



**COUNTRY REPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME AT
THE TENTH SESSION OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE
ON WOMEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
(ECLAC)**

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Introduction

Suriname has experienced a number of developments since the last Session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Achieving gender equality is important for Suriname to create actual development of both sexes while welfare and well-being are defined as follows:

- Maximum enjoyment of human rights;
- Economic strength;
- Adequate quality of life, both physically and psychologically;
- Opportunities for participation in democratic and decision-making processes;
- Access to information and education;
- Economic, social and judicial safety.

The Surinamese Government acknowledges the strength of equal participation and wants to further design the process to realize gender equality together with various stakeholders (state and non-state).

Article 8 Paragraph 2 of the Constitution: “No one shall be discriminated on grounds of birth, sex, race, language, religion, origin, education, political opinion, economic position or social circumstances, or any other status”. “Discrimination is also defined in Article 126 of the Code of Criminal Law. The principle of equality of men and women is also incorporated in the Constitution: “men and women are equal by law. Gender discrimination is prohibited in the national legislation, while Article 35 Paragraph 2 of the Constitution explicitly lays down equality of men and women. A positive development is that the Government installed a committee which is currently revising the Code of Criminal Law. One of the proposed adjustments is a more precise statement of the concept of violence against women, and a sharpening up the penalty in case of discrimination of or violence against women.

The Government has installed the National Committee on Gender Legislation. This Committee consists of various departmental representatives and non-state actors, including representatives of the University of Suriname and women’s organizations. The Committees task will be to continuously test national legislation against conventions, and to present concrete legislative amendments to the government.

Education

The education infrastructure in Suriname comprises of pre-school, primary, junior secondary and senior secondary (including vocational schools) and tertiary education (University and other institutions of higher education). Several programs are already in place to encourage economically and socially disadvantaged children to go to and remain in school. Examples of such programs are:

- a school nutrition program,
- the introduction of school transportation for children and teachers outside the capital city of Paramaribo,
- allowances for the rental of books and subsidies for school uniforms and other relevant learning materials and
- free education at the primary and secondary level,
- low registration fees for students in higher education and the no tuition fee for higher education. The government is also studying the possibility of introducing study financing for students of higher education institutes,
- a program that enables teenage mothers to continue their education. The last program allows pregnant girls to leave schools (as a maternity leave) six weeks in advance and to re-enter school six weeks after their delivery, while being supervised and coached by a special unit within the Ministry of Education,
- possibilities for evening classes for students at junior and senior secondary level have also been expanded,
- regarding participation of women in education, gross enrolment rates for education show disparities between girls and boys with a higher number of girls enrolled in junior and secondary schools, and in higher education institutes.

The Education Sector Plan will focus on conducting a study to analyze gender issues in education, with a view to gender mainstreaming at all levels and types of education. The analysis will make it possible to elaborate implications which will lead to the following:

- all levels and types of schools accessible to both boys and girls;
- gender awareness incorporated in the curricula at all levels of education and all stereotyping removed;
- gender awareness training for teachers, school principals and others involved in education.

The Government of Suriname explicitly embraced the rights-based approach to development as formulated in the Government Policy Statement 2005-2010, and indicated that “human rights and development are inseparable, because human rights are about respect for humanity, protection, and possibilities to develop human potential in an atmosphere of equality, equity, self-determination, peace and security”.

Suriname believes that the rights-based approach to development is an acknowledgement of the interconnectedness and interdependence of economic, social and cultural rights, and that development will be achieved only when everyone is able to enjoy these rights. Moreover, the Multi-Annual Development Plan for Suriname 2006-2010 (a strategy for sustainable development) is based on the Millennium Development Goals, and contains the following development vision: “a fair society that guarantees human rights and basic social securities for all”. The development mission is given in this document as: “improve the life of all Surinamese”.

The special importance of human rights education is recognized within the University of Suriname and in secondary schools, as well as by NGOs (such as the human rights organization MoiWana, the United Nations Association Suriname, and the Organization for Justice and Peace), and various programs have been developed.

Elimination of Violence

Regarding legal protection, the Government’s Policy Plan 2005-2010 mentions tackling domestic violence and drugs-related crime, while a special judicial committee is currently investigating the adjustments required to bring legislation in line with CEDAW. A Bureau for Women and Children has been set up to tackle domestic violence, to act as a focal point and to establish a center for victims of domestic violence. The draft Code of Criminal Law contains a penal provision for sexual harassment at work; in anticipation of adoption and effectuation of this Act, the Government has established a complaints committee, where individual complaints can be submitted, with the possibility for sanctions when sexual harassment is proven. There is a National Network ‘*Fight against domestic violence*’ in which governmental and non-governmental organizations participate and commit themselves to promote the rights of women and to eradicate violence against women. Several activities have been carried out, such as:

- An awareness program on domestic violence for emergency aid medical personnel by the Women’s Rights Center

- The Ministry of Justice and Police made an analysis regarding domestic violence and a policy is to be implemented this year. Two main projects regarding a special unit for the protection of women and a nation-wide hotline will be implemented.
- The police trained their personnel in counseling of victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. The Foundation 'Stop Violence Against Women' has several training programs for the prevention and eradication of violence.
- The drafting of a law on domestic violence, which is already reviewed by stakeholders and is in the final phase.
- Installment by the Suriname Police Force of victims' rooms, a special protocol, reporting and data surveillance system for domestic violence in collaboration with two NGO's.

Since most violence against women is mentioned and prohibited in our penal code, the Ministry of Justice and Police focuses on the institutional framework to tackle violence against women. The high priorities are actions against domestic violence and measures against the trafficking of women and children.

In 2003 the working group Trafficking of Persons was established by the Ministry of Justice with the task to set out policy and legislation measures, guidelines and procedures for police and other institutions. The Act on the Prohibition of Trafficking in People has meanwhile become effective, and special attention is given to training, education, reception, and counseling of victims and children. In this act the penalty for trafficking in minors under the age of 16 has been sharpened (the minimum penalty for Trafficking in Persons is 8 years, but there is a higher minimum penalty for trafficking in minors under the age of 16).

Maternal, psychosocial, spiritual, legal, medical aid and the like are given by NGOs such as Foundation Stop Violence against Women, CAFRA-Suriname, STICRIS and the Ilse Henar-Hewitt Legal Aid Bureau for Women.

Health

Since June 2004, Suriname has a Multi Annual Health Sector Plan 2004-2008, with explicit gender targets.

- A Health Sector Reform Plan to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the management and the institutional strengthening of the sector has been formulated, in which the role, responsibilities, competences and tasks of all relevant organizations are

well defined and in harmony. Also a policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health has been formulated and an implementation plan for maternal care will be developed. The Government has also approved a national Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS 2004-2008 (with policy interventions by the National Aids Program, supported by UN AID). The plan has the following specific targets: 25% of reduction of all new HIV infections in the age group 15-24 years and 25% reduction of all HIV-positive pregnant women. There are special prevention programmes for young people (for example, the prevention of mother to child transmission program), while various joint activities of Government and NGO's aim at reduction of stigma and discrimination and awareness raising of human rights in the context of HIV/AIDS. Also some training such as training of 30 obstetric nurses, training of health assistants, nurses and physicians in Sexual and Reproductive Health issues. A group of about 50 doctors of the Regional Health Services (RGD) has also been trained.

National Machineries for the Advancement of women

The National Gender Policy of Suriname has been formulated in the Integrated Gender Action Plan (IGAP). This plan was formulated for the first time in the year 2000 for a period of five years, while in 2006 a revised Integrated Gender Action Plan was formulated for 2006-2010. This took place in collaboration with stakeholders (governmental/non-governmental), with the principal aim to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the Beijing Platform for Action.

The National Bureau for Gender Policy (NBG) is the coordinating body for the national gender policy of the Government. A Gender Management System has been set up with Gender Focal Points in all government ministries. This system will be expanded to the district administration bodies. On the basis of an evaluation of the IGAP 2000-2005, the decision has been taken to work on institutional strengthening of the NBG and the Gender Management System/National Gender Machinery. More higher educated and qualified persons than previously have been appointed, while upgrading of the existing staff is a priority. This bureau has a structural collaboration with Civil Society Organizations, while it has a sound collaboration with several regional and international organizations such as UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNDP and the CARICOM Secretariat.

Suriname has not yet ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination on all Forms of Discrimination against Women. In respect to this, NBG has planned to organize awareness activities about CEDAW and its Optional Protocol. Suriname has also installed a Social Indicators and Millennium Development Goals Committee, in which the General Bureau of Statistics has a coordinating role. The first MDG Report (2005) of Suriname is a baseline report, incorporating the available data on Suriname's progress regarding the achieving of the MDGs.

The Integral Gender Action Plan 2006-2010 indicates a systematic approach for strengthening the necessary basis for partnership and for developing a structural implementation frame for gender-sensitive policy development and planning. The areas described in this chapter relate to necessary actions which must lead to respectively more effective executing skills and greater equality.

The Integrated Gender Action Plan 2005 – 2010 forms the core of activities to be carried out in the coming years, regarding the following 10 priority areas:

- A. Institutional mechanisms;
- B. Poverty reduction;
- C. Economy and Labor market;
- D. Voice and decision-making;
- E. Human rights;
- F. Domestic and Sexual Violence;
- G. Education and Training;
- H. Health;
- I. Media;
- J. Environment.

Although the IGAP seems to be a well-developed and a hopeful program for the coming years, the implementation is a matter of concern. To monitor the implementation of the IGAP, the Ministry of Home Affairs is preparing the appointment of a monitoring body, consisting of representatives of the government and Civil Society organizations.

Analysis of the contribution of women to the economy and social protection, especially in relation to unpaid work performed by women

Introductory remarks:

Regarding the contribution of women to the economy and social protection, especially in relation to unpaid work, there is a lack of data. There is an urgent need for research in this field. Nevertheless, there is some information available, on which the following report is based.

The right to work is formulated in:

- The Constitution, Article 26 paragraph 1, which gives every citizen the right to work in accordance with his/her capacities, and this is underlined as one of the fundamental social rights.
- The Labor Law and the Civil Code do not discriminate on the basis of sex, and are applicable to every employee.
- In the Police Regulations an article that used to be discriminatory towards the employment of married women and women with children, has been removed.

The state has ratified the following conventions:

- *Night Work Convention* (I.L.O., no. 41) on 15 June 1976. In view of this convention and urged by different social groups, including trade unions, Suriname removed the prohibition on night work from its legislation by state decree 1983 no. 91, since the prohibition of night work was regarded as discrimination against women. The Ministry of Labor is considering the ratification of ILO Convention no. 89, which is an amendment of ILO Convention no. 41.
- *Employment Policy Convention* (I.L.O., no. 122) 15 June 1976:
- The International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Ecosoc), in 1976. This convention lays down the obligation for Suriname to treat male and female workers equally.

The following I.L.O. conventions are very important for ratification by the state, also because these are in accordance with CEDAW and the Constitution of the country. Since these conventions have not yet been ratified by Suriname, there is no legislation in this regard.

- *Maternity Protection Convention* (I.L.O. 2000 no. 183). This ILO Convention has not yet submitted to the National Assembly in this reporting period. It is expected that employers, especially small entrepreneurs, will persist in their objections against implementation of this convention, in particular with respect to the costs related to maternity leave and indemnification of delivery. Ratification might lead to fewer women being employed, which would further weaken the position of women on the labor market. Soon the Ministry of Labor will start a project “modernizations of the labor law” in which the maternity leave in the private sector also will be regulated. This will have to go hand in hand with a good social security system/ health care system of the country, because many small enterprises cannot bear the cost of paid maternity leave alone.
- *Equal Remuneration Convention* (I.L.O.1951 no. 100). This convention cannot be ratified yet, because Suriname does not have a job classification system. This system is linked to a fixed salary system. Moreover, Suriname does not have a general system of minimum wages either. The government has done many efforts already to develop a minimum wage system for Suriname. A tripartite board has been installed within the Ministry of Labor to perform studies regarding this issue and to advise the state about the best suitable minimum wage system that can be introduced. There is a strong support of the ILO Caribbean Office in this. Related to this issue a wage survey will be performed soon. As soon as Suriname will have a minimum wage system the procedure to ratify this convention will be started.
- *Discrimination Convention (Employment and Occupation)* (I.L.O. 1958 no. 111).
- *Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention* (I.L.O. 1981 no. 156). Ratification is impeded, because the obligations derived from this convention on the short term are extremely costly for the Surinamese economy.

The Labor Act and the Civil Code do not allow dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy, childbirth and marriage. The Ministry of Home Affairs has also made a recommendation to the commission on gender and legislation to review the Personnel Act in this regard.

Female civil servants are entitled to 12 weeks of paid maternity leave, i.e. 6 weeks before and 6 weeks after childbirth. The State Health Insurance Fund covers the costs of delivery. Private enterprises which have signed a collective labor agreement with their employees have a similar arrangement; some of the larger enterprises have a modification in the sense that the

female employee, with the advice of the physician, can decide how to spread the maternity leave period before and after delivery. In practice, women continue to work for up to 2 weeks before the expected date of delivery. Because there is no general maternity leave regulation, employees are not part of a collective labor agreement (shops, private households) and are not ensured paid maternity leave.

The protection of motherhood and the prohibition of heavy or dangerous labor by pregnant or breastfeeding women have not yet received special attention in negotiations between employers and employees. There are no special provisions in collective labor agreements with respect to this matter. In general, the collective labor agreements prohibit irregular working hours after the 28th week of pregnancy.

There are no provisions in Suriname for women to provide breastfeeding during working hours. Nor are there provisions that enable parents to leave their work when their children need them, and provisions for men and women to combine their family life and work through flexible working hours.

Women in Suriname enjoy the same rights as men regarding free choice of profession and employment.

In Suriname, the Ministry of Labor, Technological Development and the Environment is responsible for the national labor policy, while the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Labor are responsible for the policy on equality of men and women in the work place in general.

The Ministry of Labor has classified the vulnerable groups (women, young people and people with a disability) as a priority in its employment policy.

In close contact with other relevant ministries and non- governmental organizations, special programs and activities had been and will be developed and performed to improve the entry of these vulnerable groups into the labor market in the country and the region. There is, however, still a long way to go to reach the goals laid down in the ILO conventions regarding this matter.

There are serious problems identified on the labor market such as: lack of a minimum wage system, the informal sector, changing labor relations (contract labor – migration labor), a total mismatch in demand and supply of jobs. The government is working on these matters with special emphasis on the vulnerable groups.

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Labor, the National Steering Group "Women Workers' Rights" was installed, comprising representatives of employers, trade unions, government and women's organizations. Between 1996 and 1999 various activities were developed in the framework of the ILO project "*Training and information on women workers' rights*". The steering group, produced several documents, which can be used for the formulation of policy on women workers' rights. Some of these documents are: Research report 'Women in technical jobs'; Research report "Working conditions of workers in textile shops"; Report "Evaluation of gender equality in Surinamese labor legislation and collective labor agreements"; Report "Sexual harassment in the workplace". Posters, which were produced at the time, are still up to date and available for distribution.

The Government Foundation for Labor Mobilization and Development (SAO), aims at organizing vocational training for dropouts and job-seekers.

Through this foundation approximately 700 students all over the country are being yearly trained in 15- 18 day courses and 6 night courses over the whole country. In the 2005 and 2006 approximately 50% of the students were women and 30% to 50% of these students finished their respective courses successfully and gained a job.

There were also special courses for women in non-traditional jobs in collaboration with non-governmental organization such as a course in painting. But most of the courses in which females participated were the traditional jobs, such as home care, health care and textile. The ministry is in process to regulate the acceptance of the certificate of these trainings to ease the entrance of the students in follow- up studies in the health care.

The census data also confirm the information that women are overrepresented in the traditional women's jobs. As a result, women miss the chance to get a job in the technical field, although the latest census (2004) shows a growth in female students in non-traditional studies in the formal education.

The government Foundation of Productive Working Units support people who want to start micro- and small enterprises. Training, counseling and coaching of these starting entrepreneurs are the main objectives of this foundation. There are also working units available for them. Recently this foundation started a project with the Ministries of Trade & Industry, and the Ministry of Education to identify and register all handicrafts in the country.

The aim of this project is to pull this sector out of the informality by setting up a market for this group, so they can commercialize their products. At the end of July 2007 a pilot project started on the craft market in the centre of the city as a tourist attraction.

This foundation is also very active in our hinterland together with the Board of Co-operatives in helping to start up of micro –enterprises and cooperatives. In addition to this, people are trained and counseling is given. Also the possibility of distance-learning for remote districts is in the process. Most of these projects are prepared and implemented in collaboration with local organizations, most of them being women's organizations.

The Ministry of Regional Affairs, in collaboration with UNICEF, initiated four studies in interior regions on the economic and social situation of women and children. These studies have shown a great contribution of women in the household through ‘unpaid work’ activities, especially in agriculture and handicraft. These activities take place in a very traditional way without any form of organization and development, which does not help to overcome poverty and leads to many problems. In these regions also male migrant workers are vulnerable. This makes the women more responsible for the household, and this has its impact on the upbringing of the children. The census results of 2004 have shown that the unemployment rate of the females is the highest in these regions.

Through the State Mediation Bureau the Ministry of Labor mediates for persons seeking a job and employers looking for employees. In 2006 the bureau registered 571 clients for a job and 375 of them were women; 114 of them got a job.

With the support of IDB a project for strengthening the labor market institutions has been started. After the modernization of the mediation bureau improved service will be provided (on-line) to the clients and a higher output is expected.

Table 1 Labor Force Participation rate by sex

Activity Status	Male	Female
Employed	101,919 (65.8%)	54,768 (35.5%)
Unemployed	7,708 (5.0%)	8,717 (5.7%)
Working Age Population	154,836 (50.1%)	154,179 (49.9%)
Participation Rate	70.8	41.2

Source: Census-7 of ABS 2005

The percentages of males and females in the working age population are about the same (50.1% males and 49.9% (females). 33% of the working age population consists of employed males vs. 17.7% employed females. Unemployed women and men in percentages of the working-age population are approximately the same, 2,8% vs. 2,5%. The overall unemployment report was 8% for Suriname in 2004.

35.5% of the female working-age population is employed, 5.7% is unemployed and 54.6% is not economically active. The main reason for women for not participating in the labor market is family duties as a homemaker (23.7%) and studies (15.4%), whereas for men the main reason is studies (13.2%)

The latest unemployment figures for Suriname for young persons (15-24 years) are: males 15.8% and for females 33.4%. Lacks of suitable jobs and of specific skills and expertise are some causes for the high unemployment rates among young women.

The contribution of women to the economy is higher than visible in the official statistics, because of two reasons:

1. we assume that more women than men are active in the informal sector; but recently a research executed on the informal sector in six districts showed *that more women than men are active in the formal sector with their first job as an employee and more men than women are active in the informal sector in their first job as a micro-entrepreneur*. The sectors where the informality is the highest are construction, trade, and transport: all of these are traditional male jobs. Approximately 30% of all the workers are engaged in informal activities. This study produced labor-related data of the informal sector. Soon a follow-up study will be conducted to measure the economically related information of the informal sector.
2. Many women are active in the household and their contribution has not been measured. (The percentage earlier mentioned is 23.7%)

The social security system of Suriname does not have unemployment benefits. Unemployed citizens can get financial and medical assistance from the Ministry of Social Affairs on the basis of certain criteria, but not because they are unemployed. The social security system provides financial support and healthcare, especially to the very poor. In 1998, about 60% of

the people registered for medical assistance were women. After that year, no gender-specific data were kept, as a result of which the information cannot be updated.

The Ministry of Social Affairs is in process, with IDB funding, to develop a better social security system that will improve financial support and healthcare to the needy. There are no gender statistics available, but the indication is that more females are getting financial and medical support than males.

There is no specific law or regulation regarding paid domestic workers in Suriname and most of the women have no employment contract, which makes them more vulnerable for exploitation. The wages are also very variable.

According to a study conducted in the year 2000, paid or unpaid work is an important issue for many women. Most women think that income through a job comes before the family. Having a job besides the responsibility for the family is not a problem. For many women, a permanent job is a way to guarantee the stability of their incomes.

Not only the personal characteristics of women, but also the circumstances of the household determine whether women participate in the labor market or not. Cultural background is one of the many reasons why women cannot or do not participate in the labor market.

To combat poverty and improve the economic empowerment of women, the Ministry of Home Affairs, in collaboration with the National Women's Movement (NVB) and the Women's Business Group (WBG), implemented entrepreneurial trainings, access to credit and the participation of women to trade exchange markets. Female entrepreneurs are assisted to participate in the annual production exchange market and other events of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. NVB organizes the biennial 'Women in Business Fair' and other activities with substantial (financial) support from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The government contributes to poverty reduction by allocating financial resources and technical assistance from a number of multi-annual programs, which contain intrinsic components for the promotion of gender equality. The Sector Programs are housing, health, education, agriculture, legal protection, and security and environment etc.

Political participation and gender parity in decision-making processes at all levels.

Introductory remark

In the Integrated Gender Action Plan 2006-2010 of the Government there are various actions under the theme: “voice and decision-making”, which will be carried out, such as:

1. Increased participation of women in administrative bodies, in high bodies of state, in executive functions within the government and in Project Management Units and committees which are installed for the implementation of the sector plans;
2. During the election process, gender related data and information;
3. Assistance to political parties to set up gender sensitive structures and to formulate gender sensitive party programmes;
4. Monitoring if and how gender training is continued in political parties and where extra stimuli are required;
5. Discussions on women’s participation in political leadership and decision-making;
6. Continuation of activities to stimulate women to accept executive positions and monitoring the progress in this respect;
7. Modification of the voting system to indicate the sex of the candidates on the list of candidates and on the voting forms.

Women are still a minority in top management in both public and private organizations.

There are no reliable statistics available on the private sector. Regarding the public sector women are taking over the higher positions in government more rapidly now, although there is still an imbalance in the top positions. For the absolute top positions, such as permanent secretaries and deputy permanent secretaries, there is still a long way to go.

The main reason for optimism is the position women are taking in the educational field: the number of students in higher educational institutions is considerably higher than male students. In addition, more female students are graduating than male, and more females than males with a higher degree are entering government service.

Table 2: Distribution of positions/jobs in government offices (2006)

Level	male	female
Low	5977	6734
Middle	3751	4224
High	1541	1445
Top	200	84

With regard to the participation of women at international and national forums, in 2006 more women became visible in high diplomatic positions: there are currently four female and six male ambassadors. Regarding the second highest rank at embassies almost 27% is female. Among the consuls/ consuls general the proportion of women is 66%

High education is not the only factor influencing participation in decision-making processes. It is a step forward. To empower women, changes in political culture, legislation and gender ideology in general are needed.

One of the strategies of participation in decision-making processes is through participation in political parties. According to article 53 of the Constitution, every citizen has the right to participate in decision-making bodies in the form of political parties.

In this respect, apparently the participation of women in politics is not as high as it should be. There are, however, differences between political parties, which have to do with the political culture within the parties, but also with cultural aspects within the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic Surinamese society.

Table 3 below shows the results of the elections regarding women representation:

	1987	1991	1996	2000	2005
Government (ministers)	6%	0%	10%	15%	18%
Parliament	7.6%	5.7%	15.7%	17%	25%
District council	-	13%	7%	18%	24.5%
Resort council	-	17%	20%	24.7%	30.6%

Source: - Ministry of Home Affairs.

- H. Guicherit for Women's Parliament Forum

An analysis of the figures shows that there is a steady progress in the degree of representation of women in politics. In the Cabinet of Ministers, the growth is from 6% in 1987 to 18% in 2005. In the Parliament (National Assembly): a growth from 7.6% to 25%. In the district councils we see a growth from 13% in 1991 to 24.5%, in 2005, while the proportion of women in the local councils increased from 17% in 1991 to 30.6% in 2005.

Cultural factors in general form the basis for unequal participation of men and women in public and political life. The influence of activities of women's organizations, and in particular the Women's Parliamentary Forum, is evident in the increase of the number of female candidates for several representative bodies, and the increase in the number of female parliamentarians since the 1996 elections.

In the executive boards of political parties there is not very much change in the composition: the number of female board members increased from 14.6% in 1999 to 15.3% in 2002 (see table 4 in the appendix)

Presently there is no affirmative action quota in Suriname. There are opposing opinions about this matter. The National Bureau for Gender policy will put this subject on the national agenda and will organize workshops and seminars in order to take a decision on the best options for the specific Surinamese situation.

Table 4: Composition of boards of political parties, 1999 and 2002 related to gender

No	Parties	1999			2002		
		M	F	Total	M	F	Total
01	V.H.P.	21	0	21	17	3	20
02	N.P.S	13	2	15	12	3	15
03	K.T.P.I	11	3	14	8	3	11
04	S.P.A	9	5	14	8	3	11
05	D.A. 91	8	2	10	8	2	10
06	Pendawalima	9	0	9	9	0	9
07	H.P.P.	9	2	11	8	1	9
08	P.V.F.	7	0	7	7	0	7
09	B.V.D.	15	1	16	15	1	16
10	D.N.P. 2000				3	2	5
11	Pertjahah Luhur				9	5	14
12	Naya Kadam				8	1	9
13	Palu				12	0	12
14	D.O.E.				5	5	10
15	D.A.	9	4	13	9	4	13
16	N.H.P.				14	3	17
17	A.P.S.				8	4	12
18	N.P.L.O.				7	2	9
	Total	111	19	130	167	42	209

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs

Table 5: Sexual distributions of Parliamentarians from 1973 to 2000

Period	Name of Parliament	M	F	Total	% Women
1973 - 1977	Staten van Suriname	38	1	39	3
1977 - 1980*	Staten van Suriname	38	1	39	3
1985 - 1987**	De Nationale Assemblee	26	5	31	16
1987 - 1991	De Nationale Assemblee	47	4	51	8
1991 - 1996	De Nationale Assemblee	48	3	51	6
1996 - 2000	De Nationale Assemblee	43	8	51	16
2000 -	De Nationale Assemblee	41	10	51	20

Source: Ministry of Home Affairs

* Note: after the military coup of 1980, the Constitution was abolished.

** In this period there was an appointed National Assembly