



Guyana–Suriname Corridor

Proposed Resolution Framework & Joint Development

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Core Thesis

A Solvable Problem — If Handled Correctly

Suriname's new river fees are an **escalation risk** — not because cost recovery is illegitimate, but because a solvable operating issue can be pulled into a sovereignty narrative. Guyana already accepts the underlying principle by subsidizing its own navigable waterways.

This paper proposes a **two-track architecture**: stabilize corridor operations now through a without-prejudice, rules-based model — while advancing unresolved sovereignty questions through appropriate bilateral and international mechanisms.

Track 1 — Stabilize Now

Transparent cost recovery, non-discrimination, verifiable service standards, dispute workflow.

Track 2 — Resolve Over Time

Advance unresolved sovereignty questions through bilateral and international mechanisms.

Section 3 — Policy Framework

Seven Principles of Policy Logic

01

Separate Operations from Sovereignty

Solve fees and navigation through rules — without conceding sovereignty.

02

Do Not Conflate Distinct Disputes

Keep fishermen licensing and river fees on separate tracks.

03

Avoid Retaliation Framing

Apply transparency and cost-recovery tests — not market-access retaliation.

04

Use the Correct Forum

CARICOM is not the forum for sovereignty disputes. Keep operations bilateral.

05

Consistency & Credibility

Guyana subsidizes its own waterways — opposing cost recovery "in principle" is incoherent.

06

Protect Reputational Capital

Messaging must be disciplined and calibrated to Guyana's rising profile.

07

Certainty as End-State

Advance unresolved sovereignty issues toward durable clarity over time.



Key Strategic Insights

Strategic Miscalculation

Proponents urging Guyana to halt bridge negotiations misread the landscape. **Guyana's leverage in the current configuration is limited.**

The Bridge Is Not Leverage

If Guyana withdraws, Suriname adjusts its pathway — advancing its own road to Brazil, port infrastructure, and logistics hub. Guyana bears the larger opportunity cost.

Escalation Options Are Weak

Retaliation against Surinamese firms would trigger legal disputes, raise country-risk perception, and disrupt domestic activity. That is **self-inflicted instability**, not leverage.

Conclusion

Halting negotiations is a miscalculation — reflecting a misunderstanding of leverage and a failure to appreciate corridor economics. **Maintain engagement.**

Section 4 — Statement of Position

Bridge = Collaboration. No Bridge = Structural Win-Lose.

River fees should be interpreted as **operational cost-recovery** within a context of unresolved legal sovereignty — not as an assertion of sovereign rights. Conflating infrastructure economics with territorial claims produces policy incoherence.

Red lines: No coercive escalation; no implicit sovereignty concession through ad hoc practice; no abandonment of national strategy over solvable operational frictions.

Bridge Stance

Do not halt the Corentyne Bridge. Condition it on a **governance package:** joint border management, transparent cost-recovery, serviced land, and dispute resolution.

What "Cooperation" Means

Rules-based, mutually agreed, time-bound, measurable, and explicitly without prejudice to sovereignty. Cooperation is an **operating system**, not a slogan.



Executive Summary

Two Clarifying Facts Anchor the Strategy

Fact 1 — Limited Leverage

Suriname holds a relative operational and geographic advantage. It can pursue its Northern Arc trajectory without a bridge. Guyana bears the larger opportunity cost from delay.

Fact 2 — Unresolved Colonial Legacy

Guyana–Suriname land/river ambiguities were never fully settled post-independence. Unlike Venezuela (resolved pre-independence), this requires a structured resolution pathway.

-69.42

Regional NPV (GYD bn)

Status quo ferry scenario — value-destructive

176.67

Regional NPV (GYD bn)


Bridge + full governance scenario

Section 5 — Corridor Economics

The Corentyne Bridge as a Hinge Asset

Rooted in **Cheddi B. Jagan's 1957 integration vision** and the 1996 NDS, the bridge is a national positioning project — not a reactive bilateral concession. A fixed crossing replaces queuing and intermittency with 24/7 reliability, enabling corridor-scale cold chains, warehousing, trucking, and light manufacturing.

Integration as scale economics: Many investments are uneconomic at Guyana-only scale but viable at corridor scale. Guyana's internal market is structurally small — the non-oil build-out requires reliable external demand.

 **Key insight:** The bridge's value is multiplied when paired with serviced land, harmonized rules, and governance that converts movement into production.



Logistics Reliability

Reduces spoilage, inventory buffers, and hidden costs of missed schedules.



Trade Realization

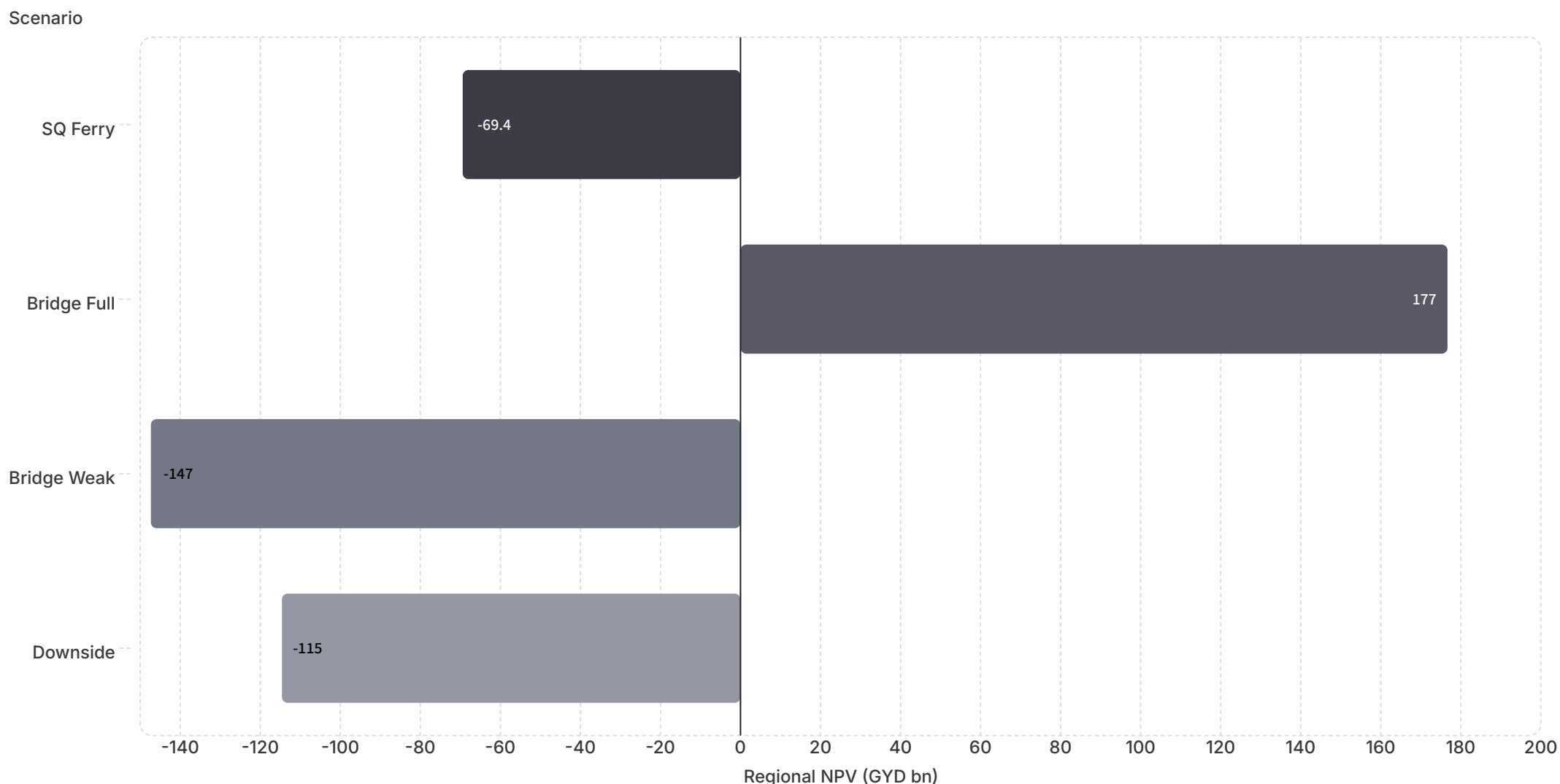
Lower generalized transport costs expand market size on both sides.



Energy Services

Shared offshore logistics across the basin creates exportable opportunity.

Execution Determines the Sign of the Outcome



The model compares four scenarios over a **30-year horizon**. The key takeaway: NPV depends entirely on execution. A bridge without governance can **destroy value**; one with credible rules unlocks transformative benefits.

GYD 169.35 bn

NPV – Guyana (Bridge Full)

vs. **-33.26 bn** under status quo ferry

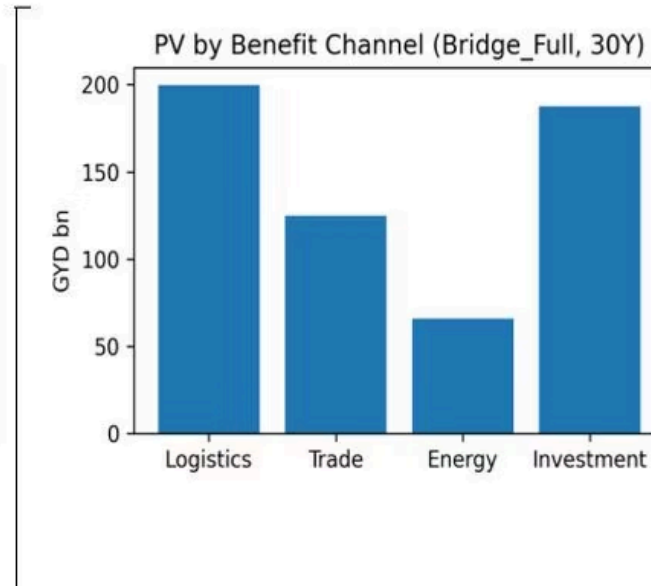
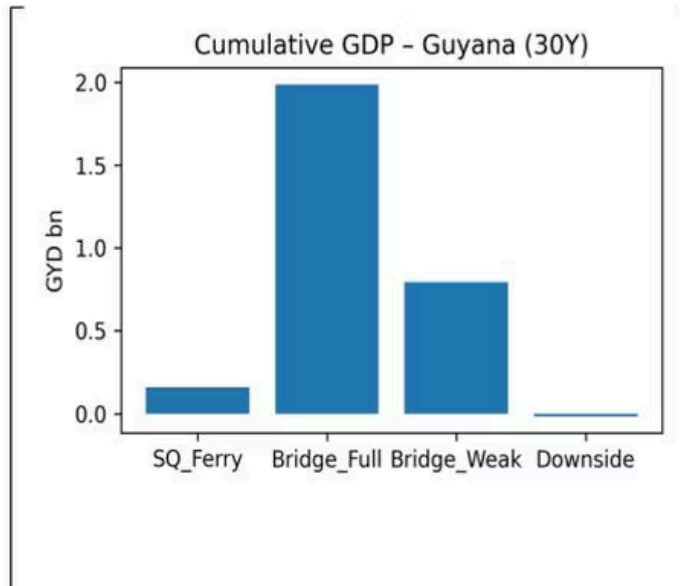
GYD 199.82 bn

PV Logistics Channel

the dominant value driver under full execution

Section 5.3 — Benefit Channels

Where Value Is Created



Under full execution, value is driven by **reliability and border performance** — not the structure itself. Protect NPV by locking in rules and KPIs.

Logistics — GYD 199.82 bn

Time savings, reduced waiting, handling, and transport frictions.

Trade — GYD 124.76 bn

Market-size effects from lower generalized transport costs.

Energy — GYD 65.77 bn

Shared offshore supply chain efficiency across the basin.

Section 5.5 — Strategic Meaning

Why the Opportunity Cost Falls Primarily on Guyana



Guyana is investing heavily in the **Berbice deep-water port** and **Linden-Lethem Road** — assets that require regional scale to achieve full return. Without the bridge, these risk underutilization.

Guyana also has a **narrow fiscal window** to recycle oil revenues into productive infrastructure. Delay wastes years of peak capacity.

📄 **Critical asymmetry:**
Suriname's losses are significant but smaller — it invests less and retains Atlantic port access. Guyana builds capacity faster than it can access markets without corridor governance.

Section 5.7 — Regional Energy Cycle

A Time-Bound Window for Private Sector Opportunity



Guyana

~11 bn bbl resources; ~900k b/d production; public trajectories toward **~1.7m b/d by ~2030**. A time-bound diversification window.



Suriname

GranMorgu/Block 58 targeting start-up **~2028** at ~220k b/d. Near-term demand for fabrication, logistics, and shore-base services.



Trinidad & Tobago

Dragon gas project targeting first gas **late 2027** at ~350 MMcf/d. Overlapping regional cycles raise the value of a reliable logistics platform.

Guyanese firms that built capabilities during the Stabroek build-out can partner with Surinamese and Trinidadian operators to capture engineering, logistics, and project-management contracts — **provided border governance is predictable**.

Section 5.4 — Implementation Pathways

Three Pathways: Only One Delivers Value

1

Pathway A — Status Quo

Persistent fee disputes, variable border performance. **Highest opportunity cost.** Default failure mode.

2

Pathway B — Bridge + Governance

Fixed crossing + joint border management + transparent cost recovery. **Highest economic value.** Requires disciplined execution.

3

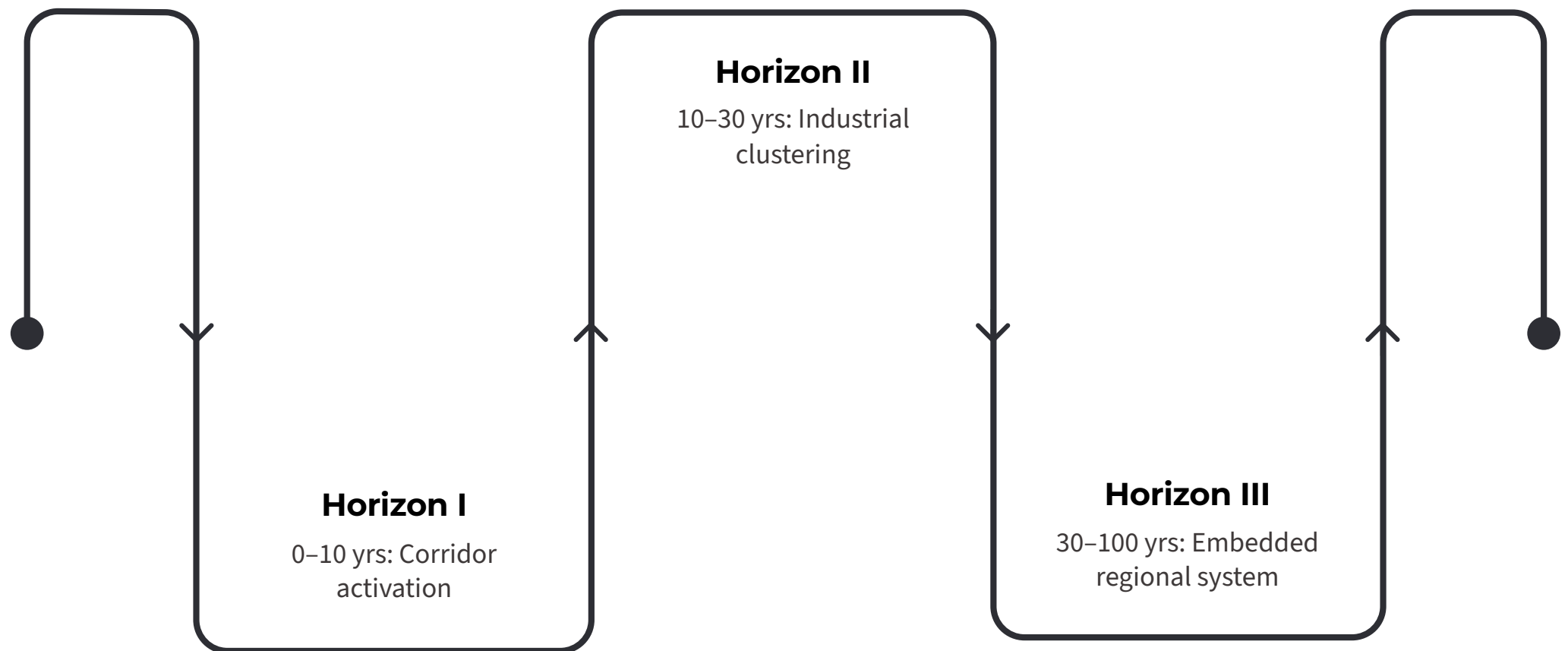
Pathway C — Overland Hedge

Guyana-side hedge preserving optionality. Complements — does not replace — Pathway B.

📌 **Pathway B dominates on value** — but only if governance is treated as part of the project scope, not an afterthought.

Section 6 — Long-Horizon Vision

The Northern Arc: A Century-Scale Positioning Move



The Arco Norte Electrical Interconnection Study (IDB) found staged interconnection feasible with a reference-case NPV of approximately **USD 723mn (2014)** for a 3,000 MW configuration. The compounding variable across all horizons is **execution discipline**: early credibility lowers risk premiums; early failure locks in structural losses.

Section 7 — Implementation Roadmap

Four Immediate Priorities



Immediate De-escalation

Calibrated public communication and incident-management discipline to prevent operational frictions from becoming political flashpoints.



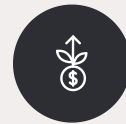
Rules-Based Operational Dialogue

Codify transparent, non-discriminatory operating rules — fees, service standards, appeals, and predictable procedures — with regular performance review.



Pursue Long-Term Resolution

Advance unresolved matters through appropriate bilateral and international processes aimed at durable clarity and stability.



Corridor Investment Readiness

Treat governance as project scope — border performance standards, interoperable processes, and serviced-land readiness — so private investment can scale.

Strategic Decisions, Red Lines & Actions

Strategic Decisions Required

- Adopt a formal position separating operational governance from sovereignty claims
- Determine acceptance parameters for cost-recovery without legal concession
- Authorize engagement with Suriname on provisional arrangements
- Position the Corentyne corridor as a strategic economic asset requiring governance

Red Lines

- No arrangement that explicitly or implicitly concedes sovereignty
- No disruption to commercial access along the corridor
- No unilateral escalation that increases political risk without strategic gain

01

Immediate (0–90 days)

- Issue formal policy position distinguishing fees from sovereignty
- Initiate technical-level engagement on river management
- Conduct legal review; prepare arbitration documentation
- Establish inter-agency coordination mechanism

02

Medium-Term (3–12 months)

- Negotiate provisional arrangements consistent with UNCLOS
- Develop cost-sharing frameworks tied to navigability
- Advance diplomatic engagement for long-term resolution
- Prepare formal submission pathway for international adjudication

Conclusion

The call to halt bridge negotiations is not a strategic position — it is a miscalculation. A disciplined approach requires recognizing the asymmetry, maintaining engagement, and managing the issue within a structured strategic framework.

Stabilize Now

Without-prejudice operational governance package and joint border operating system.

Resolve Over Time

Durable clarity on unresolved colonial legacy through appropriate bilateral and international mechanisms.

Execute with Discipline

Execution determines the sign of the outcome. Governance is the project.



About the Author



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