

**TRIPARTITE COMMITTEE (REF. CIVIL SOCIETY)  
UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE  
CARIBBEAN (ECLAC).**



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Paramaribo , December 2 nd, 1998

Dear Sirs / Madame,

Please find enclosed the presentation of the CRAFT AND ART BUSINESS ASSOCIATION OF SURINAME,(CRABASIE).

The first paper was sent to the Government of Suriname on September 11,1998.

The second paper was presented to the FTAA/OAS workshop and the Government of Suriname 1998.

Cecile MSIBA Zandwijken who has written her Masters' theses on the development of crafts in Suriname in 1996 was assigned as a craft consultant by the IDB to establish a craft and art business association in Suriname.

**Goal:**

To foster the creation of wealth for the Surinamese artisans and employment and growth for Suriname.

**Purpose:**

- to promote appreciation and sense of pride for Surinamese culture, crafts and arts
- to promote communication and mutual reinforcement among artisans and the integration of diverse cultures of Suriname
- to develop linkages between artisans and the local business and other organizations
- to foster the development of artisans in order to improve and diversify products and marketing
- to channel outside support into the sector e.g. technical assistance, training, marketing information.

**Mission statement:**

To be recognized as the comprehensive national craft association for all artisans in Suriname that will foster the production and export of the best Surinamese country specific crafts products , in order to create wealth for craft producers, economic growth and employment for Suriname.

**Vision of success:**

To create a modern craft industry in Suriname of well informed, highly skilled, craft entrepreneurs , which produces a diversity of excellent country specific crafts products in efficient production units or cooperatives and exports to international markets, creating wealth for the craft-producers, economic growth and employment for Suriname.

Cecile Zandwijken  
Ernest Yngaard  
Artur Thijm



MSIBA

To : Director Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Mr. P. van Mulier

From : Managing Director MSIBA WOODEN ART INC.  
Chairman Temecu Woodcraft Collective  
Initiator Craft & Art Business Association Suriname i.o.  
Ms. Cecile J. Zandwijken

Date : 11 September 1998

Re. : Recommendations to facilitate Business in FTAA

1. Principles and Objectives

In keeping with the legacy of the Americas for freedom, equality and prosperity rooted in black-led transnational abolitionism and with reference to the recent call of 113 nations of the world in the NAM for poverty alleviation and innovative leadership the following main issue and objective for the FTAA are considered.

Suriname has to pro-actively exercise its new leaderships role reflected in its leadership of the CARICOM, the NAM and at the International ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM – offering 12% of the nation's rainforest to the world – and take the lead in securing by all means necessary that the eradication of poverty of the inhabitants of the Americas becomes a main issue and objective of the FTAA.

2. Tools for Poverty alleviation

Bearing in mind Prof. D. Rampersad's warning that knowledge is the most important instrument of survival we cannot ignore that international consensus has been reached on micro enterprising as a tool for poverty alleviation. It has been recognized that in order to address international competitiveness micro enterprising has to be directed in the cultural spheres, e.g. the craft business. In keeping with the position of the European Commission in the Caribbean the craft business is one of those economic activities where growth and jobs are closely correlated. Specifically in times of transition the promotion of craft business will help to create jobs.

3. Craft Business and the Hemispheric Integration Process

Considering, it stimulates alternative usage of the rainforest, it maximizes the usage of natural resources, it contributes to the sustainability of the

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Hospitality Industries, it generates foreign exchange and growth, the craft business sector can be seen as a key part of the progress in the hemispheric integration process.

Suriname and the Cariforum as part of the small economies as defined for the purpose of the FTAA process, in keeping with the guarantees for the small economies and the agreed recommendations formulated in Workshop X of the FTAA the following Craft Business facilitation measures are recommended to the Government of Suriname and the Cariforum countries.

4. Concrete Recommendations to facilitate craft business in FTAA
  - 4.1. The authorization of special treatment of the craft business sectors in the Caribbean in the light of the grave social and economic problems confronting these sectors in order to facilitate the sector to comply with FTAA commitments.
  - 4.2. Awaken new awareness of the economic potential of crafts the mobilization of political will of the Governments in the Caribbean by Suriname to prioritize the craft business and the formulation of concrete requests for technical assistance and financial support to international institutions and multilateral funds for the development of the craft business in the Caribbean. *Sense of pride.*
  - 4.3. The urgent establishment of Craft Business Incubators in the Caribbean to support the development of micro and small enterprises in crafts e.g. training in how to start, how to run, how to become competitive with the assistance of the United Nations Fund for Science and Technology for Development (UNFSTD) specialized in Business Incubators.
  - 4.4. International organizations specialized in the development of craft industries, including the Commission of the European Communities, the UNESCO, the World Bank and fore most the UNIDO, has to be approached to gauge this economic potential in the Caribbean and to assist to turn it into economic reality, financed through trust funds. Handicraft projects covering the whole Caribbean market potential surveys, and a worldwide campaign "Buy Authentic Caribbean Craft" should be launched.
  - 4.5. The establishment of lines of credits offering privileged conditions to craft enterprises.
  - 4.6. The establishment of linkages of craft to the Hospitality Industries in the Caribbean by:
    - subcontracting programs for craft producers;

- promoting strategic alliances and mechanisms for joint production, joint marketing and business cooperation.

Suriname can for example host series of Caribbean sectoral craft trade fairs and bring together craft entrepreneurs of the Caribbean producing in a specific craft sector. These trade shows can be linked with Suriname's eco tourism industry and can take place in Suriname in the new international Craft Center for the Caribbean to be established.

With these recommendations Suriname can exercise its new role of innovative leadership, facilitate the Caribbean Craft Industries and their integration in the FTAA and put into gear the process of sustainable poverty alleviation in the Caribbean in step with our ancestral endeavors.

FTAA/OAS/Workshop  
02 November 1998

**FTAA / OAS WORKSHOP  
PARAMARIBO, 2 - 3 NOVEMBER 1998**

Subject : Caribbean Craft Industries Toward the New Millennium

Presented by: Cecile J. Zandwijken, Managing Director of MSIBA WOODEN ART Inc. involved in the commercial production and exports of country specific handicrafts products in Suriname, Craft consultant, Chairperson of Temecu Wood Craft Collective, Initiator of the Craft and Art Trade Association of Suriname to be.

**Introduction**

I want to express my sincere appreciation for the opportunity given to a member of the craft sector to put forward its views on the facilitation of the Craft Industries in the Free Trade Area of the Americas. I would like to compliment the Government of Suriname for taking the Craft sector seriously. With the political will, commitment and new awareness demonstrated I am convinced that the Government of Suriname will be able to take up the new challenge. I strongly recommend the urgent development of the Craft Industries in the Suriname and Caribbean.

**Summary**

In my presentation to day I will look at the goal and the dangers of the FTAA to be established and the steps taken at the regional level. I will inform you on the economic potential of the craft sector and our successful strategies in our region for its development. I will emphasize the role of Government in the development of the craft industries and I urge Suriname as the incoming chairperson of the Caricom, to take up the necessary next steps towards the crafts sector following Suriname's heartening decision of saving millions of acres of untouched tropical forests. I will close with recommendations for the FTAA facilitation of the craft industry in the Cariforum countries during the longer transition periods negotiated.

**The Free Trade Area of the Americas - FTAA**

The Caricom Regional Negotiating Machinery - RNM - has formulated a position paper with respect to both ACP-EU and FTAA negotiations. The paper talks about the goal of FTAA - the dangers and the RNM objectives in protection of sensitive industries in the Cariforum.

The goal of the FTAA is to establish an area in which barriers to trade in goods and services and investment will be progressively eliminated, concluding negotiations no later than 2005 and achieving concrete progress toward the attainment of this objective by the end of the century<sup>1</sup>.

The dangers are many including those in increased imports, in agriculture, in terms of investments, in currency stability given the fact that a FTAA will be

<sup>1</sup> RNM Policy Paper

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established between hemispheric countries of vast economic inequality in economic strength and capacity. FTAA will be established in a required framework of economic liberalization with free movement of goods and services and capital but not of people. The FTAA will be established in a context of reciprocity, in a WTO – plus environment and in a globalized world economy. The dangers are huge for small economies and vulnerable industries.

The Caricom Regional Negotiating Machinery, RNM – the region's new trade lobby arm, argues therefor that the region has to minimize any possible dislocation that could result from hemispheric free trade. This can be done by adopting appropriate trade liberalization schedules and safe guards to protect the region's sensitive industries. The RNM stated that its goal is to negotiate transition periods for the vulnerable and sensitive industries of the region for between 10 – 15 years. The Craft Industry in the Caribbean is at its infant stage and can be considered one of these vulnerable and sensitive industries. They should strongly support the RNM's goal.

### The Economic Potential of the Craft Industry

Many Governments are not aware of the economic potential of the craft industry. Dr. Barry Brown observed that our colonized societies are giving our young people negative signals. The common thinking was that a choice of a job in the civil service, banking, law, medicine, etc. the so called "respectable professions" was preferable to a career in crafts and arts. The result is that many regional artisans are not sufficiently functionally literate and need remedial assistance. Training of vital skills in conceptualization, design and aesthetics, in effective production planning, quality control, costing, pricing, promotion, packaging and in information technology to reap the benefits of jobs, growth, foreign currency, maximizing of natural resources.

Internationally it is recognized that the craft industry can be an important force in the national development. Financial institutions are increasingly looking at micro enterprise development as an important vehicle to escape poverty through

A study of the Inter-American Development Bank, IDB – done by Margaret Hagen Wood and Lene Mikkelsen<sup>2</sup> observed that the lack of a common definition of handicrafts limits the data collection that would provide information on the economic significance of the sector. Statistics on crafts industries are universally presented as estimates.

The following estimates were stated on the economic potential of crafts in Latin America and the Caribbean. This was done in October 1997 at the International Symposium on "Crafts and the International Market: Trade and Customs Codifications in Manila, the Philippines.

- Peru's handicraft production amounted to US 13 million, it employs 200,000 artisans full time and 1.6 million artisans part time. The Craft

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Hagen-Wood & Lene Mikkelsen: "Experiences in Taking Crafts to Market", IDB, 1998

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- Industry in Peru provides 50% of the population with a living and has exported US\$ 10 million of handicrafts.
- Venezuela produced handicrafts worth US\$ 0,3 million.
- Mexico's handicraft sector employs 2 million people full time, and 3 million part time. Exports of handicrafts amounted to US\$ 0,15 million.
- Cuba exported US\$ 0,3 million<sup>3</sup>.

In a recent study on El Salvador's handicrafts sector<sup>4</sup> it was estimated that 6% of the economically active population, this is 150,000 people produce handicrafts for a total of US\$ 6 million. The estimate is that only 10% work full time.

The Caribbean Craft sectors have huge economic potential. Dr. George Gwyer, Head of the Delegation of the European Commission in Barbados, states that the craft sector is one of those economic activities where growth and jobs are closely correlated. Promoting and expanding the craft sector could contribute to an increase in employment, especially self employment so important in time of economic transition, Gwyer said. The potential of the craft sector in the region could be the driving force in forstering the development of micro and small businesses.

#### **Strategies for the Development of the Craft Industry**

Although it is difficult due to the lack of statistics to develop plans and to target and design programs and policies in support of the craft sector, a lot can be learned from the experiences and successful strategies from other countries. Building on inherited craft traditions Canada, Europe and Asia invested heavily in the 30ties, 50ties and 60ties, in training of skilled workers, designers, architects, technicians and crafts was developed into national industries and fundamental sectors of the economy. Those strategies have also been successful in providing sustainable income streams for indigenous people e.g. in Canada.

Margaret Hagen-Wood and Lene Mikkelson observed Governments in our region who has been replicating this experience successfully, including Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, Haiti, Columbia. In Columbia for example Artisanias de Colombia, a quasi-public agency that works with the private sector stated as its goal to place 30% of the Columbia's handicraft production on the international market. They planned and developed programs for community organization, for training for craft production, for conservation and use of renewable natural resources, socio - antropological research for product development and marketing. They organized campaigns to promote a sense of pride, national recognition and appreciation of crafts. They hired professionals to work with artisans in developing new product ideas and designs. This strategy resulted in total exports of 43 million US\$ in 1995.

<sup>3</sup> International Symposium on "Crafts and International Markets: Trade and Customs Codifications", Manila, Philippines October 1997 (CLT/CONF/604/5)

<sup>4</sup> Monitor Company, Inc.: "Construyendo las Ventajas Competitivas de Artesania en El Salvador, 1997

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Dr. Barry Brown, a Caribbean consultant in handicraft design, production and marketing, argues that only through research into a country's cultural roots will progressive designers be able to develop country specific products that will bear the signature of our heritage. The informed markets demand this signature and is prepared to purchase it at a fair price. Dr. Gwyer suggests that the term "Authentic Caribbean Craft" can become a protected denomination and would contribute to providing Caribbean Craft with the edge it needs to establish its niche, and develop its faithful clientele. My suggestion is that international organizations should assist by launching a worldwide promotion campaign "Buy authentic Caribbean Crafts" as they did for other regions.

Artisan therefor must be informed, trained and committed to the task of showcasing country specific handicraft products. In this respect I would like to mention the prestigious Institute D'Art Visuel de la Martinique, an institution that is training artisans in object design with an impressive philosophy and methodology. The institutes reconstruct in 4 years the cultural disoriented, colonial and alienated minds of young Caribbean artisans. Building on inherited Caribbean traditions students are trained in various skills, in object design, information technology and business skills. Craft Associations in the Caribbean have to link with this Institute in order to upgrade and develop their local institutions and to broaden their skill base for authentic Caribbean craft production.

### **Business Incubators**

A Business Incubator<sup>5</sup> is a micro environment for enterprises defined by two major features:

1. a physical environment which provides premises in flexible modules on affordable terms for entrepreneurs and their enterprises;
2. immediate or ready access to a full range of business services which support the development of enterprises during the critical early years of their business life in just the amounts needed, as needed, when they are needed.

B.I. is seen as a major tool for the implementation of entrepreneurial development strategies especially in countries with: a lack of affordable premises; a lack of appropriate business services; a lack of seed capital and/or working capital.

One of the most attractive attributes of the BI concept is its adaptability to virtually any culture, set of needs or circumstances. The main objective of BI is to create enterprises. The BI concept can be used to create craft business. We should approach the United Funds for Science and Technology - UNFSTD -- to promote a BI program in the Caribbean for the Craft Industries

### **Hospitality Industry**

Internationally the regional Craft Industry is seen as a natural supplement to the Caribbean thriving tourist industry. The link between craft and tourism needs to

<sup>5</sup> C.J. Zandwijken: Saramaccan Woodcraft: a pilot project for growth in Suriname. August 1998



be promoted more by subcontracting programs for craft producers, by promoting strategic alliances and mechanisms for joint production, joint marketing and business cooperation.

### **The role of Governments**

Governments of the region have to demonstrate their new awareness for the economic potential of their craft sectors, the political will and commitment for its development. They have to benchmark successful strategies, plan for the craft sector, pro actively encourage and request support from international organizations, specialized in craft development, in research, in design, in market potential surveys, in marketing. It has been proven that Government support in promoting handicrafts, research, excellence in skills and traditions and commitment to handicraft programs increase interests of private investors, the intellectual elites and consumers and will lead to economic development of the craft sector.

### **Suriname**

With the establishment of the "Central Suriname Nature Reserve", Suriname gave permanent protection to four million acres of untouched tropical forest – what is 12% of the nation's rainforest. With the preservation of world's tropical bio diversity Suriname had open up sustainable, green, development opportunities for eco tourism, bio prospecting and craft industries. Showing the awareness for, the political will and the commitment implies necessary next steps. By maximalizing the usage of Suriname's timber and non timber craft resources including various timbers, latexes, resins, tannins, fibers, canes, seeds, oils, calabash, clays, stone, gold and by upgrading the excellence of our traditional skills in pottery, ceramics, wood carving, wood painting jewelry making, textile weaving, batik and embroidery, basketry, leatherworks, timber collages, wood inlays, furniture making, the huge potential of Suriname's crafts industry will create growth and employment for Amer-Indians, Africans, Javanese, Indians, Chinese in the city and in the districts. Suriname should invite Dr. Barry Brown for an in-depth study on the craft sector as been done for other Caricom countries.

We have to secure of that the transition periods negotiated by the RNM are effectively used for the urgent development of the craft industry in Suriname and the Cariforum.

### **Concrete Recommendations to facilitate the Cariforum Craft Business in**

#### **FTAA**

Suriname and the Cariforum as part of the small economics as defined for the purpose of the FTAA process, in keeping with the guarantees for small economies and the agreed recommendations formulated in Workshop X of the FTAA and given the fact that the craft business sector can be seen as a key part of the progress in the hemispheric integration process the following Craft Business Facilitation measures are recommended to the Government of

Suriname and the Cariforum countries by the Craft sector in Suriname. These recommendations should be implemented effectively in the transition periods negotiated by the CRNM towards the urgent development of the Craft Industry in Suriname and the Cariforum. In so doing these recommendations will contribute to the eradication of poverty in our region.

The chairman of the Caricom has

1. to secure by all means necessary that the eradication of poverty of the inhabitants of the Americas c.q. the Caribbean becomes a main issue and objective of the FTAA. In keeping with the call of 113 nations of the world in the Non Aligned Movement and in keeping with the legacy of the Americas for freedom, equality and prosperity,
2. to negotiate for authorization of special treatment for the Caribbean Craft industries along with facilitation measures;
3. to awaken new awareness of the economic potential of crafts and mobilize political will and commitment of the Governments of the Cariforum to prioritize the development of the craft business as an internationally recognized tool for poverty alleviation;
4. to urge Governments of the region to pro actively request assistance from international institutions specialized in craft and micro enterprise development to turn the economic potential of the Caribbean Craft sectors into economic reality.
5. to establish linkages and mechanisms with the hospitality industries in the Cariforum by subcontracting programs for craft producers and other forms of co-operations.

With these recommendations the Craft Industry's readiness for FTAA will be facilitated.