



National review SURINAME

In the context of the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

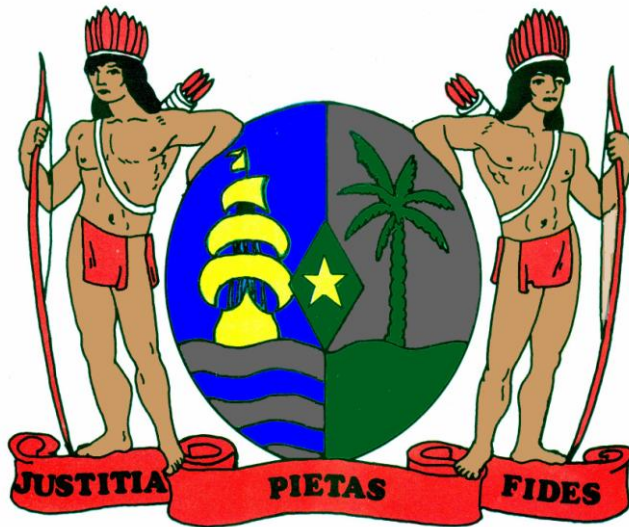
Division for Gender Affairs of Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on the way to Beijing+20



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REPUBLIC OF SURINAME



NATIONAL REVIEW OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION + 20

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NATIONAL REVIEW OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND
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SURINAME

DOCUMENTED BY:

Consultant Dr. Julia Terborg, Center for People's Development (CPD)

EDITED BY:

National Bureau for Gender Policy, Ministry of Home Affairs

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADEK	Anton de Kom University
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASP	Agricultural Sector Plan
BEIP	Basic Education Improvement Project
BLS	Basic Life Skills
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CPD	Center for People's Development
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CSME	Caricom Single Market and Economy
DNA	De Nationale Assemblée
ECLAC	Economic Commission Latin American and the Caribbean
GBS	General Bureau of Statistics
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDI	Gender Development Index
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GNI	Gross National Income
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFP	Gender Focal Point
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HDI	Human Development Index
HPI	Human Poverty Index
HRC	Human Rights Council
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IWGDS	Institute for Women, Gender and Development Studies
LGBT's	Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transsexuals
MARPS	Most At Risk Populations
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MOECD	Ministry of Education and Community Development
MOH	Ministry of Health
MSM	Men who have Sex with Men
NBG	National Bureau for Gender policy
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NHIS	National Health Information System
NYI	National Youth Institute
OAS	Organization of American States
PMTCT	Prevention Mother To Child Transmission
SITAN	Situation Analysis
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections

Srd	Surinamese Dollar
SSGTV	Stichting Stop Geweld tegen Vrouwen (Foundation Stop Violence Against Women)
SW	Sex Worker
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
TIP	Trafficking Information Point
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNASUR	Union of South American Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGASS	UN General Assembly Special Sessions
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNDHR	United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WHO	World Health Organisation

INTRODUCTION

The National Review Beijing + 20, Suriname report is a reflection of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly 2000 in Suriname.

This report is completed with financial support from the UN Women and the Government of Suriname. A consultant was hired to assist the National Bureau for Gender Policy with the development of a work plan for the completion of the national review, preparation of the draft national review, incorporation of national stakeholder feedback on draft national review and preparation and submission of a final national review report.

The following steps were taken in undertaking the National review:

1. Desk review:
Review of available data and information including: Census 2004, Census 2012, Country Reports related to CEDAW, CRC, BPfA, PoA of ICPD, MDG's, Situation analysis of women 2000 and 2010, MICS 2000, 2006, 2010, Gender Statistics and other relevant survey and research reports on situation and position of women
2. Interview with key persons to fill data gaps or verify data or to collect other relevant information
3. Writing of draft report based on available data
4. Review of draft report by selected experts in government and non government
5. Disseminate second draft report to participants invited to national consultation meetings
6. National consultation meeting with government and Nongovernmental Organization (NGO)
7. Writing of final report

With the deadline of the Beijing Platform of Action (BPfA) in close reach, the review shows that in the past twenty years in many areas substantial progress have been achieved. The most significant progress occurred in the areas that have overlap with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and targets, in particular the areas of access to primary education, reduction of maternal mortality and combating HIV/AIDS and malaria. Notable progress can also be celebrated in the strengthening of the legal and policy context given the ratification of key international agreements, adoption of supportive national legislation and the defining and implementation of various national plans, programs and projects.

However, it also has to be acknowledged that in many areas progress is far from sufficient which is manifested in the persistence of inequalities in key areas of life and the large disparities between population groups in access to basic services.

Overall, key challenges identified are closely related to the persistence of structural socio economic and cultural barriers that are deeply rooted in society. The lack of sufficient allocation of financial resources for gender mainstreaming, lack of qualified human resources, lack of

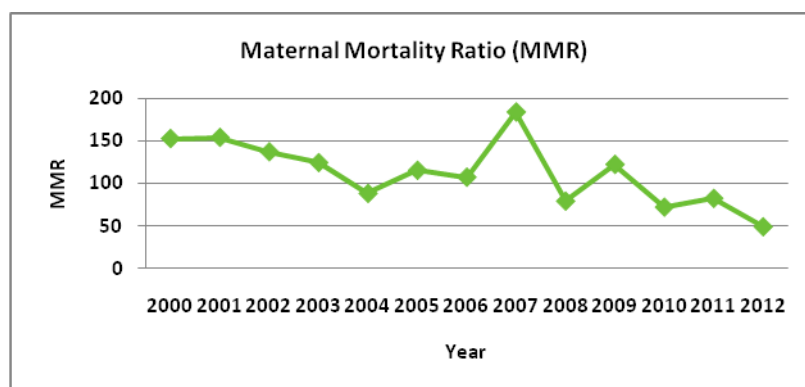
adequate implementation of legislation and evidence based policies, the persistent working of traditional gender ideology in public and private sphere, the lack of adequate structures and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation are all factors hindering the consistent and continuous protection of women's rights and ensuring women's empowerment. Women and girls continue to face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. Apart from gender there are also other interlinking factors that are maintaining and reproducing social inequalities, such as ethnicity and socioeconomic position.

SECTION ONE

1. OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

1.1 Major Achievements

Improved maternal health



Against the MDG target to reduce maternal mortality with 50%, the government made many efforts to improve maternal health. Recent data from the national MICS4 survey shows that antenatal care coverage is 95%. 91% of pregnant women reported at least one prenatal visit, while

67% reported at least 4 visits. 93% of all deliveries took place in a public (72%) or private health facility (21%). 93% of all deliveries were attended by skilled health personnel (MICS 2010). The maternal mortality rate has dropped from 153/100.000 in the year 2000 to 82.5/100.000 in 2011. In 2012 a further decline was observed when the maternal mortality rate was calculated at 48.9/100.000, meaning that the MDG target for Suriname of 50/100.000 births has been achieved in 2012. Although the 2000-2012 linear trend line shows a clear decline in MMR, possible upward fluctuations should be considered.

Increased enrollment of women in all educational levels

Table 1: Ratio of females to males in primary, secondary and tertiary education

Educational level	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Primary	0.93	0.94	1.08
Lower Secondary	1.09	1.07	1.14
Upper Secondary	1.67	1.71	1.76
Tertiary	1.93	1.93	N.A.

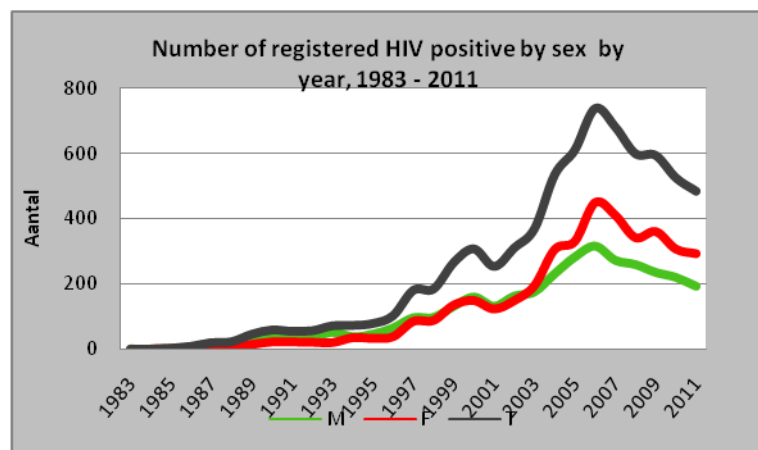
Source: Ministry of Education and Community Development, 2014

The MDG goal of gender parity in primary education on the national level is almost achieved. There are no significant differences in enrollment of boys and girls in primary schools. From the secondary junior level to tertiary education the gender parity ratio favors women, as in all these educational levels more women than men

are enrolled. It is especially at the highest levels of education that the number of enrolled women substantially exceeds that of men. These trends are confirmed by the recent census 8th 2010, which shows that the proportion of persons in the Surinamese population with a university education has increased with 60%, from a total of 7.960 in 2004 to 12.979 in 2010. The growth was the highest among women, where the proportion increased with 83%, almost

twice the growth among males, which is 41%. The growth is striking in the 15-24 years age group, where growth among men is 5%, compared with growth among women: 46%.

Decline in the HIV and AIDS curve



Since 2007 there has been a steady decline in the number of newly registered HIV-cases from 683 new cases in 2007 to 486 cases in 2011. Deaths due to AIDS dropped from 181 in 2005 to 106 in 2009 (UNGAS 2012). In the last decennium the HIV prevalence among pregnant women remained stable but still high around 1%. The percentage of young women and men aged 15-24 who are HIV infected

dropped slightly from 1% 2006 to 0.9% 2007 and 2008, and dropped further to 0.7 in 2010. The proportion of young people, aged 15–24, who both correctly identify ways of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV and who reject major misconceptions about HIV transmission increased slightly from 41% in 2006 to 42% in 2010 (MICS 2006, MICS 2010). The percentage of women, aged 15 – 49 years, who have comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS transmission increased from 39% in 2006 to 43% in 2010. 98% of interviewed women 15-49 years have heard of AIDS, 85% knew where to do an HIV test, while 55% have actually been tested. In 2010, 93% of all women knew that HIV can be transmitted from mother to child. The percentage of women who know two ways or all 3 ways of mother to child transmission is respectively 71% and 52 %. Although overall, 43% of women were found to have comprehensive knowledge of HIV prevention, there were significant differences between women in urban areas (47%), rural coastal areas (37%) and the rural interior (20%). The development of a nationwide PMTCT program contributed to increased coverage of HIV screening of pregnant women from 78% in 2005 to 84% in 2010, while treatment of HIV positive pregnant women and their children increased from 64% in 2006 to 98% in 2011 (Suriname UNGASS report, 2012). The proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to HIV treatment increased from 27% in 2004 to 81% in 2012. In 2011, 98% of the children born out of HIV positive women received treatment (Suriname UNGASS report, 2012). New cases HIV/AIDS among children under five declined from 28 cases in 2004 to 1 case in 2011.

Strengthening of the legal context and development of policies and (action) plans

In the past years substantial progress has been achieved in the building and strengthening of the existing national legal framework to support the implementation of relevant international agreements and related national policy. Apart from the Convention on the Elimination of All Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1993) other important international conventions in the area of women's rights and gender equality have been ratified, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1993), the Inter- American Convention on the Prevention, Eradication and Punishment of Violence against Women (Belem do Para convention, ratified in 2002), the Palermo treaty against cross-border organized crime, including the attached protocols on human trafficking (2006). Recently in 2012, the Suriname Parliament adopted both optional protocols of the CRC. These protocols regard the sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography, and the involvement of children in armed conflict. Furthermore Suriname expressed commitment to implementation of other key international agreements, such as the 'Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (PoA of ICPD, 1994) and of course the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA, 1995)

In harmonization with international agreements, national legislation has been put in place to further combat domestic violence, by adoption of the national law on Domestic Violence (2009), and the law on Stalking (2012), to expand protection and sanctions for violence against women. To implement regulatory measures in the area of Human Trafficking, the working group Trafficking Information Point (TIP) has been installed and developed a manual for the police and immigration authorities with guidelines on how to interview victims of human trafficking (2004). As a result Suriname has moved to tier 2WL with regard to its policy on human trafficking. In the area of sexual and reproductive rights, important revisions took place in marriage legislation where age of consent was raised from 13 to 15 years for girls and from 15 to 17 years for boys. Currently there is an new draft marriage legislation in which it is proposed to increase marriage age to 18 for both boys and girls in accordance with CRC. In the penal code sexual violence/rape within marriage is now recognized and sanctioned (2009). Also 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. The Commission Gender Regulation has prepared draft legislation on sexual harassment. As part of revision of the moral law, the restrictive access of adolescents to sexual information and contraceptives has been removed.

In order to ensure a systematic and effective response that connects to the specificities of the Suriname context, in various key areas of the BPfA and other international agreements, national policies and (action) plans have been developed, among others: National Strategic Plan HIV 2004-2008 and 2009-2013, Integral Gender Action Plan, 2000-2005/2006-2010, Gender Work Plan 2013, National Action Plan for Children, 2009-2014, National Strategic Plan for Prevention and Control of Cervical Cancer 2010-2014, Safe motherhood needs assessment, and Safe motherhood Action Plan, National Policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, 2012-2016.

Increased availability of strategic information for monitoring

With the government's commitment to international agreements related to gender equality and women's empowerment, and the obligation to report on the status of implementation, many efforts were made from different angles, both government and non government, to increase the availability of reliable data. On national level important data have been collected through the Census 7th (2004) and Census 8th (2010), as well as through the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2000, 2006 and 2010. In addition the General Bureau of Statistics started in 2002 with the publication 'Selected Gender Statistics', and published the sixth edition in September 2013. In these publications existing data is differentiated by sex, to enable gender analysis. In the research departments of the various ministries the awareness on the need to differentiate by sex has been slowly increasing, and quality of data and indicators also has improved. Since Beijing, two national analyses have been conducted on the situation of women and gender equality, respectively in 2000 and in 2011 (period 2002-2010). Various ministries have been in charge of the compilation of country reports related to CEDAW (4th and 5th report being drafted), Beijing Platform for Action (Reports in 2000, 2005 and 2010), the CRC (3rd and 4th report recently submitted and received by the UN on November 2013), the Universal Periodic Review (first UPR report in 2011). In addition, numerous studies have been conducted on various aspects of women's live, both quantitative and qualitative, mainly on community level.

1.2. Main Challenges

Weak national support for gender mainstreaming

From the start, the National Bureau for Gender Policy (NBG) has been faced with many challenges in achieving the objective of mainstreaming gender in all governments sectors. The process of incorporation of gender in national policy has not been consistent, due to discontinuity in policy with change of governments and weak management structures.. Important steps have been set in building a national gender management system, in particular with the installation of gender focal points in ministries to build structural linkages with ministries, enhance gender mainstreaming in government policies, and build bridges with civil society. Practice show, however, that many of these focal points are not really equipped or available for the assigned tasks due to lack of required skills, existing heavy workloads, lack of authority to incorporate gender in policy, while there is high turnover. In accordance with international agreements and the national development plan, integrated gender action plans have been formulated for two subsequent five year periods and a gender work plan 2013. With regard to the first gender action plan 2000-2005 sufficient financial means were not allocated to carry out the activities. As regard the second gender action plan there was an increase in the budget. Evidence based recommendations and initiatives to introduce gender budgeting has not been successful yet. However, there are initiatives made by the parliament and the National Bureau for Gender Policy in this regard. The existing structure of the government budgets does not enable measurement or tracking of total financial flows to gender equality. As the key areas of women's rights and empowerment are multiple and spread over several

governments and private sector, coordination of implementation and enhancing of an integrated approach is of critical importance for success. Rigid bureaucratic procedures, discontinuation of gender policy, fragmented provisions of services, weak management and monitoring capacity within government sectors and lack of adequate and sustained resources are all factors hindering efficient and effective implementation of gender mainstreaming.

Persistence of large disparities in access of women to education and health

The achievement of national and international targets has been uneven within Suriname. Not all women benefitted equally from the progress that has been made on the national level. There are large disparities between the educational and health status of women and girls that are greatly influenced by socio economic condition, educational level, ethnicity and living area. Most of the national responses on improvement of women's situation have been concentrated in Paramaribo, where also the vast majority of services are located. Results of national surveys, in particular the national census and MICS, affirm the relatively lower access of people, in particular women and children, living in the rural area and interior to adequate public services such as housing, education, health, clean water and sanitation and also to income sources.

Lack of adequate translation of legislation into direct and effective support to women

There is still significant discrepancy between existing legislation and the extent that this legislation is effectively implemented. Even where government and non government service providers have been informed about the new legislation, and trained in its application, practice show that the establishment of required structures and mechanism, as well as the development of clear protocols for consistent application is a much slower process. Other factors stagnating implementation are also the lack of qualified workers and the functioning of an adequate referral system. These gaps are in particular visible in the area of violence against women. Despite existing national legislation and capacity building of service providers from government and civil society, many women and girls still do not receive adequate aid in time. Therefore, gender based violence, including physical and sexual abuse of women and children continues to be one of the major problems threatening women's (mental) health and hindering their active participation in development.

Lack of translation of educational gains into economic and political empowerment of women

The widely acknowledged educational achievements of women are insufficiently reflected in their growth and empowerment in economic and political life. Although Surinamese women represent the better educated part of human capital they account for two-thirds of the unemployed, are concentrated in lower paid jobs in the formal sector, and work mainly in informal sectors in jobs that are often temporary, unregulated and unprotected. While women are poorer than men, and head at least one third of all households, there is little structural, support available. Educational achievements alone are also not sufficient for women to attain political power. High political authorities, such as the government and the parliament

continued to be dominated by males, considering the fact that women's share in parliament is currently about 14%, while of the 17 ministers in the cabinet only one is a woman. With little representation in powerful political and economic decision making, earlier mentioned critical factors affect women's daily life in multiple areas. On top of that women are overloaded with unpaid caring tasks in home and community that are also impacting on their chances for a successful job or political career.

Transforming gender ideology in both public and private sphere

A major barrier in the achievement of gender equality is the persistent dominance of traditional gender ideology in both government and private sector, as well as in the private domain of family, where gender roles and gender labor division are still strongly guided by traditional norms and values, restricting women's personal and social development. Apart from incidental mass media campaigns and awareness raising activities in communities, relatively little investments have been made in structurally transforming gender ideology, for example through mass media, community programs or in workplace policies. As part of ongoing educational reforms, the Ministry of Education and Community Development initiated revision of gender stereotyping text and images in part of the school curricula in primary school, however on a small scale. Religious leaders and teachers from secondary education received training from the National Bureau for Gender Policy in gender and gender related issues such as domestic violence. Training of service providers have been often limited to a one-time training, while the important group of high officials and management of government and private sectors have hardly been involved in these gender sensitizing and awareness raising activities. Suriname is a multi ethnic, multi lingual and multi religious society. This diverse socio cultural context must be considered, as it also shapes key areas of women's life, including in the area of sexuality and reproduction. In the private domain of family and kinship, sexual and reproductive behavior is still highly influenced by traditional constructions of male and female sexuality, resulting in inter alia sexual violence, unintended pregnancies, HIV/STI's, sexual abuse of children and discrimination of LGBT's. The word 'gender' has become a popular word, used in various contexts, however mostly with little interest among its users of what the concept of gender actually means. There are indications that especially at the higher decision making level, there is still little understanding of how gender works, how gender inequality has its impact on the daily lives of women and men, and how it relates to national development.

Involvement of civil society

A broad range of civil society organizations, including faith based organizations, neighborhood organizations, women's and youth organizations, trade unions, have contributed considerably to the development and implementations of programs and projects in various areas of women's advancement, including in the area of economic and political empowerment of women, education and awareness raising, strengthening of skills and provision of services in the area of literacy, credit to establish small businesses, vocational training, political training, media campaigns. NGO's are also playing a key role in the provision of primary services in the area of violence against women, women with HIV, sexual abuse of girls, support to pregnant adolescents and teen mothers.

In line with international requirements, reviews of key international agreements such as CEDAW, CRC, BPfA, have been consistently based on national consultations with civil society and their input in the draft and delivering of final reports. Several NGO's are subsidized by the government among others through provision of government paid personnel or covering of part of the operational costs. In 2011 the National Bureau for Gender Policy started a national gender dialogue to actively involve civil society in the identification of priority areas to be included in the gender policy and to discuss strategies for a more structural cooperation between civil society and government aimed at accelerating progress in the achievements for gender equality. As a result of that dialogue a gender work plan has been developed for 2013.

International and regional cooperation

International organizations, in particular UN agencies have been major partners of the government of Suriname in the implementation of the BPfA, and all other women's advancement related international agreements. Several development partners have played a key role in the initial period of the National Bureau for Gender Policy to establish the required structures and mechanisms for women's advancement, conducting relevant research, building capacity among key service providers to improve the quality and impact of services, education and awareness raising of general public but also specific population groups. To coordinate the allocation of UN resources the first UNDAF was developed for the period 2008-2011. Recently, the state signed the second UNDAF agreement for the five year period 2012-2016, for the provision of technical and financial support to key areas within the national development of Suriname. Notable is that related to the monitoring of UNDAF a gender working group has been installed aimed at enhancing gender mainstreaming of the UNDAF program. Other international partners of the State are the IDB, the IMF and the European Union. Apart from support from bilateral partners, such as China, India, Canada, Netherlands and USA, the government also participates actively as a member in regional institutions such as the CARICOM, the OAS, the ECLAC and UNASUR. Notable is also that within Caricom, Suriname holds the portfolio of Gender, Culture and Youth. Development partners are also important sources for Civil Society Organizations for technical and financial support.

Relation between BPfA and the MDG's

The MDG's have been a powerful instrument to get governments on board for global changes and indeed resulted in significant progress in the achievement of some of the targets. On the international level there were also comprehensive funds available, especially in the area of HIV and maternal health, malaria and tuberculosis that were also mobilized for the national response in Suriname. The government also made efforts to adequately monitor the MDG's, as a special inter ministerial group was established to produce the MDG reports.

Although the MDG's share many similar areas of interventions with the BPfA, it is a much smaller range of focus as most attention in the MDG indicators was on the overall outcome and less on the structural challenges of gender equality. As the government's focus was especially on reaching the MDG's targets, the other areas covered by other women's right related agreements such as the PoA of ICPD or BPfA were somewhat neglected. Specific areas of gender inequality such as gender based violence, women's unpaid care work, sexual reproductive health and rights were less addressed. For more impact it is crucial that in the

measurement of women's progress, targets and indicators are defined that are much more related to the structural foundations of gender inequality, in particular weak gender management system, weak government institutions and the quality of governance and accountability systems, as well as social and cultural norms, stereotypes and practices that discriminate against women and girls.

SECTION TWO

1. WOMEN AND POVERTY

- 1.1. There are no official uniform data on the level of poverty in Suriname. Based on a uni-dimensional measurement of poverty (based on basic food package), it has been estimated that 65% of households live below the poverty line (GBS 2000). The uni dimensional measurement of poverty provides a narrow picture as it doesn't take into account a large informal sector, with an estimated contribution to GDP of 20.4% (2008), and other factors influencing poverty such as access to health, water and sanitation, education and participation. In the past years several national efforts have been made to estimate poverty, from a more multidimensional approach.
- 1.2. Based on internationally used measurement tools, such as the Human Development Index or the Multi Poverty Index, the poverty level in Suriname has been estimated nationally at 49% of households that live below the poverty line. The HDI is a summary measure for assessing long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living. In the Human Development Atlas, Suriname (2013) data of MICS 2010 and the census 2010 have been used as main sources to calculate the values of the different components of the HDI. As a result disaggregated data on the HDI index are presented by district. Suriname's HDI value for 2012 is 0.684 and positions the country at 105 out of 187 countries, and in the medium human development category. Between 2005 and 2012, Suriname's HDI increased from 0.666 to 0.684, an increase of 3% or an annual average increase of about 0.4%. Between 1980 and 2012, Suriname's life expectancy at birth increased from 65.9 to 70.8, by 4.9 years and expected years of schooling increased from 10.2 to 12.4, by 2.2 years. Suriname's GNI per capita increased by about 37% between 1980 and 2012 from 5.331 to 7.327 (UNDP, Human Development Report 2013).
- 1.3. Neither the uni- nor the multi dimensional measurement of poverty provide information on how within household resources are shared and controlled by household members, which means that even in households that live above the poverty line, women can be poor due to existing gender inequality. Several community studies on the situation of women indicate that the vast majority of women in the low income communities have no or little income and are financially dependent on the income of their partner or other household members.
- 1.4. Although gender is mentioned as a cross cutting factor in the national development plan, there is no integration of a gender perspective in poverty reduction policies and also no instruments to monitor the impact of these policies on gender equality.
- 1.5. Despite the lack of hard and uniform evidence, there are sufficient indications to assume that overall women are poorer than men, and that poverty is not only closely linked

to gender, but also interconnected with educational level, living area and ethnicity. Another proxy indicator for women's economic status is her access to the labor market. Much more than men, women are vulnerable to poverty if we take into account their relatively lower access to formal and paid work, lower wages in the labor market, and the demanding caring responsibilities at home that limit their access to the labor market. The last census data show that in 2010 the unemployment percentage (non agricultural) among women is 20% against 8% among males, thus 2.5 times more than men. This confirms the persistence in the gender gap with respect to income from labor. Women's vulnerability to poverty is also present among the older women, who are retired without a pension because they worked in the informal sector. It is also not regulated yet that widows in a concubine relation can receive the pension of their husbands.

- 1.6. Last census 8th showed that households headed by women have increased from 31% in 2004 to 33% in 2010. There is no information on the economic status of these female headed households, and no disaggregation of these data by rural, urban or interior. Therefore, it is difficult to just assume that increase of female headed households means increase in poverty of women, because there is no information on the poverty status of these households.
- 1.7. Nevertheless there are sufficient indications to state that poverty is severely impacting on women's live and behavior. MICS studies show consistency, through the years, in the close relation between women's educational level, wealth of household and their sexual and reproductive health behavior. MICS 2010 shows that the lowest literacy rates among women, aged 15-24 years, are found in the poorest households (73%). The primary school age children of the poorest households are estimated to have the lowest school attendance rates (92%) when compared to children in each of the other wealth status groups. Poor women tend to have higher fertility rates, relatively low use of contraceptives, have much more at risk to become a teen mother, to get involved in high risk sex work, and to get infected with HIV. MICS 4th also indicate that traditional notions on gender relations are more prevalent among poor, low educated women. The high level of poverty among women is also confirmed by the fact that most recipients of social protection services are women, often female headed households. In 2009, the number of recipients of social benefits, as provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs, increased to the highest levels since 2005¹.
- 1.8. **National response:** Guided by several government policy documents, in particular previous Multi-Annual Development Plan, 2006 –2011, and current Development Plan, 2012-2016, the following policies and programs are being implemented:
 - **Strengthening of the social protection system:** The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing is responsible for the development and implementation of social protection policy. Identified target groups are mainly vulnerable groups or groups at risk, such as elderly, people with a

¹ Report on Basic Indicators, General Bureau of Statistics, 2012

disability, children and women in poor households. The ministry has a supply scheme including material and immaterial social services, which are accessible for both men and women. The basic social protection services are: Health cards to ensure free medical care, financial support for needy households and people with a disability, child allowance, old age allowance, and provision of school supplies. Furthermore subsidies are provided to institutions taking care of the elderly, children and people with a disability, while services with respect to family counseling and community work are also provided.

- **The draft legislation on old age pension 2014 has been approved by the Council of Ministers and has been submitted to the Parliament for approval.**
- **The draft legislation on basic health insurance has been approved by the Council of Ministers and has been submitted to the Parliament for approval.**
- **Phased implementation of a national health insurance system:** Since last years all children 0-16 years and all senior citizens aged 60+ have access to healthcare, including those who were previously not covered. Next group to be included are all pregnant women
- **Non contributory pension system:** Suriname has a general old age allowance, starting at 60 years that is based on anon contributory pension system. Although the amount is still low, there has been a significant increase from Srd.150 (46 US\$) in 2004 to Srd. 525 (162 US\$) in 2012.
- **Incentives and policies to improve women's and youth employability** (see paragraph 4 on 'women and economy' for detailed information).
- **The development of draft legislation for the establishment of a minimum wage system:** Draft legislation on a minimum wage is already approved by the Council of Ministers and has recently been submitted to the parliament for approval
- **Social housing programs:** Since 2003 the government of Suriname established low- and middle income housing programs. These programs provide technical and financial support (low interest housing loans) for home modifications and construction through government subsidies
- **Afterschool program:** All schoolchildren in primary school can participate in an after school program, during which they receive free meals, guidance with home work, and are participating in recreational and sport activities.
- **Removal of all school fees in primary and secondary education**

1.9. Challenges:

- A gender perspective should be included in poverty reduction programs to reveal the impact of gender inequality on poverty and the most effective measures to be taken.
- Support for poor female headed households, and for women who are occupied with additional specialized care tasks such as care of elderly and disabled persons.
- Increase funds and credits for female entrepreneurs,
- Collection of poverty data that are not only disaggregated by sex, but also gives a better understanding of the gendered nature of the underlying causes and incidence of poverty and that reflect gender-based inequities within households.

2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN

- 2.1. Suriname has compulsory education from age 7 to age 12, however primary school starts at age six. The net enrollment ratio in primary education has increased from 93% in 2004 to 98% in 2011, and close to the MDG target of 100% in 2015. According to MICS, the proportion of children entering first grade of primary school who eventually reach grade 5 increased from 94% in 2004 to 96% in 2010.
- 2.2. Since 2004, the literacy rate among 15-24 years women has been stable at 93%. Literacy rates in urban areas are higher than those in rural areas being 96% and 80% respectively and are substantially lower in the rural interior (54%). (MICS 2010).
- 2.3. The gender parity index for primary school fluctuates around 1.00, indicating that at national level there is no significant difference in the attendance of girls and boys to primary school. (MICS 2006, 2010). With respect to the secondary level, the gender parity index is 1.24 in favor of girls. Of the overall 5% students that reach the tertiary level, more than two third are women. Girls perform better in almost all educational cycles. (Statistical Yearbook 2008, General Bureau of Statistics)
- 2.4. For a more nuanced picture it is, however, important to bear in mind that overall the educational level is still low. For 43% of the Surinamese population primary school is the highest attained educational level, while 31% did not continue after secondary junior education. This implies that the vast majority of the population, 74%, is relatively low educated. The proportion of persons that finalized tertiary education is only 5.4%, of which 2.4% a university graduate (Census 2010).
- 2.5. Census 2010 showed that the proportion of persons with a university education has increased with 60%, from a total of 7.960 in 2004 to 12979 in 2010. The growth was the highest among women, where the proportion increased with 83%, almost twice the growth among males, which is 41%. The growth is striking in the 15-24 years age group, where growth among men is 5%, compared with women where the growth is 46%.
- 2.6. However, despite their better school performances than boys, girls still account for the largest part of the category of youth 'unemployed and out of school'. Due to the persistent structural gender inequality in the labor market, (young) women have less access to jobs, even if they are higher educated than men' (Census 2010).
- 2.7. **National responses:**
 - Removal of all school fees in primary and secondary level: Starting school year 2012, the government has removed all school fees, in order to increase access to education.
 - Scholars and study loans for students in higher education
 - Compulsory education will be extended by law to the age of 15 years, to at least ensure minimal schooling at secondary junior level

- Improvement of education in the interior: In the reform of the education sector, with the loan of the IDB, the interior has been identified as a priority area. In addressing the educational problems in the interior, most progress is seen in the area of construction and rehabilitation of school buildings and teacher's houses, mainly public educational facilities. Improving the quality of education is a much slower, long term process. Nevertheless some important programs and projects, of both GOS and NGO's, aimed at improvement of education in the interior have been initiated and successfully implemented.
- Significant increase in women's access to technological careers and other non-traditional areas.
- Increase of women's access to vocational training offered by the ministry of labor
- Efforts made to remove gender stereotyping from existing curricula and mainstream a gender perspective in the curriculum
- Both government and NGO's have developed adult literacy programmes, in which mainly women are enrolled, and aimed at achievement of functionally literacy.
- The development of a basic life skills curriculum, including the issue of sexuality. While textbooks have been developed and teachers have been trained, the actual integration of this curriculum in primary and secondary education has not been implemented yet.
- Development and implementation of regulations to forbid removal of pregnant girls from school. Since 1986 the ministry of Education also runs a program aimed at keeping teen mothers in school, prevent a second unintended pregnancy and increased their chances in the labor market through provision of vocational training
- Inclusion of gender courses in higher educational institutions, including the University, the teachers academic and others
- Research on the feasibility of introducing bilingual intercultural education, especially for primary schoolchildren in the interior
- Development of a plan for IT in education in 2013. However, there is no integration of a gender perspective in this plan.

2.8. Challenges:

- National disparities in access to quality education: there are persistent disparities in access to quality education caused by gender and socio economic inequalities and geographical barriers.
- Main problems regard access to and availability of quality education (at all levels, and especially in the interior), relatively high proportions of repetitions, drop-out and retention.
- Limited availability and poor quality of preschools
- Also of concern are the outdated school curricula, lack of qualified teachers, structural inefficiencies in the training of teachers at all levels, bad infrastructural conditions and lack of adequate learning materials
- A major barrier in education is the language barrier, in particular the extreme discrepancy between the mother tongue of children in the interior, learned at home and the use of Dutch in schools. NGO's and other key stakeholders have advocated for the introduction of bilingual education in primary schools in the interior.

3. WOMEN AND HEALTH

- 3.1. Between 1980 and 2012, Suriname's life expectancy at birth increased from 65.9 to 70.8, by 4.9 years. The life expectancies for both women and men have increased as compared to 1980, when the life expectancy for men was 64 years and for women 71 years to 66 for men and 77 for women (UNDP 2012).
- 3.2. Based on the prevailing patriarchal gender ideology women are still the primary caretakers in society and the ones responsible for care for the sick, the disabled, the elderly and all other groups in need of healthcare. While women are the main health caretakers in society, both in private and public sphere, their own health is often at risk in many areas.
- 3.3. Main cause of death in Suriname is cardiovascular diseases, with an equal share of males and females, respectively 27.1% in 2011. The second and third main cause of death among women is respectively cancers 14% and Diabetes Mellitus (10%). Alarming is women's share in cancers, in particular reproductive health cancers. While overall cancer incidence is low, mortality due to cancers of the reproductive organs, in particular breast cancer and cervical cancer places Suriname in the category of developing countries with the highest cervical cancer incidence rates. With a share of 3.3% in total women deaths, HIV/AIDS is the 7th leading cause of death among women.
- 3.4. Although the national fertility rate declined dramatically from 7.10 in 1964 to 2.53 (TFR) in 2010, there are significant differences between various socio-economic and ethnic groups. Women from Maroon descent has the highest fertility level, in last census calculated at 4.47.
- 3.5. While in general there is improvement of maternal health, less progress have been achieved in the area of neonatal health. The perinatal mortality rate was 35.2 in 2000 and went down to 27.2 in 2011. Despite this decline, Suriname is still among the countries with the highest rates in the region.
- 3.6. In the area of maternal health key indicators of MDG's show varying results. Three national MICS surveys (2000, 2006, 2010) in the last decade showed only a slight increase in national prevalence of contraceptive use, from 42% in 2000 to 47.6% in 2010. National disparities in contraceptive use are large, with lowest contraceptive use in the interior: 14.6% (2006), while in 2010 contraceptive prevalence found in the interior districts of Brokopondo and Sipaliwini was respectively 26% and 25%. In 2010, national unmet need for family planning has been determined at 16.9%, with highest unmet need among women in the interior: 34% (MICS 2010).
- 3.7. Due to relatively low use of contraceptives, risk of unintended pregnancy is high, resulting in an estimated amount of 5.000 to 10.000 abortions per year, which is an abortion rate of 43 to 86 abortions per 1.000 women, aged 15-44 years. Reliable figures on the incidence of abortion cannot be obtained as there is a strict law that penalizes abortion in all cases, and therefore usually abortion is not registered, except for those complications

cases that appear at the emergency ward of the Academic Hospitals. The abortion prevalence found in MICS 2010 is 7% of all women, ever pregnant.

- 3.8. The lack of sufficient and qualified health workers is also reflected in the area of maternal health. There is a great need for rapid expansion and scale-up of the number of midwives and others with midwifery competencies and quality of midwifery care to meet the current demand. Apart from capacity building through training, of equal importance is the regulation, accreditation, proper delegation of authority and supportive supervision of midwives. (National safe motherhood assessment, 2011)
- 3.9. Overall, low educational level, lower range in the wealth index, as well as living in the interior are closely connected to lower level of knowledge of HIV and condom use. There are strong indications that condom distribution in the interior is considerably lower than elsewhere. Accessibility of condom sources appears to be gender specific and especially women are reluctant to buy and carry condoms.
- 3.10. Recent detailed data on STI prevalence by sex and age group are not available. Reports of the central STI clinic indicate that the vast majority of all identified cases are detected among youth, aged 15-29 years, with a major share of youngsters in the age group 20-25 years.

3.11. **National response:**

Against the background of the MDG's and the increased efforts to reduce maternal mortality, significant interventions in multiple areas have contributed overall to increased women's access to health, with enlarged focus on maternal health and HIV/STI.

- **Development of policies:** To build a systematic and focused response on women's health and guided by a human rights based approach and a gender perspective, several policies and action plans have developed in which improvement of women's health is included: National Strategic Plan HIV 2004-2008 and 2009-2013, Integrated Gender Action Plan, 2009-2011, National Child Action Plan 2009-2013, National Strategic Plan for Prevention and Control of Cervical Cancer 2003-2009, National Strategic Plan for Improvement of Primary Health Care. Safe motherhood needs assessment, and Safe motherhood Action Plan, National Policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, 2012-2016.
- **Data collection on women's health:** A large number of studies on sexual and reproductive health issues have been conducted, among others in the area of maternal health, HIV/STI, adolescent's health, SRH indicators, Quality of care, Sex workers, MSM, with the incorporation of a gender perspective. An important national source on women's health is the Multi Cluster Indicators Survey (MICS) that has been conducted in 2000, 2006 and 2010.
- **Improved maternal health:** Antenatal care coverage is 95%. 91% of pregnant women reported at least one prenatal visit, while 67% reported at least 4 visits. 93% of all deliveries took place in a public (72%) or private health facility (21%). 93% of all deliveries were attended by skilled health personnel (MICS 2010). To further improve the quality of care for mothers during

pregnancy and at the time of delivery, recently the government decided to provide free pre- and postnatal care to all pregnant women.

- **Reduction of maternal mortality:** Various nationwide and community based initiatives have been developed to achieving this target. The maternal mortality rate has dropped from 153/100.000 in the year 2000 to 82.5/100.000 in 2011. There was a rapid fall since 2009 (122.5), 2010 (72.1), 2011 (82.4). In 2012 a further decline was observed when the maternal mortality rate was calculated at 48.9/100.000, meaning that the MDG target for Suriname of 50/100.000 births has been achieved in 2012. Although the 2000-2012 linear trend line shows a clear decline in MMR, we still have to consider possible fluctuation. Not clear how stable this line is.
- **Decline of annual HIV+** Since 2007 there has been a steady decline in the number of newly registered HIV-cases from 683 new cases in 2007 to 601 in 2008, and in 2010 a sharp drop to 527 new cases and in 2011 a sharp drop to 486 new cases. In the period 2003 to 2010, HIV prevalence among pregnant women fluctuated around 1.0%. HIV treatment of HIV-positive pregnant women and children increased from 64% in 2006 to 83% in 2008. In 2011, 98% of the children born out of HIV positive women received treatment (Suriname UNGASS report, 2012).
- **Increased access to HIV knowledge and HIV treatment:** Since 2003, the HIV prevalence among pregnant women remained stable but still high around 1.0%. The national program on 'Prevention Mother to Child Transmission' (PMTCT) has resulted in a 84% HIV screening coverage of pregnant women in 2010, while treatment of HIV positive pregnant women and their children increased from 64% in 2006 to 98% in 2011 (Suriname UNGASS report, 2012). Significant progress in treatment contributed to a sharp reduction in AIDS deaths since 2006.
- **Decline in HIV prevalence in MARPS:** HIV prevalence study show that HIV knowledge among sex workers and MSM have increased and that HIV prevalence went down
- **Since 2006 there is a decreasing trend and AIDS mortality** is on the 6th place and in 2011 mortality is on the 7th place on the list of causes of death
- **Increased use of condoms among women, 15-24 years:** Two-thirds of women 15 – 24 years report having sex with a non-regular partner in the 12 months prior to the MICS (2010). Of those women, almost half report using a condom when they had sex with a high risk partner.
- **Increased HIV knowledge:** MICS 2010: Overall, 93% of the women know that HIV can be transmitted from mother to child. The percentage of women who know all 3 ways of mother to child transmission is 52 %, while 5% of the women did not know of any specific way.
- **Increased access of marginalized and vulnerable women populations to sexual and reproductive health:** specific programs and projects focused on Indigenous and Maroon women, young women, women who have sex with women, migrants etc.
- **Establishment of a National Health Information System (NHIS)** at the central office of the Ministry of Health, with epidemiological data differentiated by sex.
- **Implementation of the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) immunization** program for adolescent girls.

3.12. Challenges:

- Further improvement of the quality of care, including care for mother and child. In this regard number of qualified midwives should increase. Also important is to ensure that midwives, and other health workers, have appropriate employment protection, remuneration, incentives and motivation.
- The national capacity in emergency obstetric care, the registration system, maternal mortality case investigations and universal access to a comprehensive range of contraceptives, needs strengthening for further reduction of the maternal mortality rate².
- To enable a further decline in the HIV/AIDS curve it remains important to continue effective promotion of consistent condom use and sufficient availability of affordable condoms, strengthening of a continuum of care for HIV+ persons to enhance HIV treatment adherence and counseling, early detection of HIV, especially among males, continuity in outreach activities for MARPS, increase access to HIV services for migrants, further integration of HIV services in general SRH services at PHC level and reduction of stigma and discrimination on all levels of care, especially among sexual minorities and women living with HIV.
- Development of HIV prevention programs targeting women in marriages and other conjugal relations .
- Improve access of marginalized and vulnerable populations to quality sexual and reproductive healthcare services. Due to lack of gender and cultural sensitivity of health workers and other socio economic barriers, there are persistent inequities in access to health care for certain population groups, in particular people with disabilities, victims of violence, elderly, Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgenders (LGBTs) and also males in general.
- Filling of gaps in required regulations in the health sector, and revise national legislation where possible to prevent unsafe abortions and regulate safe abortions through expanding of the range of legal grounds for which abortion is not punishable.
- Implementation of the national plan on prevention and control of Cervical Cancer
- Development of educational and awareness raising programs on gender specific symptoms of cardiovascular diseases, and preventive lifestyles.

4. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- 4.1. Violence against women continues to be one of the main areas where women's rights are severely violated and insufficiently protected in both public and private spheres. Despite the national response driven by the international and national legislation, just recently in 2012, the alarming scale of violence against women was demonstrated by the fact that 14 women were murdered by their partners, accounting for the majority (54%) of the 26 murders in that year. In this same year the police registered 1167 cases of domestic violence, with assault and battery as the most common forms, followed by threats. Of all perpetrators of domestic violence, 80% are men, while all victims of fatal violence are women. In the first half of 2013

² Safe Motherhood Needs Assessment (SMNA) Report, 2010

already about 700 cases of domestic violence were registered at the Police. The vast majority of registered sexually abuse children are girls.

- 4.2. 602 cases of sexual violence were reported to the police in 2009, 490 cases in 2010 and 398 in 2011. In 96 % of sexual offences (2007-2010) the offender was known to the victim. Indications are that the majority of sexual abuse remains unreported, due to fear for stigma and discrimination, lack of knowledge and skills among service providers (teachers, health workers, social workers, religious leaders) to detect symptoms and recognize signals of abuse in an early stage, cultural barriers (f.e. reluctance of traditional/closed communities to involve outsiders in matters that are perceived as 'family/community matters that fall under the authority of local traditional leaders)
- 4.3. There are indications that most registered cases of sexual violence has not been prosecuted, while only a small proportion of victims of violence receive adequate counseling and other psycho social support due to a severe shortage of qualified service providers in this field of work.
- 4.4. That violence against women is deeply rooted in gender notions about masculinity and femininity is confirmed by results of MICS 2010 that shows 13% of women 15-49 years believe a husband is justified in beating his wife/partner for certain reasons. Prevalence of these notions is the highest among women with relatively low educational and economic status, varying between 25% to 30%.
- 4.5. Sexual harassment of females workers have been confirmed by a recent research in public and private workplace. Prevalence of sexual harassment victims varied among males from 4% to 25% and among females from 2% to 57%. Harassment was the highest in workplaces with unequal gender relations, absence of a code of conduct, traditional leadership and a sexual context. Notable is that victims of sexual harassment were found in all age and educational categories.
- 4.6. Between 2005 and 2009, 22 cases of human trafficking have been recorded by the Unit Trafficking in Persons (TIP) of the Police.
- 4.7. **National Reponse:**
 - In the past years various efforts of both government and non government partners have resulted in a stronger response in the area of legislation to the issues of domestic violence and gender based violence. Apart from CEDAW and CRC, Suriname has also ratified Belem Do Para Convention, the "Palermo Protocol" to prevent and fight Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, the two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography and developed national legislation, i.e. The domestic act on combating domestic violence and Bill against Stalking, and modified penal code, which now forbids and penalizes all forms of human trafficking, internal and cross-border, sanctions child prostitution, and also sexual violence/rape within marriage and common-law union.

- Installation of a working group, by the Ministry of Justice and Police, with the specific task to prepare and implement the establishment of a unit that will be responsible for the counseling of perpetrators of domestic violence
- A special Trafficking In Persons (TIP) Unit was established to investigate cases of human trafficking and educate and raise awareness on trafficking.
- Large groups of police officers, judges and other judicial authorities have been trained in the correct and adequate implementation of approved laws and modified articles. Also social workers and other relevant service providers such as teachers, medical doctors and other health workers, and religious leaders have been trained in early detection of violence in their daily practice and how to provide adequate support and guidance to both persons at risk and victims.
- In 2010 a shelter for abused women and children has been established.
- Community participation has been strengthened by SSGTV in the response against domestic violence through the establishments of district networks in 5 districts (Para, Saramacca, Commewijne, Wanica en Nickerie)
- Regular data collection on domestic violence, sexual violence by the police and the foundation Stop Violence against women.
- The government increased its cooperation with NGOs and media in the area of prevention and reduction of domestic violence.
- Against the framework of the campaign "16 Days of Activism to End Violence against Women" of the UN Secretary-General, annually public awareness raising activities are conducted, mainly through mass media campaigns. Public media statements of high authorities and role models to stop all violence against women, girls but also men and boys
- Implementation of a multi annual program on prevention and reduction of sexual harassment in the workplace. This program was conducted among private and public companies and included training, awareness raising, research and development of workplace policy
- The development of draft national policy to combat domestic violence by the inter ministerial Steering Group Domestic Violence and the Platform Domestic Violence
- Implementation of a guidance and counseling programs for perpetrators of domestic violence
- Data collection and research on violence against women, incl. Intimate partner violence
- Development of draft legislation for prevention and reduction of sexual harassment
- Media awareness programs regarding domestic violence on national television and radio stations.
- Development of educational materials regarding domestic violence
- Since November 2007 'victims rooms' have established for victims of domestic violence in a number of police stations.
- A bureau for aid to victims of violence has been set up in district Nickerie (November 2007) and another one in Paramaribo (December 2008).
- Inclusion of faith based organizations and religious leaders in campaigning against violence

4.8. Challenges:

- The effect of legislation is still low. Training only is not sufficient for service providers. They also have to be carefully guided and supported in their daily work on how to effectively apply the new legislations and the related procedures.
- A major structural barrier in the reduction of GBV is the very limited capacity of social and health service providers, who are mainly NGOs, especially at this time when many donors have withdrawn their funds. The vast majority of women and girl-children are still on their own when trying to prevent or deal with violence in the home.
- On top of that many GBV victims suffer with structural problems, such as affordable housing and employment. Lack of adequate and basic data is one of the most important constraints in developing a proper understanding of the issue of domestic violence, as well as lack of trained service providers.
- GBV is not yet adequately integrated in primary healthcare. It should be noted that integrated systems for referral and monitoring in all cases have not yet been developed.
- Data collection on violence against women and girls is not consistent, scattered and mainly based on registered cases at the police, which provide only a limited picture, and on a much smaller scale by other service providers such as the foundation Stop Violence against women, or shelters for sexually abused children. There has never been a national survey on to measure prevalence of violence against women, and therefore lack of evidenced based policy
- Lack of systematic support for victims of human trafficking, such as shelter, financial and psycho social guidance

5. WOMEN IN ARMED CONFLICT

5.1. Fortunately, Suriname is not in any armed conflict. The last armed conflict was internal and known as the 'Internal war', in the period 1986-1992. During this period there was an armed conflict between the armed forces of the government and the so called 'Jungle Commando', comprised of rebels who operated mainly from the interior of Suriname. As many of the Maroon villages were destroyed more than 10.000 people of the interior, mainly from the Upper Suriname River area and the Cottica river area fled to Paramaribo or to French Guyana. Driven by lack of access to adequate housing in the city, large groups of displaced Maroons occupied houses and grounds, without proper access to water, sanitation and electricity. Longer than two decades after the war, the impact of this armed conflict is still visible in the situation of especially women and children who settled in the city under very bad living conditions. The majority of these dwellers still has an illegal status as they are currently living either in squatted dwellings or squatted land.

5.2. Suriname has signed the following conventions:

- The Geneva Convention regarding the protection of Civilians in time of war.
- The Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and their destruction.

5.3. Women are increasingly entering the armed forces, mainly the police and the military, and to a lesser extent the security forces in both public and private sector.

5.4. **Challenges:**

- The development and implementation national policies specifically aimed at enhancing of the integration of internal migrants of in their new habitats. Measurements should include literacy programs for adults, school home work guidance, economic empowerment, especially of female head of households, accelerated access to adequate housing and land, and easy access to appropriate sexual and reproductive health services.

6. WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

6.1 In 2012, Suriname's public debt and debt-service burdens are the lowest among its Caribbean neighbors (at 19 percent and 2 percent of GDP, respectively), and there is only a low risk of debt distress. The level of nominal GDP in 2010 was about 20 percent higher than previously assessed. Since 2009, economic growth has been fluctuated between 3 and 4 % (IMF report 2012).

6.2 Economic growth is not reflected in women's economic position. Despite economic growth, large proportion of the population is living under the poverty line, there is no minimum wage, there is a growing informal sector and an increase in temporary contract labor, with little protection and insurances for workers, especially low income workers.

6.3 Unemployment rate, declined from 16% in 1998 to 11% in 2011 in Paramaribo and Wanica (Statistical Yearbook 2011, GBS 2012). The vast majority of job seekers registered at the unemployment registration are women. In 2013 they accounted of 75% of all registered unemployed.

6.4 In the last decennia the share of women in the country's labor force showed a continued but very slow rise. Due to the unequal task division in the prevailing gender relation, women's contribution to the economy remains mainly invisible, as the economic activities of women are still largely concentrated in the private sphere of the home, agriculture, food production, the community, or the informal labor market, and therefore remain unrecorded, unremunerated or undervalued.

6.5 From 1998 to 2010 the total number of working people (wage employment in non agricultural sector) went up from 88,816, of which 28,557 women (ca. 32%) to 173,130 in 2004 with a female share of 36%, and rose further in 2010 to a total labor force of 188,229 employed persons of which women 37% (is 69,484). This means that in a 12 year period women's participation in the labor force grew only with 5%, from 32% in 1998 to 37% in 2010. The government is one of the largest employer³, of women. About half, 50.3%, of

³ Government employees constituted approximately 61 percent of the estimated 125,000-member formal sector workforce

government employees is female, mainly working in the education sector as teachers, in administrative jobs and in lower servants jobs. In the private sector most women are positioned in the lower commercial jobs in the private sector. More recently, increasingly women have become self-employed and own small enterprises, mainly in the informal sector and often in traditional areas (embroidery, catering, small craft, etc.)

- 6.6 Women are underrepresented in the agricultural, mining, transport, construction sector, and overrepresented in the public administration and wholesale and retail sector. Women are also less represented than men in higher management positions in both public and private sector.
- 6.7 The share of youth in employment decreased further from 14.5% (16.2% for males and 11.5% for females) in 2004 to 12% in 2012. In 2012 the youth between 15 – 24 years accounted for 12% of the employed population, with a share of 8.7% for young women and 13.6% for young males. Striking in the figures is the incongruence between the high levels of female enrolment in school and the disproportionately low female participation rates in the labor force.
- 6.8 Suriname has not ratified ILO-agreement 103 yet, that relates to the right of all pregnant working women to maternity leave. Due to the absence of national legislation, large groups of working women in the informal sector and small businesses sector are not entitled to these maternity rights. Since 2004, one of the trade unions has submitted draft legislation to the government. A major barrier perceived by government and private sector policymakers is the lack of resources to finance the required maternity arrangements.
- 6.9 Research showed that sexual harassment of women is common in both public and private workplaces, while in the vast majority of workplaces policy to prevent and reduce sexual harassment is absent. A very vulnerable group is comprised of domestic workers, who are at increased risk of sexual harassment. However, this group is not organized and lacks any labor protection from trade unions.
- 6.10 Due to large cuts in operational costs of large companies most of the lower services have been outsourced to subcontractors. Many working women in lower jobs, such as cleaning women, street sweepers, lost their formal jobs and were moved to a contractor, where contracts are often temporary, salaries are much lower and basic secondary securities such as health insurance are not included.
- 6.11 Both development partners, government and private sector have invested in the provision of microfinance credit to address immediate household needs of poor households, and to support women in the development of small-scale women businesses which are often focused on traditional jobs such as embroidery, sewing and the sale of food items with limited capacity for exploring or entering new business areas or export opportunities.

6.12 National response:

- The draft Minimum Wage Act has been approved by the Council of Ministers and has recently been submitted to the parliament.
- Establishment of a Social Investment Fund (SIF) aimed at increased investment in the social and employment sector, with emphasis on marginalized groups
- Implementation of Nationwide multi annual vocational training programs initiated by national and international stakeholders for vulnerable groups, including women, girls, school drop outs, and guidance in successful entering or reentering the labor market
- Labor Mobilization and Development and Foundation Productive Work units are units of the Ministry of Labor, Technology and Environment, which offer regular vocational training to jobseekers, and strengthening the small entrepreneurship in Suriname. The majority of the participants in these programs are women.
- Different ministries provided training to business women in stimulation of micro and small size business in the agricultural sector, in close cooperation with women NGO's. The activities have resulted in a growing number of female micro – entrepreneurs
- Development of policies and strategies to strengthen the link between demand and supply in the labor market
- The establishments of several Micro credits Funds in close cooperation between NGO's, development partners and private sectors (banks, credit cooperation's) to increase access of female entrepreneurs to credits.
- Day care Centers: There are 11 government daycare centers, and 1 preschool, where working mothers can place their children for a subsidized fee. Annually approximately 600-700 children in the age group 0-4 years are enrolled in these daycare centers. There is also an increase of daycare centers linked to private and public workplaces, so working mothers can be close to their infants.
- Development of numerous economic empowerment programs by women's NGO including training of women in traditional but also nontraditional jobs, literacy training, training in budgeting, small business development, etc.
- A trade and competitiveness project is launched to study the various roles of men and women in the development of Caricom Single Market and Economy (CSME) and to analyze the effects of CSME free trade regime on women
- The Civil Code, the Labor law and the Personal Act include the principal of equal pay for equal work
- According to the revised law on maternity leave (2003) female civil servants are entitled to 12 weeks of paid maternity leave, i.e. 2 weeks before and 10 weeks after childbirth.
- Research on the occurrence and nature of sexual harassment was conducted in ten places of work, which provided detailed input for the development of a Model Code of Conduct and a Model Policy for companies. Draft legislation had already been developed by the Interdepartemental Commission on Gender legislation, in close cooperation with the NGO 'Ilse Henar Hewitt Judicial support for Women' Foundation.

6.13 Challenges

- Development of an action plan to systematically and effectively advance women's economic position and empowerment in both government and private economic sector. The plan should be costed, thus with an allocated budget to contribute effectively to transformative women's economic empowerment. The measurements could include:
- Investment in women's businesses through provision of credits should be increased and not limited to traditional small scale enterprises but include more ambitious non traditional business projects.
- Improvement of women's working conditions, including for women working in the informal economic sector
- Development of required legislation to ensure a safe, secure and protective working environment of women. In this regard the ratification of ILO 103 is required as well as adoption of national legislation to ensure maternity leave for all working pregnant women. Also approval of the draft law in sexual harassment and establishment of structures and mechanisms for effective implementation.
- Improvement and expansion of day care centers that offer quality services in line with national standards.
- Promote the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and increase access for women and girls as a strategy to strengthen competitiveness and increase job opportunities in the labor markets and access to other economic opportunities.

7. WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

- 7.1. The Suriname constitution and other national legislation do not discriminate between men and women with respect to participation in decision making. The Decree Political Organizations (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1987 no.61) states that political parties must be open to everyone, irrespective of race and religious conviction. Despite absence of discriminatory articles that would forbid women to take part in political positions, since 1996, their numbers remain small.
- 7.2. Women's participation in politics in Latin America and the Caribbean has grown steadily since the nineties with women's share in parliament rising from an average of 13 percent in 2000 to 21 percent in 2010. In Suriname, the same trend could be observed till 2009. The number of women in the national parliament increased from 8 % in 1987 to 25 % in 2009. Currently however, the proportion dropped again to only 14%. The speaker of the house, a woman, is also the chair of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. With respect to representation in the cabinet, women's share has been marginal, fluctuating between 6% and 12% in the period 1987 to date. Currently there is only one woman in a cabinet of 17 ministers.
- 7.3. However, while women are strongly underrepresented in the cabinet, more women have been appointed in the position of permanent secretaries. Notable is also that the chair

of the National Audit Office is a woman, and also in the Central Bank of Suriname, the three directors are all women. Since the installation of the current cabinet subsequently two women were appointed as minister of the Ministry of Finance. Unfortunately, both left the Cabinet prior to its formal end.

- 7.4. On the sub national, district level, more women have been elected as district commissioners (comparable with a major). Of the 15 districts commissioners, 4 are women, which is almost one third. Regarding the representation of women in the district councils, there is a growth from 7% in 1996 to 31 % in 2010, while also the proportion of women in the local councils increased substantially from 19% in 1996 to 35 % in 2010.
- 7.5. Contrary to the decrease in political positions in government and parliament, women's share in higher state bodies have significantly increased, in particular in the High Court, the State Council and the Auditor's Office. Women's share has increased to 50.7% of the number of functionaries in 2010. The representation of women changed dramatically in the period 2000-2007 in the Court of Justice, taking into account that the number of female judges rose from 1 in 2000 to 10 in 2013, a growth of 900%, while the number of male judges decreased from 12 in 2004 to 6 in 2013. In the public prosecutor's office women account for 15 of the 21 prosecutors, among which the attorney general, two head prosecutors, 5 prosecutors and 7 substitute prosecutors.
- 7.6. In the area of diplomatic positions Suriname achieved more than the UN target of 50% (50/50 campaign), taking into consideration that at the moment females account for the majority of the Suriname diplomatic corps. Nine women are in charge of a diplomatic post, of which seven in embassies and two in consulates.
- 7.7. More than in the government sector, there are indications that women's involvement in the decision making in the private sector is increasing and that more women are selected in management positions based on their appropriate educational qualifications. More than ever women are in the top management of leading financial institutions, such as banks and credit cooperation's, while the present chair of the association of bankers is a woman. Women are also increasingly participating in staff and the management of large companies
- 7.8. Although no hard data is available, it can be assumed that the increasing influence of women in key positions in the government and in parliament has contributed to the adoption of some important bills regarding protection of women's rights, in particular with respect to violence against women and children. In this regard also the establishment of a national commission on gender legislation increased women's voice in drafting of required legislation
- 7.9. As a CARICOM member state, Suriname holds the portfolio on Youth Policy. Suriname established the National Youth Institute (NYI) in 2004. The purpose of the NYI is to express a full experience of the right on participation of youth on governmental level, so that the youth policy can be effective and efficient. The main tasks of the NYI are to provide the Government with information and insights so that a harmonious youth policy can be established, relevant to the community and for monitoring and supervision on the

execution of the youth policy. Young women are actively taking part in the youth parliament elections. Notable is that the current chair of the Youth parliament is a young woman.

7.10. Despite relatively increase in leadership position of women, the overall picture is still that women continue to have a marginal involvement in national decision making. Factors contributing to this situation are multiple and include lack of opportunities within political parties for women's political career, a lack of suitable child care facilities, relatively weak financial position of women and lack of access to political and financial network to support political campaigns, lack of support from the social environment.

7.11. National Responses:

- Increasingly political parties are including women and youth in the board. Some political parties also established 'gender commissions'. It is however not clear how this impact on participation of women and youth in decision making at the highest level
- Public activities by the National Bureau for Gender Policy, including workshops to raise awareness on women's representation in politics and to discuss the strategy of quota policy.
- The National Assembly organized two 'Round Table Discussion' in 2012 with leaders of political parties aimed at mobilizing commitment to candidacy of women in upcoming election and political empowerment of women
- The NGO, 'Women's Parliament Forum' implemented a successful campaign in 2005 on political empowerment of women '*Elect consciously, Elect a woman*', which will be repeated during the next election in 2015
- In previous campaigns some political parties selected women as presidential candidates
- In preparation of the next general election in Suriname, May 2015, NGOs are making efforts to raise awareness on importance of women's role in politics through discussions on strategies and more profiling of women during election periods. Main activities in the area of political empowerment are political training to relevant women groups and mass media campaigns to support the election of women's candidates during elections. Presently preparations are ongoing for the launch of a national promotional and awareness raising campaign on the 30th of May titled 'More female leadership in 2015', which will be supported by the NBG. The aim of this campaign is to enhance public and political awareness on the importance of participation of women in political- and economic decision-making, and to ensure women's share in parliament and government with at least 30%.

7.12. Challenges

- Research in the Latin American and Caribbean region show that gender quota laws, accompanied with placement mandates and sanctions for noncompliance, have been effective and resulted in increased female representations in parliaments and cabinets. Suriname could learn from the best practices and develop a national proposal on quota policy that takes into account our specific political environment.

- Promotion focused on political parties to undertake measures to enhance and expand women's political profiling through identifying, training, and nominating women to elected office. Party resources should be made available to these candidates to support their campaigning.
- Promote cross party strategic partnerships between female members of parliament, government and civil society groups and experts to support policy changes on women's rights and to enhance the approval of relevant legislation.
- Development of mass media campaigns for profiling of women leaders in the private sector, and present them as role models

8. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

- 8.1. Substantial efforts have been made to establish institutional structures and mechanisms within the government structure, mainly on the national level, to mainstream a gender perspective in government policies and programs.
- 8.2. Guided by the UN-driven model 'National Machinery', in 1998 the National Bureau for Gender Policy was established as part of the Ministry of Home Affairs, with the main aim to develop and coordinate the implementation of national gender policy, and to enhance the incorporation of a gender perspective in all government sectors.
- 8.3. Since the existence of the NBG, Integral Gender Action Plans have been developed for two periods respectively, 2000-2005 and 2006-2010, and a Gender Work plan 2013, in close consultation with government and civil society stakeholders. These plans were aligned with the objectives of relevant international agreements (CEDAW, BPfA, MDG's) and the multi annual development plan for period 2005-2010 and the Development plan 'Suriname in Transformation', covering the period 2012-2016.
- 8.4. In addition to the NBG, the Gender Management System has been initiated to build structural linkages with ministries and enhance gender mainstreaming in government policies. The gender management system is comprised of gender focal points that are appointed in the different ministries, with the main tasks to implement and monitor the Gender Action Plans, to mainstream Gender into policies and programs within their ministries, and are an essential communication link between NBG and the various ministries and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).
- 8.5. In the past years the NBG has successfully developed and implement several programs and projects, inter alia in the area of violence against women, improving legal context and economic empowerment of women. However, efforts were incidental, fragmented and too marginalized to bring about considerable change in government policies, in particular mainstream a gender perspective. The NBG lacked the authority that could hold the government accountable for gender mainstreaming. From the start the bureau has been faced with many barriers, including lack of qualified staff and gender experts, lack of gender

disaggregated data, limited financial resources and discontinuation of its functioning due to change of government. But there has been some progress such as the allocation of more financial means and qualified staff.

8.6. From 2006 to 2010 a Parliamentary Committee on Women's and Children's Rights was installed within the National Assembly. This commission was specifically responsible for women and children issues in parliament.

8.7. The Government of Suriname has installed the National Committee on Gender Legislation in June 2007-2010. They played a key role in the approval of the Bill on Stalking. The draft law on Sexual Harassment at the workplace is also produced by the commission and is currently being adapted by the Foundation Ilse Henar Hewit Judicial support for Women, for submission to the National Parliament. In 2013 the committee on Gender Legislation was reinstalled for a period of one year.

8.8. The Institute for Women, Gender and Development Studies of the Anton de Kom University of Suriname was established in 2008 with the main objective to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment through the integration of a gender perspective in education and research programs across faculties at the University. The institute has been successful in the establishment of several gender courses, implementation of research on a small scale and provision of services in the area of development of gender sensitive programs and policies.

8.9. **National Response:**

- The NBG has played an important role in the preparation of the Convention on the elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Country report in 1999 and the second and third report in 2007 and currently drafting the Fourth and Fifth Periodic report. In addition, the NBG also was in charge of the BPfA reviews. Country reports were submitted regarding reviews of BPfA +5, BPfA+10, BPfA+15. A number of projects to improve the situation of women and children have been set up over the past years.
- Within the Ministry of Justice and Police, a Bureau for Women and Children has been established. This bureau coordinates the Women and Child policy of all divisions within this Ministry and is also executing projects to implement the Conventions: CEDAW, Belem do Para and the Convention on the Rights of Children.
- In line with efforts aimed at institutional strengthening and decentralization of governance, the Ministry of Home Affairs has opened an auxiliary branch of the NBG in Nickerie. The opening of NBG-Nickerie took place on December 2, 2006.
- In the Agricultural Sector Plan (ASP), gender mainstreaming is recognized as a policy principle. To pilot this principle, a gender perspective was integrated in two projects of the ASP. In this regard, the gender focal point was added to the planning department of the ministry.
- Regularly production of a statistical publication on 'Gender statistics', by the General Bureau of Statistics.
- The Institute for Women, Gender and Development Studies (IWGDS) of the Anton de Kom University of Suriname has committed itself to education, research and services aimed at

issues, national and international concerning the living conditions of women and men in general and women in particular. Important activities of the institute are : Gender policy support, scientific research, training and education (gender courses).

Challenges:

- Lack of gender awareness on the highest governmental level and also in the community;
- Lack of clear mandates, adequate resources, and ability to influence policy.
- Implementation of gender budgeting
- Development of a subsidy policy to support civil society in the implementation of gender action plans
- Approval from the government of the task description for gender focal points in which their roles and functions are clearly defined. Also technical capacities of focal points require strengthening.
- Further development of effective instruments to facilitate, support, and monitor gender mainstreaming in the various policy areas.
- Allocation of human and financial resources for the institutional strengthening of the IWGDS

9. HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN

9.1. In 2006 the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism was enacted by the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) to monitor the level of fulfillment of human rights obligations in all member countries. This UPR is a peer-review mechanism conducted by all States each four years. Through this mechanism states report on the extent in which it responded to its human rights commitments and obligations (civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights), and receive recommendations for improvement. Suriname participated in the first cycle in May 2011, and will again submit a UPR in 2016. In Sept 2011, the government presented its formal response to all recommendations. In its introduction the government reiterates the state's commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights as evidenced, in addition to the Constitution, by the domestic legislation and its adherence to international treaties. The Constitution of the Republic of Suriname elaborates in chapter V on the protection of basic rights, individual rights and freedom within the territory of Suriname. Article 35 Paragraph 2 of the Constitution: "men and women are equal by law".

9.2. National Response

According to the UPR, since 2008 Suriname undertook concrete steps towards promoting and protection of human rights:

- In the Multi-annual Development Plan (M.O.P.) of the Government for 2006–2011 human rights and gender are presented as cross-cutting issues.
- In the area of building a sound foundation for protection of women's rights the legal framework was improved. Multiple international agreements were ratified and relevant domestic legislation was drafted and approved. Suriname ratified CEDAW (1993), CRC (1993), Belem do

Parra (2002), Palermo Treaty (2006), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), two optional protocols of the CRC (2011), endorsed the Program of Action of ICPD (1994), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), and the Millennium Development Goals (2000). The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has not been ratified yet

- On the domestic level modification of existing legislation occurred and important new legislation was put in place, among others revisions in the penal code and civil code, while additional legislations in the area of violence against women was approved, in particular the Domestic Law on violence against women and the Bill against Stalking
- Apart from improving the legal context, the government also started with the establishment of institutions and related structures. On the national level, the National Bureau for Gender Policy was installed in 1998, to promote and monitor the process of strengthening of gender equality in Suriname, and in particular incorporation of a gender perspective in government sectors.
- A National Committee on Gender Legislation was established to identify all gaps in legislation and recommend and draft new legislation.
- Following the legislation, in different areas policies has been put in place and action plans have been formulated. In some of these areas plans have been translated in concrete programs and projects aimed at improvement of women and girls, and enhance gender equality. National Policies include: the National HIV strategic plan, period 2004-2008, 2009-2013, the National strategic plan for the prevention and control of cervical cancer 2009-2013, the National policy on sexual and reproductive health and rights 2012-2016
- To strengthen the capacity of qualified human rights experts, the government developed a post graduate one and half year 'Human Rights Diploma Program' course, and delivered a group of 18 government employees who graduated successfully in June 2012. The execution of this educational program was the result of an agreement between the Ministry of Justice and Police and the UNDP. The availability of this human rights experts group is expected to significantly contribute to increasing government awareness on international human rights, including women and child rights and policy and programs, in accordance with the agreed conventions.
- In 2008 the Ministry of Justice and Police has established the Human Rights Bureau. In the same year a project plan named 'Support for Implementing the Policy Plan for Protection of Legal Rights and Safety – Legal Protection and Human Rights, and Anti-Corruption' has been drafted and signed with UNDP. The execution of this project started in 2009. A project council was established consisting of the country director of UNDP and representatives of relevant ministries.
- Training of judicial authorities in several human rights issues, such as 'The best interest of the child', 'Adequate application of the laws related to Violence against women',
- Awareness trainings for media, NGOs, religious organizations and organizations of Indigenous Peoples and Maroons.
- Capacity building training for management and staff of Bureau Legal Aid.
- The installation of an inter-ministerial commission to prepare the country report for UPR.
- Judges, public prosecutors, lawyers, social workers and religious leaders have been trained in order to increase awareness and focus on crimes against women.

- The judiciary has been strengthened with female judges. The judiciary now consists of six male and ten female judges
- In response to recommendations to the UPR commission regarding protection of rights of marginalized and vulnerable populations, in particular rights of LGBT's and Maroons and Indigenous communities, and human rights of migrants the government responded that the: *'National legislation offers protection of human rights to all Surinamese citizens, as well as all others on Surinamese territory; hence LGBT individuals enjoy the same protections as all others. Even though sexual orientation remains a sensitive and controversial issue, the Government will endeavor to undertake those steps necessary to address all concerns'*.
- With respect to Indigenous Rights and land Rights Issues, the government had discussions with stake-holders, NGO's and civil society, as well as with the UN special rapporteur on land rights. Although the Constitution recognized the individual rights to land for all Surinamers, it does not yet recognize the collective rights to land. Since the lands of the Indigenous and Maroons are not effectively demarcated, the government launched a project named 'Support for Sustainable Development of the Interior Program' which had to demarcate the land of the people living in the interior.
- With respect to the enjoyment of all human rights by Migrants, the constitution guarantees the human rights of all persons on Surinamese territory. However, under certain circumstances those rights may be restricted, for example when it comes to illegal foreigners. These have recently been called to register, in order to eliminate their illegal status.

10. WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

- 10.1. In the last MICS (2010), for the first time nationwide information was generated on women's use of the media and information and communication technology. Results show that at least once a week, 77% of women read a newspaper, 84% listen to the radio and 90% watch television. With regard to use of information technology, 72% have used a computer, 60% used a computer during the last year and 46% during the last month. Overall, 57% of women age 15-24 have ever used the internet, of which 49% during the last year. 79% had a cellular phone that worked.
- 10.2. With respect to children in school, the ministry of Education developed a national plan on Information Technology in education to promote and enhance access of school children to IT (2013). Unfortunately, there is no incorporation of a gender perspective in this plan.
- 10.3. In Suriname the mass media, comprised of 19 television stations, 25 radio stations and 6 newspapers, are mainly dominated by males, especially in the higher positions. The majority of women in media are in administrative function (32%), 26% is a journalist, while only 7% is in a management function (SITAN 2011), and 3% is working in a technical area. With almost three quarter of journalist being males, and management of media houses in hands of males, it is most likely that news is made mainly from a male's perspective on life.

10.4. Apart from mass media campaigns on specific issues during international commemorations days related to women's or children's rights, such as International Women's Day (March) or 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence (November), there is little regular use of the media to promote or raise awareness on women's rights. Up till now the media does not provide a balanced picture of women's diverse lives and contributions to society. The majority of the programming is copied from foreign media sources, with an emphasis on violence, reinforcement of women's traditional roles, and reproduction of stereotypical gender images, including images of women as primarily sexual objects

10.5. It is unclear to what extent women unfriendly and stereotypical images and texts are being published and/or shown. No research has been done in this area. In 1999, a media council was established. This independent body was involved in the monitoring of media on with regard to gender and child sensitivity. Although the media council is currently inactive, in the past, successful actions have been undertaken to remove the broadcast of inappropriate TV commercials, where women or child unfriendly advertisements and/ or programs were shown. Currently there are initiatives to educate and raise awareness on the impact of mass media violence and gender stereotyping on children. Recently the NGO 'Child friendly media in Suriname' was established. Another NGO provides education to schoolchildren on the use of IT (Bluetooth and internet) to sexual abuse of children, especially girls. Legislation and government structures and mechanisms to structurally supervise and screen media are missing.

10.6. **National Response**

- Government and NGO's have occasionally developed gender awareness material for radio and television to promote gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. These media programs were related, amongst others, to multiple issues, including teen pregnancy, HIV, mother and child care, involvement of males in maternal health and childcare and violence against women.
- Several training projects have been implemented on national and regional level to make Surinamese media workers aware of their role in advocating for gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Since 2010 the Commemoration of International Day on 'Women and Girls in ICT', has been introduced in Suriname on the 4th Thursday in April. This day is an initiative of the United Nations agency for Information & Communication Technologies (ITU) to create a global environment that empowers and encourages girls and young women to consider careers in the growing field of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Each year several public activities are implemented by the government in close cooperation with schools and NGO's. Activities included: public presentations of female IT experts and motivational speakers for female student, an essay competition on the theme of women and girls in ICT, computer training, the launch of an official website (www.girlsinict.sr) on 'Girls in ICT' in Suriname. The portal is easily accessible and provides practical information on scholarship programs, internships, training opportunities, online networks, 'Girls in ICT' Day activities and other resources. On these days not only young girls are involved but also girls with a disability and senior women through offering of tailor made computer training sessions.

- To encourage IT in schools, the government is working towards integration of computer education in all schools. In this regard an increasing number of schools, also in the district and in the interior, are equipped with special class rooms for IT education.
- In some communities in the interior community radio stations have been established, with the objective to provide a communication channel for community groups, including women groups, to use mass media to educate, raise awareness and mobilize the community for women's advancement (Upper Suriname River, radio 'Muje', and in Apoera radio 'Mawakwa').

10.7. Challenges:

- To promote and create structures and legislation to reduce media programs that discriminate, stereotype and denigrate the image of men and women and on the long term to ensure gender equity in the mass media
- More use of the media to break with the male-dominant culture and make citizens aware of discrimination against women, and development of mass media communications campaign that contribute to gender equality
- Development of innovative communication resources such as: street theatre, banners, posters, brief publicity spots on radio programme
- Increase access to ICT and media for women in rural areas and the interior, as well as women working in the informal sector

11. WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- 11.1. Overall, 95% of the population is using an improved source of drinking water. Disaggregated by region there are negligible differences in access to an improved source of water, with 99% in urban areas and 85% in rural areas, except for the interior district of Sipaliwini, where coverage is significantly lower at 64%.
- 11.2. 91% of the population of Suriname is living in households using improved sanitation facilities. Disparities are large considering the disparities by regions: 98% in urban areas, 71% in rural areas and 42% in rural interior. Only 22% of faces of all children 0-2 years, is disposed of safely. (MICS 2010)
- 11.3. Fortunately, Suriname has not been confronted with huge natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes and other natural destructive forces as experienced in many countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Nevertheless, there is growing concern about the sea level rise, considering Suriname's vulnerable location due to its low land in the coastal region, where the major government facilities and economic activities are concentrated and the majority of the population lives. The impact that climate change can have on food security, economic activities and social life have already been felt with the flooding of the interior (2006 and 2008) and in some other living areas close to the sea.

11.4. Due to the prevailing gender tasks division and the gender specific roles, environmental changes impact differently on women and men. For example in the interior, women are the main food producers, primarily in charge of collecting wood for fuel and water for consumption and household chores. If environmental changes impacts on these activities, because agricultural plots are flooded or water sources, such as rivers and creeks are polluted, women and their children will be primarily affected.

11.5. Especially the small gold mining activities impose a great treat to the environment, mercury is being released into the environment, contaminating food sources (fish) but also water sources (rivers), putting the population in the interior at great health risks. The assumption is that women are disproportionally affected taking into consideration their large dependency on subsistence agricultural food production and natural water for consumption and household. Due to risk of polluted water especially pregnant women and her unborn child, as well as small children are at increased risk of mercury poisoning

11.6. National responses:

- In response to the vulnerability of Suriname to effects of global warming and the need to strengthen emergency preparedness, structures and regulations have been put in place for a quick and effective response. The National Institute for Environment and Development in Suriname and the National Council for the Environment as well as a National Coordination Centre for Disaster Management were established in 1998. The government has developed a multi annual National Climate Change Action Plan, and a draft National Disaster Plan to coordinate activities of the government and NGOs at times of national disasters.
- The UN Convention on Biological Diversity have been signed in 1992 and ratified in 1996. Following this legislation, the government developed a 'National Biodiversity Strategy', including Action Plan for the period 2012-2016. The last country report on implementation of the convention dates 2012.
- All national and international companies that are planning large scale planning economic activities, with potential risk to the environment and existing surrounding communities, are required to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment Study. This requirement, however, is not binding as it is not integrated yet in legislation.
- In the past years the government has taken measures to reduce the negative impact of gold mining and forestry on the natural environment thorough the establishment of structures for control and improvement management of these sectors. In this regard a national commission regulation gold sector was established in 2011 aimed at registration of small gold miners, capacity building in safe gold mining and development of regulation measurements to prevent environmental damage and reduce illegal gold mining.
- Data collection on environmental issues has been improved. Since 2011, the General Bureau of Statistics produces annually a publication on 'Environmental Statistics'. Several studies have been conducted related to the environment and natural resources of Suriname. In none of these studies a gender perspective has been incorporated.
- The discussion on biodiversity has been expanded and intensified, especially related to the increasing tension between on one hand the exploitation of our natural resources gold and

forestry and the pressure on Suriname's biodiversity and on the livelihood of populations living in the interior, who are very much dependent on access to these resources.

- The signing of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, including a legal framework for environmental protection and natural resource management in the Caribbean Community (2001), which has to be incorporated in domestic laws
- The United Nations in Suriname, led by UNICEF and PAHO/WHO, support national partners in formulating and implementing programs for improved access to water, sanitation and hygiene in targeted vulnerable communities.
- With the support of especially the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Conservation International (CI) several projects both regionally and nationally are currently being implemented.

11.7. Challenges:

- Contrary to the BPfA the current environmental management plans however do not include a gender perspective.
- Lack of updating of national legislation, including the enactment of specific regulations. Suriname's obligations under the various international environmental instruments conventions to which it is a Party, are often not explicitly reflected in national law
- Development of comprehensive environmental legislation
- Further development and intensifying of national environmental awareness and education programs, with consideration of women's needs in relation to the changing environment.
- Further improvement of the provision of sanitation services
- Promotion of women's participation in dealing with emergency situations.
- Further regulation of the Gold mining sector
- Integration of rural women's traditional knowledge in the development of environmental management programs, including access to and rational management of water.
- Assessment of women's particular susceptibility or exposure to environmental degradation and hazards.

12. THE GIRL CHILD

- 12.1. Suriname has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Child in 1993, and has established structures and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of these rights in all social sector ministries, inter alia the ministry of Social Affairs, ministry of Education and ministry of Health. Suriname has submitted an initial report in 1998 and a second periodic report in 2005. Last year the combined third and fourth country report has been submitted covering the period 2007 – 2012,

- 12.2. Currently efforts are made towards the development of a more integrated approach on child protection, which covers the area of prevention and reduction of violence against children. There are no indications that children's access to services is influenced by parents or care takers preferences for one sex. In the areas of vaccination coverage, birth registration⁴, net enrollment rates in preschool and primary school, coverage is high with no significant differences by sex. In certain areas there are, however, gender based differences between problems of boys and girls. While much more boys are reported as victims of child labor, violence in the street, or drugs abuse, and much more in conflict with the law, girls are much more victims in the area of sexual abuse, HIV infection, trafficking, domestic violence and repercussions due to early pregnancy.
- 12.3. Just like in other parts of the region, also in Suriname almost half of the population is under the age of 25. The adolescent population, aged 15-19 accounted for 8% of the total population, with a total number of 45,108 of which 22,772 males and 22,336 females (2012). While adolescence is usually seen as a healthy phase in human's life, current practice show that especially in the area of sexual and reproductive health young people are facing many challenges. There is a general recognition that especially young girls are increasingly at risk of unintended pregnancy, HIV infection and /or sexual violence. Sexual and reproductive health problems, gender inequality and poverty are closely interconnected social phenomena.
- 12.4. The percentage of children in Suriname aged between two and nine at least one reported disability is 23.7% with the differentiation between urban, rural coastal, and rural interior areas, nor by mother's level of education or the level of household wealth index (MICS 2006). According to the Situation Analysis of children in Suriname (2010) children with physical or mental disabilities face many challenges: inadequate care in child care institutions, lack or limited opportunities to have adequate education, lack of opportunities to play and develop friendships with other children, stigmatization by society and also family, face an increased risk of violence or abuse by service providers and family members.
- 12.5. Sexual abuse is the most reported form of violence against children. The vast majority of sexually abused victims are girls, average of almost 90%, while a sexual abuse is most prevalent in the age range 0-14 years. Almost all perpetrators are men, including young boys. The one and only shelter for sexually abused children is constantly under threat of closure, due to lack of funds.
- 12.6. In 2011 two (2) girls were found as victims of human trafficking. In 2012, the total number of identified victims increased to 14, of which 10 girls and 4 boys. There is no detailed information available (yet) on the background and characteristics of these children or the type of offences.

⁴ The latest MICS (2010) data on registration of birth on the national level indicate further improvement, as the registration of children under five years in Suriname have been increased to 98.9%, with no major variations across sex, age, or education categories.

- 12.7. In the past three years there has been evidence of new trends in child sexual abuse and exploitation, which are related to Information Communication Technology (ICT). These trends include cell phone pornography. Children use the cameras on their cell phones, capturing sexual images of themselves and their friends, and share these images thorough blue tooth or social media. An NGO, with support of the national communication company Telesur, took the initiative to address the issue of child pornography with educational sessions for school students.
- 12.8. Although sexual abuse against children is penalized in the law, with expanded articles and heavier sanctions, since the ratification of the two Optional Protocols of the CRC on the protection of children from sale, the rise in child trafficking (November 2011), the number of prosecutions is still low. Indications are that the majority of sexual abuse cases remains unreported due to weaknesses in the area of early detection of signals, while provision of treatment of victims is often inadequate due to limited numbers of qualified service providers to counsel and treat child victims.
- 12.9. There is severe lack of reliable data available on sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, child pornography and trade and sale of children. A few very serious cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children were highlighted in the media. There is an urgent need for data and documentation in this area.
- 12.10. Average ages, found in different studies, for initiation of sexual activities for women fluctuates between 16 and 18 years and for men between 14 and 16 years. Since the 1980's, all age groups experienced overall fertility decline between 28 - 47%, except for the youngest age group. There is no consistency in measuring of national adolescent fertility rate, resulting in different values dependent on source. According to MICS, adolescent fertility dropped from 59.3 in 2000, to 58.5 in 2006 and went up again to 61% in 2010. Earlier data by MOH showed data 72.1 per 100.000 in 1980 to 68.4 in 2007, to increase again to 73.7 in 2010.
- 12.11. In the past years, the proportion of annual live births in Suriname from teen mothers has fluctuated between 15% and 17%, and in absolute terms between approximately 1500 and 1600 births. The vast majority of teen pregnancies are unintended ('Youth and health', 2008) (Lobi/CPD, 2011).
- 12.12. Women aged 15-19 had a much lower prevalence contraceptives share (39%) against women, aged 35-39 (51%). methods most used by young women are the condom and oral contraception (MICS 2009, MOH 2008).
- 12.13. About 8% of women, aged 15-24 years, reported ever to have an abortion in MICS, with a wide variation if ethnic background is taken into account. Within young women, living in household with head of Indigenous, Creole and Mixed descent the highest share of abortions are found, respectively 24%, 15%, and 10%.(MICS 2010). There are strong indications that many adolescent pregnancies end in an abortion, including unsafe abortions. Despite strict abortion legislation, in Suriname safe abortion is available and offered by gynecologists as a private health service.

- 12.14. In Suriname, early childbearing among adolescent girls is disproportionately higher among the most disadvantaged women: those who are poor, who live in rural areas, and who belong to Indigenous and Maroon groups. These patterns are more or less similar to what has been found in other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean. The type of impact of teen pregnancy on the future of these young mothers is strongly linked to age of mother, wealth level of the household where she lives, and ethnic cultural background of household.
- 12.15. Adolescent fertility is considered a key determinant in the intergenerational transmission of poverty and strongly impacts negatively on the educational and employment opportunities for girls. Most teen mothers are out of school, low educated, unemployed and often single mothers (MOH 2008).
- 12.16. The Ministry of Education does not allow removal from school due to pregnancy with reference to the right of every child to education. However, some school principals tend to hold on to their own school rules and still expel pregnant girls from school. Teen mothers who re-entered school often faced multiple problems, including the challenge of combining schoolwork with motherhood. In some school communities, despite formal acceptance, teen mothers are often stigmatized by both teachers and co students. Due to their financially weak position, many girls are engaged in transactional sex, putting themselves at risk of a next unintended pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease.
- 12.17. Less girls than boys go to school in the interior (gender parity index 0.9) compared to coastal areas (gender parity index of 1) where more boys than girls are dropping out. The relatively lower primary school attendance of Maroon and Indigenous girls as compared to boys from the interior may be related to the young age at which these girls often get married and have children.
- 12.18. The percentage of young women and men aged 15-24 who are HIV infected dropped slightly from 1% 2006 to 0.9% 2007 and 2008, and dropped further to 0.7 in 2010. While almost all males and females (97%) reported easy access to condoms, studies clearly show that condom sources are gender specific. Females are not likely to buy condoms. Only 19% of females ever bought a condom against 82% of males.
- 12.19. Since the establishment of one national marriage law, (2003) the minimum age for marriage is 15 for females and 17 for males, the number of marriages within the age group 15-19 has dropped. Of all marriages in 2007, about 12% was of girls, aged 15-19. MICS 2010 found that, nationwide, approximately 11% of women aged 15-19 years were married or in union, and highest in households where the mother tongue is Javanese (19.2%) or for women living in the rural interior districts (20.0%). 19.5% of the girls, aged 15-19 years and 22.6% of the women aged 20-24, currently married or in union in 2006 had a husband 10 years older or more. Women who married at younger ages were more likely to believe that it is sometimes acceptable for a husband to beat his wife and were more likely to experience domestic violence themselves.

12.20. National response

- Structures and mechanisms have been established for the implementation of the CRC and the National Action Plan for Children 2009-2014
- The law on care institutions, including childcare institutions, has been adopted in January 2014 and will be enforced by August 2014. The implementation of this law will enable the regulation of the institutional care for all groups in care institutions (certification requirements based on the determined standards), including children/youth, persons with disabilities and elderly
- A free Child helpline (123) has been established in 2008
- Mapping and Assessment of a Child protection system has been initiated working towards an integrated approach of abuse against children
- The two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography have been ratified
- The revision of the Penal Code includes penalties against child's prostitution.
- There is a special police anti-trafficking unit that apparently regularly inspects brothels to identify victims of trafficking and children, as well as carrying out some outreach into the interior
- Ministry of Education has developed policy against corporal punishment in schools and removal of pregnant schoolgirls
- Since 1986 the government established a program on 'Teen mothers in school', aimed at keeping adolescents girls in school, provide support and guidance in finishing her school career and increase opportunities also for a successful job career.
- A basic Life Skills curriculum and related materials have been developed to be integrated in curriculum of all schools, including comprehensive sexuality education integrated life skills education into the school system to help build the self-esteem and confidence of girls and boys in classrooms and promote gender equality
- Efforts have been made to incorporate a gender perspective in school curricula and revise teaching materials and textbooks in such a way that gender stereotyping is removed and the self-image of girls is improved.
- Multi annual programs have been implemented aimed at improving quantity of schools and quality of education in the interior
- Implementation of mass media campaigns to promote child rights, with the use of different communication means, including use of public bill boards

12.21. Challenges

- Intensification of the national response aimed at prevention and elimination of sexual abuse of girls. To provide adequate care, support and guidance to victims it is critical that relevant care institutions are supported with qualified human resources and sufficient financial

means to provide professional guidance to these girls to prevent long life impact of sexual abuse

- Enhance data collection and research into relevant areas regarding the situation of the girl child, including areas that have hardly been explored. One such area is that of sexual trafficking, and the involvement of girls. In this regard efforts should be intensify to further investigate signals and indications of child pornography and exploitation of young girls in all kinds of new forms of commercial sexual activities, uptill now mainly hidden and disguised in businesses such as 'massage salons', 'escort services' etc.
- Strengthen and expand program of the Ministry of Youth and Sport aimed at prevention of teen pregnancies and empowerment of teen mothers. In order to extend the program to some districts, there is an urgent need for institutional strengthening.
- Implementation of the Basic Life Skills program, meaning integration of its curriculum into the curriculum of primary and secondary schools
- The establishment of government care institutions especially for children with disabilities

SECTION THREE: DATA AND STATISTICS

- 1.1. In almost all international agreements on women and girls, including the Beijing Platform for Action, the pivotal role of accurate data is acknowledged and therefore Governments are urged to regularly collect statistics on women's situation and position in all relevant areas, to serve as a basis for monitoring progress and evaluating the impact of legislation and policies.
- 1.2. Timely availability of data and strategic information to inform policy and programs remains a significant challenge to the formulation and implementation of equity-focused and gender-sensitive policies and strategies. In the national development plan 2012 – 2016 the state acknowledge the lack of quality data and analysis that can provide a reliable understanding of the main patterns of deprivation and inequities in Suriname, and the specific characteristics of vulnerable and marginalized groups. The government of Suriname is aware of the need for the production of relevant statistical information, including budgetary allocations and improved statistical and analytical information on disadvantaged groups.
- 1.3. One of the first efforts to improve data collection started in 2003, within the context of measuring MDGs, was the installation of an inter ministerial group of research experts aimed at working towards standardize definitions and methodology, design indicators for the various sectors, collect data for the compilation of the MDGs report for Suriname, and on the long run develop a sustainable system of national data collection, analysis and administration, to monitor the national development goals and the MDGs.
- 1.4. 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 of Statistics, to draft a National Statistic Development Strategy (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. Apart from lack of appropriate and disaggregated data, many government officials still lack the interest and the skills to translate data into strategic information. The UN continues to assist the government in strengthening its statistical and information systems.
- 1.5. In 2010, the General Bureau of Statistics in Suriname (GBS), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Suriname Business Forum (SBF) / Suriname Business Development Center (SBC) organized a series of 7 (seven) seminars on the area of social statistics to raise awareness on social statistics as pivotal for the effective development, implementation and evaluation of social policy.
- 1.6. In the past years, important achievements have been gained in the strengthening of national data collection systems, in particular through the computerization of databases and the establishment of surveillance systems in various ministries:

- The NHIS, National Health Information System (Ministry of Health)
- The EMIS, Education Management Information System (Ministry of Education) Computerized data entering/ processing system which is an instrument to facilitate/ provide input for education planning and education policy formulation
- Civil registry Management Information System CBBMIS (Ministry of Home Affairs): Computerized database on civil registry
- The Ministry of Justice and Police is developing a central database connecting databases of all departments responsible for youth affairs. The objective is to closely monitor the implementation of youth related policy. With this computerized system every individual child that is or have been in conflict with the law can be traced during the whole process of service provision by the different departments.
Notable is that most of the data collected and entered into these systems are disaggregated by sex and other relevant variables.

1.7. Main sources of data on women and girls

Currently the main sources of national primary data regarding women and girls are:

- The census: Since Beijing two censuses were held, respectively in 2004 and in 2010.
- The Multiple Indicator Survey (MICS): In 2010 the fourth MICS survey has been conducted. This nationally representative survey of households is an important source of national data on children as it targets women aged 15-49 and children. All data can be disaggregated by wealth index, living area, mother tongue spoken and other relevant variables. Recently in the last MICS Survey 2010, for the first time data were collected on women and the media.
- Continuous household surveys of the general bureau of Statistics, however limited to two districts of Paramaribo and Wanica
- Situation analysis on the situation of women and gender equality: Conducted for the first time in 2000 and the second time in 2012
- Situation analysis on the situation of children: Conducted in 2006 and 2010
- The Human Development Atlas: In 2012 the UNDP in close partnership with the General Bureau of Statistics undertook the initiative to produce data, differentiated by sex and district, for time periods 2004-2006 and 2009-2010 for each of the ten districts in Suriname and compares the development trends during these time periods, generated from available surveys such as Multiple Indicator Surveys for Suriname. Based on these data for Suriname as a whole and for each district the human development index is calculated, as well as the inequality adjusted human development index (and dimensions indicators) and the gender equality index, including dimensions indicators. Production of the Human Development Atlas 2012, will be repeated.

1.8. Availability of data on the situation of specific groups of women

In the past years various studies have been conducted on marginalized populations, often as part of the national response on HIV/AIDS, and usually limited to selected areas. In the area of HIV/AIDS studies have been implemented among adolescents and youth, sex workers, men who have sex with men, indigenous women, maroon women, migrants, goldminers, people with disabilities, people living with HIV. Against the larger background of sexual and

reproductive health community studies have been done on various issues such as 'mother and child health', 'use of contraceptives', 'help seeking behavior', 'Intimate sexual violence', 'violence against children'. Most of these studies were focused on revealing local perceptions of women and hearing the diversity of voices. Unfortunately, all studies are limited to selected areas, conducted on an incidental base and strongly dependent on foreign financial resources. Most studies were conducted by NGO's or consultants with technical and financial support from UN agencies or other development partners (see annex for list of studies). Notable is that in the last census variables were included to measure prevalence and type of disability.

1.9. **Gender statistics**

In Suriname, the responsibility of the production of gender statistics is assigned to the General Bureau of Statistics (GBS), Suriname's National Statistics Office (NSO). As part of the Research and Planning unit, a gender statistics focal point has been appointed. Noteworthy is that per October 2013 the GBS has a staff of 114, with a majority of females (76/67%), including in staff positions. Since 2002 when the first edition was launched every odd year the GBS published 'Selected Gender Statistics'. The last publication is from 2013 and the sixth in range. Previous editions were published in 2002, 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2011. Gender statistics are not specifically mentioned in the national statistic laws, while there are also no gender specific surveys. The production of gender statistics still focuses predominantly on traditional areas: Education, Population and Health, Labor, employment and unemployment, Criminality, Public Governance, Other areas.

Since 1999, the GBS has participated in several national and international training activities to increase knowledge on gender in general and gender statistics in particular. The main sources used to compile the gender statistics are the census (Census 2004 and Census 2012), and data obtained from research departments of different ministries. Regular availability of data from the line ministries remains a big challenge as many data are just not available. Some raw data are available but not processed due to lack of automatisation. Another big problem is that data collection is not consistent and often with gaps in time. Variables are not consistently defined, which makes it impossible to compare different time periods and reveal trends. Data coverage is not optimal as data from the interior and other districts is often missing. GBS sometimes do the further processing.

Reliable trend analysis is difficult as values of variables vary dependent on the source of the data. For example, national sources for measuring of age fertility data are multiple and composed of both administrative data and survey data: civil registry data, MICS data and Census data. If one source is used, there must be consistent use of that specific source. If Census data are preferred, the value for the indicator is only available for 2004 and 2012.

Use of international gender indicators

Due to the current situation that poses enormous limitations to the data collection, the collection of gender statistics is not guided by gender indicators, but just based on what is available. Most of the gender statistics are related to the traditional public areas of education, employment, mortality or representation of women in political decision making bodies. For the

more sensitive issues and emerging areas little or no knowledge is available. There are no national survey data on the prevalence of violence against women and girls. Also in the area of women's economic autonomy data are scarce. In 2009 the ECLAC was assigned the task to set up a 'Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean' based on three pillars of data: women's economic autonomy, women's physical autonomy and women's decision making autonomy'. A small set of indicators was developed to measure women's advancement in these areas. Although Suriname is included in the data that are presented on the ECLAC's website, it is also obvious that there are major gaps in the available data. Data on 'proportion of women without own income', 'time spent on paid and unpaid work', 'level of poverty of head of household', are not collected. Also in the area of sexual and reproductive health indicators, data are often scattered or simply not available. In 2009, an assessment was made of the available data on sexual and reproductive health indicators revealed significant gaps. Other studies on integration of gender in HIV programs and gender budgeting also revealed large gaps in available information, and as a result specific set of indicators were recommended. Although the GBS is informed about proposed national indicators, international and regional gender indicators, the production of gender statistics is not guided by these indicators, but simply on the availability of reliable data. The National Bureau for Gender Policy used international indicators for the development of the framework to conduct the SITAN (2011).

1.10. New set of gender indicators

In 2012 a global review of gender statistics programmes in UN member countries was presented to the UN Statistical Commission in 2013. Apart from an analysis of gaps and achievements, also a new set of gender indicators was presented. This set has been discussed and worldwide agreed by CSO and international community, as a guide for national and international data compilation. The minimum set covers 52 basic indicators on economic structures, participation in productive activities and access to resources, education, health and related services, public life and decision-making, and human rights of women and girls, all a reflection of the BPfA.

In addition also a new set of nine ground-breaking indicators specifically designed to measure violence against women in all its aspects, including physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence. By UNWOMEN this progress is seen as a crucial step to improve efforts for prevention, protection, prosecution and provision of services to survivors of violence."

1.11. Knowledge of new gender indicators and use

As was mentioned earlier, the collection of gender statistics in Suriname is not governed by a national agreed set of gender indicators. In interviews with staff of the General Bureau of Statistics, it appeared that the responsible focal points for Gender statistics are not informed yet about this new set of indicators, neither the general indicators nor on the nine specific indicators on violence against women. Not only the GBS but also the line ministries responsible for social statistics are not yet equipped, either in terms of their human resource capacity, or their equipment and infrastructure, to conduct the data collection exercises needed to measure the comprehensive set of gender indicators.

Many of these indicators must be measure on national level, which requires national survey. Considering the limited resources, both human and financial, it is not likely that these surveys will be conducted out of government's budget.

1.12. Challenges

- Suriname has not yet defined a national set of basis gender indicators that is relevant within the specific socio cultural and economic context and also that the country could afford to effectively monitor. If this set of indicators is determined, the next step would be to develop and implement a coherent data compilation strategy, including the selection of the most efficient data collection instrument for each indicator.
- To increase awareness on translation of available data into the development of policies and programs, it is pivotal that key persons, especially in government are trained on the job in data analysis as well as in application/translation of the available information into policies and programs.
- There is great variability in the social data that has been collected by the research departments of the social ministries, which questions the reliability and validity of the data collected, as well as to issues of internal and external comparability. Due to the lack of clear, structured protocols and methodologies for the collection of data, the output is likely to be inconsistent, and the quality doubtful.
- Measuring indicators in the area of women's physical autonomy and related to sexual and reproductive health and rights are often sensitive issues and difficult to measure with conventional methods. Up till now Suriname never had a national survey to measure violence against women, domestic violence or sexual abuse.
- There is still no national agreement on how to measure multidimensional poverty, resulting in lack of information on poverty levels within households and also how household income is distributed between household members
- To strengthen the collection of gender sensitive indicators it is critical that the institutional capabilities of the GBS and research departments of social ministries are further strengthened among others through the provision of resources and training opportunities in order to increase the reliability and regularity of the social statistics that they already collect.
- Sharing of information and data, especially among researchers in order to utilize all data to the fullest,
- Provide training to policy formulators, at the highest level, in evidence-based gender policy formulation and gender analysis.

SECTION FOUR: EMERGING PRIORITIES

The national review of twenty years implementation of BPfA showed important achievements but also considerable gaps. Most of these gaps are strongly related to persistent inequalities and discrimination that severely hinder the full achievement of the determined objectives. Progress has been uneven, and therefore future actions should enhance all inclusiveness, and efforts should be intensified to include those that are particularly disadvantaged and have been left behind. Of the 12 critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action, in the past twenty years the emphasis was very high on those areas that are linked with the MDG's, while other areas such women and the media, the girl child, women and environment were almost neglected, and limited focus on women and health.

Taking into consideration the identified gaps and the lessons learned in the past twenty years of implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the subsequent intergovernmental reviews and agreements, the current discussions on Sustainable Development Goals, and the upcoming post-2015 development agenda, in this last section an overview is presented of the identified priorities for the advancement of women's rights and women's empowerment:

National support for the call of UN WOMEN to include a stand alone gender goal in the post 15 development agenda

This year is critical year in worldwide efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, as the post 15 development agenda is being defined. Based on the ratification of CEDAW, the promised made in the BPfA, the substantive and political agreements adopted in the successive regional Conferences by both governments and civil society, the UN WOMEN agency promotes the adoption of a stand-alone goal that promotes three goals, i.e. gender equality, women's empowerment, and the defense of women's rights, as well as the effective mainstreaming of gender equality across all goals of the new development framework. The three goals should be reflected in minimum standards which are 1. the elimination of violence against women and girls, 2. the achievement of gender equality in capacities and resources; and 3. the achievement of gender equality in decision-making in public and private institutions. In the development of national policy, the governments should be guided by the relevant international agreements. On the last 58th meeting of the UN '*Commission on Status of Women*' in New York, the government of Suriname already expressed its full support for UN WOMEN's call for a standalone goal on gender and women.

Structural transformation of gender ideology

Integrate a gender perspective structurally in the policies/code of conducts and operations of major formal institutions such as schools, government institutions and authorities, workplaces to enhance gender equality to be integrated in school and workplace cultures. This is a phased process and can start with promotion of school and workplace policies that are directed at development of gender equality, and building towards an physical and ideological environment

that fully support the personal capacities and talents of both girls and boys, women and men, and provides protection of their individual rights and dignity.

In addition to this transformation process on the institutional level, both government and civil society should enhance and intensify the promotion of gender equality through mass media campaigns and community interventions in the area of education and awareness raising.

Further harmonization of legal context with international agreements

Bearing the mind the gaps that still exist in legislation further revisions of existing laws as well as adoption of new laws is needed to further enhance protection of women's rights protection. Gaps in international legislation include the ratification of ILO 110, 111 and 113, all related to gender equality in the workplace and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. On the national level, the Commission Gender Regulation should continue in the important work of identifying and addressing not only discriminatory laws but also the unfair and discriminatory application of existing laws.

Strengthening of the National Bureau for Gender Policy

In order to enable the Bureau to function as an authority that have the power to govern and incorporate gender in policy of all governmental sectors it is pivotal that the Bureau is institutional strengthened with staff and a budget that enables coordination and monitoring, and the attraction of qualified experts that can pull the process. If necessary, organizational restructuring of the Bureau should take place, including of the gender management system. In this regard it is important that the Bureau obtain a strong position within government with the authority to mobilize broad based political support, across ministries, for implementation of plans and programs, and to mobilize required resources and hold the government accountable for promises made. Decentralization of gender policy can be facilitated to link with the national decentralization process and to make use of existing govern structures on the districts level to mainstream gender. In the national response strong emphasis should be on those populations and regions where needs of women are the highest, and should be based on principals of participatory development. According to earlier agreements, structural cooperation between government and civil society should be established to joint decision-making in the planning, implementation and evaluation of pursuing the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Strengthening of the monitoring of gender equality

To enable measurement of progress in the achievement of gender equality, and the impact of national policies on gender relations, it is crucial that monitoring structures and mechanisms are in place. One of the most important requirements is an agreed set of national gender indicators and agreed methodology to measure these indicators consistent and regularly, as well as an allocated budget. Considering the high costs of national surveys, pooling with existing surveys such as MICS and the household surveys should be considered. As Suriname never had a DHS, this study could be on a priority research agenda to be identified for a five year period, based on the gaps in current data collection.

In line with national efforts, also in the area of gender data, much more use should be made of existing data. In the past years ample data have been collected, on a wide variety of issues regarding women's situation that can already be translated into concrete actions. This is especially relevant in case of community studies that enable evidence based interventions, often for the most vulnerable groups. All national plans should include a gender perspective.

In accordance with support for the key issues in the stand alone goal on gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights, explicit emphasis will be on the following key issues:

Prevention and reduction of violence against women

Despite the gains in the development of national legislation, capacity building of service providers and education and awareness raising activities, interventions should be scaled up. The Steering group Domestic Violence and the Platform Domestic Violence already developed a draft national plan on reduction of domestic and gender based violence, with attention for all strategic areas in the national response, including coordination of interventions, prevention, aid (guidance, counseling and treatment) to victims, capacity building, data collection and monitoring. In this regard it is critical that all required political and material support will be made available to guarantee implementation of this plan.

Economic empowerment of women

Broad based support should be mobilized to put economic empowerment of women and youth high on the political agenda. Much more investments are needed to support women's participation in economic development. Apart from solely focus on small scale and small businesses women should be supported to participate also in more ambitious, non traditional economic sectors.

Strengthening of the social protection system

According to the last census single female headed households are rising, while there are sufficient indications to state that poverty among women is increasing and that more human resources and financial resources should be made available to women in poor households, given their primary responsibility for the family. The unpaid but vital caring tasks that women are doing every day should be valued and especially poor single mothers should be financially and socially supported.

Creation of conditions for political empowerment for women

Development and implementation of legislation and policies to enhance involvement of women in politics. To stimulate women to choose for a political career the government should provide adequate support through adequate and affordable childcare, easy accessible political training, and support women in political campaigning.

Development of specific policies and programs for Indigenous and Maroon populations

Considering the great disparities between geographical locations in access to services, it is critical that development of Indigenous and Maroon peoples, especially those living in the interior, is enhanced by developing and implementing policies, based on the principles of

human rights, equality and non-discrimination, in close cooperation with the communities and in accordance with local circumstances and needs.

Increased protection of the girl child

More resources should be allocated to ensure realization of adolescents and their full participation of young people in decision making at all levels.

Strengthening of current national response towards shift from a more vertical, problem focused approach to the development of a sound child protection system, comprised of integrated services with the interest of the child in the center.