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REPORT OF WORKSHOP II

Subject: "Considerations involved in deciding an appropriate land development approach for the Geneva Estate among alternatives"

The Workshop was unanimous that there was a definite need to place any proposal within the framework of a political ideology. Political ideology, it was thought, would be significant in deciding on the organization of the system of production on the estate, and so had to be considered along with any proposals for the development of the Geneva Estate. Not only would the political ideology be important in helping to decide on the organisation adopted but it would condition the acceptance by Government and by the people of the Geneva Estate environsof any proposals submitted for the development of the Estate.

The Workshop accepted that it was particularly important for the government to undertake to close the credibility gap which currently seems to exist between the people of the Grand Bay area and the Government, particularly in the area of agriculture. This credibility gap highlighted differences in ideology between Government and substantial portions of the Grand Bay society.

The Workshop agreed that at the present time there was no clear and unambiguous expression of the political ideology of the Government of the country or of the people of the Grand Bay area. This accord was reached in the light of a number of arguments advanced. Among these was one which contended that to the extent that Government allowed the former owner of Geneva Estate to own and operate the Estate in a capitalistic fashion, then Government was espousing the cause of capitalism.

The Workshop also recognised that the Government was being pressured on the one hand by people for small lots of land and on the other by institutions which provide credit. The institutions normally accept subdivision of land into larger farms than those possible if a large class of very small landowners was created.

It was revealed that there were in Grand Bay a number of groups which espoused different ideologies. Most of the youth groups accepted and wanted to follow a cooperative and socialist pattern of land and community development: they felt that Government did not really accept this type of policy. The other group, comprising primarily the older people of the area preferred a form of production based on private owner operators. However, it was accepted by the Workshop that the goals of improving the Grand Bay area and the standard of living of its residents were the same for all groups concerned although the desired mechanisms of achieving these goals were different.

Having accepted that the political ideologies of both the Government and the residents of Grand Bay were rather amorphous at present, certain proposals were accepted which it was thought could be acted upon in order to initiate some immediate action in the development of the Estate. These proposals were:

- (i) an examination and restructuring of the role and structure of the Land Management Authority in its management of the Geneva Estate; and
- (ii) the involvement by representatives of the people of the Grand Bay area, in the negotiations of terms and conditions under which the people of Grand Bay operate the Geneva Estate.

The first proposal was made because the people of Grand Bay had expressed intense dissatisfaction with the present system and structure of management by the Land Management Authority at Geneva Estate.

The second proposal was adopted since the people who will operate the estate will be required to pay some rental for the use of the estate. Such terms and conditions could well affect the financial viability of any development of the Geneva Estate by the people of the Grand Bay area.

The necessity for the coordination of sub-sector regional plans into the overall national plan was unanimously accepted by the Workshop. Considerations involved in the mechanisms for such coordination and integration were stated without a full knowledge of the Physical and Economic plans of Government for the country. Nevertheless, it was accepted that the goals and mechanisms of the sub-sector regional plan be consistent with the goals and mechanisms included in the national plan.

Specific areas of consideration included:-

- (i) the equitable distribution of scarce resources over the entire country rather than one area;
- (ii) the combination of marketing of the produce of the Geneva Estate with the marketing of produce from all other areas of the island;
- (iii) the production of crops on the Geneva Estate which would assist in improving the nutritional status of the residents of the Grand Bay area as well as of the island generally;
- (iv) the requirement that the land use patterns in Geneva must complement those of the country generally;
- (v) the use, to some extent, of the financial surplus which may arise from the development of the Geneva Estate to further the development of other parts of the country; and
- (vi) the possibility of using the Geneva Estate development as a model for further land development in the country.

An alternative model to the four Case Study Models for the development of the Geneva Estate was proposed. The proposal involved the formation of a company in which Government would initially be the sole shareholder, but would divest its shares to workers of the Geneva Estate as soon as the workers became able to manage and administer the Estate. The Board of Directors of such a company would consist of a balanced distribution of Government-appointed experts, appointed on the basis of their revealed competence, and of representatives of major groups in the Grand Bay area. The functions of the company would be to manage the lands of the Geneva Estate and to offer technical assistance to leaseholders in the area with the aim of maximising the returns from the land. It was suggested that Government should lease part of the land to the company for a long period of time at a rental charge of 1 per cent per annum of the value of the land. The distribution of land between the company and small farmers would be the same as between the cooperative and small farmers advocated in Model IV of the Case Study Report. The company would handle the marketing of produce of its own farm as well as that of small farmers.

Concern was expressed at the suitability of the small plots, advocated in the Case Study Models, to satisfy the desires of the people for land,

even in the short run. Concern was also expressed at the ability of the Geneva Estate to support wholly the large and growing population of Grand Bay area at reasonable standards of living.

Several criteria were accepted for the evaluation of the five models. While an attempt was made to quantify some of the criteria (Table 1) the Workshop recognised that much of the evaluation of alternatives by these criteria was highly subjective and recognised that the evaluation of the models would serve only as a rough and subjective evaluation of models relative to each other.

Alternative V. was generally accepted by the Workshop to be the alternative which should be implemented, particularly since it incorporated the best features of Alternative Model IV, but also included provisions for implementation and high level management.

It was recognised that the present system of scattered farm plots now held by residents of the Grand Bay area under leasehold arrangement would have to be rationalised and restructured. The organisation of production on such plots would also have to be rationalised, and existing leaseholders would have to be considered for new leases to increase their present plot sizes, if they wished to increase their plot sizes.

The Workshop recognised the immense value which a properly organised and efficient public relations programme would have in terms of educating and informing the people of the Grand Bay area about the structure, role and function of the company, and the interactions of the company with the residents of the area. Mounting a strong, well planned and well executed public relations programme was, therefore, proposed.

The Workshop recognised that one of the functions of the proposed company would be to develop new and more efficient methods of land use both on the company farm and on the small farms in the area.

Finally, a call was made for the consideration by Government of ways of gaining control over underutilised land other than by purchasing such land, since purchase of land by Government on an island-wide scale would be highly burdensome, and quite likely, impossible. It was advocated that consideration be given by Government to leasing land from landowners for long periods as in Jamaica.

Table 1. Preliminary Evaluation of Alternatives for the Development of Geneva Estate, Dominica

Criteria	Government Operated	Settlement Leasehold	Cooperative	Cooperative & Settlement	Company Operated
	I	II	III	IV	V
Income-generating capacity (\$)	very low	low	909,000	626,000	626,000
Employment generated (nos.)	very high	220	435	304	304
Acceptability to residents of Grand Bay area	low	medium	low	high	high or medium
Level of management and administration	low	medium	medium	medium	high
Cost of Development (\$)	high	436,000	255,000	180,000	180,000
Efficiency of allocation of resources	low	low	high	high	high
Contribution to improving nutrition in the area	medium	high	high	high	high
Probability of early implementation	low	low	low	low	high
Comformity with national policy	high	high	high	high	high

110.

Source: Workshop participants including residents of Grand Bay.