



Empowered lives.
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THE GUIANA SHIELD FESTIVAL

"Probably the most important Eco-region in the World"



Radisson Blu EU Hotel, Brussels
Rue d'Idalie, 35 1050 Brussels Belgium

Organised by the Institute for Environmental Security
for the Guiana Shield Facility
with the support of the United Nations Development Program



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PROGRAMME

4 NOVEMBER 2015

15.30: Coffee and registration + viewing of the information stands.

16.00: Opening and welcome by **Ms. Barbara Pesce-Monteiro, Director UN/UNDP Brussels:** Perspective of the United Nations on the importance of the Guiana Shield ecoregion.

16.10: The Guiana Shield: 270 million hectares, 200 billion trees, 10% of terrestrial carbon, high and endemic diversity of and within the forest ecosystems of the Shield. The global significance of the Guiana Shield forest estate as the most intact continuous stretch of tropical forests in the world will be presented by **Prof. René Boot, Director of the Tropenbos Programme**

16.20: The Guiana Shield has one of the highest biodiversities in the world, with many endemic species. The State of the Biodiversity of the Shield will be highlighted by **Dominiek Plouvier, former Director of WWF Guianas.**

16.30: A panel of the present representatives of the Guiana Shield countries will draw attention to new and exciting projects in their countries.

17.10: The Guiana Shield ecoregion is home to a high variety of indigenous communities and cultures each with their own unique ways and solutions to manage the natural resources in their lands. How to maintain and share these solutions in practice: **Dr. Matthew Simpson** from the **EU-funded COBRA project**

17.20: Coffee break + viewing of information stands

17.50: One of the major threats to the Guiana Shield Ecoregion is the environmental and social disruption as a result of the informal gold mining and the nefarious impact of mercury pollution. On the latter, a globally binding UN convention has been signed in October 2013, the so-called Minamata Convention, for which the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is the main financial mechanism. A brief overview of the mercury problematique in the Guiana Shield and of the role of the EU will be given by **Wouter Veening, Institute for Environmental Security**. This will be done in relation with another unique feature of the Guiana Shield, namely that it is also the transition from the Amazon to the Caribbean: all Shield rivers empty either directly or via the Amazon River in the Caribbean Sea. The connection between the (transboundary) Shield rivers, suffering from mercury pollution, and the Caribbean & North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems (CLME+) will be indicated.



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- 18.00:** Monitoring: Forest and vegetation cover, illegal logging and mining sites, water levels in lakes, rivers and wetlands, have to be monitored precisely and continuously. Key element of the Guiana Shield Facility programmes in the past and in the coming programme for 2016-2020 is the partnership with SarVision and their advanced monitoring methodology from space, combined with field verification by local communities, using smartphones. A presentation of the FORESEEN programme (FOREst REMote SENSing EXchange Network) will be made by **Nicolas Grondard** from **SarVision** with strong visuals + a demonstration of amphibian bio-monitoring by **Dr. Raffael Ernst** from the **Senckenberg Institute in Dresden, Germany**.
- 18.25:** All stakeholders in the Guiana Shield Ecoregion and all partners in the work of the Guiana Shield Facility need continuous access to updated information on the state of the region and its communities, and on the on-going and proposed policies and projects in or relevant to the region. **Katarina Belobradova** will explain how the **Guiana Shield Priority Setting Platform (GSPSP)** fulfils these functions.
- 18.35:** How to enjoy the impressive beauty of the Guiana Shield landscapes the best way? It might be by balloon or zeppelin, majestically flying over the Tumucumaque Mountains in Amapá, Brazil, to the Kaw Mountains in French Guiana, to Raleigh Vallen/Voltzberg in Suriname, to the unique Kaieteur Falls in Guyana, over “The Lost World” of Canaima in Venezuela, to the cultural and natural World Heritage monument of Chiribi with its rock paintings and its setting in the Colombian part of the Guiana Shield, to end at the Serranía de la Macarena, the most Western outcropping of the Shield, with the enchanting Cano Cristalles and a view of Eastern Cordillera of the Colombian Andes. Representatives of the **Institute for Environmental Security** will give an impression of how this “Guiana Shield Eco Zep” service might look like, including showing pictures of these stunning landscapes.
- 18.50:** Long-time Amazon traveller, ethnobotanist, activist and internationally renowned speaker, amongst others at the TED Forum in 2014 on the knowledge of the indigenous peoples of the Amazon, **Mark Plotkin**, will bring the world-wide significance of the Guiana Shield part of the Amazon and of the culture and knowledge of its original inhabitants to the Fore, pointing to the irreversible loss to the world if the Shield and its original cultures get lost.
- 19.15:** The last item of the Festival will be a video-message by **Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Member of the European Parliament**, who has been a long-time advocate of the Guiana Shield Facility Programmes and of support of those programmes by the European Commission. In his message Mr. Gerbrandy will call upon the European Commission and upon the European Union in general to continue and enhance their support for the Facility, and in particular for the 2016-2020 Work Programme.
- 19.30:** Informal continuation with drinks and light snacks + viewing of the information stands.