



Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce

*The Expiration of the Agreement on
Textiles and Clothing: Meeting the
Competitiveness Challenge*

**Garment Sector Working Group
Meetings**

**Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce
2nd August, 2005-4th August 2005**

Summary and Objectives

At the second workshop held at the Red House on Main Street, Kingston participants were asked to identify potential action initiatives to help develop the sector and prioritised three broad areas for future action:

1. Accessing new markets
2. Developing domestic and international strategic alliances/linkages
3. Workforce Training

Participants volunteered to form themselves into Working Groups and to meet to discuss these three areas at a later date. The following is a summary of the results of those three 3 Working Group Meetings held in the boardroom of Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce from 2nd August, 2005 to 4th August, 2005. Commerce Division, in conjunction with the Private Sector Commission and *Empretec*, hosted the meetings.

Meeting #1: Accessing New Markets

Present at the meeting were:

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|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Ms. Simone Browne De Monick | Designer |
| 2. Ms. Glenna Toney | Designer |
| 3. Mr. Troy Miller | Troy Garment Factory |
| 4. Ms. Yonette Patterson | Designer |
| 5. Ms. Sharon Alexander | Fabric Designer |
| 6. Ms. Felicia Forde | Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce |
| 7. Mr. Nick Godfrey | Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce |
| 8. Mr. Jared Kissoon | Private Sector Commission |
| 9. Ms. Jocelyn Williams | GTIS |

Possible initiatives identified by participants:

1. A network of designers, manufacturers and industry experts should be formed in order to share ideas on market access.
2. Designers should liaise local suppliers:
 - I. To ensure consistent quantities of raw materials are available for producers
 - II. To ensure consistent standards of raw materials (non-flammable, non-toxic, etc)
 - III. To create a reference list on various materials for purpose of creating care labels, sizing charts, etc
3. A closer link should be developed between this sector and GNBS to ensure that the required standards are developed.
4. The idea of a trade forum was put forward by one of the participants.

5. Information such as a list of people in this sector (buyers, sellers, distributors, manufacturers, local retailers, etc.), what items buyers need, what quantities do they need, should be compiled. Both local and foreign data should be captured in this process.
6. In order to gain access to new markets Guyana should hold seminars and trade fairs (similar to Guyana Flava, but involving foreigners). In addition, there should be a “virtual” online marketplace for Guyanese garments and textiles. Participants felt that technical assistance to help prepare for trade fairs, for example, organising transportation and logistics, finding out about the cultural background of participants and information on how to run a trade fair display should be provided.
7. Participants felt that a mechanism should be implemented to examine products before they leave Guyana.
8. The participants felt that training needs to be undertaken in the following areas:
 - I. How to obtain letters of credit, purchase orders, etc.
 - II. What are my legal rights as an exporter
 - III. How to go about getting export insurance
 - IV. International commerce training
 - V. E-commerce training
 - VI. How to develop a professional portfolio/catalogue
9. Participants agreed that there is a need for a “design school” or Fine Arts College (could be done in conjunction with Carnegie School of Home Economics). The school would provide training as well as technical assistance in order to improve standards and productivity.
10. There is a need for industry professional to visit participant groups directly to give hands-on technical assistance.
11. There was also a call for quality assessment of products by manufacturers and for institutions such as *Empretec* to help design and improve their standards.

Meeting #2: Strengthening Linkages

Present were:

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|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Ms. Yonnette Patterson | Owner/Seamstress |
| 2. Ms. Simone Browne Demonick | Designer |
| 3. Ms. Sharon Alexander | Designer |
| 4. Ms. Patricia Helwig | Owner/Manager |
| 5. Ms. Felicia Forde | Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce |
| 6. Mr. Nick Godfrey | Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce |
| 7. Mr. Jared Kissoon | Private Sector Commission |
| 8. Ms. Jocelyn Williams | GTIS/USAID |

Possible Action Initiatives Identified by Participants:

1. Linkages identified which need to be strengthened (via some sort of forum to bring stakeholders together) are:
 - I. Developing relationships between actual suppliers of raw material and dye and designers to get consistency of supply.
 - II. Developing pooling mechanisms between small designers and manufacturers
 - III. Forming relationships between larger manufacturers and designers so that designers can get residual fabrics and so that the sector could move to full package production.
2. Sharing of knowledge e.g. Denmor could share information on how they achieved success.
3. Developing a list of local boutiques and lists of buyers in key markets abroad could help to form linkages between buyers and suppliers by having the information readily available.
4. Form linkages with GNBS and Industry in order to convey information to GNBS about standards in garments (e.g. set up visit)
5. A visit Carnegie should be set up by the sector to ensure:
 - I. Curriculum is revised so it is tailored to needs of industry
 - II. Introduce grading system for certificate
 - III. Improvement in staff knowledge
 - IV. Improvement in facilities e.g machines
 - V. Introduction of monitoring and evaluation of courses taught
6. Linkages between industry and Go-Invest should be developed in order to get contacts in overseas markets and convey to Go-Invest what the industry needs with respect to Trade Fairs etc.

7. Some provisional ideas for Local Garment Sector Forum were also discussed. It was felt that the group should have specific topics and goals for discussion in order to develop action initiatives e.g. how to improve curriculum at Carnegie, what types of technical assistance would be best, speed contact making (e.g. 5 minutes speed dating idea, have to have ten contacts by end).

Meeting #3: Workforce Development

Present were:

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|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Ms. Patricia Helwig | Owner/Manager |
| 2. Ms. Sharon Alexander | Designer |
| 3. Ms. Simone Browne Demonick | Designer |
| 4. Ms. Yonette Patterson | Seamstress/Designer |
| 5. Ms. Felicia Forde | Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce |
| 6. Mr. Nick Godfrey | Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce |
| 7. Mr. Jared Kissoon | Private Sector Commission |
| 8. Ms. Jocelyn Williams | GTIS/USAID |

Possible Action Initiatives Identified by Participants:

Upgrade of training institutions

1. Participants felt that the curriculum of Carnegie and GTI needs revamping in order to deliver a better level of service. This may require technical assistance from the Ministry of Education to do this.
2. There was a suggestion that textile-related machine maintenance programs may need to be incorporated into existing programs at GTI and a call for collaboration with independent machine technicians to pass on their skills in training programs.
3. One of the lessons learnt from the CPEC initiative was that while the training was useful, it was not realistic, as participants did not have the equipment to put training and ideas into practice.
4. Participants also considered the need for a central facility for automated tasks like cutting, label making, quilting, lacing, etc. This type of facility would be CAD driven. Services at facility would be paid for – offered at an affordable price. It was felt that such a facility might partly be subsidized by a loan of grant from an international financial institution.
5. Participants also discussed the need for quality Control mechanism such as a testing facility being set up at GNBS to verify textile quality and to eliminate inferior or substandard textiles.

Access to Finance

6. Participants felt that the lack of financing available could be addressed to some extent by better co-operation among sector professionals i.e. by pooling of funds to achieve quantity discounts for raw materials
7. It was also felt that the sector would benefit from affordable financing for investment and working capital – start-up soft loans, subsidies, through linkages with the Institute of Private Enterprise Development (IPED) and Development Finance Limited DFL.

Facility for International Trade

8. There is also a need for brokerage house; facilitating body for international trade – this could be done through linkages with Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation.

Next Steps

The Division will select those initiatives highlighted that can be implemented in the short term and at little or no cost and present them to the sector for a discussion of the modalities for implementation. We will disseminate this information via email and placement on the Ministry's website and request feedback on the modalities for implementation.

The Division will also select those initiatives, considered long term because they may require hiring a garment sector expert and may require formulating a project proposal for funding from Government or a donor agency, and present them to the sector for feedback regarding the need for a consultant and agreement on the areas selected.