

**Patron: His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales**

---

## PRESS RELEASE

March 14, 2017

### **Iwokrama among partners in restoration of iconic St George's Cathedral**

The Iwokrama International Centre (IIC) and its joint venture partner Farfan and Mendes Ltd. are supporting the restoration of the iconic St George's Cathedral, which is located in the heart of the capital city Georgetown.

This year marks 122 years since the dedication of the Cathedral, renowned as one of the tallest wooden churches in the world, at a height of 43.5 metres (143 ft). It is not only one of the great landmarks of Georgetown, but also one of the great Cathedrals of the Anglican Diocese in the West Indies.

Major repair works on the Cathedral were done some 15 years ago but the Anglican Church saw the need to have an assessment done to determine the state of the structure. The Grenadian firm which carried out the assessment found that while the building was structurally sound, the Cathedral needed an overall restoration – not just repair works.

To accomplish the restoration works, a very conservative cost of 2.5 million USD was put forth. But the Trustees of the Anglican Church, in whom the cathedral is vested, could not afford it. Hence a decision was taken to carry out the restoration in phases.

In the first phase, the eastern face of the Cathedral was restored three years ago with contributions by the Trustees and a one million GYD contribution from the National Trust of Guyana, under which the Cathedral is protected as a national heritage building.

This month, works have commenced on the restoration of the northern face of the Cathedral. This phase of the project has been estimated at 61 million GYD, with a contribution of 13 million GYD expected from the National Trust of Guyana.

This conservative estimate takes into account the concessionary pricing for the wood that is being used in the restoration. The wood is being harvested from the Iwokrama Forest, the only internationally certified forestry concession in Guyana.

Dane Gobin, CEO of Iwokrama noted that "I am pleased that Iwokrama, a Guyanese iconic institution itself, was able to provide first quality certified timber to another Guyanese iconic institution". Mr Gobin went on to say the fact that the Cathedral wanted to use certified products was testament to "their contribution towards encouraging the sustainable management of Guyana's forests". Gobin also noted that "in October last year, Iwokrama and its partners were

in October last year, Iwokrama and its partners were a non-profit institution established by Guyana and the Commonwealth. The Centre manages the nearly one million acre (371,000 hectare) Iwokrama Forest in central Guyana to show how tropical forests can be conserved and sustainably used for ecological, social and economic benefits to local, national and international communities.

**Patron: His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales**

---

able to encourage the UK authorities to lift its ban on Guyana's Greenheart through the provision of FSC certified wood.

Iwokrama's forestry operation is being done in partnership with Farfan and Mendes Ltd, which was happy to support the restoration of the Cathedral.

"Iwokrama and McVantage (a contractor of Farfan and Mendes Ltd) very kindly stepped in and gave us some concessionary prices for kiln dried, cured Greenheart, which is required for the building," said the Very Reverend Father Andrew Carto, Dean and Rector of the Cathedral. He added: "I was quite happy when Iwokrama came on board as part of the restoration. It's very easy to go out there and buy wood but to restore this structure we need cured, kiln-dried wood, and once we've finished the job then it's good for 20 years.

"So Iwokrama's certification and McVantage (contractors of Farfan and Mendes Ltd) coming on board with them to do harvesting, kilning, and preparing the wood was a tremendous relief for us."

**Patron: His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales**

---

## Notes to the Editors:

### About Iwokrama

The Iwokrama International Centre (IIC) was established in 1996 under a joint mandate from the Government of Guyana and the Commonwealth Secretariat to manage the Iwokrama forest, a unique reserve of 371,000 hectares of rainforest “in a manner that will lead to lasting ecological, economic and social benefits to the people of Guyana and to the world in general”.

The Centre, guided by an international Board of Trustees is unique, providing a dedicated well managed and researched forest environment. The forest is zoned into a Sustainable Utilization Area (SUA) and a Wilderness Preserve (WP) in which to test the concept of a truly sustainable forest where conservation, environmental balance and economic use can be mutually reinforcing. The IIC collaborates with the Government of Guyana, the Commonwealth and other international partners and donors to develop new approaches and forest management models to enable countries with rainforests to market their ecosystem services whilst carefully managing their resources through innovative and creative conservation practices.

Iwokrama brings together:

- 20 local communities (approximately 7,000 people) who are shareholders and participants in the IIC’s sustainable timber, tourism, research operations and forest management activities through complex co-management and benefit sharing arrangements;
- Scientists and researchers engaged in ground breaking research into the impacts of climate change on the forest and measuring the scope and value of its ecosystem services; and
- A portfolio of sustainably managed and certified business models using innovative governance systems which include participation of the private and public sectors and the local communities, earning income from the forest and its natural assets whilst employing international social, environmental and economic best practice, whilst still keeping abreast of the ever changing thinking on funding for environmental projects in the face of climate change and the perennial scarcity of international finance.

This alliance and the Centre’s work programmes are committed to showing how a rain forest can be used for real sustainability, real climate change protection and real community benefit.

For further details about the Iwokrama International Centre please visit [www.iwokrama.org](http://www.iwokrama.org) , [www.iwokramariverlodge.com](http://www.iwokramariverlodge.com) or contact Dane Gobin, Chief Executive Officer on [dgobin@iwokrama.org](mailto:dgobin@iwokrama.org)



The Iwokrama International Centre for Rain Forest Conservation and Development is an autonomous non-profit institution established by Guyana and the Commonwealth. The Centre manages the nearly one million acre (371,000 hectare) Iwokrama Forest in central Guyana to show how tropical forests can be conserved and sustainably used for ecological, social and economic benefits to local, national and international communities.