



## **Guyana Empowered Peoples' Action Network**

### **Press Statement: Tasserene Land Titling Process – Conflict of Interest**

The Guyana Empowered Peoples' Action Network (GEPAN) reiterates its concern regarding the non-resolution of the conflict of interest amounting from the ownership of mining blocks by the Junior Minister of Natural Resources, Simona Broomes, on Tasserene proposed title land.

The Natural Resources Ministry is an integral component of the Amerindian Land Titling (ALT) Project, funded by the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LDCS, recently renamed). The Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC), the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GLSC) and the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) are all Senior Suppliers to the ALT Project under the supervision of the Natural Resources Ministry, and are tasked with facilitating titling and demarcation of Amerindian lands, as mandated by the signed ALT project document.

The Natural Resources Ministry as well as the GGMC, the GFC, the GLSC and the Protected Areas Commission (PAC) are all sitting members of the ALT Project Board and participate actively in the implementation of the project. In addition, the project is executed in keeping with the United Nations safeguards and standards for transparency and accountability and in respect for human rights which encompass indigenous rights.

Consequently, Minister Broomes in her role as the Junior Minister of the Natural Resources Ministry and its agencies, and by extent the Natural Resources Ministry, are in violation of the exigencies, terms and obligations of the ALT Project. As such the Natural Resources Ministry cannot facilitate the land titling process for Tasserene, if the mining blocks owned by one of its Ministers already constitute a mining encumbrance and therefore part of the problem which obstructs the Tasserene land titling process under the ALT project. GEPAN concludes that the Ministry is subsequently breaching its responsibility to the Amerindian beneficiaries of the Government of Guyana funded Amerindian Land Titling (ALT) Project.

In a previous correspondence to GEPAN, the Natural Resources Ministry alluded to the legal connotation of “conflict of interest”. While no legislation in Guyana prescribes a definition for the term, legally, “conflict of interest” designates a situation in which a public or government official violates her or his responsibility to fulfill the duties assigned to her/him for the benefit of the people s/he serves, with the aim of acquiring personal profit or benefits, particularly pecuniary.

It is on this basis that the conflict of interest on Tasserene proposed title land arises, and it is also on this basis that the Government of Guyana is in violation of several articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Amerindian Act 6 – 2006 and the Constitution of Guyana, all listed in a previous missive addressed to the Hon. Minister of Natural Resources, Mr. Raphael Trotman.

GEPAN reaffirms its belief that the possession of mining blocks registered under Simona Broomes (or SB), B-149/MP/000, 2013, Simona Broomes (or SB) B-149/MP/001, 2013 and Simona Broomes (or SB) B-150/MP/000, 2013 and to which the Junior Minister admitted ownership on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016, obstructs the land titling process for Tasserene under the ALT Project.



Provisions made, under the Norway/Guyana Low Carbon Development Strategy (recently renamed) which funds the ALT Project, for the protection of indigenous rights and the inclusion of indigenous peoples in attaining the goals of the Agreement, are also being breached by this irresponsible non-action from the Natural Resources Ministry.

GEPAN insists that the Ministry reserves the right to have Ms. Broomes' blocks relocated out of the proposed titled area upon simple request to the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC). The GGMC is known to facilitate such a process once the miner is willing to cooperate. Relocation of these blocks would significantly reduce the obstacles to the Tasserene Land Titling Process.

Refusal to correct this anomaly will demonstrate poor political will and ethics from the Government of Guyana in fulfilling its commitment to the indigenous peoples of this land as well as to its own policies.

We look forward to the cooperation of the Government of Guyana in resolving this issue. We also invite civil actors and all other concerned parties to participate in the resolution of this conflict of interest.

**Regards,**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anna Correia", is written on a light blue rectangular background.

**Anna Correia**  
**President**  
**Guyana Empowered Peoples' Action Network (GEPAN)**