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## **National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21\***

### **Suriname**

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



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## List of abbreviations

BEIP	Basic Education Improvement Program
BGA	Bureau Gender Affairs
BIBIS	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation
CAT	Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CTI	Convention against Torture Initiative
GAP	Good Agricultural Practice
G.B.	Gouvernementsblad meaning the Official Gazette (before 1975, the year of independence of Suriname)
GBV/DV	Gender Based Violence/Domestic Violence
HRC	The United Nations Human Rights Council
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ID Cards	Identity Cards
ILO	International Labour Organization
IWGDS	Institute for Women, Gender and Development Studies
JCC	Youth Correction Center, Jeugd Correctie Centrum
JOG	Youth Detention Facility, Jeugd Opvoedingsgesticht
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community
MinOWC	Ministry of Education, Science and Culture
NARG	National Advisory Council for the Disabled
NCDV	National Council on Domestic Violence
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
S.B.	Staatsblad meaning the Official Gazette (after the independence of Suriname)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
TIP	Trafficking In Persons
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

UPR      Universal Periodic Review  
WRC      Women's Rights Centre

## **I. Introduction**

1. Suriname is pleased to present its report to the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC).
2. In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Suriname (S.B. 1987 no.116, as last amended by S.B. 1992 no.38) , the Government is committed to promote and protect the human rights of all people under its jurisdiction without discrimination. Suriname will continue to cooperate with the Human Rights Council and the Human Rights treaty bodies and other international and regional bodies in its endeavor to ensure that the rights and freedoms of all that are present within Suriname's territory are observed.

## **II. Methodology and consultation process**

3. This report was prepared under auspices of the Ministry of Justice and Police in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation (BIBIS) and Watra Human Rights Consultancy NV, in consultation with other relevant stakeholders, civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). After the objectives were explained to the stakeholders in two meetings, a draft report was distributed, followed by a second round of consultation in which the respective feedback was discussed. This report covers the period 2015–2020.

## **III. Development and implementation of the recommendations since the last review**

4. The Government of the Republic of Suriname has carefully reviewed the 148 recommendations received during its Universal Periodic Review in 2016. The current responses reflect Suriname's continuing endeavors, in consultation with civil society and NGOs, to better protect and guarantee the human rights of all present within the territory of the Republic and under its jurisdiction.
5. After acceptance of the recommendations, several ministries have implemented the recommendations in collaboration with NGOs and civil society. The Government installed a commission consisting of governmental and non-governmental representatives, to prepare for the third UPR cycle and its follow-up. The results of the work of the commission are reflected in this report. This report addresses the recommendations by theme.

### **Acceptance of international norms**

6. The ratification of the 2nd Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) will be considered after the abolition of the death penalty in the Military Penal Code has been approved.
7. The ratification of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) is in the final stage of approval, which is the approval by Parliament, who may decide to accede to this treaty either tacitly or explicitly.
8. In 2002, Suriname signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and started the ratification process. The latter has to be completed by submitting to the Depositary the mandatory declaration under article 3 paragraph 2 of the afore-mentioned Optional Protocol, that sets forth the minimum age at which it will permit voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces and a description of the safeguards it has adopted to ensure that such recruitment is not forced or coerced. The current Government initiated steps towards finalizing afore-mentioned ratification process in 2021.
9. Article 9 of the Compulsory Military Service Act (G.B. 1970 no. 98, as last amended by G.B. 1975 no. 75) states that as far as the law provides otherwise, all males, holders of the Surinamese nationality, residing in Suriname and between the ages of 18 and 35 years, are

obliged to serve in the armed forces. According to this Act, Suriname is in compliance with the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

10. Ratification of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide requires further national consultation and amendments to national legislation and policies to comply with the obligations contained in this instrument.

11. Suriname became a party to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination on 15 March, 1984.

12. Suriname acceded to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 29 March, 2017.

13. Suriname complies with the obligations under the Statute of Rome and reports as follows:

(a) In the Penal code (G.B.1911 no.1, as last amended by S.B. 2020 no. 42) article 5 sub 1 under I states;

(b) The Surinamese Penal Code is applicable to any Surinamer, who commits, outside Suriname:

(i) Any of the crimes described in Titles I en II of the Second Book, and in articles 334, 334a, 334b, 258, 279 and 288, 332 and 333 as well as– insofar as it concerns against the administration of justice of the International Criminal Court (ICC) as referred to in article 70 sub I of the Rome Statute of 17 July 1998, establishing the ICC - in the articles 229 until 232, 241, 252, 259a, 345a and 425;

(ii) An offense which is regarded as a crime by Surinamese Criminal Law and which is punishable, by the law of the country where it was committed;

(iii) Any of the crimes described in the articles 292 until 305 and article 339, insofar as the offense was committed against a person who has not yet reached the age of eighteen years;

(iv) Any of the crimes described in the articles 292 and 293, insofar as the facts falls under the description of articles 2 until 10 of the Budapest established International Convention on Cybercrime of 23 November 2001;

(v) A terrorist offense or a crime in preparation for or facilitating a terrorist offense.

### **Cooperation with treaty bodies**

14. Suriname will continue to make all efforts to meet its reporting obligations originating in the human rights instruments to which it is a party, including the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

15. The newly elected Government initiated further steps towards the compilation and submission of the periodic national report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

16. In the period 2016-2019, Suriname continued its cooperation with the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations through several capacity building activities, including:

Capacity building training sessions and workshops in collaboration with the local UN country Office and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in regard to the following treaties: CAT, CESCR, CRPD and CEDAW.

### **Constitutional and legislative framework**

17. The Republic of Suriname has already integrated most human rights enshrined in the conventions of which it is a party, in its legislation and will continue to do so where necessary. However, the Government is aware that the legal provisions, do in and of itself not suffice in resulting effective practices and or efficient legal procedures.

18. On 30 August 2019, the Act establishing the Constitutional Court (S.B. 2019 no. 118) was adopted by Parliament and entered into force on 11 October 2019. The execution of this Act was on 14 January 2020 (S.B. 2020 no. 12). This Court is impartial and independent as are all courts in this country. On 7 May 2020, the chair, vice-chair, members and alternate members were sworn in. In accordance with the respective provisions of the afore-mentioned Act, the Constitutional Court consists of 5 full time members and 3 alternate members, all with appropriate qualifications. This court is tasked with reviewing laws on their contradictory nature with the Constitution and international human rights conventions. It also has the authority to review and decide on challenged decisions of Government bodies on the grounds of incompatibility with basic rights and freedoms.

### **National Human Rights Institution (NHRI)**

19. The newly elected Government of Suriname is committed to establish and operationalize a National Human Rights Institute in accordance with the Paris Principles and initiated steps in this regard. A general Ombudsman will also be linked to this Institute. The Office of the Ombudsman will be divided into two divisions, one for children and one for adults.

### **Human rights education in schools**

20. Human rights education is being incorporated in the national curriculum, over the past 10 years. Textbooks are being produced by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (MinOWC) for the primary level, grades 4–6 (10–12 years) mainly in the subject area History. The curriculum department is still working on developing new course material for the higher levels incorporating human rights issues.

21. MinOWC's policy is also linked to the conventions, but the translation into education is not always visible. The subject "Orientation on yourself and the World" has themes such as: Human Rights, further in the subjects "Social Studies and Law", the rights are also emphasized. There are also projects that are in line with the specific treaties.

### **Professional training in human rights**

22. The Government continually makes efforts to adapt its policies to the human rights standards. In this context it has also organized a number of training courses for relevant stakeholders, such as Government officials, correctional officers, the police, prosecutors and judges, to raise awareness and strengthen skills to apply human rights issues in practice.

23. Education on human rights is incorporated in the curricula of the Law Enforcement Officers training. In this context seminars in identifying discrimination and violence against the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community were organized by the LGBT Platform Suriname.

### **Equality and non-discrimination**

24. The prohibition of discrimination is stated in the Constitution. There are also provisions in several other laws which prohibit discrimination such as in the Penal Code of the Republic of Suriname, specifically the articles 126 sub a, 175, 175 sub a, 176, 176 sub b, 176 sub c and 500 sub a.

25. The Government of Suriname (Ministry of Labour, Employment Opportunity and Youth Affairs) has submitted the Bill on Equal Treatment in Employment to The National Assembly (the Parliament) in 2019. This Bill prohibits among others discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, LGBT individuals in the labour market and related labour issues.

## **Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary execution**

26. In 2000, the Office of the Public Prosecutors, imposed a stay on the statute of limitations in the case concerning the so-called “8 December 1982 murder case”.

27. In November 2007, the trial in the so-called “8 December 1982 murder case” against Desiré Delano Bouterse, the former Commander of the Armed Forces, and 24 other defendants commenced. The trial has been halted a number of times, lastly by the Amnesty Act 1989 (S.B. 1992 no. 68, as last amended by S.B. 2012 no. 49). In 2016, the High Court of Justice deemed this Act to be in conflict with the Constitution, which eventually led to the re-start of the trial. In November 2019 the verdicts were rendered, resulting in sentences ranging from ten to twenty years; a number of defendants were acquitted. Mr. Bouterse, who at that time was President of the Republic of Suriname, was convicted in absentia to twenty years imprisonment. The Court has not ordered his imprisonment, and he is currently appealing the verdict before the Military Court.

28. The implementation of the Moiwana judgement concerning the prosecution of the alleged perpetrators by the prosecutor Office proved challenging in the period 2012–2020. In commencing the process of prosecution according to article 172 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (S.B. 1977 no. 94, as last amended by S.B. 2008 no. 21) the Prosecutor Office has not been able to interview witnesses as part of the preliminary investigation; this, since no witnesses came forward. However, the obligation to investigate the case and to prosecute and punish those responsible will continue to exist until the next of kin have obtained satisfaction.

## **Death penalty**

29. In 2015 the death penalty was abolished with the adoption and entering into force of the amended Penal Code. This was not the case in the Military Penal Code.

30. On 21 April 2021, the Council of Ministers approved the Bill amending the Military Penal Code (G.B. 1975 no. 173) as well as the accompanying Explanatory Memorandum. The Bill has now been submitted to the State Council and after approval it will be tabled in Parliament.

## **Conditions of detention / Juvenile justice**

31. There are three prisons countrywide: one in Paramaribo, one in district Wanica, and one in District Nickerie. There is one detention centre (house of remand) in the district Wanica. There is a designated police unit for the oversight of all the detention centers. At the end of 2019, some of the detention centers in Paramaribo were partially rehabilitated. Currently most of the detention centers are in fair condition. These centers have the most detainees, because the largest part of the detained population resides in Paramaribo.

32. Minors in pre-trial detention are separated from adults. These minors are in ‘Opa Doeli’. In prison minors are separated from adults with regards to males. There are two youth detention centers:

- (a) Youth Pre-Detention Centre; Jeugd Doorgangscentrum "Opa Doeli".
- (b) Youth Detention Facility; Jeugd Opvoedingsgesticht (JOG).

33. ‘Opa Doeli’, a pre-trial detention facility for minors offers adequate shelter, housing, education and pedagogical guidance to juvenile detainees aged 12/17-18 years. It should also be noted that there are some challenges with regard to separate prison facilities for women and minors. These women and girls are in the same facility. When the conviction of these juveniles has taken place, they are transferred to the Youth Detention Facility (JOG). JOG is located within the walls of the adult prison Santo Boma, which means that contact between the juveniles and adults is not excluded. In order to improve this, the Ministry of Justice and Police has established the Youth Correction Center (JCC) to provide the juveniles with an adequate residence, which meets the requirements according to the ratified treaties and national laws and regulations, during their posting. By building another prison facility the

girls can be separated from the women, which is one of the future plans. With regards to the number of detainees from 2015–2020 (see Annex 1).

34. The construction and completion of the JCC is in progress. The school in JCC was inaugurated on 21 November 2019. The construction and furnishing of the school was done in partnership between the Ministry of Justice and Police, the MinOWC, the business community in Suriname and UNICEF. On 15 December 2020, a mini sports field, was donated by the Koninklijke Nederlandse Voetbalbond (the Dutch Football league) and local partners.

35. The juveniles are not staying in the JCC yet, because the renovation and construction of the various housing units is ongoing. For their education, the juveniles are transported daily to and from JOG to JCC.

### **Prohibition of slavery, trafficking**

36. In 2015, the State revised its Penal Code with regard to Trafficking In Persons (TIP). The revised Act is aligned with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (especially Women and Children) and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.

37. With this amendment both sexes are protected against trafficking and the penalties have been extended, especially when under-aged victims are involved. In addition to the sexual exploitation other purposes of trafficking are included in the Act, such as labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery and removal of organs.

38. The maximum penalty for traffickers in and outside Suriname is life imprisonment according to the revised Penal Code. These penalties are made sufficiently stringent with respect to sex trafficking, commensurated with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. Article 334 of the Penal Code criminalizes sex trafficking and labour trafficking and prescribes penalties of up to nine years' imprisonment and a fine of SRD 100,000 for offenses involving a victim 16 years of age or older, and up to 12 years' imprisonment and a fine of SRD 100,000 for those involving a victim under the age of 16.

39. Within the police force there is the designated police anti-trafficking unit responsible for investigating such crimes.

40. In 2019, the Government of Suriname renewed the mandate of the inter-ministerial Trafficking in Persons Working Group for three years and launched a National Plan of Action for the prevention and response to trafficking in persons under the pillars of "Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Partnership and Policy".

41. According to the TIP 2019 Action Plan, the following activities, among others, have been undertaken to date:

(a) A TIP conference with Embassies and other stakeholders was organized. On international and regional level there are bilateral plans to widen cooperation against trafficking between Suriname and other States.

(b) The extensive media awareness campaign is continued, addressing, among others, the following issues:

(i) Spots that serve as information are broadcast via radio and television.

(ii) Documentaries/ sketches, specially recorded for awareness purposes, have been broadcast on various television channels.

(iii) Bill Boards were placed in locations that are classified as risk areas, where many foreigners reside.

(iv) TIP posters have been placed at all police stations, border posts (Albina and Nickerie) and the Johan Adolf Pengel Airport.

- (v) Awareness programs on trafficking are being carried out for Maroon People and women and girls in the interior.
- (vi) A total of 325 police officers from police stations throughout the country were trained including 1 doctor, 2 health workers and 10 members of the Military Police from Nickerie.
- (c) Furthermore, a new 24-hour trafficking hotline was launched. The TIP hotline 155 was evaluated and a protocol will be developed for the hotline.
- (d) With regard to the TIP Unit of the Suriname Police Force, there is a protocol in place for first response in case of TIP, which entails among others:
  - (i) Special care for minors, foreign victims often victims of loverboys.
  - (ii) Counseling and other services to trafficking victims in partnership with the country's psychiatric institute.
  - (iii) A shelter, which is gender-neutral with 24 hours protection.

42. To make migrant workers more resilient to exploitation, the Labour Ministry is in a progressed stage of preparing mandatory courses for migrant workers entering the labour market focused on language, workers rights and duties (including trafficking in persons and labour exploitation) and the protection and supervisory system in Suriname. This training program is based on the Ministerial Decree Certificate of Language and other Societal Skills (S.B. 2020 no. 205).

### **Domestic violence / Advancement of women**

43. The State continued to take active measures to ensure the effective implementation of the 2009 Law Combating Domestic Violence, for instance:

- (a) Since 2015, sexual violence/rape within marriage is recognized and sanctioned in the Penal Code.
- (b) In June 2017, the National Council on Domestic Violence (NCDV) was established for a period of 3 years to evaluate the National Policy Plan for the Structural Approach to address Domestic Violence 2014-2017. The mandate of the Council was extended to 15 March 2022 to, among others, update the Plan. The NCDV includes governmental and non-governmental representatives.
- (c) In 2018, the NCDV carried out the following activities:
  - (i) Training on the standard domestic violence registration form as a pilot project was conducted in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Women's Rights Centre (WRC). The pilot project was intended to measure the effectiveness of the registration form and identify the obstacles. In this pilot project 12 agencies participated. On 3 December 2018, this pilot project was evaluated. The standard domestic violence registration form was adopted and is being implemented.
  - (ii) In October 2019, an information session on domestic violence was held for the staff members of the Paramaribo-South hotline and a delegate from the Police Corps.
  - (iii) In November 2019, the launch of the Women's Health Report took place. This study was done by the IDB. The NCDV made its contribution in this process.
  - (iv) Activities carried out between 2015 to 2020 include public awareness raising activities on gender and domestic violence for communication officials, priests and youngsters from different religious denominations, civil servants, high level Government officials and Community Based Organizations.
  - (v) The students of the Anton de Kom University of Suriname, who participated in domestic violence training in November 2016 were nominated as Ambassadors of Domestic Violence by the minister of Home Affairs.

(vi) Since the COVID-19 pandemic special attention has been given to domestic violence. Noteworthy, in this regard is the implementation of the project “Gender Based Violence (GBV) interventions in response to COVID – 19 measures”.

- This project commenced in June 2020 and is a joint effort of the Ministries of Home Affairs as well as Justice and Police, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Development Program and implemented by Women’s Rights Centre.

(d) The judiciary has specifically appointed judges to deal with protection order appeals in cases of domestic violence, besides their existing regular duties.

(e) There are also programmes initiated for perpetrators. Psychological help is being offered by psychologists, religious leaders, and NGOs such as The Foundation Stop Violence Against Women. Counseling is also offered to perpetrators of all forms of violence -including domestic violence- in prison. Data of the various programs are regularly gathered and the programs are evaluated.

44. Currently, there is only one Government shelter for female victims of domestic violence and their children up to 12 years.

45. The services provided by the shelter are evaluated regularly for improvement. There are two Government bureaus for Victim Aid (one in the district of Paramaribo and one in the district of Nickerie).

46. There is also a shelter operated by an NGO called “Stichting Tehuis voor Vrouwen in Crisis Situaties”, where women and children in crisis situations can find a temporary safe space.

## **Gender equality and women’s empowerment**

47. The Republic of Suriname continues to promote women’s empowerment through different activities.

48. During the period 2016–2020, as a follow-up from a Training of Trainers by WRC (a project organized by the Ministry of Home Affairs and UNDP) the Ministry of Home Affairs has provided training on gender, women's rights, violence and other gender-related issues.

49. Since 2016, gender is one of the topics included in the curricula of the annual courses of Civil Servants.

50. Installation of the Gender Platform in the district of Nickerie in February 2019. The Gender Platform Nickerie is a collaboration and consultation structure in which stakeholders (Government organizations, non-governmental organizations and individuals) address gender issues in the district to contribute to the achievement of gender equality in different areas and levels.

51. To eliminate gender biases and stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of men and women in the family and society various activities have been carried out.

52. The legislative gaps related to the rights of women and concrete actions aimed at eliminating discrimination against women, the application of the principle of non-discrimination and improve the rights of women and gender equality, including the participation of women in economic life have been addressed by the Government of Suriname as follows:

53. Suriname ratified the ILO core conventions:

- (a) the Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100); and
- (b) the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111) in January 2017.

54. The ratification resulted in the inclusion of the principle of non-discrimination in several labour laws enacted in the reporting period such as:

- (a) the Freedom of Associations Act (S.B. 2016 no. 151)<sup>1</sup>;
- (b) the Collective Bargaining Agreements Act (S.B. 2016 no. 152)<sup>2</sup>;
- (c) the Private Employment Agencies Act (S.B. 2017 no. 42)<sup>3</sup> and;
- (d) the Labour Exchange Act 2017 (S.B. 2017 no. 67)<sup>4</sup>.

55. The two latter laws are also based on the ILO Private Employment Agencies Convention (No. 181) which was ratified by Suriname.

56. The principle of equal pay for work of equal value was included in the legislation regarding the temporary agency workers (Private Employment Agencies Act based on the ILO Equal Pay Convention (No. 100).

57. On 11 April 2019, the principle of non-discrimination was incorporated in the Employment Protection Act for parenthood/families which was adopted in Parliament and entered into force on 18 June 2019, (S.B. 2019 no. 64)<sup>5</sup>. The participation of women on the labour market was promoted by the introduction of mandatory maternity leave (16 weeks) and paternal leave (8 days), employment protection related to maternity and paternity leave and the labour conditions of pregnant and lactating women. In order to introduce more Work-Life-Balance in the world of work, which could benefit women who tend to accept relatively more specific family responsibilities, the Government of Suriname submitted the Bill Working Time<sup>6</sup> to The National Assembly in 2019.

58. To promote safe working conditions and prevent discrimination in the workplace, two Bills were tabled in Parliament in 2019 namely:

- (a) the Bill on Equal Treatment in Employment<sup>7</sup>; and
- (b) the Bill on Violence and Sexual Harassment on the Workfloor<sup>8</sup>.

59. In 2018, the Identity Cards (ID Cards) Act 2018, (S.B. 2019 no. 16) was approved by Parliament. This Act contains the rules for identifying citizens, manufacturing, issuing and withdrawing ID cards. With the entry into force of this law, the Identity Act of July 3, 1974 (G.B. 1974 no. 35, as last amended by S.B. 2002 no.19) and the implementing regulation based on this law were repealed. The Identity Annex I (S.B. 1976 no. 10) has been withdrawn. In 2018 a working group was established to revise discriminatory provisions in the Personnel Act (G.B. 1962 no. 195, as last amended by S.B. 1987 no. 93).

60. To raise awareness regarding equal opportunities and responsibilities for men and women, in order to abolish discrimination on the basis of gender which will lead to greater representation of women in positions of responsibility, the State has conducted some activities among others:

61. In 2016 the Bureau Gender Affairs (BGA) implemented various awareness-raising activities regarding the International Day of the Girl Child.

62. Governance and decision- making within private and public life is one of the seven priority areas identified in the Gender Vision Policy Document 2021-2035.

63. The Gender Vision Policy Document contains long term goals to be achieved within five to fifteen years.

64. Suriname does not have a legal quota system for the political decision-making apparatus and in particular The National Assembly. There was discussion on the possibility for introducing quota as a means to increase the number of women in decision-making positions. However, there are still different views on e.g. determining legal quota for appointments.

65. Various campaigns and projects have been carried out to encourage and increase participation of women in political structures. These activities were mainly carried out by NGOs and women's organisations and took place prior to the 2015 and 2020 general elections. Activities related to women in the democratic process which were implemented were among others:

- (a) Project "More Women in Decision-making 2015".
- (b) The "OokZij" Campaign of STAS International (2014-2015).

(c) After the elections of May 2015, the Bureau Gender Affairs also collected and analyzed data on women's political participation, including in appointed and elected positions.

66. In preparation of the 2020 elections, personnel of the Ministry of Home Affairs was trained in the period 2016 -2017 in the various election processes. This project "Training Institutional Strengthening Election Organization" was funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

67. Activities regarding the thematic area governance and decision – making are identified in the Gender Action Plan 2019-2020, which are among others, to achieve an increase of gender balance in staff of electoral structures, awareness on the importance of equal participation of men and women in political parties and Surinamese society as a whole as well as gender-friendly polling stations. However, due to lack of finances and COVID-19 measures some of these activities could not be implemented, whereas, the following was conducted:

The NGO STAS International implemented an awareness campaign "Balance in 2020", with support of the UNDP and the Dutch Embassy, with the aim to achieve balance (men/women and young/old candidates) on the candidates lists of the general elections of May 25, 2020. Live television debates with political organizations were also part of this awareness campaign.

68. Upon request of the BGA, the General Secretariat Elections of the Ministry of Home Affairs produced statistics on e.g. candidates, voters by sex, age, and district/resort.

69. As a post - election activity the BGA conducted a gender analysis on documents and other productions produced for the General Elections of May 2020 such as educational material, final report on the General elections, etc.

70. Measures to ensure gender equality and non-discrimination of women in all spheres particularly the presence of women and the eradication of gender discrimination in the labour market are among others:

(a) The establishment of a Labour Market Information System, which is currently in progress.

(b) The update of the Workers Registration Act.

71. The Republic of Suriname has conducted the following activities to implement outcome-oriented programmes to empower women's participation in the workforce such as:

(a) The Ministry of Economic Affairs, Entrepreneurship and Technological Innovation (former Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism), and the Cooperative Savings and Credit Bank Godo, have signed a cooperation agreement in February 2019 to improve entrepreneurship in Suriname.

(b) The workarms of the Ministry of Labour, Employment Opportunity and Youth Affairs (former Ministry of Labour) namely Foundation for Productive Works (SPWE) and Vocational Training Institute (SAO), the Council for Cooperatives (RACO) and Trustbank Amanah have agreed to a Public Private Partnership and an MOU has been signed in April 2019 to stimulate micro and small entrepreneurship.

(c) The agricultural cooperation "Wi Uma fu Sranan" is the first women's agro cooperation in Suriname (launched in February 2016). It consists of approximately 40 Maroon women. This cooperation aims at jointly developing the interior of Suriname by increasing employment opportunities for Maroon women and is active in the districts of Brokopondo, Saramacca, Para and Wanica.

(d) Markets have been established where the vast majority of the vendors consists of female entrepreneurs among others: The craft market 'Waterkant', for the sale of handcraft products made by mainly Maroon and Indigenous women and the 'Kwakoe Market' for mainly Maroon women to offer their fruits and vegetables to the community.

(e) The Suriname Agriculture Market Access Project (SAMAP) is being carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture, Husbandry and Fisheries for a period of four (4) years to

strengthen sustainable agricultural development in Suriname through more competitive and safe production and better access to the export market.

### **Children: definition, general principles, protection against exploitation**

72. The State continues to intensify its efforts to protect children's rights. This through the investigation of child sex trafficking cases, the prosecution of child sex trafficking offenders under the trafficking statute and the protection of child victims.

73. The Government, enhanced the protection of children in general, in particular against sexual abuse through social media. The Penal Code was adjusted in this context, to prevent the publication and display of shocking images. The distribution of fake news and the production of fake accounts is also covered by the amendment of the Penal Code.

74. Furthermore, an adjustment of the Penal Code was needed, among other things, to protect youth against "grooming". This concerns behaviors in which acts are committed with the aim of sexually abusing a child.

75. Sexual abuse of minors (age has been raised to 16 years) as a form of sexual intimidation has been defined as a criminal offence and the definition of sexual harassment has been expanded<sup>9</sup>.

76. Suriname is committed to eliminate child, early and forced marriage by 2030 in line with target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

77. In article 82 of the Civil Code the minimum age for marriage for boys has been established to 17 years and for girls to 15 years. Suriname still has marriages in the age group 15-19 years, registered at the Civil Registry Office. However, there are no cases of forced marriage registered at the official authorities such as the Public Prosecutors Office or at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing.

78. Consultations between Government and NGOs resulted in the amendment of the law on child marriage in the draft revised Civil Code. Consequently, the minimum age to enter into marriage for both boys and girls is raised to 18 years.

79. Two legislative products, namely: the Bill on the Children's Ombudsman and the Bill on Foster Care are being updated, before continuing the process for adoption by Parliament.

80. In 2018 the National Commission on the elimination of child labour was re-established. Consequently, a National Action Plan on prevention and reduction of Child Labour 2019–2024 entered into force.

81. To eradicate child labour and to harmonize the Surinamese labour law concerning child labour with ILO standards (ILO – convention 138 and 182), the Act on Labour of Children and Youth was adopted in 2018, the Child Labour Act (S.B. 2018 no. 76)<sup>10</sup>.

82. The Ministry of Labour, Employment Opportunity and Youth Affairs participates in the Referral System, which falls under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing and under the Child Protection Network (Het Integraal Kinderbeschermingsnetwerk) "IK BeN". One aspect of this Referral System is child labour.

83. In this context, the Labour Ministry, selected the child streetvendors selling fruit in Paramaribo (south) for participation in the afore-mentioned Referral System for research and household assistance based on the Child Labour Act. The Referral System will be evaluated in 2021.

84. In January 2019, the Suriname Child Labour Survey Report<sup>11</sup> was launched with technical assistance of the ILO. Subsequently, the first National Child Labour Action Plan was adopted within the ILO CLEAR (Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labour) Project in April 2019. With regard to child labour in the informal sector, there are no legal obstacles in the Labour Inspection Act which would withhold labour inspectors to carry out inspections in the informal sector or to propose sanctions. The Labour Inspection has the power and the authority to access and carry out inspections and propose sanctions in all workplaces in Suriname, irrespective whether these workplaces are registered, pay taxes

or fulfill their social security obligations. If access to workplaces is hindered, the Labour Inspection is assisted by the police.

85. The powers of the Labour Inspection to act are expanded in 2017. The complexity to carry out inspections in the informal sector is not related to the informal character of workplaces or legal gaps, but to:

(a) the invisibility of informal workplaces since they are not registered, do not pay taxes and ignore the payment of social security premiums and the mandatory insurances;

(b) the absence of enforcement and supervisory authorities in the rural areas and interior. Informality is more likely to occur in the rural areas and the interior (due to the absence of authorities in these areas including the Labour Inspection).

86. Children in Suriname are protected from corporal punishment on the basis of the existing laws and regulations such as articles 360 through 364 of the Penal Code (maltreatment) and the law on Domestic violence.

87. Hotlines were established as part of a pilot project, to identify cases of sexual abuse within local communities. The hotlines were set up in different areas for ease of accessibility and to avoid the threshold fear among citizens.

88. In schools an awareness raising program is being conducted, particularly in the areas where there are child protection centers. During these sessions, information about several forms of violence (corporal punishment included) are presented and discussed with the children. The Child Protection hotlines Apoera and Coronie were set up in October 2015, in response to the high level of child abuse detected in the Apoera and Coronie Region.

89. The third hotline in Paramaribo- South (Latour, Stibula) was set up in the period August to December 2016, due to, among other things, the increasing complaints of prostitution among the teenagers in those areas which are demographically heavily populated with teenagers.

90. There are three Centers for Reporting Child abuse (Meldpunt Kinderbescherming) located in the districts Sipaliwini (Apoera), Coronie and Paramaribo. The Child Help Line 123 was also set up in 2007 for children and youth when confronted with violence. This Help Line was available from 8.00 – 16.00 hours. With the support of UNICEF this Child Help Line was upgraded to a 24 hours Help Line for children and adolescents. In 2021, the group of beneficiaries was also extended to adults who fall victim to abuse; the name of the Help Line was changed to ‘Mi Lijn’, which literally translates to My Line but in figurative speech means as much as “my friend, my support”.

91. To tackle violence against children, the Bureau for Women and Child Policy prepared and implemented an awareness program in collaboration with UNICEF to raise awareness among children in schools about different forms of violence especially child abuse, bullying, sexual abuse and cyber crime.

92. The launch took place on 18 December 2019 at the Thabor School on the Nieuwzorgweg and total of 8 information sessions were conducted up to January 2020.

93. To increase access to services for child victims of violence, the Ministry of Justice and Police established ‘Meldpunten Kindermishandeling’ (Centers for Reporting Child abuse) in communities with relatively high prevalence of child maltreatment. In 2019 several actions have been implemented to further strengthening of delivery of services at the aforementioned Centers.

94. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing has formulated a National Action Plan for Children, 2019-2021, to facilitate coordinate and integrate the implementation of legislation, policies and programs for creating optimal development opportunities for all children in Suriname.

95. Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) was a project between the State of Suriname and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for which the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing was responsible for the preparation and implementation. This project was to support poor families by means of financial assistance, whereby conditions were set to qualify for these benefits. Conditions included the obligation to send the children to school and that

mothers had to attend all consultations with the doctor with their baby. Due to unexpected circumstances, the implementation did not go ahead and the funds from the IDB were returned.

96. Under the previous administration, the name CCT was changed to "Bromki Fu Tamara" project. This project would also be implemented in collaboration with the IDB. The agreement was made that the IDB would come up with the financial means in the first phase/year, and every year Suriname would come up with a part of the means until the project would be completely financed by State means. Families were identified for this project and eligibility was based on educational and health care purposes. This project also stumbled upon implementation.

97. The current Government is planning to introduce a new form of CCT, but the plan is still in the preparation phase.

### **Persons with disabilities**

98. Article 8 para. 2 of the Constitution states the definition for discrimination. Although there is no specific reference to persons with disabilities in this provision of the Constitution, it is implicit in the phrase "any other status".

99. In Suriname various laws have been modified in addition to some regulations, customs and practices that constituted discrimination on the ground of disability. The Guardianship Laws and other rules are not infringing upon the right to legal capacity. The Mental Health Laws do not legitimize forced institutionalization and forced treatment, since the authorities know that this is discriminatory. There is no non-consensual sterilization of women and girls with disabilities. In 2014, the Act on Care Facilities was adopted by Parliament.

100. In Suriname persons with disabilities are provided the opportunity by the State to fully enjoy the rights to equality and non-discrimination based on the measures taken in raising awareness of their rights under the Convention.

101. In 2013 the working group National Advisory Council for the Disabled (NARG) was installed to give shape to the NARG New Style, but this did not go ahead due to lack of support.

102. In 2017 the proposal is to establish a National Platform in which the target group should also have a seat. From the discussions held at that time, the stakeholders indicated that the NARG New Style document developed at that time could be used with the necessary adjustments. Due to COVID -19 pandemic further discussions did not take place.

### **Indigenous peoples**

103. To improve the situation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples and guarantee their rights, the State has commenced the process of formal legal recognition of the collective rights of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.

104. To provide solutions for the Land Rights issue two Presidential Commissions on Land Rights were established (2016 and 2017); both drafted a roadmap which was subsequently merged into one, namely the Roadmap for the process to the legal recognition of collective land rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Suriname.

105. On November 30th 2018 the Management Team together with the Legislative Proposals Committee, the Demarcation Committee and the Awareness Committee were installed.

106. The Management Team and all the Committees were composed of representatives of the Government as well as representatives of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.

107. From 23–25 September 2019 the Bill Collective Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples was presented to the Traditional authorities of both Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.

108. Subsequently, the Bill Collective Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples was presented to Parliament for discussion in 2019. The Bill on Collective Rights and especially the Explanatory Memorandum address the inclusion, status, role, responsibilities of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples and FPIC principles to an extent.

109. Recently, the Bill was withdrawn in order to be reviewed by a Presidential Commission installed by the current Government. Meanwhile the amended Bill has been approved by the Council of Ministers and is now at the State Council before submission to Parliament.

110. The withdrawal of the Bill has not been communicated to the representatives of Indigenous and Tribal People who have participated throughout this trajectory.

111. Formal platforms were established by both the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in order to promote and protect their rights. One of such platforms is the Association of Indigenous Village Heads in Suriname (VIDS). The six Marroon tribes established KAMPOS, the Collaboration of Tribal Peoples in Suriname in 2019.

112. There is no formalized joint organization of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, however the issues on human rights are central in their frequent dialogue and collaboration.

113. Parts of the Moiwana Community and Saramaka Los judgements have been implemented. The State is in the process of implementing the other conditions in the long term as legislation and policy are necessary i.e. the Bill Collective Rights of the Indigenous and Tribal People has been submitted to Parliament.

114. According to the Constitution of Suriname and the Mining Decree (S.B. 1986 no. 28 as last amended by S.B. 1997 no. 44) all land and its natural resources belong to the Republic of Suriname.

115. With regard to ensure effective and meaningful consultation with Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in decision-making in all areas having an impact on their rights, the Republic of Suriname has adopted and intends to adopt some legislation to secure the rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples such as:

(a) The Environment Framework Act (S.B. 2020 no. 97), in this Act the interests and role of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples are implicitly approached throughout the Act. The incorporation of the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) principles secures the participation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples.

(b) The Bill Sustainable Nature Management (2018). The Bill Sustainable Nature Management speaks to the inclusion of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples on various occasions such as the establishment of particular protected areas.

(c) Mining Decree (S.B. 1986 no. 28 as last amended by S.B. 1997 no. 44). According to article 25 para 1 sub. b that applications for exploration licenses must include a list of all Tribal Villages located in or near the requested concession. Mining permits are given by the Government of Suriname within the Mining Decree. The mining permits are given in the interior for an area without villages. Furthermore, mining cannot be performed within an area that will be selected by the Government as an economic zone. This economic zone is classified as an important area for the villagers where different activities for their livelihood are/can be carried out such as forestry, small-scale mining, fishery and hunting. When mining rights are applied for, the Ministry of Natural Resources request advises from the District Commissioner. The Ministry acts on the basis of this advice.

116. In December 2017, The National Assembly amended the “Decree on Fundamentals of Land Policy” (1982). The new title is the “Protection of Residential Area and Habitat Act”. This legislative amendment is intended to prevent the issuing of concessions within a radius of 10-kilometer around every village. The amended law was never published and therefore the Bill did not become law.

## **Administration of justice and fair trial**

117. The Government provides legal assistance and legal aid free of charge to the financially weak irrespective of sex, through the Legal Aid Bureau (Bureau Rechtszorg) of the Ministry of Justice and Police in accordance with article 14 of the Code of Criminal Procedure which deals with access to legal counsel.

118. The judiciary has a social mandate to protect the fundamental rights of citizens, which requires said judiciary to be independent and impartial, with sufficient safeguards in place.

119. According to Surinamese law, the judiciary must consist of at least forty judges.

120. On 18 December 2020, the acting President of the Court of Justice, having then served 6 years in that capacity, was sworn in as President of the Court of Justice by the President of the Republic of Suriname. On the same day judges and alternate judges were sworn in bringing the total of judges to 29, who deal with hearing all civil and criminal cases in the courts.

121. Despite the quantitative deficit, the utmost of efforts are employed towards realizing citizens' right to a fair trial within a reasonable period of time, which is guaranteed by both the Constitution, the Criminal and Procedural Law and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the State is a party.

122. In order to assure swift and proper administration of justice, continuous efforts are being undertaken to increase the productivity and efficiency of the judicial system, such as sizable investments in training judges and qualified support staff, to name a few at present:

(a) 8 writing jurists who serve as clerks in the civil court, assisting judges in jurisprudence research and preparing drafts, thus increasing the output of legal decisions.

(b) 10 jurists have been selected to undergo a 15-month training as writing jurist for the criminal court. The training will commence in the second half of 2021.

123. The Court of Justice adopted the Code of Conduct for Judges in June of 2015. This Code of Conduct is inspired by the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, which is a globally recognized code of conduct for judicial conduct.

124. In October 2020, a complaints procedure was implemented, detailing the submission and handling of complaints about judicial conduct which does not adhere to the aforementioned Code. Both the Code of Conduct and the complaints procedure, have been made available to the public through the Court's website.

125. One of the basic principles is that trials are public, and that the public should have insight in judicial decisions and verdicts. In April 2019, the judiciary launched its own website [www.rechtspraak.sr](http://www.rechtspraak.sr), which provides information on various legal proceedings and services rendered by the registry. The website also contains a database in which judicial rulings are published. Publication of legal decisions does not only increase the legitimacy and transparency of the judiciary, but also contributes to legal education and research. As of February 2021, over 800 court decisions have been published.

126. The Covid-19 situation has presented a number of challenges for the judiciary, one of them being the limitations on the number of persons who can be admitted to public trial proceedings. In order to maintain guarantees for judicial transparency, facilities have been created, so that the press can follow trial proceedings in high-profile criminal cases in real time from a specially equipped press room in the court building. The judiciary is also working on making a few of the sparse judges available to provide legal explanation on verdicts in high profile court cases.

## **Right to an adequate standard of living – general**

127. In order to continue to consolidate the positive societal policies in favour of vulnerable sectors, various national development and recovery plans were operational, namely the:

(a) Stabilization and Recovery plan 2016-2018;

- (b) Development Plan 2017-2021; and
- (c) The Crisis And Recovery Plan 2020-2022.

128. Within these development frameworks, several national plans and policies have been developed particularly including the focus on women, children and youth, such as:

- (a) National Plan Suicide Prevention (2015-2020);
- (b) National Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (2015-2020);
- (c) National HIV Plan (2014-2020);
- (d) National Policy 'Health in All Policies' (HIAP) (2017);
- (e) National Policy for a Structural approach of domestic violence (2014-2017);
- (f) National Action plan prevention and reduction of Child Labour (2019-2023);
- (g) National Action Plan Trafficking, Gender Action Plan (2019-2020);
- (h) Gender Vision Policy Document (2021-2035);
- (i) Policy Plan National Anti-Drugs Council (2019-2023);
- (j) National Strategic Plan for Health and Wellbeing (2019-2028);
- (k) National Action Plan Children (2019-2021).

## Poverty

129. To eradicate poverty and strengthen social protection, a National Social Security System has been put in place through the adoption and implementation of three (3) social laws namely the Minimum Hour Wage Act (S.B. 2014 no. 112), the General Pension Benefits Act (S.B. 2014 no. 113) and a National Basic Health Insurance Act (S.B. 2014 no. 114). Major beneficiaries of these interventions are women, considering their overrepresentation in lower income groups and the growing number of female heads of households.

130. The basic social protection services are:

(a) Free Basic Health Insurance (Since august 2014 after the National Health Insurance Act was approved vulnerable groups have access to free Basic Health Insurance).

(b) Old age allowance. This allowance is granted to all Surinamese who have reached the age of 60 and who apply for it, there are no limitations or restrictions for nationals. It is also managed by the Government, i.e. the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing. This benefit was increased from SRD 275 in 2008 to SRD 350 in 2010; to SRD 425 in 2011; and to SRD 525 monthly in 2012; a 90.9 % increase from 2007 to 2012. In 2018, a total number of 60,578 persons were eligible for this benefit, approximately 55 % of whom were women. A comparison between 2014 and 2018 shows, that the overall proportion of women beneficiaries remained stable between 54 % and 55 % respectively.

(c) Child allowance. Eligible for this allowance are families who do not receive child allowance from their workplace or employer. In 2011 the amount was raised from SRD 3 to SRD 30 per child monthly (for 4 children at the maximum) (900 % increase). In June 2015 the allowance was raised from SRD 30 to SRD 50. Women still account for the largest group of registered grantees. For the year 2013 the number of women registered as grantees was 34,713 (91%) compared to 3,183 men (9 %). In 2018 the number of women registered were 40,440. The largest number of child allowance grantees (16,621 persons) was from the District of Paramaribo, of whom 93 % was female (15,495 women), followed by the District of Wanica and the District of Sipaliwini.

(d) Financial assistance is granted to poor individuals and households on subsistence level and has two components, namely Financial Assistance to Single Persons and Households, and Financial Assistance to Disabled Persons.

131. Recently, the President announced that the amount of all of the above-mentioned basic social protection services, will increase by 1 July 2021.

132. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing has requested the Government to increase the assistance for single persons from SRD 33 to SRD 108 (227 % increase) and for households from SRD 40.50 to SRD 115.50, a 185 % increase.

## Health

133. In Suriname a study showed that, 62 maternal deaths and recorded 48,881 live births (maternal mortality ratio, 127/100,000 live births) between 2015-2019 were identified. Of the women who died, 14 of 62 (23%) were in poor condition when entering a health facility, whereas 11 of 62 (18%) died at home or during transportation. The maternal mortality ratio decreased over the years, (226 [n=64]; 130 [n=65]; and 127 [n=62]), with underreporting rates of 62%, 26%, and 24%, respectively in confidential enquiry into maternal deaths Figure I, II and III (see Annex 3). Of the women deceased, 36 (56%), 37 (57%), and 40 (63%) were of African descent; 46 (72%), 45 (69%), and 47 (76%) died after birth; and 47 (73%), 55 (84%), and 48 (77%) died in the hospital, respectively, in confidential enquiries into maternal deaths Figure I, II, and III. Significantly more women were uninsured in confidential enquiry into maternal deaths Figure III (15 of 59 [25%,]) than in confidential enquiry into maternal deaths Figure II (0%) and Figure I (6 of 64 [9%]). Obstetrical hemorrhage was less often the underlying cause of death over the years (19 of 64 [30%], vs 13 of 65 [20%], vs 7 of 62 [11%]), whereas all other obstetrical causes occurred more often in confidential enquiry into maternal deaths Figure III (eg, suicide [0; 1 of 65 (2%); 5 of 62 (8%)]) and unspecified deaths (1 of 64 [2%]; 3 of 65 [5%]; and 11 of 62 [18%] in confidential enquiry into maternal deaths Figure I, II and III respectively). Maternal deaths were preventable in nearly half of the cases in confidential enquiry into maternal deaths Figure II (28 of 65) and Figure III (29 of 62). Delay in quality of care occurred in at least two-thirds of cases (41 of 62 [65%], 47 of 59 [80%], and 47 of 61 [77%]) over the years.

134. Suriname's maternal mortality rate has decreased throughout the past 3 decades, yet the trend is too slow to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 3.1. Preventable maternal deaths can be reduced by ensuring high-quality facility-based obstetrical and postpartum care, universal access to care especially for vulnerable women (of African descent and low socioeconomic class), and by addressing specific underlying causes of maternal deaths. Maternal Mortality Ratio per 100.000 was 51.10 in 2017 and 61.17 in 2018.

135. For the period 2017 – 2019, the Crude Birth Rate indicates that per 1,000 of the Mid Year population there are approximately 17 live births. There is minimal difference when comparing the annual Crude Birth Rates: 2019 (16.93), 2018 (16.59) and 2017 (16.78). The Crude Birth Rate for 2019 is 16.93. This means that there are approximately 17 live births per 1,000 of the Mid Year population.

136. The Sex Ratio at birth as of 2017 to 2019 is 105.0, 105.0 and 106.7. According to empirical research, the sex ratio at birth is usually between 102 and 107.

137. The mean age of a woman who gave birth to a first child in 2019 was 27.55 years. The total Fertility Rate in 2019 was 2.23. This means that there were about 2 children born per woman in the child bearing age group 15–44 years. The General Fertility Rate Approximately in 2019 was 75.87, which means that 76 children are born from 1,000 women in the child bearing age group 15–44 years.

138. The National Mental Health Plan is being continued, but will also be evaluated. The priority areas:

- (a) Decentralization of Psychiatric Care;
- (b) Integration of mental health care in the primary health care;
- (c) Strengthening of the mental health information system.

139. Continuation of implementation of the National Suicidal Prevention and Intervention Plan 2016-2020. (see Annex 4)

140. The five priority areas on which the plan will focus in the coming five years are:
- (a) Increase access to mental health care for people who are suicidal and for the survivors of people who have committed suicide;
  - (b) Restrict access to potentially lethal means and agents that increase the risk of committing suicide;
  - (c) Improve the perception about and attitude towards suicidality;
  - (d) Increase the socio- economic and cultural empowerment of vulnerable groups;
  - (e) Strengthen the (coordination of) research.
141. For these priority areas, results and general activities have been formulated. Together with the relevant actors they will be worked out in detail to be implemented.
142. Some activities included in the National Plan for Youth are:
- (a) Integration of suicide prevention into the curriculum for all health care and social worker training;
  - (b) Integration of suicide prevention and programs into the curriculum training of health workers and teachers;
  - (c) Scientifically proven effective programs to teach children and adolescents coping strategies to select and screen for applicability in Suriname;
  - (d) Education and training at school for pupils, teachers and community organizations in all languages.

## Education

143. The Government of Suriname remains committed to ongoing improvement of access to education for all children, including in the rural areas. In this regard the following measures were taken:
- (a) Execution of structural changes in the education sector:
    - (i) The first Basic Education Improvement Program (BEIP I) 2012-2016 was followed up by a second BEIP, phase II from 2016-2021, with a total investments of US\$ 40 million.
    - (ii) This current plan BEIP II will continue with implementation of strategies and actions that respond to gaps in the education system.
  - (b) Construction of schools and teacher housing in the interior:
 

During Phase I of BEIP II, two (2) new schools were successfully built, twelve (12) were renovated (21 new classrooms and 20 renovated classrooms) and twenty (20) new houses for teachers were built in the interior.
144. In addition, the following activities will be conducted by MinOWC:
- (a) Further improvement of the facilities of MinOWC, amongst which are:
    - (i) renovation and expansion of classrooms and teacher housing in the interior. In this regard the expectation is to have 7 schools remodeled and/or expanded.
    - (ii) construction of the Centre for Continuing Education of Suriname (CENASU) to train teachers and principals. It is expected to train 6850 teachers in the use of new curriculum.
  - (b) Improvement of school results in the interior. Through the BEIP II it is planned to increase the percentage of students in the district of Sipaliwini that complete primary education on time (to grade 8) from 8 to 25%, and in the district of Brokopondo from 16 to 30%. Improvement of management capacity at the MinOWC (US\$1.54 million) (see Annex 5).

145. The outbreak of COVID-19 has hampered education nation-wide, but in particular in Indigenous and Tribal villages. Because of poverty (no smart phone or computer) and or the limitations with electricity and very unstable internet in their respective villages, Indigenous and Tribal children are not able to adequately benefit from distance learning provided by teachers using internet platforms.

146. Suriname is committed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in which inclusiveness is one of the goals (SDG4).

147. Suriname has an extensive educational system with free schooling compulsory until age 12. The adult literacy rate is approximately 89.6%. As a rule, all instruction is in Dutch. The educational system is based on the Dutch education system and it allows for schools from different religious groups (e.g. Roman Catholic, Moravian, Hindu and Islam) in addition to public schools up to secondary education. Tertiary education includes training institutes, technical schools and the Anton de Kom University of Suriname, situated in the capital Paramaribo, with Faculties of Medicine, Law, Social and Technological Sciences etc.

148. The MinOWC is in the process of setting out a course of action, especially in the lower grades, where the Dutch language will be used as a second language in school.

149. With respect to raising the age of compulsory education the Bill that was drafted and submitted to the Parliament has been withdrawn for revision with respect to educational renewal. The Bill will be amended as some facilities are missing and substantive issues regarding educational renewal were not included.

150. Regarding to the Bill, compulsory education commences in the year that the child has reached the age of four (4) and ends in the year that he has reached the age of sixteen (16).

### **Economic growth, employment, decent work**

151. Youth participation and involvement (period 2016-2021) in decision making processes affecting youth on both the national and global agenda, including the SDGs, is a key priority of the Republic of Suriname.

152. In October 2020, the Government in cooperation with the local UN office organized a UN75 high-level Intergenerational dialogue, including key policy makers (ministers), representatives from Parliament, UN heads, private sector and Youth Leaders from Suriname to discuss various youth-related issues around the theme: "Achieving the SDGs in the wake of COVID-19".

153. The Republic of Suriname developed a clear policy for Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME):

Outcome 1: New entrepreneurship is stimulated and training, monitoring and incubator facilities strengthen the capacity of new entrepreneurs;

Outcome 2: Special financing modalities such as the SME Fund for (start-up) stimulate the creation of new enterprises and strengthen their production capacity;

Outcome 3: Economic laws and regulations have been modernized and facilitate the entrepreneurial, investment and trade climate.

### **Human rights and toxic waste**

154. In 2020, Parliament adopted the Environmental Framework Act. In the context of the sustainable development of Suriname, this Environmental Framework Act forms the basis for a much needed National Environmental Strategic Plan that creates a balance between economic growth and environmental protection in order to respond to the aspirations of the Surinamese people.

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*Notes*

- <sup>1</sup> [https://www.dna.sr/media/176501/SB\\_2016\\_no.\\_151\\_Wet\\_Vrijheid\\_Vakvereniging.pdf](https://www.dna.sr/media/176501/SB_2016_no._151_Wet_Vrijheid_Vakvereniging.pdf)
  - <sup>2</sup> <https://www.dna.sr/wetgeving/surinaamse-wetten/wetten-na-2005/wet-collectieve-arbeidsovereenkomst/>
  - <sup>3</sup> <https://www.dna.sr/wetgeving/surinaamse-wetten/wetten-na-2005/wet-ter-beschikking-stellen-arbeidskrachten-door-intermediairs/>
  - <sup>4</sup> <https://www.dna.sr/wetgeving/surinaamse-wetten/wetten-na-2005/arbeidsbemiddelingswet-2017/>
  - <sup>5</sup> [http://www.dna.sr/media/259817/SB\\_2019\\_\\_64.pdf](http://www.dna.sr/media/259817/SB_2019__64.pdf)
  - <sup>6</sup> [https://www.dna.sr/media/263490/Wet\\_Werktijdenregeling\\_2019.pdf](https://www.dna.sr/media/263490/Wet_Werktijdenregeling_2019.pdf)
  - <sup>7</sup> [https://www.dna.sr/media/263434/Wet\\_Gelijke\\_Behandeling\\_Arbeid\\_ID\\_50211\\_.pdf](https://www.dna.sr/media/263434/Wet_Gelijke_Behandeling_Arbeid_ID_50211_.pdf)
  - <sup>8</sup> <https://www.dna.sr/wetgeving/ontwerp-wetten-bij-dna/in-behandeling/ontwerp-wet-geweld-en-seksuele-intimidatie-arbeid/>
  - <sup>9</sup> Article 292 and 298 of the Penal Code.
  - <sup>10</sup> <https://www.dna.sr/wetgeving/surinaamse-wetten/wetten-na-2005/wet-arbeid-kinderen-en-jeugdige-personen/>
  - <sup>11</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---ippec/documents/publication/wcms\\_663337.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ippec/documents/publication/wcms_663337.pdf)
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