

Universal Periodic Review
(25th session, April-May 2016)
Contribution of UNESCO to Compilation of UN information
(to Part I. A. and to Part III - F, J, K, and P)

Suriname

I. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

Scope of international obligations: Human rights treaties which fall within the competence of UNESCO and international instruments adopted by UNESCO

I.1. Table:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date of ratification, accession or succession</i>	<i>Declarations /reservations</i>	<i>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</i>	<i>Reference to the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence</i>
Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)	Not state party to this Convention	<i>Reservations to this Convention shall not be permitted</i>		Right to education
Convention on Technical and Vocational Education. (1989)	Not state party to this Convention			Right to education
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)	23/10/1997, acceptance	N/A	N/A	Right to take part in cultural life
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)	N/A		N/A	Right to take part in cultural life
Convention on the			N/A	Right to take part in

Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)	N/A			cultural life
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II. INPUT TO PART III. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT APPLICABLE INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW TO ITEMS F, J, K, AND P

Right to education

1. NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

1.1 Constitutional Framework

1. The **1987 Constitution of Suriname with its reforms of 1992¹** enshrines the right to free education in **Article 38**, which states that:
 - "1. Everyone shall have a right to education and cultural expression.
 - Education shall be free, subject to State supervision of all public educational institutions, in order that the national education policy and educational standards laid down by the State shall be observed.
 - The practice of science and technology shall be free.
 - The State shall promote the kind of education and the conditions under which school education and other forms of education can contribute to the development of a democratic and socially just society [...]"

2. **Article 39** adds: "The State shall recognize and guarantee the right of all citizens to education and shall offer them equal opportunity for schooling. In the execution of its education policy the State shall be under the obligation:
 - a. To assure obligatory and free general primary education;
 - b. To assure durable education and to end illiteracy;
 - c. To enable all citizens to attain the highest levels of education, scientific research and artistic creation, in accordance with their capacities;
 - d. To provide, in phases, free education on all levels;
 - e. To tune education to the productive and social needs of the society."

¹ <http://www.unesco.org/education/edurights/media/docs/dfcff4209dad7879549a7d46dc0bcbf82919c591.pdf>, http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=209753, Accessed on 28/04/2015

3. Moreover, **Article 37** specifies that "1. Young people shall enjoy special protection for the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, among which are: a. Access to education, culture and work; b. Vocational schooling; c. Physical training, sports and recreation;
4. The primary goal of youth policy shall be the development of the personality of the young person and of the concept of service to the community.
5. **Article 24** stipulates that "The state shall take care of the creation of conditions in which an optimal satisfaction of the basic needs for [...] education [...] is obtained."
6. **Article 8 (2)** recognizes the principle of non-discrimination and states that "No one shall be discriminated against on the grounds of birth, sex, race, language, religious origin, education, political beliefs, economic position or any other status."

1.2 Legislative Framework

7. "According to **Article 20** of the **Compulsory School Attendance Act** (Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 1960), parents or guardians have the obligation to have children between the ages of 7 and 12 years attend primary school on a regular basis, if the possibility for this exists."²
8. "There has been a Compulsory School Attendance Act in Suriname since 1870. The law itself does not make school attendance actually compulsory, but it does state that children between 7 and 12 years of age must be provided with the possibility to enjoy education. It also states that every child has the right to primary education, which is provided by the State free of charge."³
9. "Suriname is in the process of drafting a **Bill on Special Education**, to ensure, in particular, special (follow-up) education and protection for children with disabilities. The **Draft Bill on Primary Education** has been discussed among stakeholders and the Ministry of Education and Community Development is in the process of reviewing this draft."⁴

² Initial Report of Suriname, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 1998, ref. CRC/C/28/Add.11, p. 7 para 15, accessible at: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2f28%2fAdd.11&Lang=en, Accessed on 28/04/2015

³ Initial Report of Suriname, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 1998, ref. CRC/C/28/Add.11, p. 30 para 118, accessible at: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2f28%2fAdd.11&Lang=en, Accessed on 28/04/2015

⁴ Combined third and fourth Report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child of the Republic of Suriname 2007-2012, 2014, p. 33, accessible at: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fSUR%2f3-4&Lang=en, Accessed on 28/04/2015

1.3. Policy Framework

i) General information

10. “Suriname has developed a **second National Action Plan for Children (NAPC)** for the period **2009-2014**, based on the recommendations of the UN Committee for Children’s Right in its Concluding Observations 2007 (par. 13) and on the UN-document: *A World Fit for Children*. The plan has been approved by the Council of Ministers and fits within the larger national frame of development policies, including the Development Plan (DP) and the policy documents of the various relevant ministries [...].
11. The main topics in the NAPC are:
- **Legislation.** Harmonization of national legislation with CRC commitments. Review and amendments, adapting the pending draft.
 - **Mechanisms for Monitoring of the Implementation of the CRC.** Effective monitoring of the implementation of the CRC. From the viewpoint of the implementation of an objective Child Policy, strengthening of data collection and analysis.
 - **Non Discrimination.** Promotion and implementation of the anti-discrimination principle with regard to legislation, service and allocation of means.
 - **Violence.** Prevention and reduction of all forms of violence against children: police violence, violence in school and institutions, violence via the media and domestic violence.
 - **Education.** Universal access to free and quality primary education and reduction of disparity levels of education between urban, rural and interior districts. Improvement of facilities for Early Childhood Development (ECD).
 - **Children from Minority groups.** Protection of children from underprivileged and minority groups, indigenous children and children in the interior.
 - **Family, Alternative Care and Poverty Reduction.** Regulation of foster care and strengthening of economic positions of families and improvement of social-judicial protection of Surinamese children.
 - **Health Care.** Improvement of mother and child care, sexual and reproductive health care, as well as further strengthening of the prevention and reduction of HIV among youth.
 - **Children with disabilities, HIV/AIDS.** Protection of children infected with or affected by HIV, children with a disability and protection against abuse, sexual and other forms of exploitation, drug and alcohol use and drug and child trade.

- **Capacity building.** Training and upgrading of relevant service providers/professionals working with or for children.”⁵

ii) Inclusive Education

12. “The recently conducted ‘*Situation Assessment and Analysis of Children’s Rights in Suriname*’ (SAACRS, 2010) confirmed large disparities in education achievements between the coastal areas and the interior (where the majority of Indigenous and Maroons live) due to large differences in quality of education. In primary school, only 65 percent of children in the interior in the first grade reached grade 5, compared to 83% of children in rural areas and 93% of urban children. While in 2004, 56% of all children passed the exams to enter secondary school, the same passing rate was only 31 percent in interior schools. 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.
13. Another barrier causing relatively high dropout rates in the interior proved to be school tuition. Beginning of school year 2012, the government abolished all school tuition in order to increase access to education. Especially for families living in the interior this action means a considerable financial release, as school fees in the interior were often even higher than in the remaining part of Suriname due to the fact that the most schools in the interior are denominational schools, requesting higher fees than public schools.”⁶

iii) Gender equality

14. “In Suriname, where there are 91 boys for every 100 girls enrolled, 75% of lower secondary education teachers are female.”⁷
15. “Changes in the pattern of boys’ disadvantage in secondary education have varied since 1999. (...) In some richer countries such as (...) Suriname (...), gender gaps in secondary enrolment have widened”⁸

⁵ Combined third and fourth Report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child of the Republic of Suriname 2007-2012, 2014, pp. 9-10, accessible at:

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fSUR%2f3-4&Lang=en,
Accessed on 28/04/2015

⁶ Combined third and fourth Report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child of the Republic of Suriname 2007-2012, 2014, p. 53, accessible at: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fSUR%2f3-4&Lang=en, Accessed on 28/04/2015

⁷ EFA GMR 2013-14, p. 87, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002256/225660e.pdf>, Accessed on 28/04/2015

⁸ GMR EFA: Achievements and Challenges 2000-2015 p. 162/163

<http://www.google.fr/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCoQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Funes>

16. “In (...) Suriname, the situation of girls has been deteriorating.”⁹

iv) Other (as appropriate)

17. “(...) Suriname, have made tremendous progress in reducing the number of poor children who have never been to school.”¹⁰

18. “The attainment rates of children from the poorest households also increased sizeably in other Latin American countries, such as (...) Suriname (...).”¹¹

19. “Latin American countries ((...) Suriname) and Viet Nam saw the most substantial gains among children from the poorest households compared with those from less poor households. Two possible explanations are that in Latin America, social protection programmes and curricular reforms may be reaching at least some of the extreme poor, and that children from the second-poorest quintile already had very high completion rates in 2000 (...).”¹²

2. COOPERATION

20. Suriname is **not party** to the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.

21. Suriname did **not report** to UNESCO on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1960 UNESCO Recommendation against Discrimination in Education within the framework of the:

- **Sixth Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 1994-1999),
- **Seventh Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 2000-2005),
- **Eighth Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 2006-2011).

22. Suriname did **not report** to UNESCO on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International

doc.unesco.org/2Fimages%2F0023%2F002322%2F232205e.pdf&ei=u4iCVZzfCsn8ULrpgsAB&usg=AFQjCNEso8XWrRKjEk2uHje6KUzaMmevuw&bvm=bv.96041959,d.d24

⁹ Ibid. 226

¹⁰ Ibid p. 79

¹¹ Ibid p. 83

¹² Ibid p. 94

Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms within the framework of the:

- **Fourth Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 2005-2008),
- **Fifth Consultation** of Member States (covering the period 2009-2012).

23. Suriname did **not report** to UNESCO on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1976 UNESCO Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education within the framework of the **First Consultation** of Member States (1993). However, it **reported** within the framework of the **Second Consultation** of Member States (2011).

24. Suriname is **not party** to the 1989 UNESCO Convention on Technical and Vocational Education.

Freedom of opinion and expression

1. CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

25. Freedom of Expression is enshrined in Article 19 of the Constitution of Suriname.¹³

26. Defamation is regarded as a criminal offense and can be punished by fines or prison terms for up to three years.¹⁴

27. There is no freedom of information legislation in Suriname.

2. MEDIA SELF-REGULATION

28. The major journalists' union in Suriname is the Surinaamse Vereniging van Journalisten (SVJ).¹⁵ It has a Code of Conduct and it offers ethical and professional trainings for journalists.¹⁶

3. SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS

29. UNESCO recorded no killing of journalists in Suriname. Journalists operate in a safe environment.

¹³ See the Constitution of Suriname on the government's website:
http://www.gov.sr/media/160144/grondwet_suriname.pdf.

¹⁴ http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=209839

¹⁵ <http://www.stvs.sr/content/view/669/91/>.

¹⁶ <http://ndpsuriname.com/training-journalisten-in-verband-met-verkiezingen/>

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Right to education

30. **Recommendations made within the framework of the first cycle of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, considered on (please check the date on the following web site: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Documentation.aspx>)**
31. 72. The recommendations formulated during the interactive dialogue and listed below enjoy the support Suriname:
- i. 72.4. Incorporate human rights education into the school curricula (Indonesia);
 - ii. 72.21. Prohibit all forms of violence against children, in particular corporal punishment, which is still legally practised in schools (Belgium);
 - iii. 72.22. Strengthen and apply poverty reduction strategies to ensure disadvantaged communities have access to adequate shelter, food, health care and education (Indonesia);
 - iv. 72.24. Continue implementing programmes and measures to enhance the enjoyment of the right to education and the right to health (Cuba);
 - v. 72.25. Continue to improve both the quality and accessibility of education and related facilities (Indonesia);
 - vi. 72.26. Continue and step up efforts to improve school enrolment and the quality of education (Slovenia);
 - vii. 72.27. Continue efforts to guarantee better implementation of education plans particularly in rural areas (Ecuador);
 - viii. 72.28. Continue efforts aimed at improving access to education, particularly in the rural areas, including by, inter alia, increasing the number of teachers, ensuring adequate infrastructure, learning materials and educational tools (Malaysia);
 - ix.

- x. 72.29. Continue efforts to implement legislation that takes into account the needs of boys and girls in general, including equal access to universal primary education, as well as, in particular, that of boys and girls with disabilities
- xi. (Argentina);
- xii. 72.30. Take expeditiously efficient steps to improve access to free basic education to all children, with particular focus on those living in the interior areas and those belonging to indigenous and minority groups (Slovakia);
- xiii. 73.42. Provide enhanced training to law enforcement, immigration and judicial officials regarding trafficking cases and victims, and provide foreign victims of trafficking with legal alternatives to deportation (United States of America);
- xiv. 73.47. Prioritize the creation of school facilities in remote areas and implement a functioning system of data collection on children living in districts bordering neighbouring countries (Norway);

32. 13. These are the recommendations which cannot be supported:

- i. 73.44. Prohibit explicitly corporal punishment at school, at home, as well as in any public establishment attended by children (France);
- ii. 73.45. Adopt the necessary legal measures to prohibit all forms of violence against children, including corporal punishment in all settings, particularly in the family, schools, alternative childcare and places of detention for juveniles (Mexico);
- iii. 73.46. Follow up efficiently on the recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to explicitly prohibit by law all forms of violence against children, including corporal punishment, in all settings, including in the family, schools, alternative childcare and places of detention for juveniles, and to subsequently implement those laws effectively (Slovenia);

33. Analysis:

Suriname developed a Nation Action Plan for Children (NAPC) for the period 2009-2014 in which the main topics are non-discrimination, violence, universal access to free and quality primary education, children from minority groups, children with disabilities etc. In the year 2012, Suriname abolished all school tuitions which improved access to education, notably for families living in the interior of the territory and improved considerably the situation of poor family households. Nevertheless and to the extent of available information, there were no further measures taken to combat gender based discrimination through school curricula or awareness raising campaign. Suriname, even

though it refused the recommendation, recognized the importance of preventing and reducing violence against children in all settings but has not, given our information, legally prohibited such practices yet.

34. Specific Recommendations:

1. Suriname should be strongly encouraged to ratify the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.
2. Suriname should be strongly encouraged to submit state reports for the periodic consultations of UNESCO's education related standard-setting instruments.
3. Suriname should be encouraged to further continue its work for the implementation of plans toward better access to education for all including the population living in the interior, the poorest and children with disabilities.
4. Suriname could be encouraged to continue taking steps toward prohibiting violence against children in all settings and put in place awareness raising campaigns against corporal punishments in the public and police institutions.
5. Suriname could be encouraged to further integrate human rights education into the curricula.

Cultural rights

35. **Suriname** is encouraged to ratify the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). UNESCO's cultural conventions promote access to and participation in cultural heritage and creative expressions and, as such, are conducive to implementing the right to take part in cultural life as defined in article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In doing so, Suriname is encouraged to facilitate the participation of communities, practitioners, cultural actors and NGOs from the civil society as well as vulnerable groups (minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, young peoples and peoples with disabilities), and to ensure that equal opportunities are given to women and girls to address gender disparities.
36. As a State Party to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), Suriname is encouraged to fully implement the relevant

provisions that promote access to and participation in cultural heritage and creative expressions and, as such, are conducive to implementing the right to take part in cultural life as defined in article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In doing so, Suriname is encouraged to give due consideration to the participation of communities, practitioners, cultural actors and NGOs from the civil society as well as vulnerable groups (minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, young peoples and peoples with disabilities), and to ensure that equal opportunities are given to women and girls to address gender disparities.

Freedom of opinion and expression

37. Suriname is recommended to introduce a freedom of information law that is in accordance with international standards.¹⁷
38. The country is further encouraged to decriminalize defamation and place it within a civil code that is in accordance with international standards.¹⁸

Freedom of scientific research and the right to benefit from scientific progress and its applications

39. Suriname, in the framework of the 2015-2017 consultations related to the revision and monitoring of the Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers is encouraged to report to UNESCO on any legislative or other steps undertaken by it with the aim to implement this international standard-setting instrument, adopted by UNESCO in 1974.

¹⁷ See for example, General Comments No 34. of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 2006 Recommendation of the 87th Session Human Rights Committee, the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, and Resolution 1577 (2007) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

¹⁸ See for example, General Comments No 34. of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 2006 Recommendation of the 87th Session Human Rights Committee, the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, and Resolution 1577 (2007) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.