



COUNTRY REPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME

AT THE ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE REGIONAL

CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND

THE CARIBBEAN (ECLAC)

BRASILIA, BRAZIL

13 – 16 JULY 2010

Paramaribo, 07 June 2010

Introduction

Suriname has experienced a number of developments in among other things: health, the eradication of poverty, and the protection of victims (of domestic violence, sexual violence) since the Tenth Session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was held in Quito – Ecuador from august 06- 09, 2007.

A great part of the actions / developments has been integrated in the questionnaire to governments on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly (2000). This report presents the actions which have been undertaken in the fulfillment of the Quito Consensus since April 2009 and policies and programs planned in order to follow up on the priority issues being addressed at the Eleventh Session of the Regional Conference. This report also addresses the type of economic development and democracy needed to achieve equality between men and women and public policies that promote gender equality in the context of the growth and development models of the countries of the region.

The data incorporated in this report has been gathered from the Gender Focal Points of the Ministries, the Millennium Development Goals Report 2009 and data available at the National Bureau for Genderpolicy.

This report is divided in three parts:

Part one: Actions undertaken in fulfillment of the Quito Consensus

Part two: Challenges

Part three: Policies and programs planned in order to follow up on the priority issues being addressed at the Eleventh Session of the Regional Conference

Part One

Actions undertaken in fulfillment of the Quito Consensus

Women and Poverty

The Ministry of Labour has developed strategies to reduce poverty by investing in the labour sector. In order to alleviate unemployment, a number of activities were presented. These include the stimulation of micro, small and medium sized businesses and offering of vocational education for dropouts and job seekers; the assistance of jobseekers in finding a suitable job (labour exchange). Last year 12 trainings were organized for jobseekers from which more than half were female participants. Seventeen female micro-entrepreneurs got a loan through a fund named “yep kraka you baka’ (freely translated as: “ help to support your back”).

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing provides a series of social programs including cash transfer and in-kind transfer programs. One of the programs is the Social Safety Net (SSN). This program provides social protection to the needy in the society. The SSN is a network of provisions and services to support the poor and vulnerable groups in the society for a fair standard of living. Another program is the Low Income Shelter Program, a subsidy for renovations and new buildings, which has been successfully implemented. The program has contributed to the improvement of the living circumstances of the most poor and has also helped the applicants to receive property rights.

Education and training of women

School buildings have been renovated and new buildings built especially in the interior to increase the access in pre-primary and primary education.

A school feeding program (in collaboration with Brazil) has recently been put in place and other measures are being taken (introducing child-friendly schools) to keep children in schools.

Training interventions for teachers and headmasters, new curricula, and other programs have dropped the percentage of repeaters in the past two to three years.

A national research on “out-of-school” youth (school mapping) is being carried out to gain a better insight into the problems leading to dropouts and repeaters in primary education. This research will enable the Ministry of Education to formulate better policies to tackle these problems in especially the remote areas in Suriname.

Regarding Early Childhood Development (ECD), the Ministry of Education and Community Development (MINOV) is working on rules and regulations, and policy. A major awareness campaign is being carried out whereas an interdepartmental group is in the final stage of setting up standards, norms, rules, and regulations for daycare centers, and other ECD facilities. As part of this project the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing has organized an ECD training for personnel of day care centers of the Foundation for Management and Exploitation of Day Care Centers. The law on day – care centers has been presented to the National Assembly for approval.

A project has been initiated to promote social guidance to teenage mothers, and junior - secondary - educated students at school, so that they can function better in the educational process.

To improve the access to education of the community, especially higher - educated people of Suriname, recently a Study Finance Fund was initiated to create financial possibilities for students. Up till now 541 students have received a loan. The data disaggregated by sex is not yet available.

Women and Economy

In order to enhance employment among women, both on the part of the government (through the Stichting Arbeidsmobilisatie en Ontwikkeling (Foundation Labour Mobilization and Development)), and on the part of the NGO's (*the National Women's Movement*), employment projects for women are set up to teach skills that are required in the formal sector (e.g. in traditional male professions such as furniture maker and bricklayer).

The board of cooperation, also a body of the Ministry of Labour, is training persons, mostly female micro-entrepreneurs (especially in the interior) to set up cooperatives, they also support these persons with the needed legal paperwork.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry is also working on improvements of conditions for micro, small and, medium - sized businesses and trade national as well international.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Husbandry and Fishery has initiated an agricultural credit fund that has the purpose to eliminate the gender gap in the access of agricultural credits, among other things, by assigning property rights to women.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing is currently implementing the project "Family coaching". The aim of the project is to strengthen families socio – economically: possibilities for training of mothers, provide parenting tools, learn how to deal with money, financial support from the government, offer adequate accommodation, and psychosocial counseling. To execute this project the Ministry of Social Affairs is cooperating with the National Women Movement (NVB) for training mothers. Twenty – one mothers are participating in the "family coaching project". Seventeen out of the twenty – one mothers have given up themselves for the training "Assistant daycare teacher". Four out of the seventeen mothers have successfully passed the training and the other thirteen are still in the training.

The Ministry of Justice & Police is now revising the civil code. Paid maternity leave has been added to the draft - civil code. Worth mentioning is that for civil servants paid maternity leave is already regulated in the Personnel Act. Some companies have also included paid maternity leave in the companies' collective agreement on terms of employment.

On April 08, 2010 the Ministry of Trade & Industry launched the Component 300 of the CARICOM – Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Trade and Competitiveness Project. Component 300 consists of 3 subcomponents and one of the subcomponents (312.2) is gender: to achieve gender equality in the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). In this regard a research is being carried out to study the various roles of men and women in the development of CSME and to analyze the effects of CSME free trade regime on women and men.

The Nationale Vrouwen Beweging (National Women's Movement) held from April 28 – May 02, 2010 a Women in BisNIS Beurs 2010 (Women in Business Fair). The purpose was to expose the roll of Surinamese women in the production process and to encourage women and others to participate in entrepreneurship. Eighty women took part in this fair. Thousands of people visited the fair.

Women and health

The Ministry of Public Health has executed a number of actions in the field of health.

A National strategic Plan for cervical cancer has been developed. Although this plan has not been approved yet, some activities are being carried out such as: cervical screening.

A strategy for elimination of vertical transmission of HIV and syphilis has been launched.

Through the “Consultatie bureau voor kinderen” (Under- Five Clinics) in the primary health care (Regional Health Department (is operating mostly in the capital and the districts situated in the coastal area) and Medical Mission (The Medical Mission is operating in the interior of Suriname), the Ministry of Health monitors, supervises and guides the nutritional status, immunization, growth and development of all children. The MDG report 2009 shows that the prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age (weight for height for age) decreased from 6.5% in 2000 to 4.9 % in 2008. The proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles grew from 71.1 % in 2000 to 85.7 % in 2008.

A school health program at the elementary and primary schools is implemented by the “Regionale Gezondheids Dienst” (Regional Health Department) and the “Medische Zending” (Medical Mission) to monitor nutritional status, immunization, growth and child development and general child health.

Recently, the Ministry of Public Health (the nutrition department of the “Bureau voor Openbare Gezondheidszorg”) (Bureau for public health) – has developed guidelines for food and beverages provided at elementary schools. A new child health record that includes (among others) the new growth standards (Growth chart) for Suriname.

In 2008 the National AIDS Programme (NAP) also executed a training for trainers in breastfeeding, infant and young child - feeding counseling for health care workers, working in under-five clinics and hospital maternity wards.

In Suriname mother and child care has been traditionally considered as an important duty within the Ministry of Health. This is expressed in the long existing benefits for pregnant women, mothers, and babies. The “Bureau voor Openbare Gezondheidszorg” (Bureau for Public Health (BOG)) prepares the policy regarding prenatal care, health centers, day-care centers and school children. Women can get prenatal guidance through the outpatients’ departments of the Regional Health Department, and after the delivery it is

possible to receive post – natal care guidance from the health centers. The post-natal care guidance is available for mothers till 6 weeks after the delivery.

Safe Motherhood Needs Assessment is finalized and a Plan of Action to reduce Maternal Mortality Ratio is in preparation.

A Sexual and Reproduction Health policy is being drafted and will be finalized soon.

From October – November 2009 the Ministry of Health organized a training in gender mainstreaming in health. The training was meant for head of bureaus of the Ministry of Public Health and two members of the National Bureau for Gender Policy.

Violence against Children

Judges, public prosecutors, lawyers, and social workers of the Ministry of Justice and Police have been trained in juvenile justice. The main factor of this training was the principle of the best interest of the child. The training has been carried out during November 2009 – January 2010. Forty-five women and 15 men participated in the training.

In November 2009 the Ministry of Justice and Police has broadcasted a documentary on sexual crimes through several television stations. The purpose of this program was to aware the community to identify sexual abuse and to inform the society about the available services.

A folder containing information and guidelines about sexual crimes for teachers of the primary and secondary schools is distributed to 24 primary schools. It is a pilot project with a duration of one year started on November 2009. The purpose of this project is to make teachers able to identify sexual abuse, to give tools to teachers how to discuss this subject with the students, and to give an overview of available services in case of further referral.

Workshops for awareness on the standards and legislation for child care centers were also held by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing.

The principles and provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child were promoted through television and radio spots, posters and folders. The text of the Convention on the Rights of the Child was also distributed to all schools, community centers and interested persons.

The law on the right to be heard (revision of the Code of Civil Procedure on the right to be heard) was approved in January 2008. Through this law children from the age of twelve can be heard in every judicial and administrative procedure.

The law on the office of the ombudsperson regarding children has been approved by the Council of Ministers in March 2010. This law is now presented for approval to the State Council. With this office, the government aims to extend the protection of children.

The Foundation Child and Young persons Help Line 1-2-3 has been established on the 15th of November 2007. This help line is for children and youngsters between the age of 06 and 25 years. Aforementioned target group can call anonymous for any kind of problem including violence. This help line is free of charge. Up till now 12079 persons including 7650 girls have called the help line. The issues these persons address regards: school problems, home situation, relationships, violence, and abuse of power, emotional problems, sexuality, body, and current topics.

The establishment of “Opa Doeli” (freely translated as: grandfather Doeli. Mr. Doelwijt, called as “Opa Doeli” by youngsters, was in the mid – fifties a policeman who took youngsters that skipped school and loafed about the streets in hand) on the 26th of October 2007. “Opa Doeli” is a facility for young persons between the age of 10 to 18 that are pedagogical lock up while awaiting trial. At the moment 45 boys and 2 girls (this number changes daily) are locked up in “Opa Doeli”.

Violence against women

Various groups have been trained in several aspects of domestic violence by the Stichting Stop Geweld tegen Vrouwen (SSGTV) (Foundation Stop Violence against Women) and the Women's Rights Centre (WRC).

Information and education sessions were/ are held by the SSGTV for students, social workers and teachers. The aim of these sessions is to increase the awareness of domestic violence and to promote healthy partner relations especially among youngsters.

Each month the WRC publishes an article "Gender Optiek" in the newspaper. This article emphasizes gender and gender related issues.

Apart from the counseling and the coaching of female and male victims of domestic violence and the coaching of self- help groups of women, the SSGTV also started with a self-help group for male victims in 2009. Through the self – help groups victims can empower each other.

Within the scope of the Sixteen Days of Activism against Gender Violence (November 2009) the Ministry of Home Affairs wrote an article about the steps that are taken at the national and international level to combat violence against women.

The revision of the moral law (the law on sexual crimes) has been approved in July 2009 by the Parliament and published in SB 2009 No. 122. The Moral Law is included in the Penal Code. The moral law has been revised (see attachment) according to the following conventions:

- The convention on the rights of children including the protocols regarding trafficking in children, prostitution and child pornography

- United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime including protocols regarding the prevention, elimination and punishment of trafficking in persons in particular women and children and
- The convention on cyber-crime.

Rape is penalized in article 295 of the Penal Code. According to this revised article, rape within marriage is also penalized. The words “buiten echt” (beyond marriage) has been scrapped. This article has also been formulated sex – neutral and through this, rape of males is also penalized. The penalty consisting of imprisonment in the various articles is added with a fine.

The law on domestic violence, drafted by the WRC, has been approved in June 2009, by the parliament. This law has been published in SB 2009 No.84. This law aims to protect victims of domestic violence in an early stage and through a fast procedure. The protection takes place by enforcing protection orders.

The law on stalking is now presented to the Parliament for approval.

The Ministry of Justice & Police is making preparations to set up a shelter for women victims of domestic violence. In this regard workshops were held in collaboration with the SSGTV in November 2009 and February 2010 to exchange ideas and to make recommendations. Representatives of the government, NGO and Parliament were present.

In March 2010 a platform consisting of government and non government organizations to combat violence against women has been formalized. One of the responsibilities of the platform is to develop a policy program on combating domestic violence in collaboration with the Steering Committee on domestic violence.

The SSGTV has set up networks to combat domestic violence. The networks consist of participants of the trainings which were provided by the SSGTV in the various districts.

The SSGTV is gathering data on the number of victims that are seeking advice, assistance and counseling. The Police Corps is also gathering data of cases reported on domestic violence on regular basis.

Sexual harassment

The government and ngo's are taking actions to prevent, eliminate and punish sexual harassment.

On the 28th of January 2010 the Ministry of Home Affairs organized in collaboration with the Stichting Ilse Henar Hewitt (Foundation Ilse Henar Hewitt) a workshop "Legislation in the national approach of sexual harassment". The purpose of the workshop was to exchange ideas and to make recommendations. About 95 representatives of the government, non-government organizations, business community, and labor union were present. The Committee of Gender legislation of the Ministry of Home Affairs is now in the process to integrate the recommendations of this workshop in her first draft on sexual harassment at the workplace.

The Ministry of Justice & Police is preparing to re-establish a commission that will mediate in cases of sexual molest within the Ministry.

The Stichting Ilse Henar Hewitt (Foundation Ilse Henar Hewitt) is currently executing a project "Elimination of sexual harassment at the workplace in Suriname". The duration of the project is January 2009 – December 2011. The project is funded by the UN Trust Fund. The overall goal is to contribute to eliminate violence against women, especially sexual harassment at the workplace in Suriname. The objective is to contribute to effectively reduce violence at the work place through the development of national legislation, national policy and company policy on sexual harassment at the workplace. The project will concentrate on reduction of sexual harassment in companies, sustainable capacity building, enabling governance, sustainable finance and empowering of project

partners. The aforementioned workshop on legislation was part of this project. At the moment 09 of the 10 companies have committed to develop policy regarding this issue.

In February 2010 the Ministry of Justice and Police opened a bureau for legal protection. This bureau receives complaints against the personnel of the Ministry of Justice and Police from the society, mediates, and refers to other institutes.

Control and decision-making

In February 2010 the Ministry of Home Affairs organized a workshop on quota policy and the participation of women in decision making. The purpose of the workshop was to increase the awareness of women to participate in politics and decision making processes. Presentations were held by Mrs. Sheila Stuart, representative of the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr. H. Breeveld, Director of the Democracy Unit of the Anton de Kom University of Suriname, and Mrs. Ruth Wijdenbosch, member of the National Assembly. Representatives of the ministries, non government organizations, political parties, members of the parliament were present. A great part of the participants recommended to implement quota through legislation in order to have a certain proportion of women in decision making positions.

As of 25 January 2008, one female was appointed as the Sustainable Tourism Director of the Association of Caribbean States.

The judiciary has been strengthened with female (substitute) judges. The judiciary now consists of 9 male and 10 female judges.

Institutional Development

The Ministry of Home Affairs initiated a number of activities in order to strengthen the National Gender Management System.

The staff of the National Bureau for Gender Policy (NBG), the Gender Focal Points (GFP's) of the different ministries and NGO's have been trained in gender, gender analysis, gender mainstreaming, concepts of aid modalities, gender equality and gender budgeting in July 2009. In August 2009 the staff of NBG, GFP's and representatives of NGO's were also trained in networking, lobbying and negotiation skills.

A research project entitled "Gender Equality, Gender Relations and the Position of women in Suriname, A situation analysis" is now in the final phase. The objective of this project is to get an overview of the existing gender relations and the position of women in Suriname in order to identify equality gaps where further policy making and action is required.

Round Table Discussion on Aid Modalities and Gender Equality.

The Ministry of Home Affairs in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning and Development organized two Round Table Discussions on Aid Modalities and Gender Equality in 2009. The objective of this dialogue was to discuss how gender equality in donor-aided projects in Suriname can be effectively tracked and monitored, and to set up a mechanism to ensure a regular exchange of information and monitor gender equality in projects/ programs.

National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)

In December 2009 the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation installed two working groups, consisting of representatives of line- ministries and chaired by the General Bureau for Statistics, to draft a NSDS 2010-2014. The purpose of the NSDS is to strengthen the capacity of all relevant producers of (social) statistics in order to produce reliable data.

Part two

Challenges

Although there have been a number of developments, Suriname is still facing challenges.

- NGO's are operating mostly on foreign – donations, which makes them insecure about their existence.
- Lack of expertise.
- Insufficient financial resources.
- Lack of gender disaggregated data.
- Creating employment for all.
- The hinterland, where enrollment of students / pupils is lower, faces serious problems: the accessibility of education in the interior is generally hampered by a lack of transport facilities, adequate school buildings, educational tools and material, qualified teachers and teachers' accommodation.

Part three

Policies and programs planned in order to follow up on the priority issues being addressed at the Eleventh Session of the Regional Conference

In the coming period the WRC will train judges, lawyers, policemen, and social workers in various aspects of domestic violence.

The SSGTV will continue to train teachers, social workers, religious leaders, civil servants, ngo's, civil society organizations and others in the various aspects of domestic violence.

The WRC will lobby further to incorporate “domestic violence” in the curricula of the police force, and the judges.

The SSGTV will collaborate with the Ministry of Justice and Police to counsel also perpetrators of domestic violence.

In 2010 and the following years SSGTV will establish more self-help groups for male and female victims of domestic violence on the basis of experience with the present self-help groups. The members of these self-help groups will assist the foundation in her information and training sessions.

At this moment the NBG is preparing a Time – Use Survey on ‘The contribution of women and men to the economy and social protection especially in relation to paid and unpaid work carried out by women and men in the Suriname’.

Establishment of a gender database system in order to manage and use gender-disaggregated data, monitoring and evaluation of the national gender policy, as well as efficient reporting, in particular in the framework of CEDAW and MDGs.

To promote self-sufficiency among the beneficiaries the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing intends to implement a new program similar to the “Chile Puente” model to provide a framework within and among others, conditional cash transfers. Counseling and promoting productive employment are the key elements for successful exit from the social programs provided by the Ministry. This model will re-orient the existing exit strategy, which in practice offers ‘life membership’ to most beneficiaries of social programs.

Reform of the education system is now being addressed by the implementation of the Basic Education Improvement Project, which is being funded by the IDB.

Also with donor organization such as UNICEF and the Vlaamse Vereniging voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Technische Bijstand (Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance), programs have been put in place to strengthen the pre-and in-service training institutions for teachers, reforms in primary education directed towards child-friendliness and child-centered approaches.

Implementation of antenatal - care programs and programs for Under - Five Clinics in order to reduce child mortality rates.

Implementation of Immunization programs and campaigns nationwide in order to increase the immunization coverage.

Improving child’s health does not rest solely on the provision of health services. Scaling up of essential interventions must take place within a framework that strives to strengthen and integrate programs with health systems and promotes a supportive environment for children and mothers.

The Ministry of Health is in the final stage of setting up a National Health Information System (NHIS Master Database).

Finalizing and implementation of the Sexual and Reproductive Health policy.

Implementation of Plan of action for Safe Motherhood.

Preparations are being made to conduct a research regarding the underachievement of boys.

Preparations are being made for the 4th and 5th CEDAW country report.