steering Committee. The money cannot be used for other purposes than what have been agreed. The process of preparing projects has taken longer than anticipated, and therefore no money has been disbursed from the Fund to Guyana.

During my visit to Guyana in March, I underlined that it is a prerequisite for Norway that international standards for fiduciary, social and environmental safeguards are adhered to. This is also part of the legal framework of the Guyana REDD+ Investment

Fund. The Partner Entities (the Inter-American Development Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank) are all reputable international organizations applying such standards. The projects or project concept notes presented to the Steering Committee for approval will be published on the Low Carbon Development Strategy/Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund's website. At the moment there is only the project concept note for institutional strengthening that is under consideration by the Steering Committee and the document can be found on the website. The project for titling of indigenous land is under preparation. Norway has confidence that the United Nations Development Programme as one of the key organizations of the United Nations working with governance, local democracy and human rights, has the experience and know-how to deliver.

Transparency is essential to the Guyana – Norway cooperation and none of the consultants responsible for the verification reports related to the cooperation have indicated to us that they had problems in obtaining information from the government of Guyana. The verification for 2009 - 2010 showed that Guyana had delivered on the initial benchmarks and this resulted in the second disbursement according to what had been agreed. The money will be kept in the Fund until projects have been approved by the Steering Committee. The benchmarks for 2011 are further elaborated in the revised Joint Concept Note agreed between Guyana and Norway. The reference level and calculation of the results based payment is explained in the revised Joint Concept Note and various documents available on the Low Carbon Development Strategy/Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund's website.

I would once again like to thank you for your input and comments. This is an innovative process where there will be a diversity of views and even disagreements. Such diversity of views can be a positive force to get us closer to success as long as we are working towards the same goal.

Yours sincerely,  
  
Erik Solheim

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