INTEGRATED SUSTAINABILITY:

The key to development and conflict prevention

On the 8th of August 1992 the Accord for National Reconciliation and Development was signed, bringing an end to the interior conflict in Suriname which lasted from 1986 to 1992. The dialogue and thinking that shaped the provisions of the peace accord is reflected in the title.

The title contains two key terms: national reconciliation and development. National reconciliation refers to the peaceful termination of the interior conflict and the subsequent emergence of coalitions between the parties to the conflict.

The use of the term development in the title reflects the consensus among the peace brokers at that time that development, and the development of the interior of Suriname in particular, was an essential condition for the prevention of future conflicts. This presentation reviews both aspects of the accord, national reconciliation and development, with a focus on the interior of the country.

The conclusion: most of the national reconciliation objectives of the peace accord have been achieved, however, essential provision of the accord which are fundamental to sustainable local development are still on the drawing board. These include: recognition of land rights of the Indigenous and tribal peoples (article 10) and the legal position, authority and status of the customary chiefs of the Indigenous and tribal communities (article 13). Tenure security and statutory authority for tribal government are essential pre-conditions for the governance and management of the development in the interior of Suriname.

This presentation offers a model for integrated sustainability that clearly exemplifies the strengths and weakness of social institutions that are critical to development. The model also illustrates the extent to which human social institutions are adequately linked and aligned, to ensure the provisioning and regulating services that people need to support their livelihoods and the continued existence of the communities and societies in which they live.

The model clarifies the reliance on statutory authority and tenure security to manage sustainable and equitable development of the local communities in the interior of Suriname. It provides a roadmap for development that stresses the functional interdependence of governance, livelihoods and social development and the essential dependence of human society on viable eco-system services.

If the fundamental conditions for the governance and management of sustainable development of the interior are not institutionalized, the negative impacts and resulting tensions may sooner or later undermine the achievements of the peace accord and the resulting national reconciliation.