

## ACTIVITY REPORT 10.1

<b>Activity:</b>	Meetings with Trio leaders and authorities regarding <i>garimpeiros</i>
<b>Financed by:</b>	Organization of American States
<b>Focal group:</b>	Trio community of Kwamalasamutu, Sipaliwini
<b>Execution:</b>	The Amazon Conservation Team (ACT); President: Mark Plotkin; ACT Suriname Program Director: Gwendolyn Emanuels-Smith Counterparts: the Trio indigenous communities
<b>Date:</b>	November 21, 2005

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### **OBJECTIVE**

The objective was to inform Suriname government authorities regarding the presence of *garimpeiros* (itinerant gold miners from Brazil) in the Sipaliwini Area.

### **COORDINATION**

Activities were coordinated by the Trio leader Granman Asongo and the ACT Operations Manager Sonja Lisse.

### **ACTIVITY REPORT**

The presence of *garimpeiros* in the Sipaliwini area was demonstrated in field reports and reported during an official meeting on November 14<sup>th</sup> in Kwamalasamutu.

#### **November 14, 2005. Meeting with Granman Asongo and ACT staff in Kwamalasamutu.**

The Granman explained the purpose of the meeting and described the presence of two *garimpeiros* in the Sipaliwini area. The *garimpeiros* had come to prospect the area for gold with the assistance of a villager of Kwamalasamutu (Adimimang Berg).

The Granman had asked these individuals to leave, but instead they drifted further southward to Sipaliwini and are still prospecting with the help of a few local villagers. The Granman asked for ACT's help in removing these individuals from the area.

Ms. Lisse explained to him that he—as the Granman of the area—may contact authorities such as the District Commissioner of the Police to inform them of the presence of trespassers. It was explained that NGOs such as ACT-Suriname may only pass on his concern to the authorities, but that ACT return charter flights could help to bring indigenous leaders to Paramaribo. The Granman was satisfied with this explanation and said that he will be in Paramaribo on November 16<sup>th</sup> to speak with local authorities.

After communicating with the translator and official representative of the Sipaliwini area to the government, Ms. Lisse arranged a meeting with the police authorities.

#### **November 21, 2005. Meeting between Granman Asongo, police authorities, and ACT staff in Paramaribo.**

The Granman informed the Police Commissioner (PC) Plet of the current situation, and asked for his help. The Commissioner explained to the Granman that it was the first time he heard about this matter, and that he was glad that the Granman had brought it to his attention. He asked if the Granman had informed the District Commissioner (DC), and the Granman said that he had sent a letter earlier with the translator, but had yet to receive a response. The Police Commissioner then

called the District Commissioner, because during his morning meeting with the DC this issue had not been raised.

The DC explained to the PC that he had been on leave for several weeks, and that just this morning he had noticed the Granman's letter. The PC and the DC agreed that it was a very serious issue, and that they would discuss resolution of the matter as soon as possible. The PC then asked ACT for assistance, particularly with regard to transportation. Ms. Lisse informed the PC that while the option of collaboration is always available, it would need to be structured and on a long-term basis.

The Granman asked explicitly that the PC communicate through ACT and the translator with regard to the *garimpeiro* issue. The PC promised the Granman that he will communicate as requested, and stressed that only with the help of the Granman and the communities of Kwamalasamutu and Sipaliwini will they have success in removing the *garimpeiros*. The PC is also looking forward to working together with ACT in the effort to prevent the destruction of indigenous traditional lands.

**November 18, 2005. Meeting with Official of the Ministry of Regional Planning.**

The Granman met with the advisor to the Minister of Regional Planning, Marie Djosetro, and informed her on the status of the *garimpeiro* situation. The advisor was dismayed, and promised to provide the Granman with the help of the Ministry as needed. She explained that the Ministry had only recently been established, and that she would hold a conversation with the Minister on how to help the Trio community.

**CHALLENGES**

The challenge is to establish a reliable network with local authorities for dealing with threats to the Trio community, particularly *garimpeiros*.

**FOLLOW UP**

Work with local authorities to remove *garimpeiros* and other threats from indigenous traditional lands.