

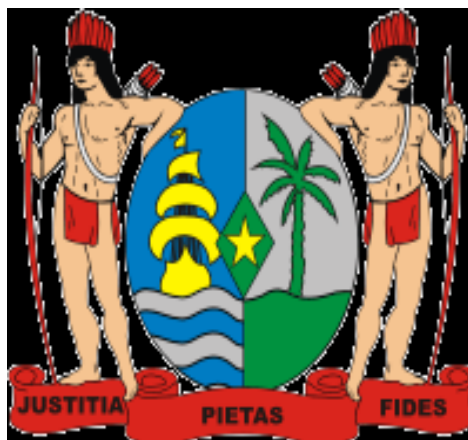


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REPORT OF SURINAME

REPUBLIC OF SURINAME



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

Ministry of Home Affairs, October 2016

Introduction

The government of Suriname has committed itself to execute the policy measures named in the Beijing Declaration and its Concluding Document, in which gender mainstreaming is central. On regional level Suriname has committed itself to gender mainstreaming by supporting the action programs from among others the Organization of American States (OAS), the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), and the UN Economic Commission for Latin America (UN-ECLAC).

In the Development Plan 2012-2016 of the Government of Suriname called "Suriname in transformation", "gender" is addressed in a separate chapter and is being considered as a cross cutting issue that transcends sectors.

The Ministry of Home Affairs, Bureau Gender Affairs, is responsible for the coordination of the national gender policy.

In this regard a Gender Work Plan 2013 has been formulated. This Work Plan is the predecessor in the process to formulate a National Gender Policy and contains five critical areas, namely: Education and training; Labor, Income and poverty alleviation; Violence; Health; and Control and decision-making. These 5 critical areas have been evaluated and preparations are being made for the formulation of gender policy 2017- 2021.

In the process of creating a society in which gender equality, gender equity and women's rights are fully experienced and respected the Government has to cope with many challenges, such as the limited financial resources, the shortcomings of data, the lack of expertise, lack of gender awareness and the lack of a structural cooperation with the different stakeholders for gender mainstreaming. This report will address the two most outstanding challenges namely inadequate national support and commitment for gender mainstreaming and lack of gender disaggregated data , and the achievements in the area of violence against women/ domestic violence.

Challenge 1

Inadequate national support and commitment for gender mainstreaming

The process of the incorporation of gender equality in national policy has not been consistent, due to discontinuity in policy of alternating governments and inadequate management structures.

Important steps have been set in building a national gender management system in 2001, in particular with the installation of gender focal points in ministries in order to build structural linkages with ministries, enhance gender mainstreaming in government policies, and build bridges with civil society. Practical experience shows, 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 and lack of authority to incorporate gender in policy, while there is a high turnover.

Further the lack of gender awareness among decision-makers hinders gender mainstreaming of public policy.

To meet these gaps various government and non – government stakeholders have been trained on gender and gender related concepts and strengthened with advocacy and lobby skills. The institutionalization of gender focal points within ministries is currently further being studied.

The inadequate support for gender mainstreaming is also shown by the scarce availability of financial means for gender / gender related projects. Additionally the existing structure of the government budgets does not enable measurement or tracking of total financial flows to gender equality.

Challenge 2

Lack of gender disaggregated data

Various important statistics are not disaggregated making it difficult to obtain gender breakdowns. 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 automation.

Another major problem is that data collection is not consistent and often has gaps over 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 are often missing.

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. To meet the lack of gender disaggregated data , the Ministry of Home Affairs/ Bureau Gender Affairs is currently executing the CARICOM Gender Equality Indicators (GEI) model with support of CARICOM and UNWOMEN. This in close collaboration with the General Bureau of Statistics of Suriname.

The main goal of this initiative is to develop a set of indicators (the CARICOM Gender Equality Indicators Model) parallel to the Global Set of Minimum Gender Indicators to identify, assess, measure and track the persistent gender equality concerns and disparities across the CARICOM Region, in accordance with the newly adopted SDGs. Suriname is one of the four countries (apart from Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica) that will be piloting this initiative.

Achievement Public policy

Violence

Combating violence against women and in particular domestic violence is one of the priorities for the government of Suriname. The Ministry of Home Affairs, particularly the Bureau Gender Affairs focuses on the prevention of violence against women / domestic violence by providing information to various groups in the community. Worth mentioning in this regard is the awareness campaign in the framework of HeForShe, Orange Day and Sixteen Days of Activism against Gender Violence that was launched on the 24th of November 2015.

The purpose of the campaign is:

1. To take action against gender inequality;
2. To strengthen the position of women and girls;
3. To eliminate violence against women; and
4. To make the whole community understand the importance of gender equality for the overall progress of Suriname.

Several activities have been carried out:

- a) Statements and slogans regarding gender equality and violence against women in the languages Dutch and Sranan Tongo were included in the invoices of utility companies and pay slips of the government officials during the year 2015/2016.
- b) A four day intervention domestic violence training for communication officials of the government, media workers and artists in December 2015. 11 males and 20 females participated in the training. A direct result of this training was the publishing of a column regarding domestic violence in a daily newspaper written by one of the participants .The purpose was to provide insights in the total cycle of domestic violence and an appropriate treatment of victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.
- c) The ministry of Home Affairs / the Bureau Gender Affairs has trained around 400 of her personnel (permanent secretary/ deputy directors/ policy advisors / policy officials, heads of bureaus/ divisions and personnel) in gender and gender related violence / domestic violence during January – July 2016. The following concepts were addressed: gender, gender roles, gender equality, gender stereotypes, gender discrimination, violence against women, causes of partner violence, why women stay in violent relationships, the Law on Combating Domestic Violence. The intention is to continue the training for personnel of other ministries.

- d) A 5 km march "Say No To Violence" in May 2016 in District Nickerie. In the supporting program members of Parliament and other prominent men (in total 11 males) of this district committed themselves as HeForShe agent. In advance of the march folders in Dutch were disseminated in schools. The folders contained information about gender, gender equality, violence against women / domestic violence, Orange Day and HeForShe. A similar march but with a greater organizational set-up will be held in November 2016 in Paramaribo, the capital of Suriname.
- e) On the 25th of every month activities are organized to raise awareness and take action to combat violence against women and girls. In this regard a collaboration has also been initiated with the Domestic Violence ambassadors of the University of Suriname. In September 2016 Orange Day has been commemorated in district Nickerie with kids. Information about Orange Day was provided and orange kites were made and flown with the kids.

Another worth mentioning strategy in the prevention of domestic violence that the Bureau Gender Affairs has used is the involvement of religious workers as they are dealing with the issue of domestic violence in their daily work and are close to the general community for sharing or raising awareness on the issue of domestic violence.

The following activities have been carried out in this regard:

- Between April – August 2013 approximately 80 priests (persons involved in religious work) from different religions have been trained by the Ministry of Home Affairs in among other things identifying domestic violence, relevant human rights, the Law on Combating Domestic Violence etc. A similar training program was also carried out in 2009 by the Ministry of Home Affairs in which about 50 priests participated.
- In November 2014 in the framework of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Sixteen Days of Activism against Gender Violence and International Human Rights Day a three day information session regarding gender, religion, domestic violence and human rights was held by the Bureau Gender Affairs of the Ministry of Home Affairs for youngsters of religious organizations. In this session 48 youngsters (21 males and 27 females) were trained by 10 priests (5 males / 5 females). These priests (persons involved in religious work within religious organizations) were selected from the group of trainees of 2013 and for this information session guided by professionals during 4 days to provide the information to the youngsters. The aim of this project was on the one hand to enable priests to provide information on above mentioned topics independently in and outside the

religious organization and on the other hand to provide information to the youngsters. As a result of this session a brochure on domestic violence was developed for youngsters and disseminated in various schools and other institutions.

- In January 2016, a “come back / impetus for evaluation” meeting was held for the trainees of the 2013 Intervention Program on Domestic Violence for priests. The purpose of the meeting was to find out to what extent the gained knowledge on gender, domestic violence, human rights from a religious perspective was applied in practice and to share the field experiences regarding domestic violence with one another. 41 trainees took part in this meeting.

Source :

- NATIONAL REVIEW OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION + 20, Mei 2014
- CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN CEDAW, COMBINED FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH PERIODIC REPORT, (2002 – 2014), July 2016